

**The potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity in female apparel
retail stores**

Cornelia Pieterse

Dissertation

M Consumer Science (Clothing Retail Management)

Supervisor: Prof AC Erasmus

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**The potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity in female apparel
retail stores**

by

Cornelia Pieterse

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Dedicated to

Nic

&

Anne-Marie

Declaration

I, Cornelia Pieterse, hereby declare that the dissertation for the Masters in Consumer Science: Clothing Retail Management at the University of Pretoria, hereby submitted by me, is my own work and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university or tertiary institution and that all reference material contained herein has been acknowledged.

Cornelia Pieterse

4 December 2013

Acknowledgements

At the beginning of this journey, a lecturer advised me that completing a dissertation for a Masters degree is a very lonely road to follow – that no one will ever truly understand what you had to go through or what your dissertation is about. Standing at the end and looking back at this project, I must disagree. To complete this dissertation, it required a whole group of people, working together and providing support. I would specifically like to thank the following people:

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity in female apparel retail stores. A field experiment was conducted in the Tshwane metropolitan - a key political, economic and urban area in South Africa - to investigate the potential of packaging to be acknowledged as an additional element of the marketing mix in terms of its influence on consumers' perceptions of the service offering of retailers and their brand equity. The study was done in the context of an emerging economy, where international clothing brands have infiltrated the market and become widely accessible in recent years. The data was collected by using convenience sampling methods, and the self-completion of a structured questionnaire after respondents acted as mystery shoppers at a Single Brand Retailer (SBR) and a Department Store (DS) that carry the same footwear brand in a major shopping centre in this metropolitan. The SBR offers consumers a branded high quality canvas tote bag after purchase, whereas the DS offers a generic plastic bag irrespective of the type of purchase or the price paid. Willing females, all final year students at the University of Pretoria (n =103) were divided in two groups. Individuals visited the two retailers according to a schedule compiled by the researcher. One group visited the SBR first, followed by the DS. The other group did the task in the reverse order. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principle Component analysis using PROMAX and PROCRUSTES rotation for the two scales that investigated the service offering and brand equity respectively, Means, Standard deviations, Cronbach's Alpha as well as paired and non-paired 2-tailed t-tests. This study confirmed the potential of secondary packaging as an independent element of the marketing mix in the branded clothing retail industry. The packaging construct dissociated it from the construct 'Product' as the literature suggests, which confirms that marketing elements adapt over time and that these changes have to be acknowledged in retail. Respondents generally had a less favourable instore experience in the DS compared to the SBR. The packaging format of SBR was also evaluated more favourably, which enhanced perceptions of the overall service offering. This suggests that respondents' less favourable evaluation of the less prestigious packaging offered in the DS, is partly to blame for the lower overall evaluations of the service offering of the DS. Packaging also contributed/enhanced brand equity as consumers' perceptions of the packaging formats – irrespective of whether it was a SBR or a DS – positively contributed to consumers' perceptions of the brand equity of the retailers that they visited. The contribution of packaging towards brand equity was mostly more prominent than the contribution of other marketing elements such Advertising and Promotion. An order effect was noted. Respondents who visited the DS first, were significantly more impressed with the SBR. Those who went to the SBR first, seemed more forgiving and evaluated the service offering and the brand equity lower compared to the SBR but nevertheless evaluated it more favourably than the group that patronized the DS first. Packaging does not seem to relieve post purchase regret. Respondents were more regretful after their SBR experience. Several explanations may be used to explain this and future studies are envisaged to expand the findings.

Key words: apparel retail, branded clothing, packaging, shopping bag, brand equity, marketing mix, conspicuous consumption, cognitive dissonance

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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

A retailer in the South African trade industry has to function in a hotly competitive and demanding environment due to the recent economic slump from which economies have not yet recovered. Multiple retailers are therefore still competing for the same consumer markets (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:vi). This is not necessarily all doom and gloom because consumers benefit from strong competition as retailers are motivated to attract and retain customers through superior service and value (Radder, 2000:79; Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:vi). The value that a customer attaches to a brand is defined as the brand equity (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:236), and developing brand equity can improve differentiation and create a sustainable competitive advantage in the market place (Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000:208). Brand equity is defined as the increased value of a product as a result of the brand name that the product carries (Aaker, 1996:8). This value is generated from consumer's identification with a brand, trust in the brand, perception of the brand's dominance and the satisfaction resulting from the social admiration of using the brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2012:236). The majority of marketers have accepted Aaker's four indicators or "asset categories" of brand equity, namely brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand associations (Aaker, 1996:8). Reinforcing the dimensions of brand equity can lead to stronger overall brand equity assessment. It is believed that marketing activities have the power to build the equity of a brand because it represents the result of the accrued marketing investments (Yoo *et al*, 2000:197). There is a great lack in conceptual development regarding which marketing mix activities contribute to brand equity (Barwise, 1993:93). Packaging is traditionally seen as part of the product decisions within the marketing mix (Rundh, 2005:673; Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101; Bearden, Ingram & LaForge, 2007:198; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Some authors however, believe that packaging is significant enough to be evaluated as a separate entity (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff, Terblance, Elliot & Klopper, 2010:260), because packaging plays a significant role in protecting the product, promoting the brand and creating convenience for the consumer (Rundh, 2005:671). Packaging has also been greatly overlooked when it comes to the theoretical construction of brand symbolism and in terms of the presentation of a product to the market (Underwood, 2003:63). Packaging carries and communicates the brand name of the product or the retailer, logos and slogans, brand personality and graphic symbols (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:187). Therefore, when it comes to branding, packaging is

considered a key brand element due to the tangibility and physical benefits it can provide (Grewal & Levy, 2012:318).

In branded clothing and accessory retail, packaging may include any bags, boxes, tissue paper or other material used to wrap and hold the product after the purchase has been made, and is considered a highly effective fashion marketing instrument. An example of this is the iconic Tiffany & Co. bird's egg blue and white box that has become a cultural symbol, as seen below in Figure 1 (Bickle, 2009:48). The independence of packaging as a separate marketing mix element in the clothing retail industry is unfortunately still under researched. One way to determine the value of packaging in the clothing industry is to measure its contribution to the equity of the brand. Empirical evidence of the value of packaging in terms of brand equity in a product category such as females' fashion apparel could provide invaluable direction in terms of retailers' attention to, and integration of the various elements of the marketing mix in their stores (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanche, 2004:233). The marketing mix is actually a powerful tool that can be strategically leveraged to obtain a competitive advantage in a retail situation (Jobber, 2010:21). The original marketing mix consisted of four P's, namely Product, Promotion, Price and Place. Over time however, the marketing mix has been extended to seven P's to include Processes, Participants and Physical Evidence (Bitner, 1990:70; Lamb *et al*, 2004:13).



FIGURE 1.1: TIFFANY & CO. POST-PURCHASE PACKAGING

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Packaging is traditionally seen as a product decision in the marketing plan of an organisation. Packaging, however, has major potential to be leveraged as a strategic marketing tool and some are of the opinion that packaging should be included as an additional “P” in a retailer’s marketing mix to acknowledge its importance in a retailers’ performance as well as in terms of consumers’ product- and sales experience (Keller, 1998 as cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101; Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Prendergast, Wai Ng & Leung, 2001:475; Lamb *et al*, 2004:240-241). Even though practicality and functionality are supposedly the main functions of packaging, it has become a vital part of the marketing strategy of a retail organisation (Löfgren, Witell & Gustafsson, 2008:463). In this capacity packaging is often neglected and the potential of packaging in terms of its persuasive influence on consumers’ buying decisions, and an attribute that may reduce the cognitive dissonance experienced after closure of a purchase transaction, is often overseen. Packaging has the ability to transmit symbolic meaning and to communicate brand messages, e.g. to convey status/prestige that might even compensate for pertinent shortcomings in products like poor construction quality or high price (Rapeal & Olsson, 1978 as cited in Underwood, 2003:62).

In the clothing retail industry conventional packaging is not used to contain goods and does not form part of consumers’ pre-purchase evaluation processes, as the clothing is presented for display on shelves to increase visual and sensory appeal during the pre-purchase phase. Packaging only comes into play after the clothing purchase has been made and when the purchases are put into some form of a shopping bag that is presented to the customer free of charge. These shopping bags are known as secondary packaging and it is used to transport and protect the goods from the clothing retail store to wherever it may be consumed (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475). Except for the basic functionality, shopping bags can be optimised as a branding tool, a marketing vehicle (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475-476) and to provide social visibility (Sirgy, 1982:287-288). When a shopping bag is carried outside of the retailer, it literally becomes a ‘walking billboard’ and serves as a form of outdoor advertising (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476).

The literature on shopping bags is extremely limited and the potential of shopping bags to increase customer based brand equity as well as retailer based brand equity is under researched. Retailers probably neglect packaging because it is – in terms of the elements of retailers’ marketing mix - not formally considered as an entity that is equally important in terms of the service offering of a store/brand as of yet. Empirical evidence is needed to confirm the benefits that shopping bags provide in the apparel industry (directly, e.g. promotion and indirectly, e.g. facilitating consumers’ post purchase satisfaction). In order to establish the effect of packaging in the branded clothing retail industry, it is necessary to assess its contribution to brand equity.

Brands may choose to retail their products through various outlets, depending on their distribution strategy. Even though the brand building activities of the marketing team are set to benefit the sales of the brand across all retail settings, different retailers might implement different strategies with regard to service, store image and price promotions that can alter the consumer's perceptions of a particular brand. In order to obtain a true evaluation of the brand's value and the influence of packaging on the brand equity, it is important to capture the consumer's total assessment of the brand across various retail settings that are part of the brand's distribution strategy. An example of this will be to assess the value of a brand that retails through its own stores, i.e. Single Brand Retailers (SBR), as well as more generic retail offerings such as Department Stores (DS).

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

Yoo and co-workers (2000:195) compiled the first research to confirm the relationship between the creation of brand equity through the elements of the marketing mix in order to lay the groundwork for future research on this topic. They concluded that more attention should be given to the construction of a 'systems view' to explain the importance of perceived marketing mix elements such as service, promotions, price and distribution combined with the characteristics of the product in terms of their influence on consumers' decision making and subsequent brand equity. Packaging can also be seen as a tangible, perceivable marketing element and it is therefore important to explore and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the role of (secondary) packaging in terms of consumers' evaluation of brand equity in the female fashion apparel retail environment. All the objectives of this study pertain to female apparel shoppers in a specific context in the Tshwane metropolitan area, South Africa.

The objectives of this study were:

OBJECTIVE 1

To determine the potential of packaging as one of the elements/ dimensions of a retailer's marketing mix.

OBJECTIVE 2

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to motivate consumers to regularly patronise the retailer, i.e.:

2.1 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).

2.2 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Department Stores (DS).

2.3 To compare and discuss consumers' evaluation of packaging of as part of the in-store experience in a SBR after exposure to an alternative packaging format for the same product in a DS (and visa versa).

OBJECTIVE 3

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to strengthen brand equity, i.e.:

3.1 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).

3.2 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Department Stores (DS).

OBJECTIVE 4

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to create value for the consumer by minimising feelings of regret resulting from cognitive dissonance.

1.5 STUDY AREA

The investigation was conducted in the geographical area of the metropolitan of the City of Tshwane in the Gauteng province in South Africa. Due to the complexity of the research design, Tshwane was chosen since the researcher is located in the area and was able to gather 103 respondents from the University of Pretoria, which is located in this metropolitan area. The Tshwane metropolitan area is located in the Gauteng province which is the most rapidly expanding and prosperous area in Africa (City of Tshwane: About Tshwane). As a result of economic expansion and growth, this province is the most affluent in South Africa and it can therefore be assumed that it would offer the most clothing brands and retailers for South African customers to select from.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This experimental design was exploratory and causal. This study is conducted to obtain a better understanding of which elements of the marketing mix contribute to/enhance brand equity in the clothing retail environment. The results of this study will also create a basis for future research in this area as theory on this subject is very limited. The aim of this study is to determine whether packaging should be acknowledged as an important element of a store's marketing mix and whether it has the potential to strengthen brand equity in female apparel retail stores. Therefore packaging is seen as the "cause" and the resulting consequence for brand equity is seen as the "effect". The most appropriate data collection method for causal research takes form in an experiment (Bearden *et al*, 2007:103-131; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:176), which is inherently quantitative (Grewal & Levy, 2012:276).

Quantitative research explores the relationships among the variables in the study with the objective of clarifying, forecasting and directing phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94). The quantitative data were captured through a structured questionnaire. Denscombe (2002:12) describes a questionnaire as a research instrument used to gather information in the social sciences, and states that it has the potential to provide the researcher with precise figures and results. Care must be taken to ensure that the questionnaire is neutral and consistent. A neutral questionnaire gives an unbiased result, and a questionnaire that is consistent shows similar results when other respondents are questioned on different occasions (Denscombe, 2002:103, 108). The questionnaire used for this study consisted of five sections. Section A captured demographic information of the respondents; Section B attempted to capture respondents' degree of social consumption; Section C explored the respondents' customer experience within the retail setting; Section D investigated respondents' brand perceptions, and Section E measured respondents' level of regret with their product choice as a measure of cognitive dissonance.

The population targeted in this study was female final year students at the University of Pretoria, in Tshwane. The unit of analysis for this study was female final-year students at the University of Pretoria, who were probably thinking about interviews before entering into their professional careers. As this study followed an experimental design, it was highly reliant on the female final year students' willingness to participate in the experiment, which would require of participants to devote some time and to travel to the chosen shopping centre to complete the tasks. Convenience sampling was therefore used to obtain a set of respondents to participate in this fairly time consuming study. Convenience sampling can be defined as the act of obtaining respondents that are most readily or easily available (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel & Kotzé, 2003:127; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:273). The respondents were obtained by streaming messages to female final year students via social media as well as recruiting on campus and in the University of Pretoria's ladies' residences. Willing participants were asked to recruit friends and fellow students to participate in the experiment. Clothing Retail Management -and Marketing

students were excluded from the sample as their prior knowledge of marketing principles and retail strategies might have influenced their responses.

Ultimately, the sample consisted of 103 female final year students from the University of Pretoria. Most of these students were coming to the end of their academic term at this tertiary institution and were eager to plan for their first interviews. An interview is a very important and possibly life changing experience and it was assumed that final year students would want to make a good impression on the interview panel in order to obtain the position. Professional or interview wear had no specific significance to this study, but the scenario was created to increase the respondents' involvement in the "mock purchase".

In true experimental designs, the researcher is able to obtain control over all the variables in the experimental context, and then manipulate one of the variables to be able to measure the effect of the change (Walliman, 2005:117; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:176). The data collection took place in the retail setting and can therefore be classified as a field experiment. A field experiment takes place in natural or realistic circumstances, and the situation dictates the level of control over the circumstances and ability to manipulate the variables (Cant *et al*, 2003:34). With research conducted in social sciences, an experiment may involve a comparison of two similar groups (Fouché, Delpont & De Vos, 2011:145). In this study two groups of 50 final year female students were formed randomly from the willing participants who pitched for the data collection process in the shopping centre. Both groups were given a mock shopping task in a Single Brand Retailer (SBR), and a Department Store (DS), which involved selecting a pair of shoes for their first job interview. The first group visited the SBR first and after completing the questionnaire under supervision of the researcher or trained assistant, they had to complete the same task in the DS where they had to select a pair of shoes that carried the same brand offered by the SBR. They then completed the final part of the questionnaire under supervision. Group 2 visited the retailers in the reverse order, i.e. they first selected a pair of shoes that carried the specific brand in the DS, completed the questionnaire, and then pursued the second phase in the SBR. The SBR offers an exclusive brand and uses superior packaging. The DS on the other hand, is a clothing and household department store that stocks many other brands apart from the brand that was under investigation. In the DS all purchases are put into a generic plastic shopping bag, irrespective of the product purchased or the price paid. By changing the order in which the participants visited the stores, a possible order effect could be determined, i.e. whether the order in which they completed the task had any effect on their brand- and service perceptions. In both cases the pair of shoes selected, was photographed by an assistant, where after it was put in the packaging offered by the store. The "purchase" was then handed to the researcher to be returned to the store. As an incentive for participation, participants' names were put into a lucky draw and they afterwards stood the chance to

win the pair of shoes that they actually selected in the experiment. This was also meant to ensure that the task was carried out meticulously.

The data collection took place between September 2012 to May 2013 in Menlyn Park Shopping Center, in Tshwane, South Africa. The research was conducted over this lengthy period due to restrictions from the retailers who found the process somewhat disruptive. It was also difficult to recruit students who were willing to travel to the specific shopping centre during the week as the stores would not allow data collection over weekends. Management of the participating retailers limited the mystery shoppers' visits to weekdays, between the 15th and 23rd of the month, which is the quietest time of the month to limit interference with real customers and sales. The availability of the students to visit the shopping center was furthermore influenced by University of Pretoria's recesses and exams.

The respondents set specific appointments with a trained research assistant who met up with them at a coffee shop situated between the SBR and the DS in Menlyn Park Shopping Center in Tshwane. The procedure was explained to the participants, where after they completed the first two sections of the questionnaire, i.e. the demographic information and some background questions. The cover page of the questionnaire explained that the study was aimed at investigating their shopping experiences. This was done to take the focus off the packaging or any specific marketing element and to reduce demand characteristics. Depending on whether the respondents were part of Group 1 or 2, they then proceeded to the first store where they had to fit shoes and select one pair, interact with the staff and then make a decision about which product they would want to "purchase". No real transactions were conducted as the logistics involved in reversing 206 transactions, combined with the risk of the products leaving the store, were too extensive. In order to create the illusion and to stimulate similar emotions to those created during an actual purchase, respondents were informed that they stood a chance to win the shoes they had selected. If the consumer could not find any shoes to their liking, they were given to opportunity to select a handbag instead. Only upon completion of the task, the respondent revealed herself to the sales assistant as a mystery shopper. A small control sheet was then filled in to capture the respondents' product selection, and to facilitate the procurement of the prize after completion of the study. As the product did not leave the store, a picture was taken of the selected product to accompany the control sheet with the details of the respondent's selection. The control sheet represented the "purchase" as the decision was then final and was placed into the shopping bag, as if they were going to leave the store with the product. The respondent then proceeded back to the research assistant to complete section 1 of the questionnaire. There after the individual proceeded to the second store to repeat the entire process up to completion of section 2 of the questionnaire. It took between 45 and 60 minutes for a participant to complete the exercise. They were offered refreshments when seated to complete the questionnaire.

1.7 DATA ANALYSIS

In order to straighten out any issues with the experimental design, a pre-test with three respondents was conducted. The feedback from these questionnaires was analysed to identify any problems with the questionnaire and the flow of the experiment. Minor problems in terms of executing the experiment were straightened out. After completion of the experiment, the questionnaires were coded by the researcher as well as the trained assistant. Data was then captured with the assistance of the University of Pretoria's Department of Statistics. This was followed by data checking and data analysis in the form of descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, medians, and standard deviations). Final analyses included factor analysis and ANOVA.

1.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The systems approach was used as the theoretical perspective because it allows an investigation of all the factors that contribute to a phenomenon (such as brand equity) and to distinguish the role of one particular element/dimension of the phenomenon (e.g. packaging) in terms of its contribution towards the entire phenomenon.

The following assumptions fit the objectives of a systems approach:

- A system consists of three parts and is defined as a collection of interrelated parts/elements (for example elements of a retailer's marketing mix) that aim to obtain specific objectives (for example brand equity, which equals a customer's "whole experience") (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:2). These elements form the INPUTS of the system. The elements of the marketing mix are perceived and TRANSFORMED into brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand associations) by customers within their existing knowledge, experience and expectations frameworks in terms of an OUTPUT i.e. a judgement that the brand is superior (or not).
- The systems theory proposes that all the elements of marketing mix that may enhance brand equity are not perceived as equally important/impressive, i.e. a hierarchy exists. Also, a brand can be judged favourably despite shortcomings in a specific element (for example packaging) due to the principle of equifinality and unless customers' judgement of individual elements are investigated, concerns about certain elements of the marketing mix cannot be confirmed. Customers may thus regard the product more crucial than packaging in terms of their final judgement of the brand's image but impressive packaging may boost brand equity beyond customers' expectations (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993:328).

- Systems can either be open or closed. In this study an open system is relevant which means that a consumer's perception of the packaging (and therefore the service offering) of one retailer (e.g. a SBR) can be influenced by their perception of alternative packaging formats that are used at competitors (e.g. a DS), which sells the same brands/products (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993:333).
- The output (brand equity) would direct future strategies in terms of a store's marketing mix (i.e. feedback) to improve, change or continue with specific strategies, for example to continue to provide the more expensive attractive packaging or to change it (control).

1.9 PRESENTATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The dissertation is structured in terms of six chapters as outlined in Figure 1.2.

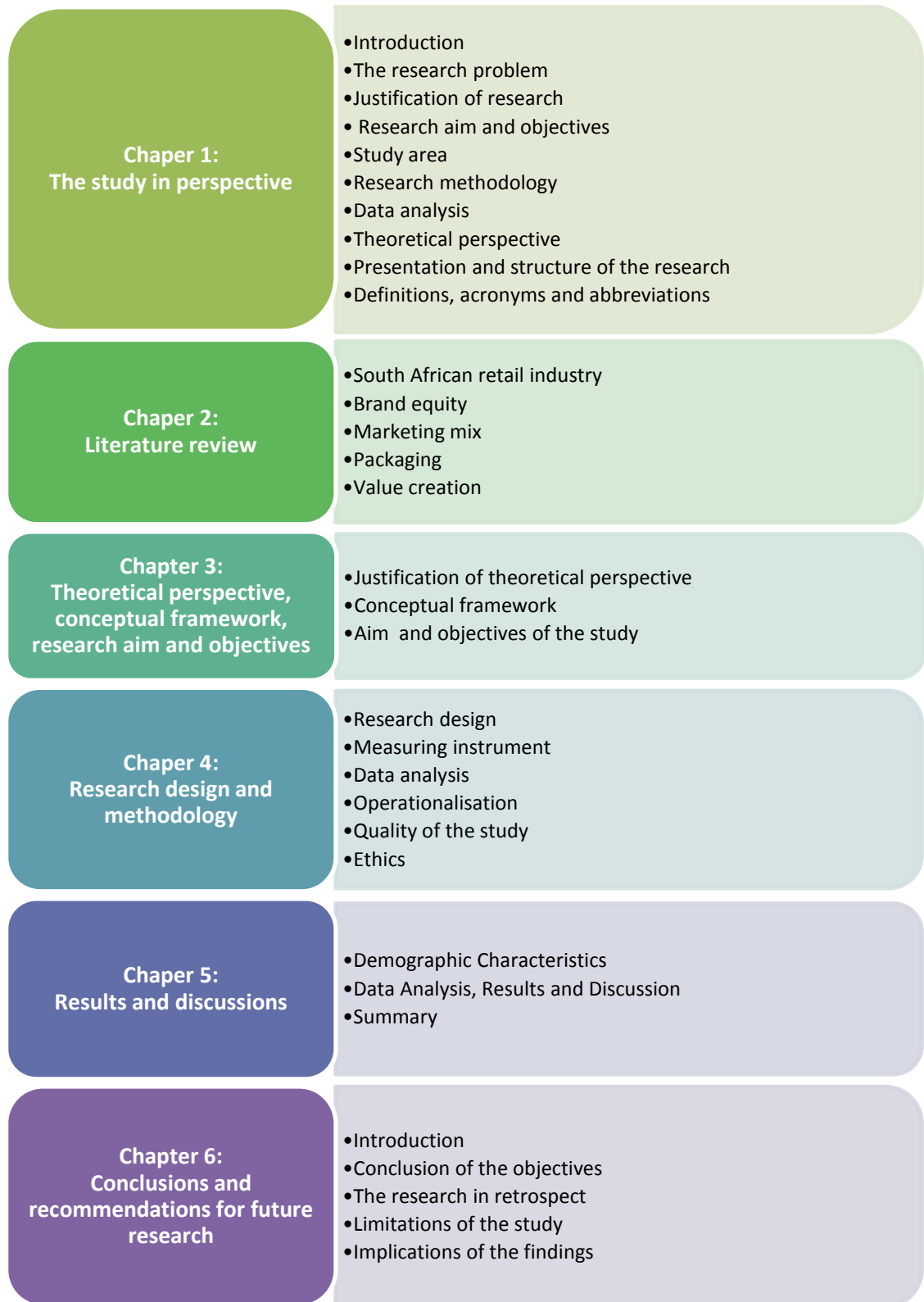


FIGURE 1.2: THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

1.10 ACRONYMS

The following acronyms were used in this document:

ATL	Above the Line Marketing
BTL	Below the Line Marketing
DS	Department Store
FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
GST	General Systems Theory
REM	Regret Experience Measure
SBR	Single Brand Retailer



Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review provides the background for the research and aims to explicate relevant constructs in terms of their contribution towards the research. Firstly, an overview is presented of the South African apparel retail market, followed by a discussion of brand equity, the marketing mix elements in apparel retailing as well as the potential contribution of packaging to create value for both the customer and the retailer.

2.1 SOUTH AFRICA AS AN EMERGING ECONOMY

South Africa is the leading emerging economy on the African continent, and ranked 14th globally among international emerging economies (Sanews: Business, 2013:sa). Emerging economies are countries with low income that show rapid growth as a result of economic liberation (Hoskisson, Eden, Lau & Wright, 2000:249). South Africa recently joined other major emerging economies such as China and India to form part of the BRICS countries, showing that South Africa is a viable economic market, a destination for business and trade investment and a hub for innovation and expansion into the rest of Africa (South African Government Information: Economy, 2013:sa).

2.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CLOTHING RETAIL INDUSTRY

Retail trade is defined as the resale of finished products directly to the population's consumers, either for household or personal use, or to other businesses responsible for further distributing the product (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:3). Retail and wholesale trade is one of the biggest economic sectors in South Africa, contributing 5.9% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2005. Even though there has been a downward trend in recent years, this industry has consistently contributed (and is forecasted to continue contributing) an average of 5.5% to the GDP until 2015 (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:23). Competitive activity and competition should however be viewed within the industry context, where an industry is seen as a cluster of firms that retail products which can be seen as close substitutes (Lamb *et al*, 2004:108). This study focused on the South African clothing retail industry. Clothing is defined as any apparel or accessory item that consumers obtain to either cover or adorn their bodies. Therefore clothing includes anything from shirts and dresses to shoes, hats and bags (Kaiser, 1997:5).

Within the retail trade sector, the clothing retail industry is extremely profitable. In 2009, the median profit margin across all industries in South Africa was 3.9%, but for the textile, clothing, footwear and leather goods industry, the profit margin was 10.8%, the highest of all the industries (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:5). In addition to being very lucrative, the size of the clothing retail industry in South Africa is also massive as consumer spending on footwear and clothing in 2011 totaled at 86.9 billion rand (Kew, 2012:sa). It is forecasted that the South African Clothing Retail industry will go from strength to strength as it is expected to grow with 15% per year for the next few years (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:26). This projected growth can be attributed to expansion in the general retail trade sector that occurred as a result of an upsurge in shopping centers and retail space in the country, in both established cities as well as rural areas (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:sa). Another major contributor to the profitability of the retail sector is the rise of the growing middle class (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:21). It is forecasted that by 2016 South Africa will host 11 million households with an average yearly household income of R89 500 (1US\$, ≈ R10) a rate that allows discretionary spending for a much greater variety of consumer products (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:2). The emergence of a strong middle class is a key characteristic of emerging markets, and this is very beneficial for the manufacturers and retailers of consumer goods, as this group can be seen as very aspirational and aligns their purchases accordingly. The above mentioned expansion in retail outlets gives these consumers many avenues to spend their increasing disposable income, resulting in a strong consumer culture. These conditions are especially attractive for luxury consumer goods such as high end fashion brands (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:4). Middle class consumers apparently have a strong preference for branded clothing, therefore the above mentioned conditions are ideal for the retail of branded premium clothing and accessories (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:358).

During the years of apartheid, local South African clothing retailers had the opportunity to entrench themselves in the local market as there was little to no competition from international clothing retailers, as a result of the country being shunned by international investors. This resulted in an extremely strong local clothing retailer sector with companies such as Truworths, the Foschini Group and Mr Price (Conway-Smith, 2012:sa). Two clothing retailers are also listed under the top five retailers in the country – Edcon and Woolworths, with the latter being rated as one of the Top 250 retailers in the world (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:35). Many international clothing brands have saturated their own markets in the USA and Europe, and with the above mentioned attractive prospects and established infrastructure in South Africa, well known international clothing brands see South Africa as a hub which they would like to infiltrate and use as a starting point to expand to Sub-Saharan Africa (Gauteng Province Provincial Treasury, 2012:35). These branded clothing retailers are therefore steadily infiltrating the South African market and challenging recognised local clothing retailers (Conway-Smith, 2012:sa). Over the past 20 years, South Africa has seen the arrival of many international fashion brands such as Guess, Nine West, Aldo, Mango and Forever New. Just in the past three years, this has been

amplified with the arrival of massive brands such as the Spanish Retailer Zara, Australian brands Country Road and Trenery, American retailer GAP and the British brands Topshop and Topman (Conway-Smith, 2012:sa).

As a result, the high-end branded clothing retail market is getting increasingly saturated and competition is becoming more intense, which leads to decreasing opportunities for profitability for retailers (Lamb *et al*, 2004:108). A retailer in the South African trade industry therefore operates in a hotly competitive and demanding environment due to an influx of imported goods as well as the recent economic slump from which economies have not yet recovered. At present, multiple retailers are competing for the same consumer markets (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:vi). Consumers however, benefit from strong competition as retailers are motivated to attract and retain customers through superior service and value (Radder, 2000:79; Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:vi). An upsurge in competition also results in greater choice and negotiation power for consumers. In the information era that we find ourselves in at present, the public has immediate access to the Internet and social media channels. Consumers are therefore using their power by voicing their shopping experiences and opinions about retailers' products and prices in real time, online. In the end, retailers literally have no place to hide as consumers are able to find out everything about any retailer and in order to remain relevant, the branded clothing retailer needs to create value for the consumer every step of the way in terms of manufacturing, distributing, marketing as well as retailing processes (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2012:vi). The value that a customer attaches to a brand is defined as the brand equity (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:236), and developing brand equity can improve differentiation and create a sustainable competitive advantage (Yoo *et al*, 2000:208).

Different types of distribution strategies exist, for example exclusive, intensive and selective distribution (Cant, 2010:166). Selective distribution is a strategy implemented when a product is only sold in a few of the possible retail opportunities (Bearden *et al*, 2007:306). This strategy lies between exclusive and intensive distribution. Selective distribution can assist a brand in maintaining a certain brand image, whilst at the same time controlling the supply of merchandise into a specific area. This strategy is ideal for shopping goods (products categories where consumers like to spend time comparing options), such as apparel products (Grewal & Levy, 2012:478). A selective distribution strategy may include presenting the brand's products for sale through different types of retailers. Retailers can be classified in various ways, depending on the degree of control over the purchase experience or the number of varying product categories that they offer. Retail settings that feature a higher degree of purchase control are inclined to implement a store-based tactic, allowing the retailer to design a customised shopping experience for consumers (Cant *ed*, 2010:5). Examples of store-based retailers are specialty stores and department stores.

Specialty stores are retailers who target specific customers by offering a narrow merchandise selection. These retailers opt to sell merchandise within a particular category, for example shoes and handbags, and usually within the same price range. These characteristics enable specialty retailers to design a strong merchandising message for consumers, e.g. premium shoes, or low cost swimwear (Frings, 2005:284; Diamond, 2006:5). Specialty stores may have a broad assortment of the specific item the retailer specialises in, and generally the store layout is more comfortable for consumers as they are not faced with varying product categories. These retailers also have the capacity to offer personalised service to customers (Diamond, 2006:6). Department stores, on the other hand, are large retailers that offer many different categories of merchandise such as women's wear, men's wear, children's wear and even household goods such as furniture and linen. These stores are divided into clear departments for each product category, creating convenience for the consumer when searching for a specific product (Frings, 2005:286; Diamond, 2006:7; Bickle, 2009:49).

This study focused on one brand in the female apparel retail sector that is sold in SBR as well as DS. Clothing brands that implement a selective distribution strategy may choose to retail the branded merchandise through stores that only carry the branded product (SBR) and are a sub-category of specialty stores (Frings, 2005:285). The brand may however also choose to expand its distribution through department stores where the brand is in direct competition with other brands. These stores however, have a greater captive audience as they host a greater variety of merchandise, and retailing the brand through these stores can be seen as beneficial as the turnover generated from women's wear typically contributes half of the sales volume of a department store (Frings, 2005:286).

A particular brand's marketing efforts are designed to benefit all the retailers that carry the brand. Different retailers implement different strategies with regards to store image, level of service and price promotions. These elements can either compliment or destruct the brand building efforts implemented by the marketing managers of the brand. Therefore it is important to determine the effect of the marketing mix elements on the dimensions of brand equity, in both single brand retailers as well as department stores.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING BRAND EQUITY

Brand equity is defined as the increased value of a product as a result of the brand name that the product carries (Aaker, 1996:8). This value is generated from consumer's identification with a brand, trust in the brand, perception of the brand's dominance and the satisfaction resulting from the social admiration of using the brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2012:236). Brand equity can also be explained as the divergence in the choice of consumers between visibly branded products and unbranded products with

the comparable features (Yoo *et al*, 2000:195-196). Brand equity is an intangible asset (Lamb *et al*, 2004:233; Jooste, Strydom, Berndt & Du Plessis, 2008:368) and therefore it is difficult to measure the actual value of this asset. Over time, marketers have tried to establish identifiable factors that can be used to assess brand value (Hatch & Schultz, 2008:33).

The majority of marketers have accepted Aaker's indicators or "asset categories" of brand equity, namely: brand loyalty; perceived quality; brand awareness, and brand associations (Aaker, 1996:8; Yoo *et al*, 2000:196; Lamb *et al*, 2004:233; Bearden *et al*, 2007:195; Hatch & Schultz, 2008:33-34). Having strong brand equity is very beneficial as it can enhance the competitiveness of the organisation/store/brand. Brand equity may encourage consumers to prefer certain brands, and to pay a premium prices for it even when the product is not necessarily better than that of a competitor (Lamb *et al*, 2004:233; Jooste *et al*, 2008:368).

When assessing strategies on how to develop brand equity, there are a few important factors to consider. Firstly, brand equity is seen as a collection of assets, therefore, managing brand equity to obtain strategic leverage includes investing in ways to generate and develop these assets. Secondly, each of the brand equity dimensions (or "assets") generates value in different ways to obtain the best results. Marketers need to be sensitive to the variety of ways in which these assets can be used to create value. Furthermore, the value generated through brand equity is beneficial to the firm as well as the customer, whether a final consumer or channel partner. Lastly, in order for an element to contribute to brand equity, it must carry the symbol or name of the brand visibly (Aaker, 1996:8). The positive outcomes of brand equity grow exponentially, as it has been noted that investment and marketing activity that build on high brand equity show better results (Bearden *et al*, 2007:195).

2.3.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness is the first dimension of brand equity and is seen as the potency of the brand image in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1996:10; Jooste *et al*, 2008:368). Awareness is a rational consideration and looks at how many consumers within a determined market know about a brand and its values, and whether those consumers have formed an opinion about the brand (Hatch & Schultz, 2008:34; Grewal & Levy, 2012:306). Brand awareness can be measured by means of testing the different ways consumers remember a brand, from recognition, recall, to "top of mind" and dominant (Aaker, 1996:10; Jooste *et al*, 2008:368). Consumers' levels of awareness can be tested by probing consumers' recollection of an advertisement as well as their ability to communicate the information in the advertisement (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:234).

Brand recognition indicates that a consumer is acquainted with a brand resulting from previous exposure. Consumer research has shown that people instinctively prefer products that they have seen

before rather than a product that is new to them. Recognition alone can lead to more favourable feelings (Aaker, 1996:10) and can even establish positive perceptions of a brand, because recollection of a brand that they have seen before sends a message that the organisation is investing capital to maintain the brand. Consumers generally believe that organisations will not invest in marketing substandard products, and the recognition then registers as an indicator that the brand and branded product is good (Aaker, 1996:11). Brand recall is confirmed when a consumer is able to name a brand spontaneously when asked to list brands in a certain product class, like athletic gear or jeans. Brand recall is highly important as it determines whether a brand makes it to a consumer's shopping list or evoked set of alternatives for a purchase (Aaker, 1996:11; Grewal & Levy, 2012:306). Brand name dominance is the ultimate level of brand awareness and culminates when a consumer can only remember that brand in a certain product class (Aaker, 1996:15). Investing in marketing elements to enhance recognition and recall can build brand equity. It however remains pivotal to strive for strategic awareness rather than general awareness (Aaker, 1996:17).

2.3.2 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is a learned construct (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:237) that describes the keenness of consumers to repeatedly patronise the same brand, despite the efforts of the brand's competitors to sway the consumer (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:44; Jooste *et al*, 2008:369; Lamb *et al*, 2010:341; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308; Hoyer, MacInnes & Pieters, 2013:251). Brand loyalty is believed to contribute greatly to brand equity (Aaker, 1996:21; Bearden *et al*, 2007:195; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:237; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). Brand loyalty not only leads to brand equity and vice versa and both of these constructs have a significant influence on increasing profits and market share (Erdem & Swait, 1998:133; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:237).

Brand loyal customers create value for a firm in various ways. Firstly, loyal customers tend to patronise the brand more frequently and buy greater quantities of the brand in a single purchase than consumers who are not brand loyal (Aaker, 1996:21; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:30). Brand loyal consumers are furthermore willing to pay a price premium for their preferred brand and are not particularly price sensitive when the brand makes changes in its pricing strategy (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:44; Hatch & Schultz, 2008:34; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:30; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). It is also more cost effective for the organisation to serve brand loyal consumers, as it is much more expensive to entice and maintain new patrons (Aaker, 1996:21; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:30; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). Lastly, brand loyal consumers tend to refer other people through positive word of mouth which can lead to an even greater customer base for the brand (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:44; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:30; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308).

Brand loyalty can also create value for the consumer due to the increased expected utility provided by brand equity that decreases the cost of information searching and reduced risk perception, creating 'shortcuts' for the consumer and resulting in consumers repeatedly buying from an evoked set of brands (Reed & Ewing, 2004:104; Hoyer *et al*, 2013:251). Brand loyalty also creates value for the customer as it indicates that the customer believes the brand will match or exceed their expectation and will subsequently culminate in a positive post purchase evaluation (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:44; Lamb *et al*, 2004:234; Bearden *et al*, 2007:195; Hoyer *et al*, 2013:251). The level of consumer satisfaction has a major influence on subsequent purchase behaviour and therefore it can be deduced that brand loyalty enhances purchase satisfaction and may even result in routine purchasing behaviour (Reed & Ewing, 2004:104).

Aaker (1996:23) believes that by enhancing the other dimensions of brand equity (awareness, associations and perceived quality), brand loyalty will be enhanced as these assets are also designed to strengthen the consumer's brand relationship. In addition to this strategy there are many tactical strategies that can be employed to boost brand loyalty. The brand may design any of a number of loyalty or frequent buyer programmes to motivate consumers to continue purchasing the same brand or at the same store to benefit from the reward system. Brands can also improve brand loyalty by maintaining their database, communicating exciting news like the starting date of the end of season sale or by flashing promotions only to this data base. A brand can also establish a loyal customers' club where loyal consumers are invited to special events for product launches and previews to sale (Aaker, 1996:23-24; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308).

2.3.3 Perceived quality

Product quality is described as an emotional reaction to the branded product's innovativeness, combined with the rational aspects of brand performance (Hatch & Schultz, 2008:34). Creating the perception of quality is extremely difficult if the quality statement has no substance. Producing an offering that is seen as having quality necessitates an understanding of what the target market believes constitutes the concept of quality. After this is has been determined and if the organisation succeeds in producing a "quality" product, only half the battle is won, as consumers' perception of quality also needs to be established and communicated to the market (Aaker, 1996:20). Perceived quality enhances brand equity as it boosts the financial performance of the organisation. Perceived quality is the most significant contributor to an organisation's return on investment (ROI) as it strengthens market share and reduces agony and sensitivity associated with the price of products. This asset is seen as a key strategic thrust of an organisation's business and recurrently influences other features of how the branded product is perceived (Aaker, 1996:17).

Creating the perception of quality is a powerful tool that several marketing managers implement as a differentiation strategy (Aaker, 1996:19; Swinker & Hines, 2006:218). When the consumer is confronted with a product option that falls within her evoked set of alternatives, it is not always just the functional benefits of the clothing item, but also the cognitive, emotional and sensory fulfillment provided by the brand that influence the consumer's perception of quality (Hines & Swinker, 2001:73). Consumers' perception of product quality is deduced from a range of informational cues that is associated with the product or product class. Informational cues can either be intrinsic (part of the actual product) like the physical appearance, colour and texture, or an extrinsic element such as the brand name or image. In order to justify their purchases, consumers often convince themselves that they have based their assessment of quality on the product's intrinsic cues, as this is seen as more objective or rational. More often however, consumers use extrinsic cues such as the brand name to make their judgements about the quality of a product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:196-195).

Consumers generally want to buy good quality products (Frings, 2005:60) and this information is useful when marketing the clothing product as quality indicators may be manipulated to ensure that a consumer makes the purchase (Hines & Swinker, 2001:73; De Klerk & Lubbe, 2004:1-2). Other variables such as consumers' involvement, interest, knowledge and values will also have an effect on their perception of the quality of a product (Hines & Swinker, 2001:73). A consumer's perception of quality may vary from the actual quality of the product for several reasons. Firstly, a consumer's previous perception of poor quality may override attempts to reposition the product as a good quality product. Secondly, the organisation may not understand what the consumer expects of a quality product, and if products are marketed with different attributes in mind, consumers may not find them appropriate or relevant. Lastly, consumers rarely have the time to process and assess all the cues of a product and mostly only rely on a few aspects that they identify with quality. Therefore, organisations need to recognise and manage these cues appropriately in order to prevent an information overload (Aaker, 1996:20). Perceived quality can serve as a main motivation for purchase. In addition, quality is the dimension of a product or brand that consumers are generally willing to pay a premium price for (Aaker, 1996:19; Jooste *et al*, 2008:369). Generally, when perceived quality increases, the consumer's overall perception of the brand also improves, which builds the equity of the brand (Aaker, 1996:19).

2.3.4 Brand associations

Brand associations are driven by identity of the brand as well as the positioning that the organisation attempts to establish in the mind of the consumer (Aaker, 1996:25). This dimension of brand equity can be defined as the distinct features that the consumer links to the brand (Jooste *et al*, 2008:369). Brand associations can include symbols, product attributes or even celebrity brand ambassadors that the consumer associates with the brand (Aaker, 1996:25; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). The most successful brands strategically select a range of positive characteristics in order to create a connection with their

customer base, which also allow them to charge a premium price for their products (Nelson & Vogler, 2002:32; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308).

One of the most prominent brand associations is brand personality. Brand personality is seen as the set of distinct human traits that people ascribe to a brand. This provides the brand with an emotional identity and encourages consumers to relate to the brand on a personal level (Hatch & Schultz, 2008:34; Park & John, 2010:655; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:156; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). Creating a personality for a brand can be used as a key differentiation strategy to create a competitive advantage. These specific human personality traits in brands are very attractive to consumers who feel the need to express, confirm or enrich their self-concept (Park & John, 2010:655). Brand associations can build brand equity as it signals quality (in terms of appealing to the consumer’s personality) and can persuade the consumer to consider the brand when in the purchasing situation (Yoo *et al*, 2000:196-197).

2.4 THE MARKETING MIX

The marketing mix is very important in terms of assessing retailers’ brand equity as that would increase retailers’ competitiveness in the marketplace and ultimately contribute to retain customers and to increase customer satisfaction as illustrated visually in the model below (Yoo *et al*, 2000:196).

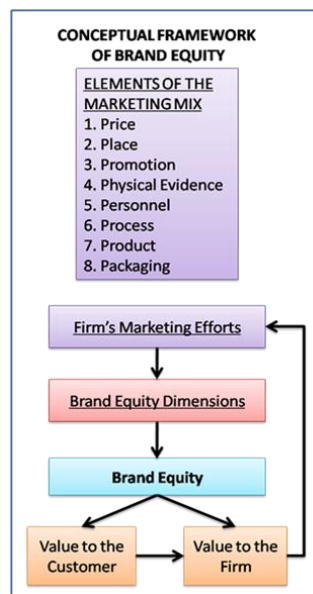


FIGURE 2.1: FRAMEWORK OF BRAND EQUITY

Literature indicates that by reinforcing the dimensions of brand equity, stronger overall brand equity can be established. It is believed that marketing activities have the power to build the equity of the brand because it represents the result of the accrued marketing investments (Yoo *et al*, 2000:197). These marketing expenses, if carefully planned, can lead to increased brand loyalty, recognition and

awareness for the brand, which all contribute to the overall equity of the brand (Grewal & Levy, 2012:306). Yoo *and co-workers* (2000:198) believe that any attempt at marketing a brand will have a positive effect on brand equity if it results in the consumer having a more encouraging response to the branded product than to a generic equivalent. There is a great lack in conceptual development regarding which marketing activities actually contribute to brand equity (Barwise, 1993:93). Knowing which marketing activities will build or destruct brand equity can assist marketing managers in developing potent marketing plans. Marketing managers therefore need to align their activities to maximise brand building and to minimise brand destruction (Yoo *et al*, 2000: 196-197).

The elements of the marketing mix are regarded as effective signals of brand equity (Erdem & Swait, 1998:134). Once the organisation has determined where they would like to be positioned in the minds of consumers and in relation to their competition (e.g. being a more exclusive store), the next step will be to strategise in terms of the principles of the marketing mix (Brooksbank, 1994:10). In order to strategically plan their marketing activities, marketers have traditionally looked at a set of four interrelated elements, more generally known as the marketing mix. These represent identifiable and manageable activities, initially referred to as the four P's (of the marketing mix), namely Price, Place, Promotion and the Product (Bearden *et al*, 2007:12; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28; Grewal & Levy, 2012:8).

The clothing retail industry is not conventionally seen as a service industry, as the basis of the sale is the product and not a service offering, but there are many service elements within the retail situation that cannot be ignored. In industries where the core of the marketing proposal is a physical product, it is harder to establish a sustainable competitive advantage. As service is part of the clothing retail experience and it is in essence, intangible, it is very difficult to copy and it may be the only competitive advantage that promises long-term sustainability (Lamb *et al*, 2004:19). Three additional P's were therefore added to the original elements of the marketing mix. The version of the marketing mix that contains seven P's include Processes, Personnel and Physical Evidence (Jobber, 2010:17) and is generally referred to as the service marketing mix as it compensates for the elements and unique characteristics of service offerings (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:6). In order to determine whether packaging (which forms part of the product and even the so-called processes in the marketing mix) builds brand equity in the clothing retail environment, it is necessary to determine whether it is relevant in terms of the dimensions of brand equity. If indeed there is a contribution to brand equity, it is further necessary to establish if this contribution is significant in relation to the contributions of the other elements of the marketing mix. If the contribution of packaging seems substantial, this can serve as a motivation to marketing managers to use packaging more strategically in their marketing decisions in future.

2.4.1 Price

Price as an element of the marketing mix encompasses all the decisions regarding the listed price of the product, possible discounts, allowances and methods of payment for the product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Price is not only the consumer's monetary sacrifice, but also represents all the time and energy used by a consumer to obtain the product. The price of a product is seen as a way of capturing the value that the organisation is attempting to create for the target consumer (Grewal & Levy, 2012:10). Price is a concrete and practical consideration when looking at consumers' motives for purchases in the apparel industry, as consumers may search for the best price within their evoked set of alternatives. The perceived worth and retail price of a branded clothing item is compared to a consumer's budget to guide the buying decision (Frings, 2005:59). Setting a price is an interesting challenge for marketing and product managers, as it is expected that the price needs to reflect the value provided by the product whilst also promising optimum profits. Estimating the value that a product creates, involves obtaining an intimate understanding of what the customer needs. This knowledge of customers' needs is then used to convert product attributes to benefits for the customer that can be used to determine a value estimate (Nagle & Hogan, 2006:17). When the price for a product is set, it can help to communicate a value proposition to consumers. The general range of prices of a retailer's products contributes to defining the overall store- and brand image (Grewal & Levy, 2012:489).

Price is seen as a meaningful extrinsic product cue and sign of benefits or quality. Expensive products are usually perceived as of a high quality and are less in danger of being affected by competitor's price cuts (Yoo *et al*, 2000:198; Bearden *et al*, 2007:378; Hoyer *et al*, 2013:91). This perception is usually established by previous experience in a particular product category and consumers tend to use this inference as a heuristic when evaluating other products (Hoyer *et al*, 2013:91). Therefore, perceived quality is positively correlated to price. If price can improve the consumer's perception of the brand's quality, it is positively related to brand equity (Yoo *et al*, 2000:198).

2.4.2 Place

Place, in the marketing mix, encompasses all decisions regarding the offering and distribution of the branded product through retail and wholesale outlets (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Selecting distribution channels calls for an understanding of how, when and where the consumer makes his or her purchases, as the consumer's buying behaviour will dictate the channels of distribution wherein the product will be presented for sale (Strydom, 2005:150). Analysing and motivating consumer demand will be futile if the product is not available for purchase by the targeted consumer at the right time and at the right location. Organisations try to optimise supply chains to increase sales and profits and that may include an integration of manufacturers, suppliers, warehousing and retail outlets in the supply process to create a seamless value producing sequence (Grewal & Levy, 2012:11). Over time organisations have

realised that it is beneficial to retail products in certain locations because many consumers patronise stores based on their convenient location. A great location therefore provides a very important competitive advantage that is extremely difficult to duplicate or beat by competitors (Grewal & Levy, 2012:491).

Consumers experience increased value as the distribution of a branded product increases because the consumer has to make fewer sacrifices to obtain the product. Intensive distribution can save the consumer on place and time utility and can result in an increase in their perception of value, which can lead to increased satisfaction, brand loyalty and perceived quality. Brand associations can benefit favourably as consumers' satisfaction increases. As the individual dimensions of brand equity are strengthened, brand equity inevitably increases (Yoo *et al*, 2000:199).

2.4.3 Promotion

Marketing decisions regarding the promotions include what form of advertising will be used, public relations activities, online promotion of the product offering, personal selling activities and sales promotions (Jobber, 2010:18; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). In essence, the promotional mix can be seen as the avenues used to communicate the product's value proposition to the consumer. If marketers neglect to communicate the value of the product to consumers, even the best products may go unsold. The three main functions of the promotions are to convey information, persuade, and remind potential customers about the product- or service offering. In this way the marketer attempts to guide the consumer's opinions on the product and prompt a response that will hopefully encourage purchases (Grewal & Levy, 2012:11). Promotions are generally attempted in terms of two broad categories, namely Above-the-Line (ATL) and Below-the-Line (BTL) marketing. ATL marketing encompasses all mass communication used to communicate value such as advertising via television, radio, billboards, newspapers and magazines (Grewal & Levy, 2012:48), while BTL marketing concerns activities where marketing messages are communicated through non-traditional media channels as well as sales promotions (Cook, 2005:224).

ATL is positively related to brand awareness. Frequency is important as repetitive advertising enhances brand recognition and inclusion of the brand in consumers' evoked set of alternatives (Yoo *et al*, 2000:200). When a clothing retailer is willing to spend on promotion through for example advertising, this may be perceived by customers as the retailer's commitment to the brand. This plays to the customers' perception of quality of the brand, which in turn may strengthen the brand equity (Erdem & Swait, 1998:134; Yoo *et al*, 2000:199). Brand association may also be strengthened by advertising as the brand's personality can be showcased through visuals and copy used in advertisements (Yoo *et al*, 2000:200; Grewal & Levy, 2012:308). Advertising is believed to strengthen favourable attitudes towards

the brand, and if a consumer is brand loyal, increased advertising may lead to those consumers purchasing more frequently (Lamb *et al*, 2010:341).

BTL marketing is mainly focused around sales promotions (Cook, 2005:224). As competition increases, many organisations are tempted to use price promotions to boost sales and move merchandise off the floor (Yoo *et al*, 2000:200). This strategy has a negative effect on brand loyalty, as consumers only temporarily switch to the brand because of the promotion, and afterwards return to their preferred brand. In the United States of America it has been noticed that sales promotions have systematically eroded brand loyalty, leading to consumers only wanting to purchase based on the most affordable price (Hoyer *et al*, 2013:252). This is not unique to the US, as it is generally accepted that price promotions wear down attempts to build up brand equity (Yoo *et al*, 2000:200).

Overwhelmingly, research into the area of promotion concluded that advertising builds brand equity, whereas price promotions harm brand equity (Yoo *et al*, 2000:199).

2.2.4 Physical Evidence

Physical Evidence increases the level of tangibility of service encounters in the retail setting. This is important as the consumer relates the intangibility of a service encounter as a perceived risk of the purchase (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:6). In the clothing retail setting, physical evidence may be presented in the store signage, point of sale material, promotional signage and catalogues. All signage within the clothing retail store environment should carry the retailer's brand and reflect the brand's image (Bell & Ternus, 2006:190). A brand can serve as a risk reducer and comfort that expectations will be met (McColl & Moore, 2011:94).

The physical store facilities and appearance of staff also fall under the physical evidence of the brand (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:6). The retail store is where the organisation encounters and interacts with the brand's final consumer (Yoo *et al*, 2000:199). Bell and Ternus (2006:60) emphasise the importance of creating a pleasant retail atmosphere by for example manipulating the design, social and ambience factors within the store environment (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal & Vos, 2002:121). An appealing store design may produce mental images in the minds of consumers and thereby promote the sales within the store by motivating consumers to make purchases (Bell & Ternus, 2006:20).

Customers relate the level of quality they observe from these physical cues and the store image back to the general quality of the offering (Yoo *et al*, 2000:199; Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:6). If perceived quality is reinforced, it can be said that store image builds brand equity. Stores that project a favourable image also experience greater traffic than stores that are less appealing. A positive image results in heightened customer satisfaction and increased and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Distributing a branded

fashion product through channels that have a favourable store image can create better brand associations and in this way brand equity is built/strengthened (Yoo *et al*, 2000:199).

2.4.5 Personnel

Personnel refers to all parties involved during the purchase encounter, such as the sales personnel and managers. The retailer's employees should constantly market the retailer's offering as their service input has a direct influence on the satisfaction output of customers (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:7). When searching for athletic clothing the consumer might expect the service personnel to project an image of physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. If the sales assistant does not align with image of the brand, it might result in confusion which is detrimental for brand equity because the impression is created that the personnel who are supposed to know the product well, do not identify with it (Erdem & Swait, 1998:136).

2.4.6 Processes

Process refers to the manner in which customers' needs are attended to, and satisfied, for example assistance in the store to conclude transactions rapidly; attention to after sales service, for example options to return products that do not meet requirements; availability of revolving store accounts, etc. (Jordaan & Prinsloo, 2004:7). If a retailer manages to build a reputation that it is empathetic, supportive and fair through attention to the so-called processes that are followed/implemented, the image of the retailer (or brand) will benefit and that strengthens brand equity.

2.4.7 Product

A **product** is seen as any tangible object or intangible service that a person exchanges for money (Lamb *et al*, 2004:222). Product decisions involve all strategic moves regarding the brand name of the product, quality guarantees provided by the organisation as well as services that are associated with the product (Lamb *et al*, 2004:222). In addition to the basic trading of goods for money between the retailer and the consumer, the product is also meant to create value for the consumer (Grewal & Levy, 2012:8). A product is not just a generic thing, products have specific designs, features, brands and even post-purchase benefits such durability or performance that is supported by product warranties and return policies that can create value for consumers. Value, however, is a subjective term and therefore the product and related elements need to be presented in a manner that is appealing to consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Ultimately, the goal of the product would be to create value that will satisfy the needs of the target market (Grewal & Levy, 2012:8).

In the context of this study, the product under investigation was branded clothing/accessories. In order to determine the effect of the branded clothing product on brand equity, it was necessary to investigate different dimensions of the product on brand equity. The physical attributes of a product, such as the shape, texture, size, colour, fit and display of the brand name can transmit many messages to consumers (Bearden *et al*, 2007:378). If the consumer's assessment of the product is favourable and if the performance of a product exceeds consumers' expectations (e.g. expectations created by advertising claims), consumers will probably perceive the product or brand in a positive way. If the product continues to perform well, a consumer might start to include the brand in his or her evoked set of alternatives, or even become brand loyal. Favourable product characteristics such as good quality and durability may therefore instigate brand loyalty, which inevitably builds brand equity.

2.5 PACKAGING

Generally packaging is seen as the wrapper or container for a product (Bearden *et al*, 2007:198) and it is traditionally considered as part of the product decisions within the marketing mix (Rundh, 2005:673; Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101; Bearden *et al*, 2007:198; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Over time, packaging has however become much more sophisticated. Today, packaging is even regarded as walking billboards that convey important information to others in a shopping centre or wherever the packaging is visually displayed. Some authors therefore, believe that packaging is significant enough to be seen and evaluated as a separate entity and role player in the marketing mix of a firm (Lamb *et al*, 2010:260). Packaging per se plays a significant role in protecting, promoting and creating convenience for the consumer (Rundh, 2005:671) and it is unfortunate that packaging has been neglected in terms of theoretical construction of brand symbolism and marketing issues (Underwood, 2003:63). Packaging contributes multiple physical benefits by tangibly carrying and communicating brand name, logos and slogans, brand personality and graphic symbols (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:187) and therefore, when it comes to branding, packaging should be respected as a key brand element (Grewal & Levy, 2012:318).

Packaging has two primary functions, namely logistical- and marketing functions (Prendergast & Pitt, 1996:60). Within these categories, packaging offers four main benefits, namely to contain products; to promote products; to offer a convenient way to storage, and lastly it can assist in reducing environmental damage by facilitating recycling (Prendergast & Pitt, 1996:60; Bearden *et al*, 2007:198; Lamb *et al*, 2010:261).

There are many types of packaging that provide different types of benefits for the consumer. Primary packaging is what the consumer touches, like a perfume bottle or toothpaste tube that is meant to hold the product and facilitate use (Grewal & Levy 2012:318). Secondary packaging refers to the material

(paper, plastic, or cardboard box) that contains the primary package and that facilitates carrying, consuming and storing of an item. Secondary packaging often provides additional information on the product that may not be found on the primary packaging, and is normally disposed of when the product is consumed (Vidales Giovannetti 1995, as cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101; Grewal & Levy, 2012:318). Tertiary packaging is mainly used for logistical purposes throughout the commercial chain. An example of tertiary packaging can be the container or box that carries a cluster of the product (wrapped within the primary and secondary packaging) throughout the supply chain (Vidales Giovannetti 1995 as cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101).

In certain industries, such as foods and other Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), packaging plays a pivotal role in positioning the offering as it is used to contain the product, and therefore forms part of the consumer's pre-purchase evaluation of the product. In these industries, products have to compete with substitutes that take up space right next to it on the shelf, and the packaging needs to be appealing and novel in order to catch the eye of the consumer and stand out from competitor's offerings (Prendergast & Pitt, 1996:61; Bearden *et al*, 2007:198; Lamb *et al*, 2012:161). In these situations, the design elements used to put together the package can assist in creating certain perceptions, and assist in positioning the product in the minds of consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:187-188). The product's packaging must communicate the brand's image to possible buyers (Bearden *et al*, 2007:198; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:187), as this may serve as a purchase motivator as it conveys certain attractive qualities of the product (Prendergast & Pitt, 1996:61). Therefore, in this context, packaging is extremely important to promote sales, create differentiation and to ensure a competitive advantage.

In the clothing retail industry however, packaging fulfills a much different role. In clothing retail stores, the product is presented without any packaging on shelves and hangers in a visually appealing manner that will motivate the consumer to fit the product. Packaging only comes into play after the purchase has been made in the form of a shopping bag that is presented to the customer free of charge. In this context, packaging may include any bags, boxes, tissue paper or other material used to wrap and hold the product after the purchase has been made, and is considered a potentially effective fashion marketing instrument (Bickle, 2009:48). Shopping bags are seen as a type of secondary packaging that is used to transport and protect the goods from the retail store to wherever it may be consumed (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475). The look, feel and image of the shopping bag or product packaging in the fashion industry, may provide the consumer with the message that the retailer cares about you after you have left the store (Bickle, 2009:48).

The literature that exists on conventional product packaging is irrelevant in the context of clothing retail as shopping bags do not form part of the consumer's pre-purchase evaluation of the product and cannot be used to create a competitive advantage during the pre-purchase phase. A nice shopping bag may however serve as a long-term echo of a pleasurable fashion purchasing experience and the customer

service received. In a clothing context, a shopping bag does not serve to sell the product, it symbolises the consumer's remembrances of a brand or an organisation (Bickle, 2009:49). The contribution of packaging in terms of brand building and brand equity is under researched. Empirical evidence of the value of shopping bags in terms of brand equity in a product category such as females' fashion apparel could provide invaluable direction in terms of retailers' attention to, and integration of the various elements of the marketing mix in their stores. In order to determine whether shopping bags in fact contribute to brand equity, and to what extent, it is necessary to look at how shopping bags can create value for the retailer as well as the consumer.

2.6 VALUE CREATION THROUGH SHOPPING BAGS

Shopping bags are aligned with the type and categories of merchandise (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:480). In recent years, paper shopping bags have become a high-end type of packaging (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:480) and it is therefore better aligned with premium fashion brands. At the same time, shoppers believe that paper bags should carry well-known brand logos and have an appealing appearance (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:479). Shopping bags can create value for the retailers and consumers in several ways.

2.6.1 Shopping bags can create value for consumers

Shopping bags can provide *social visibility* and can convey *status* (Sirgy, 1982:287-288). Kaiser (1997:414-415) defines prestige as the perception of an individual's worth and reflects status in a social hierarchy. In order to perceive status, it requires one person to claim the status and a second person to honour it, which relates to social visibility. Veblen (1967) as cited in Chao and Schor (1998:109) referred to such behaviour as conspicuous consumption, i.e. the act of public consumption with the aim of establishing status for the consumer. In order for an item to portray image characteristics it has to be consumed publicly. A shopping bag is an ideal vehicle for conspicuous consumption (Sirgy, 1982:288). Researchers have found that consumers believe that it is important for shopping bags - specifically paper shopping bags - to carry a famous brand's logo and to have an aesthetically appealing appearance. A study conducted in Hong Kong showed that consumers prefer these shopping bags as a means to flaunt their purchases as a result of their vanity and need for self-expression (Phau & Prendergast, 1999 as cited in Prendergast *et al*, 2001:479). Consumers can identify themselves with the key characteristics of a brand's identity and shopping bags communicate these brand messages and convey the personality of the brand onto the carrier (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476). The value that constitutes brand equity may stem from the social esteem of using the brand (Schiffman & Kanuk,

2010:236). As shopping bags provide a way to reflect this social esteem and project brand associations, it is justified to say that shopping bags have the ability to strengthen brand equity.

The value of shopping bags further lies in its potential to reduce *cognitive dissonance*. It is natural for consumers to experience regret after a purchase has been made (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010:293). Cognitive dissonance is defined as the thoughts of concern that occur post-purchase, especially in terms of products that involve threats, such as social- and financial risks. These thoughts of doubt are seeded in uncertainty, i.e. doubt about the appropriateness of the purchase decision (Jobber, 2010:137). Dissonance may result from various sources of concern, for example concern about the price paid; because multiple choice criteria and/or product alternatives with different advantages and disadvantages had to be taken into consideration; because the purchase is final with no option to reverse the transaction, and/or simply because of uncertainty. Cognitive dissonance is mostly associated with high involvement purchases as these types of purchases adhere to most of the aforementioned circumstances (Jobber, 2010:117). The consumer then craves reassurance and actively searches for information to rationalise the purchase (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010:291). The benefits provided by an appealing shopping bag that symbolises status and provides social visibility may help to reduce cognitive dissonance, because the consumer takes the packaging home and can be constantly reminded about the benefits of the specific brand relative to others, or the positive in-store shopping experience. By reducing cognitive dissonance, a consumer can be “fast tracked” to experience satisfaction with the purchase. Satisfaction leads to repeat purchases and may ultimately result in brand loyalty. By strengthening brand loyalty, shopping bags can thus contribute to brand equity.

2.6.2 Shopping bags can create value for retailers

Even though functionality is the primary objective of a shopping bag, it is also seen as a *branding tool*, i.e. a form of promotion and symbol of prestige, especially in the case of branded shopping bags that convey the status of the brand (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475-476). The brand also conveys the personality of the retailer and its offering, and through shopping bags other consumers perceive the personality of the carrier (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476). Therefore it is of the utmost importance that brand image is incorporated into all brand messages and touch points of a retailer or product, including shopping bags. Based on packaging attributes, a consumer can also make inferences about a brand (Hoyer *et al*, 2013:91). When a shopping bag reflects the brand image (for example a prestigious, high quality bag to carry high-end fashion merchandise), the bag reinforces brand associations and perceived quality. In strengthening these elements, brand equity is strengthened.

Shopping bags also serve as a *marketing vehicle* (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475-476), due to its visibility (Sirgy, 1982:287-288). When a shopping bag is carried outside of the retailer, it becomes a ‘walking billboard’ (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476). Two major advantages of advertising with outdoor mediums are

the high level of creativity that can be incorporated, as well as the ability of the medium to create awareness. Therefore shopping bags continually serve to boost a company's marketing objectives every time it is seen in use and re-used. Providing consumers with a shopping bag is a fixed cost for the organisation. If the bag appeals to the consumer, and if it is of a good quality, the shopper might consider reusing the bag several times. In this way the same shopping bag can reach maximum promotional value with the least cost (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:480). In times when consumers are encouraged to reuse bags to show that they care about our environment, this is especially relevant. Outdoor mediums are a form of advertising, and as mentioned before, repetition in advertising builds brand awareness which is positively correlated to brand equity. Shopping bags and other forms of reusable packaging in the clothing retail industry can hence secure extensive acknowledgment of the brand (Bickle, 2009:49).

Lastly, the *reusability* of packaging in terms of recycling and reducing minimise environmental damage should also be taken into consideration in terms of the image of a brand (Lamb *et al*, 2004:241). Shopping bags can be reused for different purposes, for example to protect and transport personal belongings, or as gift wrapping. The reuse of branded shopping bags is highly beneficial for retailers as it provides greater visibility and exposure for their brand. A good quality shopping bag can be used multiple times before it deteriorates and each time the bag is reused, the brand benefits (Weiner & Michelman, 1998 as cited in Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476). A paper shopping bag is apparently reused an average of 2.7 times, versus a plastic bag that is reused an average of 1.6 times (Prendergast *et al*, 2001:476). The shopping bag can also be manipulated to have various functions that promote reuse and reduce environmental damage. The premium Canadian footwear brand, Aldo, launched the "Take the box, not the bag" campaign in recent years in order to establish their organisation as a retailer that is concerned the welfare of the environment. In order to achieve this objective, they redesigned their shoe boxes to double up as the shopping bag by adding a handle to the box to enable the consumer to carry the box after purchase (Aldo: About Aldo, Aldo Next Step). This enables Aldo to save on the use of paper, ink and cardboard and encourage reusability of their post purchase packaging. Positioning a brand as one that is concerned about the environment can be used as a differentiation strategy, which may strengthen brand associations, perceived quality and even brand loyalty if caring for the environment is a priority for consumers. Therefore, creating sustainable, reusable or innovative packaging may build brand equity.

2.7 SUMMARY

South Africa is becoming more attractive to international investment as the retail sector is expanding rapidly and investors see South Africa as the gateway for growth in to the rest of the African continent. As a result there has been a massive influx of international clothing brands into the local market. As the South African clothing industry was ruled by local clothing retailers during the apartheid era, it is important to measure consumers' perceptions and reactions to brands in this market. Assessing the equity of the brand is seen as an effective measure of the success of a brand in the market as it is a culmination of the emotional value that consumers attach to the brand, as well as the monetary value that the retailer attaches to the brand. Brand equity can be assessed by analysing the dimensions that contribute to the value of the brand. These dimensions are *brand awareness*, *brand loyalty*, *perceived quality* and *brand associations*. Brand awareness leads to brand value as it aids brand recognition and recall, which in turn results in consumers considering the inclusion of the brand in their evoked set of alternatives. Brand loyalty stems from customers having a satisfying purchasing experience, and making the decision to repeatedly patronise the brand. Perceived quality reflects the consumers' evaluation of the quality of the product and brand offering. Brand equity is a crucial sales driver, but it is highly reliant on what the consumer believes constitutes the concept of "quality". Perceived brand associations are the positive characteristics that consumers associate with the brand, which they feel that they can utilise to portray their personal characteristics when using the branded product.

Marketing managers strategically implement the elements of the marketing mix to achieve the retailer's business objectives. The service marketing mix which is an extended version of the original marketing mix, consists of seven elements, namely Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Physical evidence, Personnel and Processes. Packaging is seen as part of the Product decision within the scope of the marketing mix. Which elements contribute to brand equity and to what extent is under still researched. The literature shows that each marketing mix element can contribute to one or more of the brand equity dimensions. Packaging can also enhance the dimensions of brand equity by creating value for the consumer (through social visibility and reducing cognitive dissonance) and for the retailer (by acting as a branding tool, marketing vehicle and enabling reusability). It is important to establish the contribution to the value that Packaging makes, in order to justify that this element should be seen as a free-standing "P" in the marketing mix.

Chapter 3

Theoretical perspective, conceptual framework and research objectives

This chapter explains and justifies the theoretical perspective that was used to structure the objectives and discussions within this study. It also provides and describes the conceptual framework and research objectives.

3.1 JUSTIFICATION OF USE OF THE GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The theoretical perspective used to organise the concepts and indicators in this study is the General Systems Theory (GST).

3.1.1 Introduction

The general systems perspective is effective in showing how processes take place to achieve an end goal. A system can be defined as a collection of interacting parts or units that become an integrated whole aiming to implement or achieve some function (Skyttner, 1996:16-17; Spears & Gregoire, 2003:2; Caddy & Helou, 2007:322). True to the original assumption of fundamentalism, a system refers to any arrangement of parts that shows pattern, order and purpose. Even though a system is both very general and highly abstract, it is able to show with certain simplicity, comparative correspondence between the parts of the systems and levels of hierarchy within the system (Skyttner, 1996:16-17). Therefore this perspective is ideal to show how the elements of the marketing mix, inclusive of packaging as a potential element, relates to service excellence and brand equity. It is also possible to establish a hierarchy among the elements of the marketing mix, enabling a theoretical position for packaging in this hierarchy.

3.1.2 Core assumptions of the General Systems Theory

A system may consist of a finite number of components or elements (Caddy & Helou, 2007:322). Systems may be influenced and interact with other systems and the environment (Caddy & Helou, 2007:322), and therefore the system can be defined as open or closed, based on the level of activity between the system and the environment (Skyttner, 1996:20; Spears & Gregoire, 2003:1). Brand equity is therefore potentially not only influenced by the elements of the marketing mix, but also by environmental conditions, for example the general state of the economy, environmental concerns, the time of the month (days away from payday), the offering of competitors and other social factors.

Retailers and marketers should therefore be sensitive to these influencing factors and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly.

A goal is defined as the purpose or aim of a system, and the goal defines the main parts of the system which are classified as the inputs, transformation and output. An input is any resource needed to realise the objectives of the system, for example the elements of the marketing mix. The transformation includes any activity that changes the inputs (elements of the marketing mix) into an output (for example service excellence and brand equity). The output is the end result obtained from converting the inputs, and it signifies the attainment of the system's goal (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:2). The goal of the system in this study is to strengthen brand equity. The inputs of the system are all the elements defined as part of the marketing mix in this study, namely price, place, promotion, personnel, processes, physical evidence, product and packaging. The transformation takes place when the consumer perceives these marketing mix elements and they are converted in memory into the elements of brand equity (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand associations). The output of the system is whether the dimensions of brand equity then translate into value for the consumer and the retailer.

In order to understand the dynamics of the GST better in the context of this study, it is important to discuss and explain the core assumptions of this perspective. The core assumptions of the GST is that the parts of a system are interdependent, that a dynamic equilibrium exists within a system, that equifinality is possible, that there is an interface between the subsystems, and lastly, a hierarchy exists within the system (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:3-4).

Interdependency of parts suggests a shared connection between the parts in a system where each element in the system influences the level of performance of the other parts (Skyttner, 1996:20; Spears & Gregoire, 2003:4; Caddy & Helou, 2007:322). Interdependency implies an interaction between the elements, and effective interaction results in integration. Integration indicates that all the parts of the system, for example the elements of the marketing mix, work together to achieve the objective, e.g. a successful strategy that strengthens brand equity. Synergy is achieved by ongoing integration, which means that the elements of the system are more effective when working together than when operating in isolation (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:4). It therefore serves no purpose to attend to a single element of the marketing mix only or to focus on a single aspect of the brand to strengthen brand equity. All the elements in the marketing mix need to be present to effectively retail a branded fashion product.

In reality it would mean that a product may be fantastic, but without effective promotion even the best brands may go unsold. Even if the promotional mix is effective in driving the consumer to the retail setting, if the personnel and processes are disappointing, the consumer might decide not to make the purchase. This indicates the interdependency of the (inputs) elements within the system. As indicated in the literature review, the elements of the marketing mix translate into the dimensions of brand equity.

Therefore, if the marketing mix elements do not coherently contribute to the success of the marketing exercise, the dimensions of brand equity will be jeopardised. Synergy is obtained if all the elements of the marketing mix are well integrated. This study presumes that more attention to packaging might address a shortcoming that has been neglected to date, which can improve synergy among the elements of the existing marketing mix of a retailer to strengthen brand equity, which will create value for the brand, the retailer and consumer.

Dynamic equilibrium indicates a “steady state”, as the system is continually responding and adapting to its external and internal environment. In order to remain relevant, the retailer needs to be responsive to political, economic and social pressures (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:4). Clothing retailing is such a dynamic industry with constant changes to the environment, such as changes to the economy that result in higher or lower spending power, seasonality of styles and fashion, and changing trends. The elements in the marketing mix need to be managed to compensate for these changes to maintain the same levels of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand associations, which ultimately achieves the objective of creating value for the consumer, the brand itself, and the retailer.

Equifinality is the phenomenon that a similar (or the same) output (increased brand equity) can be attained through the manipulation of different inputs or by selecting different paths in the transformation phase. Therefore, alternative paths can be used to achieve anticipated outcomes (Skyttner, 1996:21; Spears & Gregoire, 2003:4), for example boosting the brand through forceful promotional strategies, or to boost the brand through pertinent attention to product presentation and packaging as well as superior in-store assistance. In both instances the goal might be to create value for the consumer or the organisation. The best result can be achieved through synergy, i.e. where all the elements of the marketing mix are integrated to work together. Value can however also be created by focusing on one of the dimensions of brand equity and to align the other elements of the marketing mix to strengthen that one dimension.

The zone of interdependency between two or more of the subsystems is called the **interface**. Tension is a characteristic of this interface, as the subsystems aren't necessarily streamlined to accommodate the dependency of another subsystem (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:5). For example, when attending to the elements of the marketing mix without attending to the dimensions of a brand and the potential influence on brand equity, the outcome might not necessarily be useful in terms of strengthening brand equity. In this study, packaging is a primary focus and although it theoretically forms part of the elements of the marketing mix, its contribution in terms of the brand image and brand equity deserves equal attention.

A system consists of many subsystems and the concept of **hierarchy** implies that all elements of a system are significant although some are more important/crucial than others to achieve the desired

effect (Skyttner, 1996:21; Spears & Gregoire, 2003:5-6). As discussed in the literature review, packaging is traditionally seen as a product decision. In order to establish whether packaging should be treated as an individual element of the marketing mix, the hierarchy of the various elements within the system will indicate how strong the contribution of packaging as an influence within the system is.

Once the inputs are transformed into outputs, feedback will take place, i.e. once the contribution of packaging is established, a retailer/brand manager could determine how packaging could be used in the future (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:3) to further enhance brand equity.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Walliman (2005:396) stresses the importance of creating a “systems map”. This map will take shape in the conceptual framework and will aim to show the parts of the system, as well as showing the relationship between the subsystems and any significant overlaps. The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

The conceptual framework indicates that the elements of the marketing mix elements (controllable elements) as presented in a retailer (SBR or DS) are evaluated. Consumers’ brand awareness, the perceived quality of the brand, consumers’ brand loyalty and their brand associations then contribute to brand equity, which culminates as value for the customer (or not) and value for the retailer (or not).

In order to establish the relevance of packaging on brand equity, it was necessary to establish the perceived hierarchy among the elements of the marketing mix for a specific retail scenario (Objective 1). Thereafter it was necessary to determine the relevance of packaging as part of the marketing mix for a particular brand if the product is sold in a Single Brand Retailer versus a Department Store (Objective 2). Consumers’ brand evaluations were investigated in terms of the four dimensions of brand equity in a Single Brand Retailer and a Department Store (Objective 3). Finally, the relevance of packaging on brand equity is discussed in terms of the potential value created for the consumer through reduced cognitive dissonance (Objective 4).

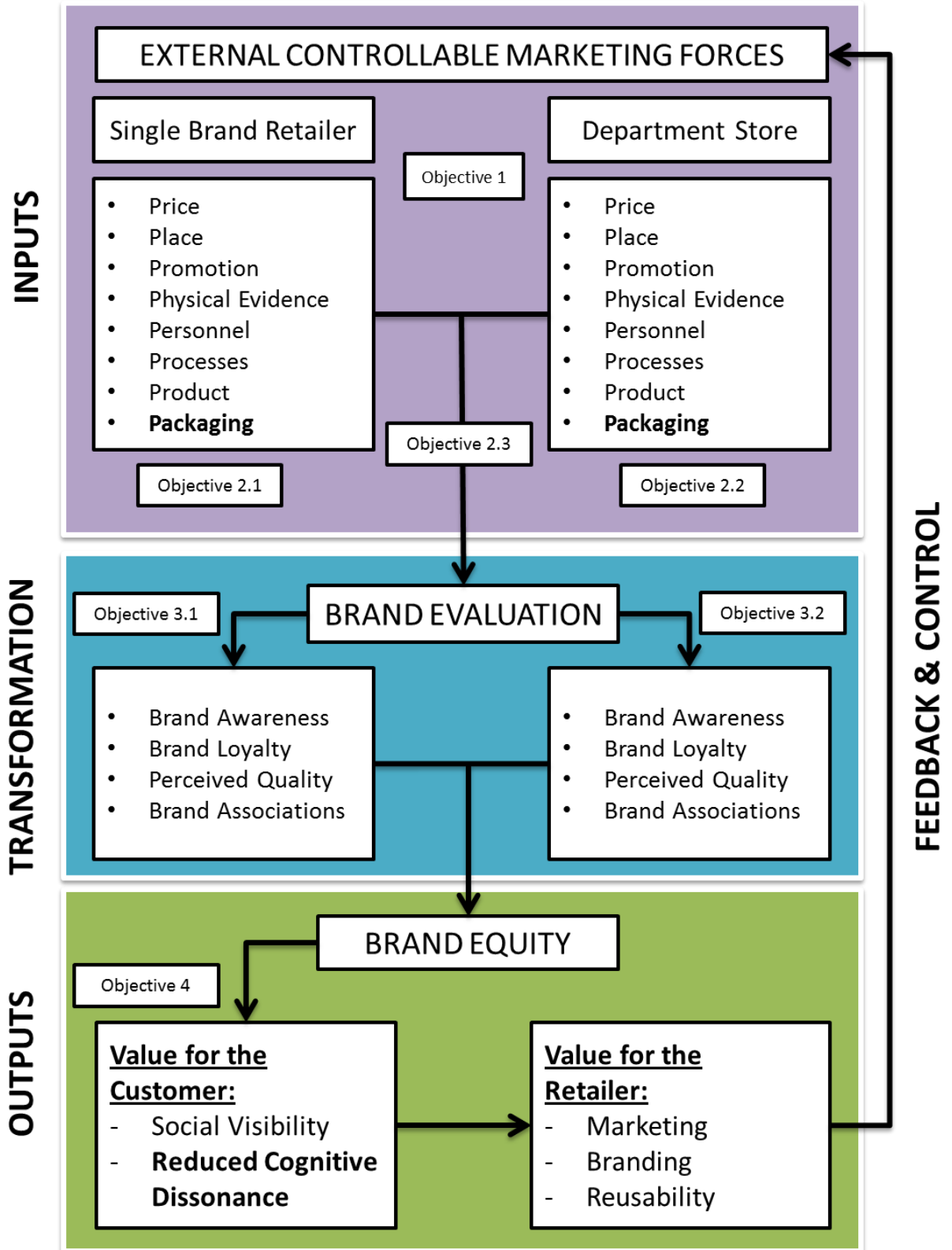


FIGURE 3.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.3 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to investigate and describe the role of packaging in terms of consumers' perception of brand equity in the female fashion apparel retail environment. All the objectives of this study pertain to female apparel shoppers in a specific context in Tshwane, South Africa. The objectives of this study are:

OBJECTIVE 1

To determine the potential of packaging as one of the elements/dimensions of a retailer's marketing mix.

OBJECTIVE 2

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to motivate consumers to regularly patronise the brand, i.e.:

2.1 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).

2.2 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Department Stores (DS).

2.3 To compare and discuss consumers' evaluation of packaging of as part of the in-store experience in a SBR after exposure to an alternative packaging format for the same product in a DS (and visa versa).

OBJECTIVE 3

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to strengthen brand equity, i.e.:

3.1 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).

3.2 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Department Stores (DS).

OBJECTIVE 4

To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to create value for the consumer by minimising feelings of regret resulting from cognitive dissonance.



Chapter 4

Research design and methodology

This chapter introduces the research design and methodology for the study. Measures that were taken to enhance the quality of the study and to address ethical concern are discussed.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is defined as the plan of action that stipulates the methods and processes for collecting and dissecting the information needed to conclude a research assignment (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:52).

The nature of the research conducted in this study was exploratory and causal. Exploratory research is conducted as an initial process with the aim of clarifying and defining the nature of the problem being addressed in the research (Cant *et al*, 2003:28). Exploratory research is done to obtain a better understanding and to create a platform for future research (Bearden *et al*, 2007:103-131). This study was conducted to obtain a better understanding of the relevance of specific elements of the marketing mix in terms of boosting brand equity in the clothing retail environment. The results of this study will also create a basis for future research in this area as theory on this subject is very limited. The nature of this research can also be described as causal, i.e. the cause-and-effect between two variables (packaging as an element of the marketing mix, and brand equity) was investigated (Cant *et al*, 2003:33; Bearden *et al*, 2007:131). The principal aim of the study was to determine whether packaging has the potential to strengthen brand equity in female apparel stores. Therefore packaging was seen as the “cause” and the resulting consequence in terms of service excellence and brand equity was seen as the “effect”. The most appropriate data collection method for causal research takes form in an experimental approach (Bearden *et al*, 2007:103-131), which is inherently quantitative (Grewal & Levy, 2012:276).

Quantitative research explores the relationships among the variables in the study with the objective of clarifying, forecasting and directing phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94). The purpose of an experimental research project is to determine a cause and effect for a certain scenario (Walliman, 2005:118). An experimental research design is put into action through creating a situation where all factors are kept constant, except for the dependent variable that is manipulated. If all other factors are kept constant, it is possible to measure the effect of the dependent variable (Walliman, 2005:117; Jobber, 2010:234).

The quantitative data were captured through a structured questionnaire. Denscombe (2002:12) describes a questionnaire as a research instrument used to gather information in the social sciences,

and states that it has the potential to provide the researcher with precise figures and results. Care must be taken to ensure that the questionnaire is neutral and consistent. A neutral questionnaire gives an unbiased result, and a questionnaire that is consistent shows similar results when other respondents are questioned on different occasions (Denscombe, 2002:103, 108). This was taken into consideration throughout the research process.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Population, sample and sampling

A population is defined as some complete group that has a set of similar characteristics (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:265). The unit of analysis is the smallest entity that is used in a study and the population is the collective (that is, all units) being considered for the study (Antonius, 2003:7). Sampling is a process whereby individuals are selected from the population to form a sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:144). Normally, a sample is drawn from a population to obtain a manageable amount of respondents who are representative of that population (Cant *et al*, 2003:124) and to use the information gathered the sample to make inferences about the total population (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:265; Strydom, 2011:223). The population targeted in this study was female final year students at the University of Pretoria, in Tshwane, South Africa. The unit of analysis for this study was female final-year students at the University of Pretoria, who were on the verge of going for interviews to start their career paths.

Due to the experimental design of the study, it relied on the female final year students' willingness to participate in the experiment. Convenience sampling was used to obtain a set of respondents to participate in this study. Convenience sampling is the process where respondents that are most readily or easily available, are recruited (Cant *et al*, 2003:127; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:273). Convenience sampling falls under non-probability sampling (Walliman, 2005:278-279; Bearden *et al*, 2007:140), which indicates that the chances of selecting a particular unit of the population is unknown or unequal (Cant *et al*, 2003:49; Strydom, 2011:231). During non-probability sampling, the selection of the sample is founded on the judgment of field workers or the researcher (Bearden *et al*, 2007:140). The respondents for this study were recruited by streaming messages to female final year students via social media, and recruiting respondents on campus and in the University of Pretoria's ladies residences. After the initial set of willing respondents had completed the task and understood what it entailed (travelling approximately 10Km to the shopping mall and spending at least 50 minutes to complete the task), they were asked to refer friends and other students to participate in the experiment. Clothing Retail Management -and Marketing students were excluded from the sample as their knowledge of marketing theory and retail strategies might have contributed to bias. Due to the sampling method and the design of the study, findings can unfortunately therefore not be generalised to the entire population. Practical

issues, time constraints and financial limitations were obstacles in recruiting a representative sample. After discussions with the statisticians at the University of Pretoria and considering that the research was done for a Master's degree and not for a PhD, it was agreed that convenient sampling would be acceptable and that a sample size of approximately 100 participants would suffice. The main objective of this study was not to obtain information that can be generalised to a population, but rather to gain insights into an under researched phenomenon for the sake of future research into the phenomenon. Cant *and co-authors* (2003:127) believe that convenience sampling is an appropriate sampling method for exploratory research as the focus will not be on representativeness, but rather on generating ideas and insights to lay the groundwork for future research.

The sample of this study consisted of 103 female final year students from the University of Pretoria. Most of these students were coming to the end of their academic term at this tertiary institution and were eager to pursue their career paths. In order to obtain a professional position, the norm is to undergo a series of interviews wherein the individual will be judged on how well she can summarise her personality and abilities in a short amount of time. Appearance management is a means of self-presentation as it can be used in a social context to communicate identity to others (Kaiser, 1997:181). Dress is an intricate communication system, and multiple messages can be conveyed through one's appearance (Johnson, Yoo, Kim & Lennon, 2008:18), which suggests that a person's appearance can be strategically manipulated to influence an observer's perception in a given situation. An interview is a very important and possibly life changing experience and it is justified to assume that a female final year student would want to make a good impression on an interview panel in order to obtain the position. Professional or interview wear had no specific significance to this study, the scenario was merely created to encourage the respondent's involvement in the "mock purchase".

4.2.2 Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument used to obtain the required information to address the research objectives, was a structured questionnaire whereby primary, quantifiable data could be obtained (Grewal & Levy, 2012:273). The quality of the data generally depends on the quality of the questions included in the questionnaire (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:230). A questionnaire needs to attain three objectives, namely to translate the information that is required into detailed questions that the respondents are able to answer; to stimulate interest and encourage respondents to answer all the questions and lastly, a questionnaire should attempt to reduce response errors by reducing the length of the questionnaire and attending to the type and complexity of the instructions and the scales used (Cant *et al*, 2003:118).

In order to fulfill the researcher's requirements, the questions needed to be checked for relevancy and accuracy as well as linguistic quality. Accuracy was established through attention to reliability and validity issues, which are addressed later in this chapter (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:230-231).

Basic guidelines exist for constructing a questionnaire that can assist the researcher to obtain the most precise results. Firstly, complex language should be avoided; keeping the style of the questionnaire conversational can assist in making the questionnaire understandable for most respondents. Items in the questionnaire were formulated as clear and concise as possible. All academic jargon was also converted to everyday language. Leading questions were avoided. Each question in the questionnaire only focused on a single construct, and a construct was tested several times through different wording to strengthen the result. The researcher did not make any assumptions about respondents' knowledge or experience, and also tried to evade questions that might be burdensome (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:236-240). As the respondents were asked to fill in a questionnaire about their in-store experience immediately after visiting the respective stores, and all the questions were related to their in-store experience, the answers did not rely on assumed knowledge or respondents' long-term memory.

The extent of freedom that respondents are given in answering questions in the questionnaire classifies the question into one of two basic types. These categories can be described as either open-ended or fixed alternative questions (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:231). Open-ended or unstructured questions give the respondent the opportunity to answer or explain their thinking in their own words (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:231; Grewal & Levy, 2012:273). Fixed/structured questions provide the respondent with a limited set of alternatives with specific options (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:232; Grewal & Levy, 2012:273). Open-ended questions are better suited for the beginning of a questionnaire, as it warms the respondent up to the process of questioning. Closed-ended questions with standardised responses have the advantage of providing comparability between responses. This function is very beneficial as it simplifies coding, tabulating and understanding the data (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:232-233). In the questionnaire constructed for this study, only two open-ended questions were used in the beginning of the questionnaire to obtain demographic information. Furthermore the questionnaire consisted of structured close-ended questions. As the respondent visited two stores in each experiment, and the majority of the questions were repeated in section 2, questions were kept brief to avoid draining the respondents' energy. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

SECTION A: *Demographic information*, i.e. age in years; population group; and level of education.

SECTION B: *Shopping behaviour and apparel preferences* measured by using an adapted version of the scale compiled and tested by Moschis (1981) as well as Carlson and Gossbart (1988) that measures the degree to which consumers' consumption is socially motivated (Bruner, 1992:158). The internal validity of the scale was tested.

SECTION C: *Consumers' expectations of customer service* was investigated by using an established 31 item scale that measured respondents evaluation of the elements of the marketing mix, inclusive of the packaging construct (7 items were added to measure Packaging, resulting in the scale ultimately consisting of 38 items). The established scale has been used in two studies in South Africa

before, in an appliance sales context (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008) and also in the clothing retail context (Erasmus & Grabowski, 2011). Cronbach Alpha coefficients were nevertheless calculated to confirm internal consistency.

SECTION D: *Influence of the elements of the marketing mix on brand equity* was measured by means of a 34 item Likert-type scale compiled by Yoo *et al.* (2000:203). It was not possible to manipulate the elements of the marketing mix in this study. However, it is said that consumers' perception of the elements is more influential on a consumer's psychological state rather than the actual marketing elements (Yoo *et al.*, 2000:200). This model has not yet been used in the South African clothing retail context, but Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to confirm the internal consistency of the scales; exploratory factor analysis was done to confirm the dimensions of the constructs (marketing mix; brand equity) in the context of this study (Yoo *et al.*, 2000:202). The internal validity of this scale was tested to confirm the suitability to this context and specific questions regarding packaging were added to investigate its effect on brand equity.

SECTION E: The Regret Experience Measure (REM) composed by Creyer and Ross (1999) was used to determine the level of cognitive dissonance that respondents experienced after their purchases were made. Items referring to packaging were inserted to determine whether packaging could help to alleviate feelings of regret.

SECTIONS C2, D2 and E2 represented replica of Sections C, D and E as these questions formed part of phase 2 of the investigation where respondents repeated the exercise by going to an alternative retailer.

4.2.3 Data collection

An experimental design is the preferred method to obtain information for causal research (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:176), and is inherently quantitative (Grewal & Levy, 2012:276). In true experimental designs, the researcher is able to control the variables in the experimental context, and then manipulate one of the variables to measure the effect of the change (Walliman, 2005:117; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:176). The data collection took place in the retail setting and can therefore be classified as a field experiment. A field experiment takes place in natural or realistic circumstances, and the situation dictates the level of control over the situation and ability to manipulate the variables (Cant *et al.*, 2003:34). With research conducted in social sciences, an experiment is usually set up with two comparison groups (Fouché *et al.*, 2011:145). In this study, two groups of 51 and 52 female students respectively were set up. Both groups were given the mystery shopping task in a Single Brand Retailer (SBR) and a Department Store (DS) where they had to select a pair of shoes (or handbag) for their first job interview. The first group visited the SBR first and then the DS. Group 2 visited these stores in the

reverse order. The SBR only stocked the specified brand and always used superior packaging. A nearby DS in the same shopping mall, is a clothing and household department store that also stocks the specific brand among many other cheaper as well as exclusive brands, but always uses simple, cheap, branded (the store's brand) plastic shopping bags as packaging material irrespective of the product purchased or the price paid. Changing the order in which the consumers visited the stores addressed the possibility of an order effect, i.e. that respondents might be influenced by their first shopping encounter when evaluating the second encounter.

The data collection took place between September 2012 to May 2013 in Menlyn Park Shopping Center, in Tshwane, South Africa. The reason for conducting research over this lengthy period of time was due to restrictions from the retailers as well as the students that had to be considered. Firstly, the management of the brand and the retailers in question insisted that the mystery shoppers only visited the stores on weekdays, between the 15th and 23rd of the month, as this was the quietest time of the month to prevent disruption in the stores to the minimum. The availability of the students to visit the shopping center was also strongly influenced by the University of Pretoria's recess and exam time tables.

The respondents set specific appointments with the researcher or a trained research assistant who met up with them at a coffee shop which was located between the SBR and the DS in Menlyn Park Shopping Center. The research assistant explained the purpose of the study broadly without emphasising packaging. She then asked them to read the cover page of the questionnaire before they proceeded to complete of the first two sections of the questionnaire, namely the demographic section and some background questions. The cover page of the questionnaire explained that the study aimed to measure the respondent's in-store experiences. This was done to take the focus off the packaging or any specific marketing element and to reduce demand characteristics. Depending on whether the respondents were part of Group 1 or 2, the respondent then proceeded to the first store where they fit shoes, interacted with the staff, made a decision about which product they would want to "purchase" and revealed that they were part of the experiment. No real transactions were conducted as the logistics in reversing 206 transactions were too extensive and complicated for the retailers. Allowing the merchandise to leave the retailer was also too risky. In order to create the illusion of a real purchase transaction and to stimulate the same emotions that are present when a consumer makes a purchasing decision, it was communicated that the respondent stood the chance to win the shoes they had selected during the experiment. If the consumer could not find any shoes to their liking, they were given the opportunity to select a handbag, but only after fitting at least one pair of shoes (this was done to ensure the respondent experienced what the retailer had to offer in terms of service within the store). After completion of the purchasing decision, the respondent revealed herself as a mystery shopper. A small control sheet was then filled in to capture the respondents' product selection, and to facilitate the

procurement of the prize after the study had been concluded. As the product did not leave the store, a picture was taken of a respondent's selection before putting it into the shopping bag as if they were then going to leave the store with product in the shopping bag. The respondents assumed that the researcher would afterwards check the purchases in their wrapping. The respondent then proceeded back to the research assistant to complete section 1 of the questionnaire. The respondent then proceeded to the second store, where the process was repeated up to the point where section 2 of the questionnaire (a replica of section 1) was completed. The time to complete the experiment was between 45 and 60 minutes, and the respondents were offered refreshments when seated to complete the questionnaire.

4.2.4 Brand and retailer selection

The Brand selected for this study was Nine West. The Nine West Group Inc. specialises in the development, design and marketing of female footwear products. The brand originated in 1983 in New York City, in the United States of America. The brand has expanded internationally and in addition to footwear, Nine West also retails premium handbags and accessories (BLOOMBERG, [sa]:1).



FIGURE 4.1: NINE WEST BRAND LOGO

The Nine West brand is positioned as a premium product range, targeting young professional and classically stylish women, as can be seen from the most recent campaign imagery in Figure 4.2 below. The brand also communicates the message "Nine & the Gang", to show that the consumers purchasing the brand is part of a group of friends (sociable, popular) and the Nine West brand is loved by all of them.



FIGURE 4.2: NINE WEST CAMPAIGN IMAGERY

Nine West ranges are characterised by products that attempt to find a balance between fashionability and classic style. The latest trends are adapted to classic silhouettes such as court shoes, Mary Jane and Brogue. Therefore this brand is ideal to use to measure final year student’s perceptions when looking for a pair of shoes for their first professional interview, as the product range is acceptable to wear within a professional work environment, as can be seen below in Figure 4.3.



FIGURE 4.3: EXAMPLES OF NINE WEST'S PRODUCT RANGE

It can be said that Nine West incorporates a selective distribution strategy. This strategy lies between exclusive and intensive distribution. Selective distribution can assist a brand in maintaining a certain brand image, whilst at the same time controlling the supply of merchandise into a specific area. This strategy is ideal for shopping goods (products categories where consumers like to spend time comparing options), such as apparel products (Grewal & Levy, 2012:478). Nine West currently retails through 14 single brand retailers in South Africa. These single brand retail outlets are mostly concentrated around metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria (NINE WEST SOUTH AFRICA: CONTACT US). The stores are designed to portray an image of minimalistic elegance and style, as can be seen in the image below depicting a typical Nine West shop front and store image (Figure 4.4.)



FIGURE 4.4: A TYPICAL NINE WEST SHOP FRONT

The Packaging (shopping bag) provided to Nine West customers (and the respondents/mystery shoppers) at the time of this experiment, was a black canvas tote bag featuring minimal print detail and the brand logo as seen below in Figure 4.5.



FIGURE 4.5: NINE WEST'S BRANDED CANVAS SHOPPING BAG

The brand also presents its products for sale in department stores such as Edgars, which falls under the Edcon Pty Ltd group (EDCON: DIVISIONS).



FIGURE 4.6: EDGARS DEPARTMENT STORE LOGO

Edgars was founded in 1929, and has functioned as a full-line (hard lines and soft lines) department store since conception of the retail offering. Edgars is the leading retailer of textiles, clothing, accessories and footwear in Southern Africa. The key to this retailer's success is a merchandise assortment featuring international, national and private label brands at affordable prices that appeal to a broad target market (EDCON: DIVISIONS). Within the Edgars environment, Nine West products are displayed according to the Edgars merchandise strategy and store image, as can be seen below in Figure 4.7.



FIGURE 4.7: TYPICAL EDGARS SHOE DEPARTMENT AND STORE IMAGE

The Packaging (shopping bag) provided to Edgars customers (and the respondents/mystery shoppers) at the time of this experiment, was a white plastic shopping bag featuring the department store's website and logo. The plastic is quite thin and transparent, and the back of the bag is used to drive awareness around Edgars's Thank U loyalty programme as seen below in Figure 4.8.



FIGURE 4.8: EDGARS'S PLASTIC SHOPPING BAG

For the purpose of this study, respondents were asked to visit one of Nine West's Single Brand Retail outlets in the Menlyn Park Shopping Center, where after the respondents visited the Nine West section within the Edgars Department store in the same center. For the purposes of this study the Nine West retail outlet is referred to as the Single Brand Retailer (SBR) and Edgars is referred to as the Department Store (DS).

4.2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as the application of thought to comprehend the sets of data that were collected for the purposes of the study. The suitable techniques for analysis are dictated by the nature of the gathered data, the research design characteristics and the researcher's information requirements (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:56). The analysis of quantitative data entails the conversion of data into a numerical format, where after the results are subjected to statistical analysis (Fouché & Bartley, 2011:249). Processing and analysing data may become a diverse and intricate process, but with the assistance of electronic data analysis software, and a detailed data processing plan, this step is simplified (Fouché & Bartley, 2011:248). Antonius (2003:32) suggests that data analysis includes electronically capturing data, analysing it and interpreting results. In the analysis stage data is organised through tables, charts and summaries to count, compare and portray the information gathered (Ferman & Levin; 1975:63). Wright (1997:3) divides data analysis into two phases, namely (1) data entry and (2) analysis and interpretation. The author proposes that data entry involves the organisation of data (the values for variables) in order to ask appropriate questions. The second step of data analysis includes evaluating data and comparing it to the research questions in order to make inferences. As mentioned previously, the information gathered through the questionnaire was coded at the University of Pretoria, with assistance from the Department of Statistics, to ultimately interpret the data by means of percentages and frequency counts. The outcomes were verified by comparing it to existing literature, and established theoretical paradigms or perspectives (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:76).

4.2.6 Operationalisation

TABLE 4.1: OPERATIONALISATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Objectives	Sub-objectives	Descriptors	Indicators	Items	Measure
1. To determine the potential of packaging as one of the elements/dimensions of a retailer's marketing mix.		Establish the independence of Packaging as a marketing construct in the marketing Mix.	Marketing Mix: - Price - Place - Promotion - Physical Evidence - Personnel - Processes - Product - Packaging	Question 4: V4.6, V4.12, V4.18, V4.24, V4.29, V4.33, V4.38 Question 7: V7.6, V7.12, V7.18, V7.24, V7.29, V7.33, V7.38	Exploratory Factor analysis, Principle Component analysis using PROMAX rotation, Means, Percentage Variance Explained, Standard Error of the Mean, Cronbach's Alpha
2. To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to motivate consumers to regularly patronise the brand.	2.1 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).	Marketing Mix	- Price - Place - Promotion - Physical Evidence - Personnel - Processes - Product - Packaging	<u>For V2 = 1</u> Question 4: V4.1 – V4.38 <u>For V2 = 2</u> Question 7: V7.1 – V7.38	Exploratory Factor analysis, Principle Component analysis using PROMAX rotation, Means, Percentage Variance Explained, Standard Error of the Mean, Cronbach's Alpha
	2.2 To evaluate and describe consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in Department Stores (DS).	Marketing Mix	- Price - Place - Promotion - Physical Evidence - Personnel - Processes - Product - Packaging	<u>For V2 = 1</u> Question 7: V7.1 – V7.38 <u>For V2 = 2</u> Question 4: V4.1 – V4.38	
	2.3 To compare and discuss consumers' evaluation of packaging of as part of the in-store experience in a SBR after exposure to an alternative packaging format for the same product in a DS (and visa versa).	Packaging as an element in the Marketing Mix	- Single Brand Retailer Packaging - Department Store Packaging	Single Brand Retailer: <u>For V2 = 1</u> Question 4: V4.6, V4.12, V4.18, V4.24, V4.29, V4.33, V4.38	

				<p>For V2 = 2 Question 7: V7.6, V7.12, V7.18, V7.24, V7.29, V7.33, V7.38</p> <p>Department Store: For V2 = 1 Question 7: V7.6, V7.12, V7.18, V7.24, V7.29, V7.33, V7.38</p> <p>For V2 = 2 Question 4: V4.6, V4.12, V4.18, V4.24, V4.29, V4.33, V4.38</p>	
3. To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging as a specific dimension of a retailer's marketing mix to strengthen brand equity	3.1 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Single Brand Retailers (SBR).	Association between Packaging and brand equity dimensions in Single Brand Retailers	Brand Equity Dimensions: - Brand Awareness - Brand Associations - Perceived Quality - Brand Loyalty	For V2=1 Question 5: V5.22, V5.26, V5.30, V5.35 For V2 = 2 Question 8: V8.22, V8.26, V8.30, V8.35	Principle Component analysis using PROCRUSTES rotation, Means, Percentage Variance Explained, Standard Error of the Mean Cronbach's Alpha 2-tailed t-tests: paired and non paired
	3.2 To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in Department Stores (DS).	Association between Packaging and brand equity dimensions in Department Stores	Brand Equity Dimensions: - Brand Awareness - Brand Associations - Perceived Quality - Brand Loyalty	For V2=1 Question 8: V8.22, V8.26, V8.30, V8.35 For V2 = 2 Question 5: V5.22, V5.26, V5.30, V5.35	
4. To evaluate and describe the potential of packaging to create value for the consumer by minimising feelings of regret resulting from cognitive dissonance.		Level of Cognitive Dissonance after "purchase decision" was made.	Regret experience measure	Question 6: V6.1 - V6.9 Question 9: V9.1 – V9.9	Descriptive statistics: percentages, means, standard error of the mean, Cronbach's Alpha.

4.3 QUALITY OF THE STUDY

In order to ensure that the findings of the study can be considered as facts that could be used in future literature in the academic community, it is important to attend to the quality of the study. The quality of the research design and methodology was therefore assessed, as well as the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments. The concepts of reliability and validity are related to the quality of the quantitative measurement. Validity is the degree to which the research tool measures what it is expected to measure. Reliability forms an integral part of the quality of the study and is defined as the uniformity in responses to the measuring instrument, or the degree to which the results can be reproduced under different circumstances (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:28; Bearden *et al*, 2007:143).

4.3.1 The importance of research design and methodology

Scrutinising the advantages and disadvantages of the selected methodology and research design is very important in establishing the quality of the study. Time constraints, as well as directive form the retailers involved had a major influence on how the methodology and research design was put together for this project.

As mentioned previously, convenience sampling was done and participation in this study was highly reliant on respondents taking time out of their busy academic schedules to go to a shopping centre that might not be their personal shopping destination of choice, and to spend near to an hour completing this experiment. Therefore willingness to participate was the first priority in sampling from the pool of female final year students at the University of Pretoria. Convenience sampling holds many advantages; it is a relatively inexpensive sampling method, saves on time and is the most expedient sampling method (Cant *et al*, 2003:127). The major disadvantage of using convenience sampling is that the data cannot be seen as representative of the thoughts, feelings and preferences of the whole population, as it is a non-probability sampling method (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:272). The sample size was 103, which is a relatively small sample size. However, considering that this was an experimental research design, and the time and energy consumed were major obstacles, the statisticians agreed that at least 100 respondents would suffice to perform the required statistical procedures and to establishing two useful control groups. Considering that the mystery shoppers were only allowed to visit the store a few days per month, was a major time constraint which limited the number of respondents that could be handled in the time required by the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences for completion of the research.

4.3.2 Validity

Validity is seen as the degree to which the measures in a survey truly evaluate the concepts under scrutiny in the study (Bearden *et al*, 2007:143). Validity can be established in various ways.

With experimental research designs, it is important to assess both internal and external validity. Internal validity is concerned with the relationship between variables (Cant *et al*, 2003:95), and is seen as the degree to which the 'effect' (dependent variable) is influenced by the 'cause' (independent variable) (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:187; Fouché *et al*, 2011:153). External validity indicates the level of generalisability of the results to the whole population (Cant *et al*, 2003:95; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:189; Fouché *et al*, 2011:153). When conducting field research, internal validity is usually lower because many environmental factors may influence the cause-and-effect relationship, and external validity is higher as the experiment takes place in a natural setting (Cant *et al*, 2003:95; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:190). Both types of validity are critical to the success of the experimental research project, and to combat error it is necessary to evaluate the threats to validity (Fouché *et al*, 2011:154). The below summarises the most common threats that affect internal validity (Cant *et al*, 2003:96-97; Zikmund & Babin, 2007:188-189; Fouché *et al*, 2011:154).

History effect occurs when external events unrelated to the experiment takes place during the experimentation period and affects the dependent variable, which in turn will result in inconsistencies in the cause-and-effect relationship. This threat is not imminent for short-term experiments, but as some experiments may take place over months or even years, it is necessary to constantly assess environmental factors and evaluate the probability that it will affect the outcome of the study. As the data was captured over the period of eight months, the probability of the history effect occurring was moderate, however, a major sale in one of the outlets could have affected the scenario. No major occurrences took place over the specified months in the economy, political or cultural environment that would have affected the experiment. The only possible effects that may have influenced the experiment was the upsurge in foot traffic in the Menlyn Park Shopping Center over November and December (Holiday and Festive shopping), and January (End of Season Sale). As the University of Pretoria's end of year exams and recess runs over November to January, data were not collected over this period and therefore this did not affect the experiment.

Maturation effects can be described as the experiences and growth that respondents undergo while taking part in the experiment. Depending on the duration of the experiment, this can include respondents ageing and entering different life stages, or in the short term respondents may become restless, bored or even hungry during the experiment. All of these changes may influence the outcomes of the research as it may cause changes in the respondents' behaviour. As the experiment took place in two stages, with the

respondent having to mystery shop in two stores and filling in eight sections of a questionnaire, which took an estimated 45 minutes to complete, it was possible that respondents may have become restless, tired, hungry, thirsty or bored. To combat this threat, the respondents completed the questionnaires in a quiet coffee shop where they could collect their thoughts, and they were offered a coffee or any beverage of their choice in order to refresh them for the questioning process.

Testing is a threat labeled as a nuisance effect, where respondents become aware of what subject is being tested, or the general awareness of being observed causes respondents to behave in an unnatural way. The respondents may then modify their behaviour to what they perceive as 'acceptable' for the researcher, which is counter-productive for the study as the aim of research is to capture consumers' true feelings, behaviours and perceptions. To combat the testing threat to validity, the respondents were told that the aim of the study was to investigate their in-store experience, and no special emphasis was placed on packaging or any specific marketing element.

Instrumentation is also an irritation that may occur when changes are made in the measuring instrument, interviewers or researchers, or procedural changes. These changes may influence the results of the study as there will be inconsistency in the execution of the experiment. Throughout the study the measuring instrument stayed the same. However, the first quarter of the respondents were received and directed by the researcher, where after a research assistant took over and conducted the remainder of the experiment with the other respondents. This may have resulted in the instrumentation effect. This threat was combated by proper training of the research assistant by the researcher. The researcher also conducted spot checks and provided supervision to the research assistant when necessary.

Morality effect is also referred to as "wear and tear", and refers to when respondents pull out of the experiment before it is completed. Respondents may withdraw for several reasons including pressure, time constraints and personal questions resulting in the respondent refusing to continue participating in the study. This can affect validity as it may cause the experiment/control groups to become disproportional due to the dropouts, which will ultimately affect the statistical comparisons and inferences that the researcher is able to make. The respondents in this study were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable or if the experiment took too long. None of the respondents chose to withdraw from the experiment.

Selection of participants may also affect internal validity when the experiment group and control group vary in composition. This may influence the experiment's final results as groups that are too dissimilar may yield differing responses for reasons other than that of manipulating the dependent variable. Even though convenience sampling was used, all respondents were female final year students from the University of

Pretoria, and the overwhelming majority was within the ages of 20 to 24 years, therefore the two groups had a similar composition.

The following threats also existed in terms of external validity (Fouché *et al*, 2011:154-155).

Multiple-treatment interference can be found in experiments with many independent variables, which blurs the lines of which independent variable caused the change in the dependent variable. If the combination of independent variables observed in the experiment are not also present in the natural setting, the conclusions from the experimental research cannot be generalised. The independent variable in this research study was the packaging. The packaging that the respondents observed was the packaging that is used in the natural (“normal”) retail setting.

Pretest sensitisation may occur when respondents involved in the pretest do not take the experiment seriously, resulting in the respondents becoming desensitised to the independent variable and ultimately obscuring the true results. None of the respondents were also involved in the pretest, therefore the effect of pretest sensitisation could not occur.

Unrepresentative samples influence the external validity of an experiment as the results cannot be generalised to the whole population. With the nature of experiments, it is difficult to obtain true representativeness as respondents are usually persons coincidentally available for participation, volunteers or persons that are attracted by some kind of incentive to participate. As convenience sampling was used, the sample was not representative of the total population and the results of the study cannot be generalised to the total population.

Demand factor occurs when respondents become aware of what the experiment aims to test and alter their behavior or opinions to align with what they believe is demanded of them. As discussed, no special attention was given to packaging or any marketing element in particular, in an attempt to avoid the occurrence of the demand factor.

Hawthorne effect occurs when respondents react in a different way than they would normally just because they know that they are taking part in a research project. This effect can also be referred to as reactivity. To combat this threat the respondents were encouraged to bring their friends (if they were also female final year students at the University of Pretoria), which made the respondents feel more relaxed. They were also asked to meet the researcher/research assistant at a coffee shop where the experimental process was explained to them in an attempt to calm them down in order to get the respondent to act as naturally as possible in the retail setting. As there were 103 respondents, it was very important for the respondents to

act as they normally would and not to alert the service staff that they were mystery shoppers before completion of the in-store exercise.

4.3.3 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency or the stability of the measurement, i.e. its ability to perform in a future study as it did in the past. There are many procedures that can be followed to increase the level of reliability in a questionnaire (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011:174).

Eliminating items or indicators that are unclear builds reliability, as unclear items may solicit varying responses from respondents when asked at different times. The measuring instrument should preferably have more than one indicator measuring one element of a variable. The level of measurement should also be increased, as indicators that are formulated on a more precise level yield more detailed information. The measurement of all important constructs (i.e. Price, Place, Promotion, Physical Evidence, Personnel, Processes, Product, Packaging, Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, Brand Associations, Cognitive Dissonance and Social Visibility), were worded in everyday language and each variable was measured through at least two or more indicators. Attempting to keep the conditions under which the experiment takes place standard, will result in greater reliability. The conditions under which the experiment took place were kept as constant as possible, considering that it was a field experiment that took place in a natural retail setting. Even though the experiment took place over several months, the respondents always visited the stores on weekdays between the 15th and 23rd of the month (quiet times of the month). The research was only conducted during normal retail trade, and holiday, festive and end of season trade months were avoided to keep the retail experience consistent for all respondents. The level of difficulty of the instrument should be moderated as any questionnaire that is too easy or too difficult will not portray a true reflection of the respondents' performance. Instructions for completing the experiment and questionnaire should be standardised, and scoring procedures should remain consistent. It was attempted to keep the questionnaire as simple and straight forward as possible, by only using existing scales and measurements. The researcher and research assistant attempted to standardise the instructions to the respondents by giving them the opportunity to read the cover letter of the questionnaire, and thereafter taking a few minutes to explain the experimental procedure to them. The researcher should attempt to avoid any external events from affecting the conditions under which the experiment takes place. No external event took place that had an effect on the experiment or the respondents. Lastly, reliability can be strengthened by pre-testing the instrument and making final changes before launching the actual experiment. The questionnaire and the experimental process was pre-tested with three respondents in the

retail setting to gain a better insight into which areas of the measuring instrument or experimental procedure needed improvement (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011:174).

4.4 ETHICS

Walliman (2005:335) explains that there are two perspectives from which ethical issues in research can be viewed. The first perspective deals with the personal integrity of the researcher and the second is concerned with the courtesy, consent and confidentiality that the researcher applies to all the parties affected by the research. In this study, all literature references were credited through the proper citation and acknowledgements to prevent plagiarism. Honesty was of the utmost importance in this study as to prevent unreliable information to infiltrate the academic community. All data and interpretations were transparent and truthful as selectively presenting data is also unethical. The selection of participants was unbiased with relation to age, cultural diversity, disabilities, and sexual orientation. This study however only focused on female participants as they were the subjects of this research. The identity of all of the respondents was kept confidential and sensitive information was discarded after the data and interpretations were submitted. The research assistant was properly trained and informed in terms of the procedures of the experiment. This study was conducted with the written consent of the University of Pretoria and the Graduate Committee of the Department of Consumer Sciences of the same institution. The study was also conducted with the written consent of the managers of the brand under question (Nine West South Africa) and all findings were presented to them after the research had been concluded.

4.5 SUMMARY

Careful consideration was taken with selecting the appropriate research design and methodology for this study to ensure that the best possible research methods were used with the resources available. Data collection was executed by using a structured questionnaire in a field experiment, which is inherently quantitative. The unit of analysis was female final year students from the University of Pretoria, situated in the Tshwane metropolitan region. The collection and analysis of data was executed in a manner that focused on the quality of the research project throughout the entire process. Throughout the study the specific elements of validity and reliability with regard to experimental research were implemented to enhance the quality of the study. Research ethics guidelines were implemented to ensure that the quality of this project is acceptable.

Chapter 5

Results and discussion

This chapter presents the demographic characteristics of the sample before attending to the data analysis, the results and a discussion of the results in accordance with the objectives for this study. Findings are also considered and interpreted in accordance with existing literature.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

The demographic section of the questionnaire consisted of indicators probing demographic characteristics that were considered relevant to this study.

5.1.1 Age

In order to participate in this research project, respondents had to be in their final year of a study at the University of Pretoria, in the Tshwane metropolitan, South Africa. 'Final year' may constitute being in the last year of under graduate studies towards a degree or diploma, as well as the last year of studying full time for a postgraduate qualification such as an Honours- or Master's Degree. Convenience sampling was used as a result of the intricacy of the experimental research design and difficulty to recruit willing students for the fairly time consuming endeavour. Final year students were selected as it seemed fit to set the scene for individuals who would all be interested in preparing for a very important job interview where they had to make a good impression. They were specifically given the task of selecting a pair of shoes for their first job interview. This scenario was created to increase the respondents' involvement in the mock purchase experience. Respondents specified their exact age in an open question of the demographic section of the questionnaire when they pitched for the experiment. Their ages were afterwards grouped into three categories, simply to indicate that all were young (Figure 5.1). Only 8.74 % of the respondents were ≥ 24 years of age.

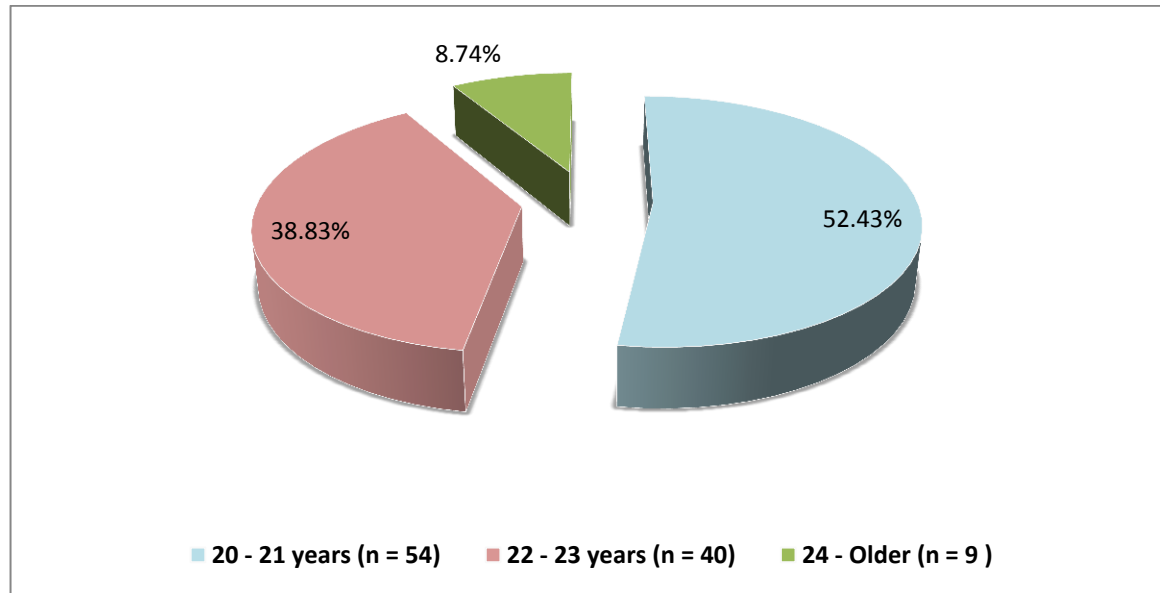


FIGURE 5.1: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

5.1.2 Level of education

Level of education was measured in this experiment as a control element, as respondents needed to be in their final year of study to qualify for participation in this study. Level of education is also considered relevant as it may influence consumers' awareness of status or prestige in a social setting (Chao & Schor, 1998:108). This is important as this study aimed to establish whether packaging, which is socially visible, can enhance/ boost the social status of a consumer. Ultimately, respondents were grouped into under graduate students and post graduate students as depicted in Table 5.1 below.

TABLE 5.1: RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION (N = 103)

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories in the investigation	n	%
Busy with final year of study for Bachelor's degree	81	78.64	Final year of under graduate study	82	79.61
Busy with final year of study for a diploma	1	0.97			
Busy with final year of study in a post graduate programme	21	20.39	Final year of post graduate study	21	20.39

The majority of respondents were in the process of completing their under graduate studies (79.61%), and the rest were completing their post graduate studies (20.39%).

5.1.3 Population group

Even though this investigation never aimed to distinguish the perceptions of different population groups, respondents indicated which population group they belonged to, to enable the research to describe the composition of the experimental groups. Five categories were distinguished in the questionnaire. The majority of respondents were White (96.12%), while the rest were grouped together as “Other” (3.88% of the sample) (see Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2: REPRESENTATION OF DIFFERENT POPULATION GROUPS IN THE SAMPLE

Categories in the questionnaire	n	%	Categories of investigation	n	%
White	99	96.12	White	99	96.12
Black	2	1.94	Other	4	3.88
Coloured	1	0.97			
Indian	1	0.97			
Asian	0	0			

The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented to confirm that the pre-requisites for participation were honoured. No inferences will be made in terms of population sub sets of the sample.

5.1.4 Social Motivation for purchases

Shopping behaviour and apparel preferences were investigated by using an adapted version of the scale compiled and tested by Moschis (1981) as well as Carlson and Gossbart (1988). The scale measures the degree to which consumers’ consumption is socially motivated (Bruner, 1992:158). The internal validity of the scale was tested, and Cronbach Alphas for the individual items ranged between 0.65 and 0.73, which is regarded as acceptable.

TABLE 5.3: RESPONDENTS' SOCIAL MOTIVATION (N=103)

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Std Error	Med	Var	Min	Max	C-Alpha
It is important to make a good impression when going for an interview	3.93	0.25	0.02	4.00	0.06	3.00	4.00	0.73
It is important to wear good quality clothing to an interview	3.37	0.59	0.06	3.00	0.35	2.00	4.00	0.70
It is important to wear good shoes when going for an interview	3.24	0.57	0.06	3.00	0.32	2.00	4.00	0.71
I tend to notice what kinds of people buy certain brands or products	3.02	0.73	0.07	3.00	0.53	1.00	4.00	0.70
I notice what others think of people who use certain brands or products	2.91	0.73	0.07	3.00	0.53	1.00	4.00	0.70
It is important to dress in expensive clothing for an interview	2.39	0.73	0.07	2.00	0.53	1.00	4.00	0.65
It is important what friends think of different brands or products	2.31	0.82	0.08	2.00	0.67	1.00	4.00	0.67
It is important to wear branded clothing when going for an interview	1.89	0.61	0.06	2.00	0.37	1.00	3.00	0.66
Overall (M_{max} =4)	2.88	0.38	0.04	2.88	0.15	1.88	3.88	0.73

An overall mean of 2.88 ($M_{\max} = 4$) suggests that respondents are socially motivated when purchasing clothing for an interview (the scale was slightly adapted to infer the context of the study). Making a good impression seemed highly relevant ($M = 3.93$) while respondents also more strongly agreed that clothing for an interview had to be of good quality ($M = 3.37$) and that it is essential to wear good shoes ($M = 3.24$). The respondents strongly agreed that they tend to notice the types of people/personalities that patronise certain brands ($M = 3.02$) and also, that they notice what others around them (reference groups, friends, opinion leaders) think of people/personalities who purchase and wear certain brands or products ($M = 2.91$).

Respondents were not that adamant that clothing for an interview had to be expensive ($M = 2.39$), and neither did it seem crucial what friends think of different brands ($M = 2.31$). The latter finding can be ascribed to the fact that this scale was asked in relation to selecting an outfit for a first interview, and because it is highly unlikely that friends will be present at the interview, friends' opinions would probably not be so important in this context. Lastly, respondents disagreed that it is important to wear branded clothing to an interview ($M = 1.89$).

5.1.5 Respondents' willingness to spend on footwear for their first interview

In an open question, respondents were asked to indicate how much they were willing to spend on a pair of shoes for their first interview, to establish the price ranges these young consumers had in mind and whether that actually allowed for shopping at single brand retailers (SBR) where shoes may be fairly expensive. Their responses were grouped into four broad categories (Figure 5.2): 41.75 % of the respondents ($n = 43$) were willing to spend between R200 and R400 on a pair of shoes for their first interview, which is achievable at a department store (DS); 39.80 % ($n = 41$) were willing to spend >R400 up to R800; 16.51 % ($n = 17$) indicated >R800 up to R1200, and only 1.94 % ($n = 2$) of the respondents were willing to spend >R1200. The price of a pair of shoes from the brand that was investigated in this study generally range between R800 and R1200, depending on the seasonality and fabrication, therefore 41.75 % of the respondents actually indicated that they would not consider shoes that are so expensive. In fact, only 18.45% of the respondents were actually willing to purchase the brand at full price. One can therefore assume that this experience was novel for the majority of the respondents and that their perceptions were not affected by prior experiences.

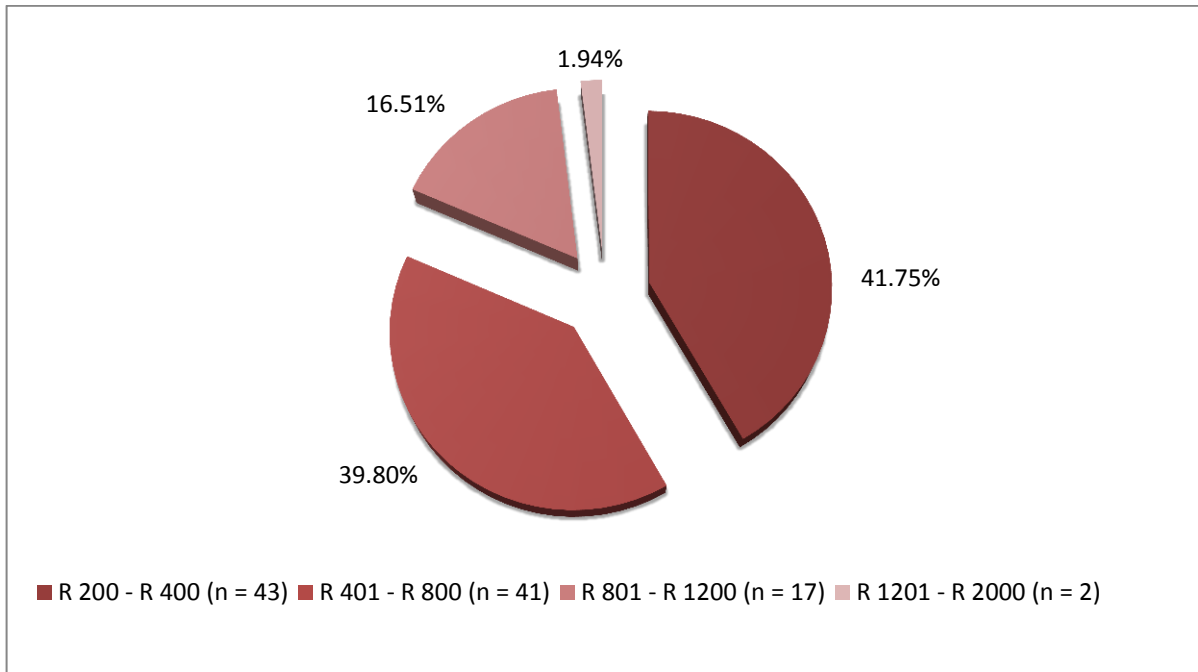


FIGURE 5.2: RESPONDENTS' WILLINGNESS TO SPEND ON FOOTWEAR FOR A FIRST INTERVIEW

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study the 103 willing participants were split into two groups of 51 and 52 respectively. Students were randomly diverted into one of the two groups when they pitched for the data collection process in the shopping centre. Both groups completed a mock shopping task in a SBR as well as a DS, which involved selecting a pair of shoes for their first job interview. The first group visited the SBR first and after completing the questionnaire under supervision of the researcher or trained assistant, they completed the same task in the DS although they had to select a pair of shoes that carried the same brand offered by the SBR. They then completed the final part of the questionnaire under supervision. Group 2 visited the retailers in the reverse order, i.e. they first selected a pair of shoes that carried the specific brand in the DS, completed the questionnaire and then pursued the second phase of the task in the SBR. The SBR offers an exclusive brand and uses superior packaging. The DS on the other hand, is a clothing and household department store (DS) that stocks many other brands apart from the brand that was under investigation. The DS generally puts all purchases into a generic plastic shopping bag, irrespective of the product purchased or the price paid. By changing the order in which the participants visited the stores, a possible order effect could be determined, i.e. whether the order in which they completed the task had any effect on their brand- and service perceptions.

5.2.2 Investigating packaging as a possible element of the marketing mix of apparel retailers

Consumers' experience of the service offering in the retailers was investigated by using an established 31 item scale that measured respondents' evaluation of the elements of the marketing mix, inclusive of the packaging construct, which is not generally contained as an element on its own. The inclusion of this construct resulted in a revised 38-item instrument that was presented to the respondents for completion after every one of the two store visits. The original 31 item scale has been used in two studies in South Africa before, i.e. in an appliance sales context (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008) and also in a clothing retail context (Erasmus & Grabowski, 2011). Cronbach Alpha coefficients were nevertheless calculated to confirm the internal consistency of the scale in the context of this study.

In terms of the service experience investigation the data of Section C, which presented the 38 item scale, was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to distinguish coherent factors and to establish the components of each factor. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the experiential design which involved four investigations, namely:

- Group 1: visit from SBR (investigation 1) to the DS (investigation 2)
- Group 2: visit from DS (investigation 3) to SBR (investigation 4)

Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Component Analysis was done, using a Promax rotation to identify coherent factors with components that made sense in terms of their meaning. A data matrix may have a large number of variables (e.g. test scores, test items, questionnaire responses) and these items may be related to one another. When variables are related to each other, they represent underlying dimensions called factors, which explain specific variables. Factor analysis therefore looks for patterns among the variables to discover if an underlying combination of the original variables can summarise the original set in terms of factors (Cooper & Schindler, 1998:560; Mazzocchi, 2008:221). A correlation matrix is then generated from the original set of data (Mazzocchi, 2008:222). This can be done in a number of ways, but the most frequently used approach is the principal component analysis, which was used in this study (Cooper & Schindler, 1998:577). This method transforms a set of variables into a new set of composite variables (or principal components) that are not correlated with each other. These linear combinations of variables, called factors, account for the variance in the data as a whole. The best combination makes up the first factor. The process continues until all the variance is accounted for. Correlation coefficients between the factor and the variables represent the factor loadings. Factor loadings greater than $\pm .50$ are considered to be significant.

Factor analysis is not a true multivariate technique in that it is not used to predict a dependent variable or variables. Factor analysis is rather an interdependence technique considering all variables and how they are

related to each other at the same time. Factor analysis can be used to either summarise or reduce data. In data summarisation, which was the primary purpose of this study, factor analysis derives the underlying dimensions/factors, which describe the data in a smaller number of concepts than the original variables. In data reduction, scores are calculated for each factor and these scores are then substituted for the original variables (Garson, 2008:1). Factor analysis can also be used for either exploratory or confirmatory purposes. As an exploratory procedure, factor analysis is used to search for a possible underlying structure in the variables without forcing items into specific factors. In confirmatory research, the researcher evaluates how similar the actual structure of the data, as indicated by factor analysis, is to the expected structure (usually derived from literature). The major difference between exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis is that the researcher has formulated hypotheses about the underlying structure of the variables when using factor analysis for confirmatory purposes (Garson, 2008:1).

The first outputs of the factor analysis procedure produced components that were shuffled between the factors and which did not make sense. To check the effectiveness, target matrices were employed, defining the required factor pattern to determine what the final factor pattern would be. At all times Cronbach Alphas were determined on the appropriate components of the factors to determine the internal consistency of the factors. The factor analysis procedure started off with 11 factors that produced unsatisfactory Cronbach Alphas for several factors and the process was extensively repeated until a four factor solution provided an option that produced the best fit in terms of the internal consistency of the factors and the coherence of similar components. The challenge was to end with factors for all four store visits (see Figure 5.3) where the factors and their components made sense and where the Cronbach Alphas were acceptable. Up to this point all items (38) were retained in the factor structure. As a last resort the factors and their components were scrutinised, and the four factor solution (Eigen values >1.5) was repeated omitting three of the components. The result produced the most satisfactory output where all the factors of the four versions of the analysis (SBR visit 1, DS visit 1; SBR visit 2, DS visit 2) made sense and where all but one Cronbach Alpha was within an acceptable range, i.e. >0.6 (Mazzocchi, 2008:221).

Four factors were distinguished through factor analysis. The four factors were not identical for the four store visit scenarios: it was virtually impossible to achieve that. Repeated factor analysis, even with target matrices, never produced factor sets that were near identical. Of particular interest for this study, however, was that from an early stage of the analysis procedure when the outputs produced 10 factors, it became clear that all the components related to 'packaging' generally assembled in a single factor. Contrary to what the services marketing mix proposes, packaging did not align itself with the so-called 'product' components. At most, two of the product components aligned with packaging and the rest were split among various factors such as 'physical environment' and 'place'.

Figure 5.3 presents a graphic description of the data analysis procedure, and how the discussion of the findings is structured. This figure also presents the overall mean for the 35 items of a particular analysis, as well as the mean for the particular element ‘packaging’, which forms the crux of this investigation and its related Cronbach Alpha. The discussion threads are as follows:

- Discussion 1: group 1 visit at SBR compared to their second visit at the DS
- Discussion 2: group 2 visit at DS compared to their second visit at the SBR
- Discussion 3: a comparison of the two groups’ first visits, i.e. group 1 visit at SBR, compared to group 2 first visit at the DS
- Discussion 4: a comparison of the two groups’ second visits after both had been ‘contaminated’ by the first experience, i.e. group 1 second visit (DS) compared to group 2 second visit (SBR)
- Discussion 5: a comparison of the two visits to the SBR, i.e. group 1 visit 1 compared to group 2 visit 2 (when their perceptions were ‘contaminated’ by their first visit)
- Discussion 6: a comparison of the two visits to the DS, i.e. group 2 visit 1 compared to group 1 visit 2 (when their perceptions were ‘contaminated’ by their first visit)

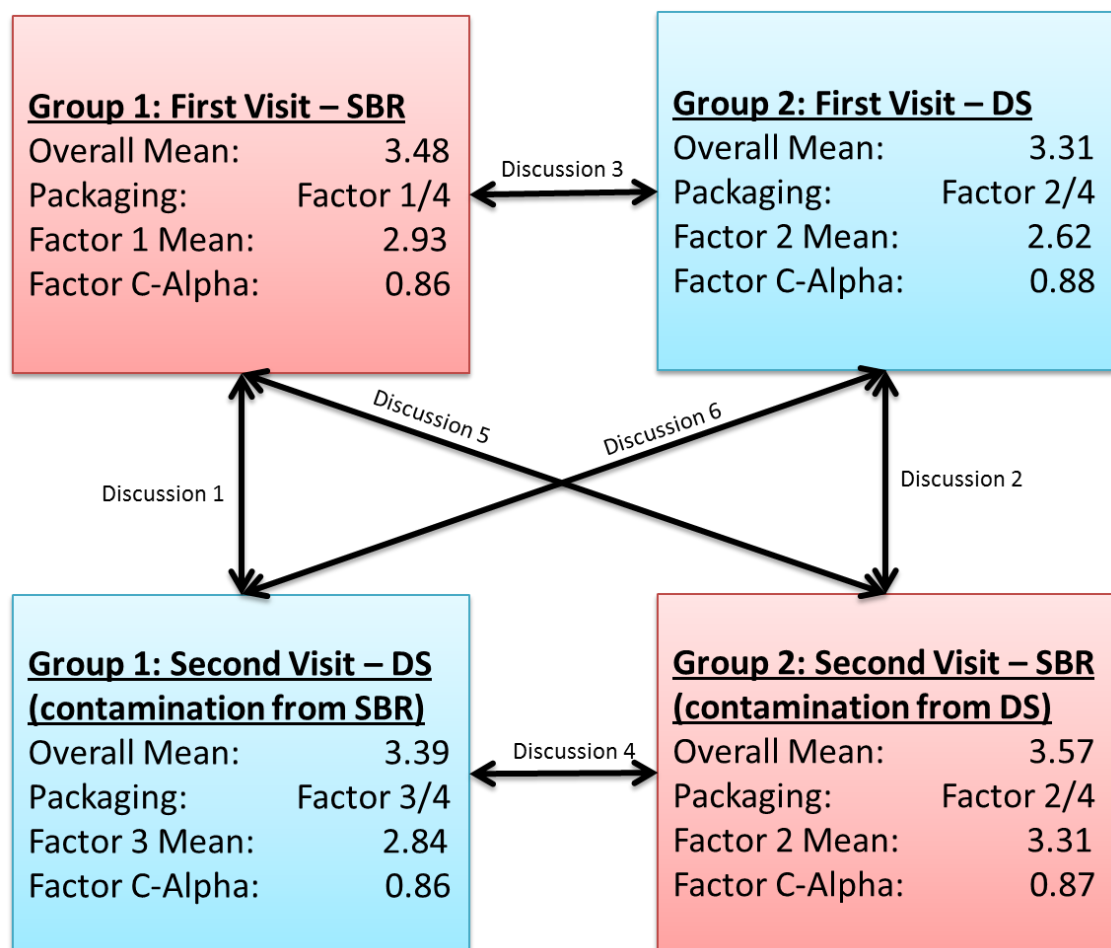


FIGURE 5.3: SEQUENCE OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDENTS' INSTORE EXPERIENCE

- **Group 1, shopping encounter 1 at SBR:**

Table 5.4 presents the detail of the factor analysis procedure for the store visit of group 1 to the SBR

TABLE 5.4: FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 1, GROUP 1, TO THE SBR

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	0.75040	0.00288	0.02784	-0.16485
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	0.73973	-0.10540	0.17413	0.04061
Other people must notice the shopping bag	0.73170	-0.22416	0.25879	-0.11000
The shopping bag must be attractive	0.70853	0.07040	0.23494	-0.04074
Products of excellent quality	0.69388	0.11107	-0.21266	0.08773
The shopping bag must display the Brand	0.69308	0.16979	-0.11195	-0.15818
Fashionability of clothing items	0.61615	0.14267	-0.04588	0.26178
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	-0.00542	0.76168	-0.23216	-0.17357
A well organised store layout	0.17656	0.66046	0.10416	-0.09547
A comfortable in-store temperature	-0.19483	0.62141	0.02449	0.06528
A positive store image	0.27838	0.60403	0.21801	-0.20648
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	-0.09022	0.52496	0.09539	0.16404
Practical, logic display of clothing	0.19913	0.52162	-0.34537	-0.07795
Well designed fitting rooms	0.02048	0.44372	0.06639	-0.27219
Efficient staff at pay points	-0.28154	0.41063	0.15115	0.20010
Good security in the store	0.01352	0.40324	0.20113	0.16281
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	0.15746	0.35305	-0.16523	0.10038
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	0.15892	0.31399	0.03874	0.10745
A large product variety/assortment	-0.26057	0.28229	0.21800	-0.04863
A good return and exchange policy	-0.23201	0.09459	0.61822	-0.05996
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	-0.08404	0.12306	0.60084	0.09475
The store must appear modern	0.40447	-0.12458	0.58887	-0.07613
The store must be located in a safe area	0.07079	-0.11350	0.54663	0.12888
Availability of credit facilities	0.36756	0.14356	0.46188	-0.01510
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	0.20291	0.12676	0.42708	0.28785
Friendly shop assistants	0.10942	0.04124	0.42546	0.33986
The shopping bag must be re-usable	0.22600	-0.12096	0.37137	-0.05123
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	-0.13648	-0.07988	0.28984	0.64763
Good value for money	-0.01130	0.43257	0.05804	0.51447
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	0.01766	0.27736	-0.30526	0.45930
Store must be conveniently located	0.11843	0.13633	0.32648	0.45591
Regular promotions	-0.02737	0.14699	0.30274	0.35168
A clean store	0.08227	0.09057	-0.07818	-0.29973
An aesthetically appealing store environment	0.08558	0.04841	0.06222	-0.52085
A pleasant store atmosphere	-0.35596	0.30228	0.33277	-0.54884
Mean	2.93	3.65	3.46	3.72
Std error of the mean	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.03
% Variance explained	38.37	7.30	16.17	3.67
Cronbach Alpha	0.86	0.74	0.71	0.27

Overall Mean is 3.48

Based on their components, the four factors were labeled as follows:

- **Factor 1: Packaging;**
- Factor 2: Place, physical environment & personnel;
- Factor 3: Processes and customer care (a merge of components of personnel, processes, place and physical environment);
- Factor 4: Physical evidence of distinction (a merge of components related to place and physical environment as well as price which all relate to elements of distinction and 'no fuss')

The Cronbach Alpha of factor 4 is the only lousy Cronbach Alpha of the sixteen factors across the four data sets. This could unfortunately not be resolved through repeated factor analysis. It was decided to retain it as is because the focus of the study was on packaging, its related components and their contribution towards the service experience.

In terms of the respondents' first visit to the SBR, packaging (factor 1) was considered least impressive of the four factors although it was still perceived as good ($M = >2.9$; $M_{Max} = 4$). Means for the other three factors (>3.4) suggest that respondents were very impressed with the SBR when evaluating their first store experience.

- **Group 2, shopping encounter 1 at DS:**

Findings for the factor procedure of the data set of group 2 that went to the DS first, are presented in Table 5.5. Based on their components, the four factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Place, physical environment, product & personnel;
- **Factor 2: Packaging**
- Factor 3: Physical evidence of distinction
- Factor 4: Processes

The Cronbach Alphas for all four factors are acceptable (> 0.60).

In terms of the respondents' first visit to the DS, packaging (factor 2) was again considered least impressive ($M = 2.62$) of the four factors. At this stage it is apparent that the comparative mean for 'packaging' for this group's visit to the DS is lower, which suggests that their evaluation of this service dimension was less favourable. Means for the other three factors (>3.2) suggest that respondents were fairly impressed with service offering of the DS when evaluating their first store experience.

Findings presented in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 reflect 'uncontaminated' data, i.e. respondents' evaluation of the stores without any prior experience of the shopping task or the questionnaire.

TABLE 5.5: FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 1, GROUP 2, TO THE DS

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
A clean store	0.93451	-0.00891	-0.20702	-0.10527
A large product variety/assortment	0.89472	-0.01653	-0.17946	-0.10114
Efficient staff at pay points	0.87810	-0.12978	0.08250	-0.08926
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	0.86963	-0.05627	-0.26629	0.23290
Friendly shop assistants	0.82487	-0.19940	0.07863	0.10444
Practical, logic display of clothing	0.81485	0.10957	-0.01869	0.05641
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	0.76041	-0.30253	0.12293	0.03469
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	0.75704	-0.16998	0.12350	-0.04872
A pleasant store atmosphere	0.74454	0.12026	0.08652	-0.16922
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	0.74039	-0.04938	0.22460	-0.20416
A well organised store layout	0.73257	-0.01298	0.19980	0.05576
An aesthetically appealing store environment	0.72886	0.12906	-0.10286	-0.10771
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	0.67586	0.08997	-0.06086	0.22763
Well designed fitting rooms	0.66497	0.12763	0.06986	0.25649
Store must be conveniently located	0.61897	0.29051	0.13931	0.00379
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	0.61205	0.04516	0.15635	0.03549
A positive store image	0.54538	0.05017	0.15441	0.27260
Products of excellent quality	0.46913	0.21900	0.18976	0.01204
Good value for money	0.40674	-0.06790	0.01790	0.19322
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	-0.00980	0.88128	-0.29705	-0.12096
The shopping bag must be attractive	0.01171	0.77769	0.19265	0.09790
The shopping bag must display the Brand	-0.25449	0.77581	0.11710	0.15527
Other people must notice the shopping bag	-0.04653	0.77104	-0.12784	0.02678
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	0.32083	0.76616	-0.15044	0.00879
The store must appear modern	-0.03283	0.75422	0.11296	-0.00818
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	0.14162	-0.10113	0.71161	-0.19880
A comfortable in-store temperature	-0.04800	-0.16899	0.68321	0.11430
Fashionability of clothing items	0.23393	0.30427	0.60883	-0.39433
Regular promotions	-0.00132	0.00368	0.59322	0.16167
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	0.08907	-0.02466	0.11064	0.76480
The shopping bag must be re-usable	-0.17750	0.01184	0.32448	0.72269
A good return and exchange policy	0.09211	0.09480	-0.14870	0.63509
Good security in the store	0.40638	-0.02081	-0.10085	0.49395
The store must be located in a safe area	0.18928	0.23352	0.35750	0.40148
Availability of credit facilities	-0.05207	0.00203	-0.12479	0.32643
Mean	3.52	2.62	3.46	3.22
Std error of the mean	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.07
% Variance explained	29.22%	54.76%	19.84%	24.30%
Cronbach Alpha	0.95	0.88	0.63	0.71

Overall Mean is 3.31

- **Group 1, shopping encounter 2 at DS:**

The second part of the experiment involved a repeat of the former exercise, but at a different type of store that offered the same brands. Findings for group 1's evaluation of the DS after completion of the exercise at the SBR, are presented in Table 5.6. It must be remembered that their shopping experience at this point, had been 'contaminated' by their prior experience in the SBR (findings of the first visit are reflected in Table 5.4).

Based on their components, the four factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Place, processes & personnel;
- Factor 2: Physical environment & product
- **Factor 3: Packaging**
- Factor 4: Evidence of environmental concern

The Cronbach Alphas for all four factors (> 0.80) reflect consistency in the data. A Cronbach Alpha was not calculated for factor 4 as it unfortunately only contained two components. The two components are however strongly correlated, which indicates that the one can be used to predict the other, which is acceptable for the purpose of this study.

In terms of the group 1 respondents' repeat shopping encounter at the DS, packaging (factor 3) was again considered least impressive ($M = 2.84$) of the four factors. The mean for 'packaging' for this shopping encounter at the DS is lower compared to their evaluation of the same construct at the SBR ($M = 2.93$), which suggests that their evaluation of this service dimension was less favourable at the DS. Means for the first two factors are highly favourable, but their evaluation of 'evidence of environmental concern' (factor 4: $M = 2.92$), which specifically reflects on packaging, is less favourable compared to the first two factors. In terms of packaging there therefore is room for improvement at the DS. Findings of this evaluation may have been influenced (thus contaminated) by their first store visit to the SBR.

Findings are presented in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6: FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 2, GROUP 1, TO THE DS

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
Good value for money	0.80930	-0.13322	-0.05389	0.14118
The store must appear modern	0.75745	-0.30939	0.17406	-0.43695
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	0.72612	0.10634	-0.18700	0.03436
Good security in the store	0.71608	-0.00156	-0.06117	-0.15962
A positive store image	0.66165	-0.03312	0.31046	0.01834
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	0.65574	0.06092	0.05839	0.15475
The store must be located in a safe area	0.64491	-0.19849	-0.06667	-0.29637
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	0.61597	0.19406	-0.30030	0.23828
Friendly shop assistants	0.59502	0.25430	0.14156	0.10086
A good return and exchange policy	0.56005	0.03334	-0.11221	0.01651
Efficient staff at pay points	0.55635	0.37116	-0.03001	0.13344
Well designed fitting rooms	0.52667	0.05964	0.14049	-0.13286
Products of excellent quality	0.51304	0.19733	0.31606	0.11972
A well organised store layout	0.51064	-0.04551	0.14859	0.21504
Store must be conveniently located	0.40353	-0.18790	-0.25112	0.12474
Practical, logic display of clothing	-0.02582	0.90297	0.00799	-0.10588
A large product variety/assortment	-0.31135	0.81733	-0.02016	-0.02378
A clean store	0.31222	0.68331	-0.13041	-0.09323
An aesthetically appealing store environment	0.14971	0.68150	0.09950	0.09413
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	-0.15900	0.66468	0.11573	-0.15389
A pleasant store atmosphere	0.34135	0.54280	0.02443	0.22725
A comfortable in-store temperature	0.33825	0.53416	0.05386	0.05852
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	0.31494	0.49613	-0.12773	-0.08557
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	0.45556	0.49145	0.04250	-0.07956
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	0.28169	0.48686	-0.05328	0.06981
Regular promotions	0.11559	-0.22408	0.13037	-0.00636
The shopping bag must display the Brand	-0.29058	0.04488	0.88033	0.03756
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	0.00738	0.13575	0.79816	0.13807
The shopping bag must be attractive	0.04568	-0.09549	0.77782	0.03362
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	-0.03870	-0.19692	0.75186	0.20597
Other people must notice the shopping bag	0.14535	-0.38085	0.75124	-0.05429
Availability of credit facilities	-0.06756	0.22239	0.58586	-0.01900
Fashionability of clothing items	0.24067	0.40453	0.56186	-0.31356
The shopping bag must be re-usable	0.02493	-0.16442	0.24842	0.87931
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	0.12221	-0.05050	-0.04730	0.83933
Mean	3.56	3.58	2.84	2.92
Std error of the mean	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.12
% Variance explained	14.69%	17.61%	35.48%	70.97%
Cronbach Alpha	0.90	0.87	0.86	-

Overall Mean is 3.39

- **Group 2, shopping encounter 2 at SBR:**

Findings for group 2's evaluation of the SBR after completion of the exercise at the DS, are presented in Table 5.7. Once again, respondents' shopping experience had been 'contaminated' by their prior experience in the DS (findings of the first visit to the DS are reflected in Table 5.5).

Based on their components, the four factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Place, physical environment & personnel
- **Factor 2: Packaging**
- Factor 3: Physical evidence of distinction and environmental concern
- Factor 4: Pace and processes

The Cronbach Alphas for all four factors are acceptable to high (> 0.70), which reflect consistency in the data.

In terms of the group 2 respondents' repeat shopping encounter at the SBR, packaging (factor 2) was considered more favourable ($M = 3.31$) compared to their evaluation of the same construct at the DS ($M = 2.62$), which suggests that after their exposure to, and experience with the format of the packaging at the DS during their first visit, they were very impressed with what they experienced at the SBR. During this visit all the means were >3.3 , which suggests that the respondents were impressed in general. In fact, their evaluation of factor 1, i.e. place, physical and personnel, reflected excellence ($M = 3.81$, $Max = 4$). Respondents' evaluation have probably been influenced (thus contaminated) by their first store visit to the DS which provided them with a point of reference.

Findings are presented in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7: FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 2, GROUP 2, TO THE SBR

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
Efficient staff at pay points	0.84155	-0.00837	-0.27691	0.06277
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	0.77946	-0.15601	0.04774	-0.07201
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	0.76810	0.08245	0.04765	-0.29049
Well designed fitting rooms	0.75198	0.18192	0.06164	-0.07856
A well organised store layout	0.68045	0.18372	0.10730	0.14605
Friendly shop assistants	0.66872	-0.22844	0.31077	-0.07053
A large product variety/assortment	0.61305	-0.08690	-0.05330	0.10552
A positive store image	0.55319	0.15800	0.22345	0.15791
A pleasant store atmosphere	0.43769	0.29286	-0.00900	0.35101
Good value for money	0.42402	0.05153	0.13039	0.11662
The shopping bag must display the Brand	-0.07747	0.83637	-0.00052	0.21632
Other people must notice the shopping bag	-0.08089	0.83172	0.08164	0.13033
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	0.08880	0.82284	-0.07093	-0.02893
The shopping bag must be attractive	-0.06020	0.80359	0.08853	0.11425
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	0.00590	0.79521	-0.05384	0.13405
Fashionability of clothing items	0.04193	0.61671	0.19119	-0.26297
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	0.17259	0.43407	0.37543	-0.17259
The store must appear modern	0.30306	0.32377	0.10248	0.09163
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	0.10085	-0.31357	0.30197	0.31212
A comfortable in-store temperature	-0.16032	0.18070	0.78311	-0.17992
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	0.02688	0.16236	0.74656	-0.04837
The shopping bag must be re-usable	0.00071	0.15964	0.63538	0.05501
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	0.34184	-0.11003	0.62339	-0.12190
Store must be conveniently located	-0.04070	0.24700	0.58213	0.05989
Good security in the store	-0.02170	-0.43310	0.49150	0.31947
A good return and exchange policy	0.41384	-0.16216	0.46578	-0.05021
The store must be located in a safe area	0.24461	0.02014	0.45821	0.22880
Availability of credit facilities	-0.15875	0.12975	-0.07389	0.66249
An aesthetically appealing store environment	0.07486	0.10156	-0.18161	0.65279
Regular promotions	-0.05825	-0.39566	0.43922	0.54376
A clean store	0.49892	-0.00497	-0.32676	0.50466
Products of excellent quality	-0.16615	0.20836	0.34437	0.49553
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	0.06409	0.10534	0.28204	0.48850
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	0.12174	0.33331	0.31097	0.35268
Practical, logic display of clothing	0.22753	0.20675	0.12233	0.22635
Mean	3.81	3.31	3.46	3.69
Std error of the mean	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.04
% Variance explained	8.06%	34.56%	21.17%	9.52%
Cronbach Alpha	0.88	0.87	0.83	0.70

Overall Mean = 3.57

As discussed in the literature review, packaging is traditionally seen as an integral part of the product decision of a retailer's marketing mix. Several authors have however, in the past, indicated that packaging has become important enough to become an entity on its own, i.e. an independent marketing construct. Reference is however specifically made to packaging in the pre-purchase context where it also conveys product information to the consumer and influences purchase behaviour, i.e. mostly referring to fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) (Keller, 1998 as cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006:101; Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Prendergast, Wai Ng & Leung, 2001:475; Lamb *et al*, 2004:240-241). The aim of this study which is unique, was to confirm the relevance of packaging as an independent marketing construct in the apparel retail context, where it is found in the form of a shopping bag that is provided to the consumer after the purchase has been made.

The first observation that can be made across all four of the data sets, is that the 'product' element of the marketing mix did not merge with packaging as expected in terms of what exiting literature about the marketing mix proposes. More so, the packaging construct was dispersed across other marketing mix elements. This happened throughout the factor analysis procedure, even when up to 10 factors were extracted. Out of the 35 items in the questionnaire, 7 items/components investigated respondents' perception of packaging as part of their in store experience, of which 2 of the 7 questions focused on the recyclability and reusability of packaging. Across all four data sets the five packaging items (not relating to reusability) stuck together while the reusability of packaging aligned themselves as an independent factor or with the 'processes' dimension. Components related to the packaging factor mostly also attracted one or two components related to the product- or physical evidence dimensions, specifically those that inferred quality or fashionability or being modern. It can be therefore be deduced that respondents associated the packaging used by the SBR or DS as an indication of the fashionability or quality of a retailer's service offering, and also registered this element as a physical evidence cue.

- **Comparing the service encounters at different stores (going from the SBR to the DS)**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging during their first service encounter at the SBR (M = 2.93) and their evaluation of packaging at the DS (2.84), packaging was evaluated fairly positively at the SBR. A 2-tailed paired t-test indicate that respondents' perceptions of packaging were statistically significantly different ($p = 0.0308$). Respondents therefore seemed significantly more impressed with the SBR's packaging. The overall mean across all 35 items was also lower for the DS (SBR: M = 3.48; DS: M = 3.39), which suggests that respondents' less favourable evaluation of packaging at the DS may influence their overall evaluation of the DS.

- **Comparing the service encounters at different stores (going from the DS to the SBR)**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging during their service encounters, packaging was evaluated fairly positively at the SBR ($M = 2.62$), but more favourably at the SBR ($M = 3.31$). A 2-tailed paired t-test indicate that respondents' perceptions of packaging were statistically significantly different ($p = <0.0001$). The overall mean across all 35 items was also lower for the DS (SBR: $M = 3.57$; DS: $M = 3.31$), which suggests that respondents' exposure to the packaging in the DS may have influenced their perceptions in the SBR favourably, also in terms of their overall evaluation of the SBR when they had a frame of reference to compare their encounter with .

- **Comparing the groups' first service encounters at dissimilar stores (group 1 at SBR, group 2 at DS)**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging during their first service encounters (group 1 at SBR; group 2 at DS) differences in respondents' evaluation were evident although a non-paired 2-tailed t-test indicated that differences are not statistically significant ($p = 0.2093$). Packaging was evaluated favourably at the SBR ($M = 2.93$) and less favourable at the DS ($M = 2.62$) although the non-paired 2-tailed t-test indicated that differences are not statistically significant. The overall means for the service encounter followed a similar pattern (SBR: $M = 2.93$; DS: Mean = 2.62). Although differences in the means for packaging were not statistically significant, it seems as if the packaging does influence consumers' perception of the service encounter as the mean for the service offering declined when the mean for packaging declined.

- **Comparing the groups' second service encounters at dissimilar stores (SBR versus DS)**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging during their second service encounters (group 1 at DS; group 2 at SBR) differences in respondents' evaluation were evident and a non-paired 2-tailed t-test indicated that differences are statistically significant ($p = <.0000$). Packaging was evaluated favourably at the SBR ($M = 3.31$) and although good, it was perceived less impressive at the DS ($M = 2.84$). The overall means for the service encounters followed a similar pattern (SBR: $M = 2.57$; DS: Mean = 3.39). It therefore seems as if the packaging does influence consumers' perception of the service encounter in a noteworthy way.

- **Comparing the service encounters of different groups at the SBR**

The next discussion around packaging as a marketing construct looks at the comparison between the visits to the SBR by group 1 as a first encounter, and by group 2 as a second encounter. When group 1 ($n = 52$) visited the SBR first with no contamination of their thoughts due to a similar experience elsewhere, the mean for packaging construct was $M = 2.93$ (Cronbach Alpha = 0.86). When group 2 visited the SBR after being exposed to the service offering of the DS, packaging was evaluated very favourably ($M = 3.31$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.87). According to a non-paired 2-tailed t-test the differences are however not statistically significant. It is interesting to note that respondents' evaluation of the same packaging in the

same retailer is more favourable after their exposure to the DS where the packaging format is much less sophisticated. This suggests that these respondents were impressed by the sturdy branded canvas shopping bag provided by the SBR after their exposure to the alternative. When aware of alternatives, consumers therefore judge service encounters differently. Overall means were $M = 3.48$ and $M = 3.57$ respectively, which means that respondents' evaluation of the service offering in the SBR was more favourably after exposure to the DS.

- **Comparing the two service encounters at the DS**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging at the DS (during first encounter for group 1 and during the second encounter for group 2), it brings to the attention that the uncontaminated evaluation for packaging when group 2 visited the DS for the first time, was average ($M = 2.62$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.88). When group 1 visited the DS after their visit to the SBR ($M = 2.84$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.86) respondents were less impressed with packaging than what they were with the other factors/elements. They however seemed more forgiving in terms of their evaluation of packaging in the DS during their second shopping encounter in the DS and the 2-tailed non-paired t-test indicated that differences are not statistically significant ($p = 0.9265$). Means for the service offering at the DS were very similar for both shopping encounters ($M = 3.31$; $M = 3.39$ respectively). Respondents therefore seemed consistent in their evaluation of the DS, irrespective of whether they visited the store first, or second.

Findings are presented more visually in Figure 5.4.

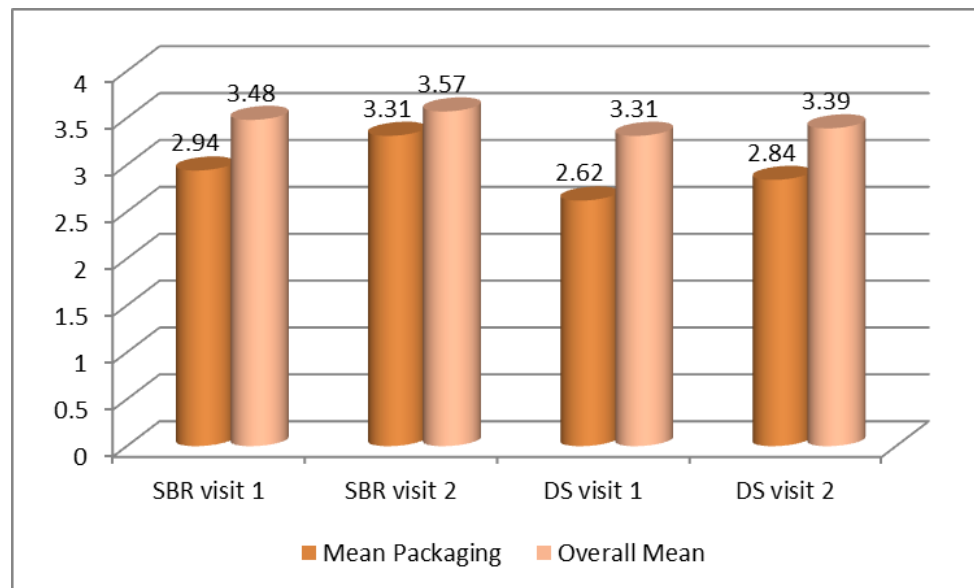


FIGURE 5.4: MEANS FOR THE VARIOUS SHOPPING ENCOUNTERS

A visual presentation of the means indicate that the SBR is evaluated more favourably than the DS (overall means) and that the packaging of the SBR is also evaluated more favourably. The most positive evaluation of packaging was by respondents who visited the SBR after they had been to the DS. This also resulted in the highest overall mean for the service encounter ($M = 3.57$), which by all standards, could be interpreted as excellent while the same respondents' evaluation of the DS during their first visit was above average for packaging ($M = 2.62$) and good for the store's service offering overall ($M = 3.31$). There therefore seems to be an order effect: respondents who visit the DS first, were much more impressed with the SBR. Those who went to the SBR first, seem more forgiving as they rated the service offering lower but were not very harsh.

5.2.3 The relevance of the environmental friendliness of packaging in consumers' perceptions

When looking at the respondents' evaluation of the environmental friendliness (reuse) of the different packaging formats, a comparison of the two uncontaminated evaluations indicate that those who visited the SBR first, evaluated both components of the construct positively ($M = 3.30$; $M = 2.87$; $M_{\max} = 4$). Group 2 ($n = 51$) that visited the DS first without any contamination from the SBR, evaluated the same items less favourably when judging the plastic bags ($M = 2.92$; $M = 2.75$). As previously mentioned, the SBR provided respondents with a high quality branded canvas bag, which could possibly be used repeatedly due to its durability and style. The DS on the other hand, only provides a thin plastic packet, with the generic DS branding. It can be said that these respondents believed that the sturdy canvas bags were more environmentally friendly, and that they would more likely reuse this in the future. Prendergast and co-workers (2001:476) mentioned that a plastic shopping bag may be reused an average of 1.6 times, whereas more durable options like a paper bag (or in this case a canvas bag), may be reused an average of 2.7 times. The results of this study is in accordance with these findings as the respondents seemed more willing to reuse the canvas bag provided by the SBR than the plastic shopping bag provided by the DS.

5.2.4 Consumers' perception of the contribution of packaging to brand equity

Brand equity was measured by means of a 34-item Likert-type scale compiled by Yoo *et al.* (2000:203). This model has not yet been used in the South African clothing retail context, but Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to confirm the internal consistency of the scales in the context of this study. Exploratory factor analysis was done to confirm the dimensions of the constructs (marketing mix; brand equity) in the context of this study (Yoo *et al.*, 2000:202). Four items relating to the fashion brand's packaging format/shopping bag in terms of its ability to strengthen brand equity were added to the measuring instrument. Each of the items intended to test the packaging construct related to a dimension of brand equity – brand awareness,

brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The internal validity of this scale was tested to confirm the suitability to this context.

The intention with this investigation was to establish whether the packaging format of a clothing retailer (in this context the shopping bags) has the potential to strengthen brand equity, i.e. to contribute value for the brand. Evidence might therefore show that retailers in the fashion industry should give more attention their shopping bags even if it seems a minor issue compared to all the others facets of the marketing mix.

The data collection procedure was the same as for the previous investigation, i.e. respondents completed the brand equity scale after every one of the two store visits as explained in the previous section. Group 1 (n = 52) visited the SBR first, where after this group repeated the experiment in the DS. Group 2 (n = 51) visited the DS first and repeated the experiment in the SBR. Therefore the analysis of the respondent’s perception of the elements that contribute to brand equity also resulted in four distinct data sets as seen below in Figure 5.5.

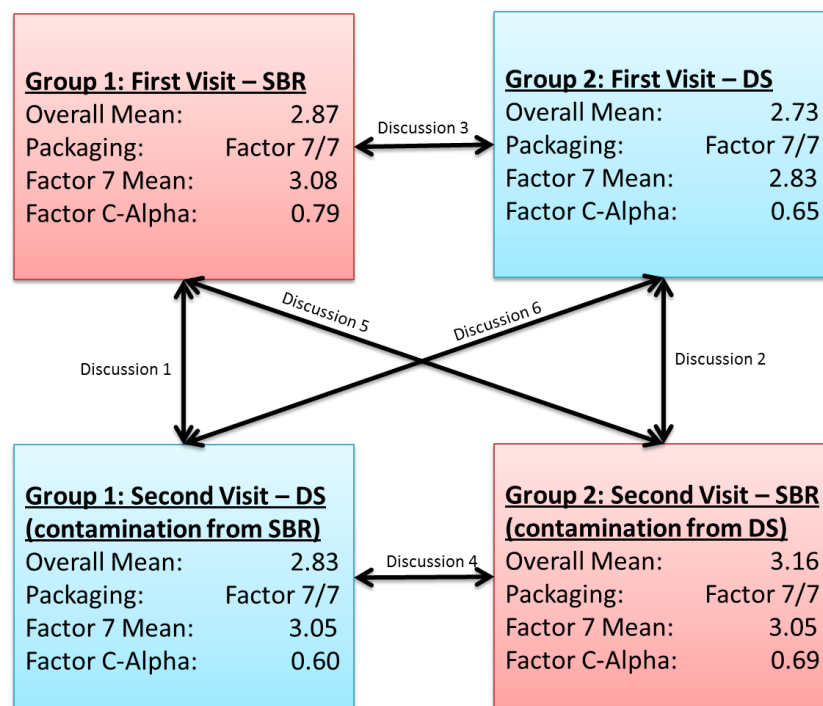


FIGURE 5.5: SEQUENCE OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDENTS' BRAND EQUITY ASSESSMENTS

Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Component Analysis was used with Procrustes rotation. Repeated analyses revealed that the 7 factor extrusion produced the best fit for the components in terms of the literature as well as the respective Cronbach Alphas. During the analysis, Brand Awareness and Brand Associations were grouped together as these two elements work together to establish the Brand’s Image in

the mind of the consumer (Yoo *et al*, 2000:197). Similarly, Distribution and Store Image also grouped together as all these items relate to the physical store, its location or the actual shop fittings. Advertising and Promotion also merged as a single construct, as most marketers group these elements under the umbrella of 'Promotion' when looking at the Marketing Mix (Jobber, 2010:18; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:28). Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity were also combined in one factor across all four data sets. This is seen as acceptable as 'Overall Brand Equity' is an ambiguous term that could relate to any of the four dimensions of Brand Equity (brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality).

Across all four data sets, the factors emerged in the same order, namely:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- Factor 7: Packaging

These factors were not entirely pure, but the groupings of items/components in each factor were regarded acceptable as the 'cross-pollination' between constructs occurred across all four data sets.

The brand equity investigation involved a four increment Likert-type 'Agreement scale' with the options: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly Agree. Therefore, the higher the mean of an element, the greater respondents' perception of its contribution to brand equity.

Figure 5.6 presents a graphic description of the data analysis procedure with the four sets of data, and how the discussion of the findings is structured when comparing the results between the retailers as well as the 'contaminated' and 'uncontaminated' groups. This figure also presents the overall mean for the components of a particular analysis, as well as the mean for the particular element 'Packaging', which forms the crux of this investigation and its related Cronbach Alpha. The discussion threads are as follows:

- Discussion 1: group 1 visit at SBR compared to their second visit at the DS
- Discussion 2: group 2 visit at DS compared to their second visit at the SBR
- Discussion 3: a comparison of the two groups' first visits, i.e. group 1 visit at SBR, compared to group 2 first visit at the DS
- Discussion 4: a comparison of the two groups' second visits after both had been 'contaminated' by the first experience, i.e. group 1 second visit (DS) compared to group 2 second visit (SBR)
- Discussion 5: a comparison of the two visits to the SBR, i.e. group 1 visit 1 compared to group 2 visit 2 (when their perceptions were 'contaminated' by their first visit)
- Discussion 6: a comparison of the two visits to the DS, i.e. group 2 visit 1 compared to group 1 visit 2 (when their perceptions were 'contaminated' by their first visit)

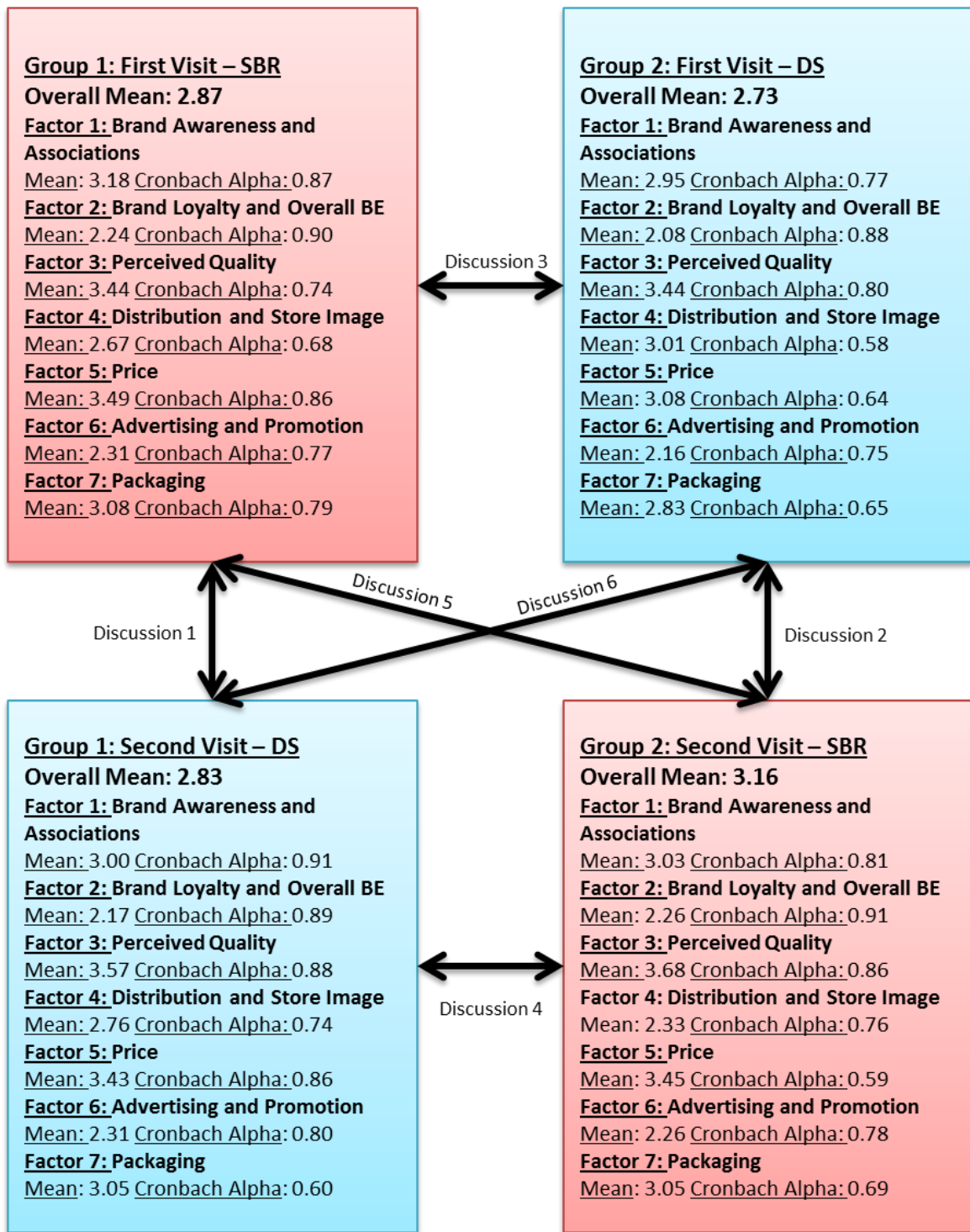


FIGURE 5.6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE BRAND EQUITY INVESTIGATION

- **Group 1, shopping encounter 1 at SBR:**

Table 5.8 presents the detail of the factor analysis procedure for the store visit of group 1 to the SBR.

TABLE 5.8: BRAND EQUITY FACTORS IDENTIFIED FOR VISIT 1, GROUP 1, TO THE SBR (DV2=1)

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	0.70297527	0.32083874	0.12354653	0.02980809	-0.0342552	0.12640882	0.18106349
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	0.68156006	-0.0818415	-0.0922042	-0.1246056	-0.2864636	0.03495948	0.38947182
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	0.67067743	0.1445738	-0.1842846	-0.0035361	0.06515446	-0.2765373	0.5559633
I know what Nine West looks like	0.64698797	0.29320148	0.01608204	0.08062379	0.12535507	0.34432797	0.08526404
I am aware of Nine West	0.6076984	0.26398316	-0.1523895	0.37793873	0.18298372	0.59102907	0.00736178
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	0.60530675	0.1400922	-0.04825	0.14363726	-0.0013814	0.06333238	0.64691881
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	0.58708591	0.3691124	0.23171721	-0.0174532	-0.0808898	0.21804998	0.12743851
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	0.05055128	0.86507613	-0.0677031	0.17058106	0.25370619	0.24271547	0.35925683
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	-0.010645	0.76764173	-0.1132622	0.31780478	0.06423201	0.15171898	0.63070677
Nine West would be my first choice	0.28266815	0.75747374	-0.080075	-0.3634663	-0.0015791	-0.1170868	0.36228397
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	0.23890299	0.75433755	-0.15128	0.06633707	0.01782368	0.0205649	0.34805721
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	0.27574939	0.74258575	0.03596034	-0.5346097	-0.2924522	-0.1920693	0.26324712
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	0.39974898	0.73700051	0.17190066	-0.0256925	-0.1059827	0.4052633	-0.1154449
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	0.37367857	0.70042818	0.20206035	-0.2904336	-0.2980335	0.1145343	0.10458711
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	0.54130563	0.67685795	0.1961952	-0.3780993	0.00564264	0.08992543	-0.1095597
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	0.01092464	0.05501435	0.88633005	-0.164409	0.07035917	-0.2303062	-0.1024223
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	-0.0170683	0.06983096	0.81678646	0.20752689	-0.0604729	-0.0049224	0.23118256
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	-0.0661844	-0.2463763	0.66193816	0.6395739	-0.5006685	0.46152724	-0.1418492
Nine West products must be of very good quality	0.01262345	-0.046945	0.60678986	-0.2066312	0.06961627	-0.134525	0.28271983
Nine West shoes are of high quality	0.36419046	0.04139602	0.59090986	0.34436418	0.27145661	0.03238388	0.13656604
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	-0.1433691	0.54126067	0.53568714	-0.4428202	0.25299562	0.26040376	-0.5509549
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	0.19941669	-0.232076	0.23791724	0.02645671	0.14003821	0.35828591	-0.2370086

Table 5.8 continued	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	0.06094144	-0.1837454	-0.0602686	1.11973683	0.09756768	0.16616153	0.17516199
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	-0.0502469	0.06840501	0.07302817	1.07548377	-0.0701673	0.62462363	-0.1678683
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	-0.4326446	-0.157684	0.17539546	1.05972528	-0.0247617	1.05710938	0.14969378
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	-0.2024004	-0.2309123	0.2007664	0.958219	0.31501985	0.72990793	0.18420779
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	0.12389084	0.23397021	0.0991331	0.89174599	0.11814924	0.37239842	-0.2143643
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	0.08637748	-0.1694269	-0.3036845	0.86990133	-0.0697472	0.46138064	0.09073643
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	0.33334873	-0.1003245	0.07178081	0.84648061	0.1976034	0.81913858	0.13905775
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	-0.2580133	0.30245667	0.03767691	0.70140618	-0.0298249	0.21749428	0.09336385
The price of Nine West shoes are high	-0.0229231	-0.0171435	-0.0503703	0.33506949	1.05166619	-0.1221113	0.08889707
Nine West shoes are expensive	-0.1223733	-0.06879	0.03536573	0.45802172	1.01141153	-0.21081	0.06211298
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	-0.187174	-0.0337828	0.07802638	0.00438388	0.85071115	-0.4980104	0.13997575
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	0.32212326	-0.0693437	-0.1100077	0.36369965	-0.2968202	1.27336674	-0.1600752
Nine West is intensively advertised	0.35255621	0.10102107	-0.0892416	0.39265077	-0.0146292	1.25702211	-0.26954
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	0.14791935	0.32329006	0.01504083	0.61941131	-0.3108203	1.07335434	0.05410074
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	0.26244402	-0.1506028	0.12386892	0.03310749	-0.0383251	-0.5301878	1.1117817
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	0.45064009	0.07014571	0.09064933	0.27295043	0.18247101	-0.2666871	0.92183567
Mean	3.18	2.24	3.44	2.67	3.49	2.31	3.08
Std error of the mean	0.08	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.07	0.08	0.09
% Variance explained	35.96%	41.22%	12.59%	9.44%	27.65%	32.42%	37.63%
Cronbach Alpha	0.87	0.90	0.74	0.68	0.86	0.77	0.79

Overall Mean is 2.87

Based on their components, the seven factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- **Factor 7: Packaging**

The Cronbach Alphas for all seven factors are acceptable to high (> 0.68), which reflect consistency in the data. In terms of the respondents' first visit to the SBR, packaging (factor 7) seems important to strengthen brand equity ($M = 3.08$) as it was perceived favourably ($M = >3$) along with Factors 1, 3 and 5, considering the overall mean of the construct brand equity ($M = 2.87$). Price (factor 5: $M = 3.49$) probably has the strongest influence.

- **Group 2, shopping encounter 1 at DS:**

Findings for the factor procedure of the data set of group 2 that went to the DS first are presented in Table 5.9. Based on their components, the seven factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- **Factor 7: Packaging**

The Cronbach Alpha (0.58) of factor 4 (Distribution and Store Image) is one of only two lousy Cronbach Alphas of the 28 factors across the four data sets. This could unfortunately not be resolved through repeated factor analysis. It was decided to retain it as is because the focus of the study was on packaging, its related components and their contribution towards brand equity. In terms of the respondents' first visit to the DS, packaging (factor 7) was considered second least impressive ($M = 2.83$) of the factors. At this stage it is apparent that the comparative mean for 'packaging' for this group's visit to the DS is lower, which suggests that their evaluation of this construct is still important as it contributed to negate the low means for factors 2 and 6 in terms of the overall mean for the brand equity of the DS ($M = 2.73$). Packaging therefore contributes favourably towards brand equity as is the case for the SBR.

Findings presented in Tables 5.8 and 5.9 reflect 'uncontaminated' data, i.e. respondents' evaluation of the stores without any prior experience of the shopping task or the questionnaire.

TABLE 5.9: BRAND EQUITY FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 1, GROUP 2, TO THE DS

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
I know what Nine West looks like	0.8810202	-0.004722	0.32281659	-0.134049	-0.2404991	0.08972014	0.0123618
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	0.73552037	0.2205359	0.29615114	-0.0857791	-0.0661979	0.18457536	0.05340879
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	0.63142594	0.08714711	-0.3983013	-0.1116003	-0.2759142	0.02385267	0.24567168
I am aware of Nine West	0.59382754	-0.0989848	0.33377073	0.14044965	0.13267489	0.05059092	0.26021603
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	0.57413055	0.26486319	0.30027785	-0.0338001	-0.4797606	-0.1906415	-0.0074829
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	0.48052727	0.44778929	-0.1422883	-0.1753625	-0.4817896	-0.1325892	0.1783136
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	0.16213173	1.10137121	0.01525431	-0.0180407	-0.0470484	-0.1305789	0.80964529
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	-0.0627421	1.07321314	0.09808912	-0.0240419	0.08955311	0.04174542	0.85544247
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	0.15288669	0.97902122	-0.1618103	0.13691003	0.07767266	-0.0594923	0.78496563
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	0.22972864	0.6451113	-0.0337357	0.23045245	-0.3435943	0.07889243	0.15291156
Nine West would be my first choice	0.3290677	0.57052059	0.11522966	-0.0743684	-0.2226239	0.16795519	0.26429451
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	0.34195104	0.54564953	0.03313209	0.06718485	-0.0804262	0.06054317	-0.1396519
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	0.25100447	0.75532055	0.05553987	0.14489853	-0.085846	-0.2263949	0.68160869
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	0.22486278	0.9024091	0.07718642	0.11665554	-0.1069681	-0.0916193	0.25444145
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	-0.1090012	0.20882503	0.84893858	-0.1665312	0.1093114	-0.0601961	0.51500566
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	0.12431032	0.07404572	0.8026054	-0.2084437	0.10563166	0.13865672	0.22869251
Nine West shoes are of high quality	0.21602613	0.21137467	0.69894344	0.0105432	0.08938732	0.04924578	0.56896494
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	0.31888667	0.11819334	0.6897733	0.11933292	0.23300778	-0.0225746	0.04871855
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	0.18410077	-0.4684845	0.63423092	-0.0859224	0.24572828	-0.0805629	-0.1433226
Nine West products must be of very good quality	0.09923674	-0.0337709	0.62837922	0.40196889	0.21224729	-0.0982983	0.43904953
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	0.36477972	0.21219595	0.42091022	0.15842471	0.12561252	-0.2923937	0.3916612
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	-0.1334411	-0.1249004	0.26327146	0.77516725	-0.1583632	0.19747018	0.03804005
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	-0.1244736	-0.3127053	-0.1435205	0.74106037	0.23042354	0.15420457	0.13594814
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	0.22845039	0.52766388	-0.2400883	0.54085281	0.25414252	0.0662074	-0.1424941
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	-0.2812071	-0.0371167	0.19176917	0.40969666	-0.3348837	0.21252231	0.38818393

Table 5.9 continued	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
The price of Nine West shoes are high	-0.5478917	0.17313393	0.0878969	0.281076	0.967236	-0.2095369	0.10787267
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	-0.2706032	-0.2958828	0.35975985	-0.1089496	0.7828836	-0.3042573	-0.0063088
Nine West shoes are expensive	-0.2317266	-0.4517032	0.20444738	0.21393352	0.77432974	-0.0868576	0.20744718
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	0.13817423	0.35335327	-0.0756398	0.47051724	0.48840588	0.27071507	0.1211854
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	-0.1752626	0.27160402	-0.0467106	0.21326821	-0.2212966	0.68391608	-0.2995902
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	-0.0213324	-0.1797218	0.03703538	0.50464734	-0.2881165	0.65702539	-0.4174913
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	-0.3169662	0.25741005	0.0746846	0.10243948	-0.1635912	0.63394513	-0.147141
Nine West is intensively advertised	0.14970379	-0.0797555	0.01685325	0.34557927	-0.0639293	0.62498989	0.2185069
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	0.45604354	0.18310373	-0.1608592	0.20723023	-0.2384356	0.57791562	0.3206553
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	-0.1673998	-0.1671436	-0.0004622	0.04868404	-0.0126535	0.56106298	0.43115706
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	-0.1532027	0.17027061	0.08142313	0.37779633	0.16157583	0.53475443	-0.0466728
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	-0.0444656	0.88349741	0.02371514	0.10323459	0.17253642	0.06291178	0.89929736
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	-0.0923193	0.21653312	0.25405612	-0.1998874	0.00236387	0.5006841	0.67797345
Mean	2.95	2.08	3.44	3.01	3.08	2.16	2.83
Std error of the mean	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.11
% Variance explained	29.90%	34.55%	19.54%	15.49%	16.12%	17.66%	60.67%
Cronbach Alpha	0.77	0.88	0.80	0.58	0.64	0.75	0.65

Overall Mean = 2.73

- **Group 1, shopping encounter 2 at DS:**

The second part of the experiment involved a repeat of the former exercise, but at a different type of store (DS) that offered the same brand as the SBR. Findings for group 1's evaluation of the DS after completion of the exercise at the SBR, are presented in Table 5.10. It must be remembered that their shopping experience at this point, had been 'contaminated' by their prior experience in the SBR (findings of the first visit are reflected in Table 5.8).

Based on their components, the seven factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- **Factor 7: Packaging**

The Cronbach Alphas for all four factors (> 0.60) reflect acceptable consistency in the data.

In terms of the group 1 respondents' repeat shopping encounter at the DS, packaging (factor 7) was again evaluate favourably (M = 3.05) along with a favourable perception of the Price construct (M = 3.43). It must be kept in mind that the students were not really accustomed to the prices of the SBR. The mean for 'packaging' as a contributor to brand equity is similar for both stores (SBR: M = 3.08; DS: M =3.05). Irrespective of the type of store, means indicate that packaging does add value to brand equity.

Findings are presented in Table 5.10.

TABLE 5.10: BRAND EQUITY FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 2, GROUP 1, TO THE DS (D2V2=1)

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	1.55789333	0.10768881	0.10134083	-0.1614729	0.10776538	-0.0316758	1.22652539
I know what Nine West looks like	1.4598548	0.17036847	-0.0542799	0.02989158	0.12748427	0.28080119	0.99063114
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	1.26202155	0.12255081	0.17190182	0.1319556	-0.0382043	0.23459254	0.97986505
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	1.15730114	0.12087944	0.24072474	-0.0954298	-0.1050179	0.37725538	0.51454803
I am aware of Nine West	0.99137614	0.01642949	0.05343582	-0.0224309	0.18653651	0.37043038	0.19441968
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	0.95970396	0.4571818	0.09724141	-0.30166	-0.2475129	0.1744617	0.25891641
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	1.16246836	0.05990058	0.0636266	0.25400073	-0.0818955	0.15730776	1.04100928
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	0.42575369	0.79676878	0.03126961	-0.3184674	0.02735919	0.10490988	0.24896335
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	0.40257265	0.78709271	-0.0461051	-0.3481345	-0.1292486	0.22997953	0.07807259
Nine West would be my first choice	0.59090094	0.78350455	0.04160057	-0.2128382	0.06799322	-0.2810919	0.72424606
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	0.33361482	0.75223319	0.00306054	0.20763985	0.19502881	0.02044747	0.31759143
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	0.3963659	0.73376619	0.0288725	-0.0209065	-0.1659272	0.48955628	-0.1363325
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	0.00829333	0.71475256	-0.1181587	0.517126	-0.0633434	0.08514268	0.45952526
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	0.63006533	0.6092617	-0.0108777	0.09306432	0.01244266	-0.3950338	0.72872138
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	-0.003826	-0.0277647	1.03443586	0.0045001	-0.0819703	0.15966786	-0.5357009
Nine West products must be of very good quality	-0.0506228	0.06621137	1.01239827	-0.0722435	0.10502912	0.25954703	-0.7868174
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	0.24210608	-0.1033075	0.95220412	0.26067884	-0.0360868	-0.141088	0.34723793
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	0.51959397	0.00101417	0.95164072	-0.2753345	0.09388099	-0.217464	0.00846577
Nine West shoes are of high quality	0.44362729	0.05101988	0.71695318	0.30058994	0.11579273	-0.2140176	0.25516662
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	-0.1683707	-0.1032562	0.16356805	1.29885795	-0.3733753	0.05733189	0.74525431
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	-0.0856799	-0.0905772	0.02804981	1.22178942	-0.3311334	0.31509019	0.73046674
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	-0.5137283	0.14382776	0.16557182	1.16284829	0.30972439	0.36563839	0.48114009
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	-0.3341637	-0.1064394	0.28961256	1.03064456	0.16551729	0.71107884	-0.100705
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	0.00438985	0.16525526	-0.0333202	0.99364838	-0.0182378	0.20335198	1.04630807
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	0.60505162	-0.1171606	-0.1757698	0.7155736	0.14110973	0.77985597	0.35241664
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	-0.4430513	0.23948287	0.06463986	0.64890461	0.03963095	0.17782784	-0.5108018
The price of Nine West shoes are high	0.31180072	-0.1564212	0.0866994	-0.0066788	0.90224681	0.01284085	0.40103901
Nine West shoes are expensive	-0.2067123	-0.0611769	0.13793126	0.3184462	0.87282103	0.1822772	0.06188348
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	0.52939999	-0.0927958	0.02875221	-0.4528505	0.85547415	-0.1182433	0.23216998

Table 5.10 continued	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	0.18104019	0.22227298	-0.0047702	0.42553129	-0.0257054	1.44218197	-0.3394981
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	0.3899167	-0.1754362	-0.1996554	0.05006217	0.13282211	1.4026752	-0.5142211
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	0.2588571	0.06492571	0.01180318	0.1681565	-0.0372002	1.38670666	-0.3895643
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	-0.2548115	0.00057521	0.06652932	0.35076185	-0.002628	1.25615183	-1.2325472
Nine West is intensively advertised	0.70421069	0.06521732	-0.1243216	0.42540827	-0.0576102	0.84572798	0.59180781
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	0.99393652	-0.1716814	0.2395207	0.34960509	0.01598855	-0.6572371	1.72721453
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	0.12925243	-0.0682396	-0.2511825	0.50620037	0.24718382	-0.1455784	1.45378407
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	0.74041204	-0.0383675	0.25225259	0.08835442	0.03178581	-0.642466	1.41349664
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	0.51585088	0.01938806	0.12008034	0.42814834	0.08551465	-0.1691683	0.87581799
Mean	3.00	2.17	3.57	2.76	3.43	2.31	3.05
Std error of the mean	0.09	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.07
% Variance explained	41.98%	37.56%	18.00%	16.00%	29.78%	34.73%	26.06%
Cronbach Alpha	0.91	0.89	0.88	0.74	0.86	0.80	0.60

Overall Mean is 2.83

- **Group 2, shopping encounter 2 at SBR:**

Findings for group 2's evaluation of the SBR after completion of the exercise at the DS, are presented in Table 5.11. Once again, respondents' shopping experience had been 'contaminated' by their prior experience in the DS (findings of the first visit to the DS are reflected in Table 5.9).

Based on their components, the seven factors were labeled as follows:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- **Factor 7: Packaging**

The Cronbach Alpha (0.59) of factor 5 (Price) is one of only two lousy Cronbach Alpha of the twenty-eight factors for Sections D & D2 across the four data sets. This could unfortunately not be resolved through repeated factor analysis. It was decided to retain it as is because the focus of the study was on packaging, its related components and their contribution towards brand equity.

In terms of the group 2 respondents' repeat shopping encounter at the SBR, packaging (factor 7) was considered more favourable ($M = 3.05$) compared to their evaluation of the same construct in terms of its contribution towards brand equity at the DS ($M = 2.83$), which suggests that after their exposure to, and experience with the format of the packaging at the DS during their first visit, they were very impressed with what they experienced at the SBR. Based on the means, packaging does influence brand equity. In this investigation, the means for packaging consistently negated dimensions of the construct that were judged less favourably. At the SBR, Perceived Quality reflected excellence ($M = 3.68$). This mean is the highest for all 28 factors across four data sets. Respondents' evaluation have probably been influenced (thus contaminated) by their first store visit to the DS which provided them with a point of reference.

Findings are presented in Table 5.11.

TABLE 5.11: BRAND EQUITY FACTORS PRODUCED FOR VISIT 2, GROUP 2, TO THE SBR (D2V2=2)

Components	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	0.70597	0.36871	0.22530	-0.19913	-0.01773	0.36952	-0.31856
I am aware of Nine West	0.69185	0.08198	0.19481	-0.22512	0.05315	-0.12334	0.15956
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	0.61342	-0.17095	0.35091	0.18910	-0.22699	-0.34659	-0.20460
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	0.60815	0.01667	0.00538	0.02294	-0.35996	0.31235	-0.23196
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	0.57733	0.03300	-0.11056	-0.09422	-0.09370	0.39258	-0.00441
I know what Nine West looks like	0.51723	0.31818	-0.05591	-0.00159	0.27545	0.03861	0.31097
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	0.33277	0.26155	0.26599	0.30173	-0.05879	0.31366	-0.10489
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	0.09491	0.97170	0.16763	-0.09203	-0.04415	0.00086	0.23710
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	0.08014	0.96625	0.21848	-0.09158	-0.06958	0.08521	0.01924
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	0.14194	0.80037	0.14640	0.13613	0.01397	0.11440	0.16870
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	0.20706	0.57799	-0.00694	-0.31623	-0.24856	0.28864	0.16630
Nine West would be my first choice	0.40487	0.52473	-0.08152	-0.22662	-0.04055	0.14640	0.31905
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	0.13890	0.41589	-0.12571	0.08904	-0.17729	0.38959	0.27228
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	0.12225	0.70030	0.21116	0.05643	-0.07105	-0.04954	0.44089
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	-0.27899	-0.18783	0.63075	0.47482	0.10014	0.38392	0.09663
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	-0.27643	-0.18324	0.55219	0.49165	0.07916	0.53140	-0.00646
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	0.16119	0.18256	0.89484	0.00306	0.18330	0.09020	0.02858
Nine West shoes are of high quality	0.20101	0.15359	0.88981	0.00384	0.00934	-0.05893	-0.27162
Nine West products must be of very good quality	0.20400	-0.03269	0.85040	0.05505	0.24159	-0.01443	-0.01845
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	0.16747	-0.12962	0.76142	0.25152	0.10273	0.03437	-0.04148
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	-0.03410	0.35004	0.58585	-0.12042	-0.21611	0.02772	0.19466
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	0.01500	-0.17419	0.44988	0.30295	0.19550	-0.10160	0.43052
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	-0.09005	-0.07879	-0.12392	0.82774	-0.20523	0.22241	0.05949
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	0.33514	-0.13686	-0.28973	0.63907	0.02232	0.25771	-0.01163
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	0.13007	0.16061	-0.34664	0.51107	0.20592	0.40428	-0.09683
The price of Nine West shoes are high	-0.17545	-0.23882	0.05777	-0.02268	0.82066	0.01496	-0.05310
Nine West shoes are expensive	-0.30936	-0.20683	0.00416	-0.09744	0.69240	-0.02060	0.11344
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	0.09646	-0.18393	0.46078	-0.03167	0.62012	-0.07825	-0.14471
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	-0.12418	-0.33955	0.26699	0.45022	-0.41080	-0.18314	0.30037

Table 5.11 continued	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	-0.34109	0.29155	-0.18459	0.22426	0.01040	0.74069	-0.28669
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	0.03920	0.03894	0.06130	0.37196	-0.25523	0.71005	0.08028
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	0.40195	0.08665	0.00075	0.09071	0.10657	0.64325	0.06579
Nine West is intensively advertised	0.43696	0.10447	0.10275	0.15961	0.14870	0.56451	0.11575
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	-0.30584	0.44618	-0.27095	0.12099	-0.04212	0.55153	-0.09515
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	-0.09736	0.11307	0.15394	0.15379	0.11966	0.07144	0.77597
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	0.22814	0.21789	0.06770	0.12474	-0.12985	-0.27340	0.62817
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	0.17593	0.56228	-0.03481	-0.02229	-0.07276	-0.02403	0.59028
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	-0.17487	0.40257	0.13454	-0.01121	-0.00018	0.02051	0.46796
Mean	3.03	2.26	3.68	2.33	3.45	2.26	3.05
Std error of the mean	0.07	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.08
% Variance explained	27.09%	45.17%	13.45%	22.22%	15.50%	24.72%	33.25%
Cronbach Alpha	0.81	0.91	0.86	0.76	0.59	0.78	0.69

Overall Mean is = 3.16

As discussed in the literature review, packaging in the fashion retail context (shopping bags) have the ability to act as a marketing vehicle, branding tool, tool to promote recycling and facilitate non-verbal communication by providing social visibility to the consumer (Sirgy, 1982:287-288; Prendergast *et al*, 2001:475-476, Bickle, 2009:49). The aim of Sections D and D2 in the questionnaire was to establish the potential contribution of Packaging to brand equity, and also to compare the levels of contribution between Packaging provided in a SBR and a DS.

- **Comparing the first brand equity assessment at different stores (SBR versus DS)**

When comparing respondents' perception of the potential of packaging to contribute to brand equity during their first service encounters (group 1 at SBR; group 2 at DS), packaging was evaluated fairly positively at the SBR (M = 3.08) and lower at the DS (M = 2.83), i.e. without being influenced respondents were somewhat less impressed with the packaging in terms of its potential to strengthen ability of the packaging of the DS to promote the equity of the brand. The overall mean across all 38 items was also slightly lower for the DS (SBR: M = 2.87; DS: M = 2.73).

- **Comparing the second brand equity assessment at different stores (SBR versus DS)**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging during their second brand equity assessment (group 1 at DS; group 2 at SBR) no differences were evident as the Packaging was evaluated similarly in the two contexts (M = 3.05). In terms of the DS evaluation, the packaging does seem to boost brand equity as the mean (M = 3.08) surpasses the overall mean for the brand equity construct (M = 2.83). At the SBR, the mean contributes to the positive brand equity evaluation, although in this case, the overall mean is higher than the mean for Packaging, which suggests that other factors such as Perceived Quality and Price may be more influential.

- **Comparing the two brand equity assessments at the SBR**

The next discussion around packaging as a strategic tool to promote brand equity looks at the comparison between the visits to the SBR by group 1 as a first encounter, and by group 2 as a second encounter. When group 1 (n = 52) visited the SBR first with no contamination of their thoughts due to a similar experience elsewhere, the mean for packaging construct was M = 3.08 (Cronbach Alpha = 0.79). When group 2 visited the SBR after being exposed to the service offering of the DS, packaging was evaluated similarly (M = 3.05; Cronbach Alpha = 0.69). The overall mean was however higher for the SBR during respondents visit after exposure to a DS, which suggests that the brand equity of the SBR is more favourable, and that it is strengthened when consumers are able to compare the retail setting with another where they can find the same brands.

- **Comparing the two brand equity assessments at the DS**

When comparing respondents' evaluation of the potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity at the DS (during first encounter for group 1 and during the second encounter for group 2, the 'uncontaminated' evaluation for packaging when group 2 visited the DS for the first time, was: $M = 2.83$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.65. When group 1 visited the DS after their visit to the SBR, packaging was evaluated slightly more favourable ($M = 3.05$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.60). The respondents' therefore seemed less critical/ more forgiving after their experience at the SBR. Means representing the overall brand equity assessment at the DS were very similar for both shopping encounters ($M = 2.73$; $M = 2.83$ respectively). Respondents therefore seemed consistent in their evaluation of the overall brand equity assessment in the DS, irrespective of whether they visited the store first, or second.

5.2.5 Consumers' regret after the service encounter

Existing literature suggests that branding might reduce *cognitive dissonance*, which is often experienced after an important or an expensive purchase (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010:293). As packaging in the clothing retail context has been proven as an effective branding tool, it may be inferred that packaging used in the clothing retail context (shopping bags) has the ability to reduce cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is defined as the thoughts of concern that occur post-purchase, especially in terms of products that involve threats, such as social- and financial risks. These thoughts of doubt create uncertainty, i.e. doubt about the appropriateness of the purchase decision (Jobber, 2010:137). Dissonance may result from various sources of concern, for example concern about the price paid; because multiple choice criteria and/or product alternatives with different advantages and disadvantages had to be taken into consideration; because the purchase is final with no option to reverse the transaction, and/or simply because of uncertainty. Cognitive dissonance is mostly associated with high involvement purchases as these types of purchases adhere to most of the aforementioned circumstances (Jobber, 2010:117). The consumer then craves reassurance and actively searches for information to rationalise the purchase (George & Yaoyuneyong, 2010:291). The benefits provided by an appealing shopping bag that symbolises status and provides social visibility may help to reduce cognitive dissonance, because the consumer takes the branded packaging home and can be constantly reminded about the benefits of the specific brand relative to others, or the positive in-store shopping experience (Bickle, 2009:48). By reducing cognitive dissonance, a consumer can be "fast tracked" to experience satisfaction with the purchase. Satisfaction may result in repeat purchases and may ultimately result in brand loyalty. By strengthening brand loyalty, shopping bags can thus contribute to brand equity.

The Regret Experience Measure (REM) composed by Creyer and Ross (1999) was used to determine the level of cognitive dissonance that respondents experienced after their purchases were made. Items referring to packaging were inserted to determine whether packaging could help to alleviate feelings of regret. As discussed previously, two respondent groups visited two stores, a SBR and a DS in the reverse order. The respondents visited the stores as below:

- Analysis 1: Group 1's visit to the SBR (no contamination)
- Analysis 2: Group 2's visit to the DS (no contamination)
- Analysis 3: Group 1's visit to the DS which followed their visit to the SBR.
- Analysis 4: Group 2's visit to the SBR which followed their visit to the DS.

TABLE 5.12: FEELING OF REGRET FOLLOWING GROUP 1'S FIRST VISIT TO THE SBR (EV2=1)

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Min	Max	Cr Alpha
I regret my choice	3.58	0.54	186.00	2.00	4.00	0.83
I really feel good about my choice	3.50	0.61	182.00	2.00	4.00	0.84
I think I made an error in judgement	3.48	0.54	181.00	2.00	4.00	0.83
I knew that I should have chosen differently	3.42	0.50	178.00	3.00	4.00	0.81
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	3.40	0.50	177.00	3.00	4.00	0.81
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	3.40	0.50	177.00	3.00	4.00	0.81
Before I received outcome feedback (i.e. comments of others), I knew that I made an excellent decision	3.31	0.51	172.00	2.00	4.00	0.82
Before I should have chosen differently	3.04	0.68	158.00	1.00	4.00	0.85
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	2.94	0.87	153.00	1.00	4.00	0.88
OVERALL MEAN	3.34					0.81

The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable in the first data set (n = 52) as all Cronbach Aphas reflected values of between 0.81 and 0.88. The overall Mean ($M_{max} = 4$) for the scale ($M = 3.34$) indicates that the respondents experienced considerable regret after their shopping experience. This is understandable as the prices at the SBR were higher than what most were prepared to pay from their own pockets.

TABLE 5.13: FEELING OF REGRET FOLLOWING GROUP 2'S FIRST VISIT TO THE DS (EV2=2)

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Min	Max	Cr Alpha
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	2.98	0.47	152.00	2.00	4.00	0.90
I really feel good about my choice	2.96	0.80	151.00	1.00	4.00	0.87
I regret my choice	2.94	0.76	150.00	1.00	4.00	0.87
I think I made an error in judgement	2.94	0.65	150.00	1.00	4.00	0.88
I knew that I should have chosen differently	2.92	0.66	149.00	1.00	4.00	0.88
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	2.90	0.67	148.00	1.00	4.00	0.88
Before I received outcome feedback (i.e. comments of others), I knew that I made an excellent decision	2.88	0.55	147.00	2.00	4.00	0.89
Before I should have chosen differently	2.69	0.65	137.00	1.00	4.00	0.89
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	2.45	0.99	125.00	1.00	4.00	0.92
OVERALL MEAN	2.85					0.88

The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable in the second data set ($n = 51$; Cronbach Aphas: > 0.87). The overall Mean ($M = 2.85$), indicates that the respondents were less regretful compared to their visit to the SBR, although they purchased the same brand of shoes. Jobber (2010:137) mentions that cognitive dissonance may occur as a result of financial risks. It can be said that the consumer experienced less regret in the DS, as this specific retailer is well-known for providing customers with the opportunity to purchase on revolving credit which does not include interest. This may alleviate stress surrounding the consumers' perception of the financial risk of buying an expensive product, as purchasing on credit allows the consumer to pay the purchase off over a few months (the specific DS offers a 6 months interest free option for credit purchases). The SBR also offers a credit option, but the awareness of this service is very low, as it doesn't carry the same name of the brand. Jobber (2010:117) states that the availability of many choice alternatives may also result in cognitive dissonance. The SBR offers a larger variety of styles and colour options than what you will find in the small product bay of the brand in a DS and this may also have influenced their cognitive dissonance.

TABLE 5.14: FEELING OF REGRET FOLLOWING GROUP 1'S SECOND VISIT TO THE DS (E2V2=1)

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Min	Max	Cr Alpha
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	3.12	0.73	162.00	1.00	4.00	0.93
I really feel good about my choice	3.08	0.84	160.00	1.00	4.00	0.93
I regret my choice	3.04	0.79	158.00	1.00	4.00	0.92
Before I received outcome feedback (i.e. comments of others), I knew that I made an excellent decision	3.04	0.71	158.00	1.00	4.00	0.93
I think I made an error in judgement	3.02	0.75	157.00	1.00	4.00	0.92
I knew that I should have chosen differently	3.00	0.84	156.00	1.00	4.00	0.93
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	3.00	0.84	156.00	1.00	4.00	0.92
Before I should have chosen differently	2.87	0.82	149.00	1.00	4.00	0.94
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	2.33	0.86	121.00	1.00	4.00	0.96
OVERALL MEAN	2.94					0.94

This discussion reflects on group 1's second shopping encounter at the DS after they had already been to the SBR, where their regret seemed substantial. The Cronbach Alphas for the individual items were high (>0.92) and the overall mean for this scale ($M = 2.94$) is notably lower than their regret after their shopping experience at the SBR ($M = 3.34$). Their level of regret is also slightly higher than the level of regret of the respondents who went to the DS first ($M = 2.85$). As discussed, regret may be caused by multiple factors. The DS is well-known for its promotional cadence and the general perception might be that you may receive the same brand/product at a lower price (as there might be a promotion running) at the DS. When purchasing the same brand, consumers therefore may have experienced lower levels of regret when shopping at the DS compared to shopping at the SBR from the same product. I could be that the context of the SBR is more intimidating.

TABLE 5.15: FEELING OF REGRET FOLLOWING GROUP 2'S SECOND VISIT TO THE SBR (E2V2=2)

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Min	Max	Cr Alpha
I regret my choice	3.49	0.61	178.00	2.00	4.00	0.83
I really feel good about my choice	3.37	0.82	172.00	1.00	4.00	0.85
I think I made an error in judgement	3.35	0.77	171.00	1.00	4.00	0.83
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	3.33	0.71	170.00	1.00	4.00	0.83
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	3.27	0.80	167.00	1.00	4.00	0.84
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	3.24	0.79	165.00	1.00	4.00	0.89
Before I received outcome feedback (i.e. comments of others), I knew that I made an excellent decision	3.22	0.76	164.00	1.00	4.00	0.82
I knew that I should have chosen differently	3.16	0.81	161.00	1.00	4.00	0.83
Before I should have chosen differently	2.86	0.80	146.00	1.00	4.00	0.84
OVERALL MEAN	3.25					0.85

The fourth data set represents the group who visited the SBR after their first visit to the DS (Table 5.15). As mentioned previously, the group who visited the SBR without contamination was notably regretful ($M = 3.34$). All the Cronbach Alphas were >0.82 , which confirms the internal consistency of the scale. The overall mean for this scale ($M = 3.25$) indicates that when the group purchased the same brand at the SBR, their level of regret increased substantially (Mean difference: 0.49). Cognitive dissonance is mostly associated with high involvement purchases (Jobber, 2010:117). Despite the favourable impression created by the SBR as discussed earlier, consumers experienced higher levels of regret after their visit to the SBR. This may be an excellent motivation for the SBR to offer their merchandise in DS as well, because a feeling of anxiety can discourage future purchases.

George and Yaoyuneyong (2010:291) explain that after a transaction has been concluded, consumers actively search for information to justify their purchases because they crave reassurance that the correct decision was made. Bickle (2009:48) states that post purchase packaging (in the form of a shopping bag) in the fashion industry, serves to remind the customer about all the benefits of purchasing the product and of their pleasant shopping in the branded fashion store. One of the objectives of this study was to determine if premium, branded packaging had the potential to alleviate cognitive dissonance in the female apparel context, to ultimately create value for the consumer in this way. As discussed previously, during the respondents' visits to the SBR, they were presented with a premium fabric tote bag carrying the fashion brand's logo. When the respondents visited the DS they were presented with the generic plastic packaging used for all purchased (branded or unbranded) that only carries the name of the DS. After making inferences from the extant literature, it was anticipated that the visits to the SBR with the premium branded packaging will show lower levels of regret in relation to the visits to the DS with the generic packaging. This was however not the case as both the visits to the SBR (not contaminated as well as contaminated by experiences in an alternative outlet), evoked higher levels of regret compared to the visits to the DS (not contaminated and contaminated). This could indicate that feelings of uncertainty sprouting from too many alternatives and financial risks, far outweigh the pleasure of taking

home a good quality product in premium packaging in the case of this study. These results may also be influenced by the fact that respondents only conducted mock-purchases, which may have altered their true feelings of regret as they were not expected to spend their own money (therefore their only true sacrifice was time and the burden of comparing alternatives and making the product selection). A recommendation for future research may be to question true shoppers who patronise the brand, in order to get a better idea of the level of cognitive dissonance experienced for the same brand in different retail settings in the context of female apparel retail.

Findings are visually summarised in Figure 5.7

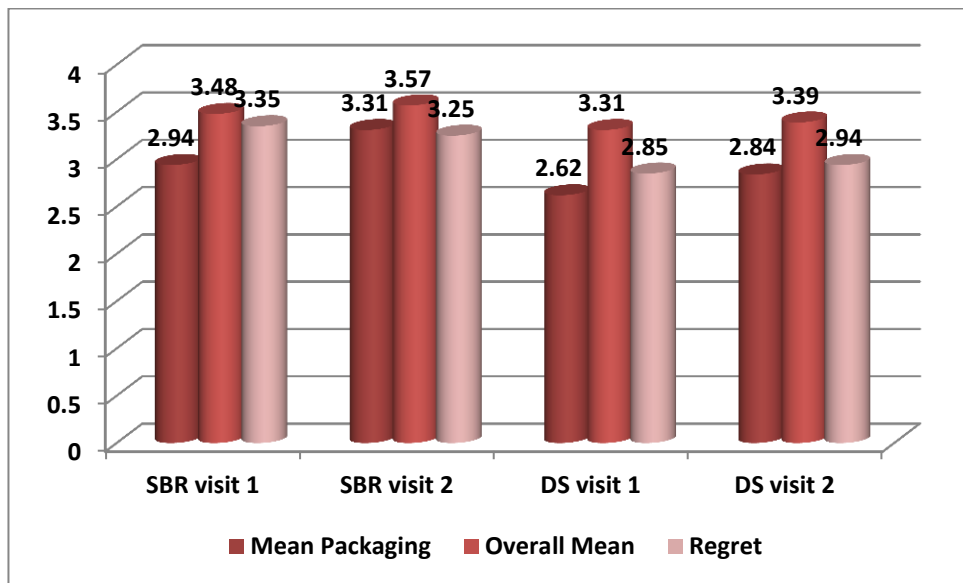


FIGURE 5.7: SUMMARY OF MEANS FOR THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE AS WELL AS CONSUMERS' POST PURCHASE REGRET

5.3 SUMMARY

The data was collected by using convenience sampling methods, and the self-completion of a structured questionnaire after respondents acted as mystery shoppers at a Single Brand Retailer (SBR) and a Department Store (DS) that carry the same footwear brand in a major shopping centre in this metropolitan.

The SBR offered consumers a branded high quality canvas tote bag after purchase, whereas the DS offered consumers a generic plastic bag. Respondents visited the two retailers in two groups, where the experiment was conducted in reverse order to explore the possibility of an order effect. The experiment was completed by 103 willing female final year students from the University of Pretoria. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, Principle Component analysis using PROMAX and PROCRUSTES rotation, Means and Cronbach's Alpha. Thereafter 2-tailed t-tests, paired and non-

paired were conducted to distinguish statistically significant differences between consumers' evaluation of the packaging dimension of the construct during comparable service encounters.

This study confirmed the importance of packaging as an independent marketing mix element in the branded clothing retail industry, as it did not merge with 'Product' as the literature suggests and featured as a separate entity that respondents felt contributed favourably to their instore experiences. Respondents generally evaluated packaging less favourably and evaluated the entire instore experience less favourably in the DS versus the SBR. This suggests that respondents' less favourable evaluation of the less prestigious packaging offered in the DS has had an influence in terms of the lower overall evaluation of the DS.

It was found that Packaging indeed has the potential to contribute to brand equity as it contributed to a higher overall mean for the construct. An order effect came to the fore. Respondents who visited the DS first, were much more impressed with the SBR. Those who went to the SBR first, seem more forgiving as they rated the service offering lower but were not very harsh of the DS.

Lastly, it was anticipated that (after making inferences from the extant literature), that the visits to the SBR with the premium branded packaging will show lower levels of regret in relation to the visits to the DS with the generic packaging, as a result of the value created for the respondent by the social visibility of the branded shopping bag. This was however not the case as both the visits to the SBR (not contaminated as well as contaminated by experiences in an alternative outlet), evoked higher levels of regret compared to the visits to the DS (not contaminated and contaminated). This could indicate that feelings of uncertainty sprouting from too many alternatives and financial risks, far outweigh the pleasure of taking home a good quality product in premium packaging in the case of this study.



Chapter 6

Conclusions of the study

This chapter presents the conclusions for the study as well as the limitations and recommendations for future research.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a retrospect of the entire research process in order to recapitulate the findings of the study in terms of the overall aim that inspired the investigation, and to indicate the challenges that were encountered along the way. Research procedures are reviewed in terms of technical and ethical issues.

6.2 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.2.1 The potential of packaging as one of the elements of a retailer's marketing mix (Objective 1)

This study aimed to establish that a clothing retailer's packaging strategy should be treated as an independent element in the marketing mix, rather than to treat it as part of a retailer's product decisions. In order to do this, consumers' expectations of customer service was investigated by using an established 31 item scale that measured respondents' evaluation of the elements of the marketing mix; inclusive of the packaging construct (7 items were added to measure Packaging, resulting in the scale ultimately consisting of 38 items). The items that represented the Packaging construct consistently merged together during factor analysis, whereas the items relating to Product were quite dispersed. Across the four data sets, Packaging only occasionally merged with some of the Product related items. These items specifically encapsulated the fashionability and quality of the product, and this may serve as an indicator that the respondent's use Packaging as a physical queue to gauge the fashionability or quality of the product or even the brand.

6.2.2 The potential of packaging to motivate consumers to regularly patronise the brand (Objective 2)

In terms of the service experience investigation, the data of Section C, which presented the 38 item scale, was subjected to exploratory factor analysis to distinguish coherent factors and to establish the components of each factor. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the experiential design which involved four investigations, namely:

- Group 1: visit from SBR (investigation 1) to the DS (investigation 2)
- Group 2: visit from DS (investigation 3) to SBR (investigation 4)

Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Component Analysis was done, using a Promax rotation to identify coherent factors with components that made sense in terms of their meaning. Four factors were distinguished through factor analysis. The four factors were not identical for the four store visit scenarios: it was virtually impossible to achieve that. Ultimately a four factor solution was repeated omitting three of the components. The result produced the most satisfactory output where all the factors of the four versions of the analysis (SBR visit 1, DS visit 1; SBR visit 2, DS visit 2) made sense and where all but one Cronbach Alpha was within an acceptable range, i.e. >0.6 .

6.2.2.1 Consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in SBR

When group 1 visited the SBR first (no contamination of their thoughts due to a similar experience elsewhere), the Packaging construct was judged favourably ($M = 2.93$, Cronbach Alpha = 0.86). When group 2 visited the SBR (after being exposed to the service offering of the DS), the Packaging construct was evaluated very favourably ($M = 3.31$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.87). It is interesting to note that respondents' evaluation of the same packaging in the same retailer is much higher after their exposure to the DS where the packaging format is much less sophisticated. This suggests that these respondents had a greater appreciation for the sturdy branded canvas shopping bag provided by the SBR, after their exposure to the alternative. When aware of alternatives, consumers therefore judge service encounters differently. Overall means were $M = 3.48$ and $M = 3.57$ respectively, which means that respondents' evaluation of the service offering in the SBR was more favourable after exposure to the DS. If consumers are introduced to SBR later on when they believe that they can afford to do so (respondents in this study indicated that they were not really willing to pay the prices charged for shoes at the SBR yet), they would probably be impressed with what these retailers have to offer. When consumers are 'forced' to go there before they feel ready to do so, they may experience levels of anxiety as found in the regret measure in this study, despite their favourable impressions.

6.2.2.2 Consumers' evaluation of packaging as part of the in-store experience in DS

When comparing respondents' evaluation of packaging at the DS (during first encounter for group 1 and during the second encounter for group 2), the uncontaminated evaluation for packaging when group 2 visited the DS for the first time, was: $M = 2.62$; Cronbach Alpha = 0.88. When group 1 visited the DS after their visit to the SBR, $M = 2.84$ (Cronbach Alpha = 0.86) respondents were less impressed with packaging than what they were with the other factors/elements. They however seemed more forgiving in terms of their evaluation of packaging in the DS during their second shopping encounter in the DS. Means for the service offering at the DS were very similar for both shopping encounters ($M = 3.31$; $M = 3.39$ respectively). Respondents therefore seemed consistent in their evaluation of the DS, irrespective of whether they visited the store first, or second. They were probably more familiar with the DS, which is one of the largest in South Africa and their evaluations were probably based on more defined cognitive frameworks compared to their evaluations in the SBR environment.

To conclude, it seems that packaging deserves to be acknowledged as part of a retailer's marketing mix – even in the clothing industry where secondary packaging is used and where the formats of packaging differs vastly from one retailer to the next. The financial layout to introduce sophisticated packaging seems worthwhile as the packaging construct distinguished itself clearly from other marketing related factors in the marketing mix, the packaging format of the SBR was always judged more favourably and it contributed to a more favourable impression of the retailer's service offering overall.

6.2.3 The potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity (Objective 3)

Exploratory factor analysis, specifically Principal Component Analysis was used with Procrustes rotation. Repeated analyses revealed that the 7 factor extrusion produced the best fit for the components in terms of the literature as well as the respective Cronbach Alphas. These factors were not entirely pure, but the groupings of items/components in each factor were regarded acceptable as the 'cross-pollination' between constructs occurred across all four data sets. Across all four data sets, the factors emerged in the same order, namely:

- Factor 1: Brand Awareness and Associations
- Factor 2: Brand Loyalty and Overall Brand Equity
- Factor 3: Perceived Quality
- Factor 4: Distribution and Store Image
- Factor 5: Price
- Factor 6: Advertising and Promotion and lastly
- Factor 7: Packaging

6.2.3.1 The potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in SBR

The Cronbach Alphas for all seven factors are acceptable to high (> 0.68), which reflect consistency in the data. Without exception, the packaging dimension seemed to contribute positively towards brand equity as the mean for packaging was always among the higher means in a particular investigation, to the extent that the higher mean for packaging negated the lower means for other factors in terms of the overall mean for brand equity. The lowest mean for packaging surfaced in the DS visit of group 2, and in this particular result the mean for packaging is also the lowest. On surface value (further statistical procedures can be applied, such as regression), respondents' evaluation of packaging was more favourable than the overall mean for the specific encounter. Packaging should therefore be considered more seriously in terms of its potential to boost brand equity.

6.2.3.2 The potential of packaging to strengthen/enhance brand equity in DS

In terms of the respondents' first visit to the DS, packaging (factor 7) was considered second least impressive ($M = 2.83$) of the perceivable marketing factors. At this stage it is apparent that the comparative mean for 'packaging' for this group's visit to the DS is lower, which suggests that their evaluation of the construct is less favourable which is less desirable in terms of brand equity. The respondents however seemed more forgiving in terms of their evaluation of packaging in the DS during their second shopping encounter in the DS, having experienced the offering of the SBR. Respondents however seemed consistent in their evaluation of the overall brand equity in the DS, irrespective of whether they visited the store first, or second, but in both instances the packaging contributed to a higher overall mean which indicates that in DS in particular, brand equity could be boosted with more sophisticated packaging formats.

6.2.4 The potential of packaging to create value through reduced cognitive dissonance

The Regret Experience Measure (REM) composed by Creyer and Ross (1999) was used to determine the level of cognitive dissonance that respondents experienced after their purchases were made. Items referring to packaging were inserted to determine whether packaging could help to alleviate feelings of regret. As discussed previously, two respondent groups visited two stores, a SBR and a DS in the reverse order. During the respondents' visits to the SBR, they were presented with a premium fabric tote bag carrying the fashion brand's logo. When the respondents visited the DS they were presented with the generic plastic packaging used for all purchased (branded or unbranded) that only carries the name of the DS. After making inferences from the extant literature, it was anticipated that the visits to the SBR with the premium branded packaging will show lower levels of regret in relation to the visits to the DS with the generic packaging. This was however not the case as both the visits to the SBR (not

contaminated as well as contaminated by experiences in an alternative outlet), evoked higher levels of regret compared to the visits to the DS (not contaminated and contaminated). This suggests that feelings of uncertainty sprouting from too many alternatives and financial risks (or other risks that could be explored), far outweigh the pleasure of taking home a good quality product in premium packaging in the case of this study.

These results may also be influenced by the fact that respondents only conducted mock-purchases, which may have altered their true feelings of regret as they were not expected to spend their own money (therefore their only true sacrifice was time and the burden of comparing alternatives and making the product selection). A recommendation for future research may be to question true shoppers who patronise the brand, in order to get a better idea of the level of cognitive dissonance experienced for the same brand in different retail settings in the context of female apparel retail.

6.3 THE RESEARCH IN RETROSPECT

The groundwork for this study was laid by extensively reviewing extant literature on the important constructs contained in the research problem. This allowed for the structuring and formulation of the research objectives, conceptual framework and also the compilation of the research instrument, which in this case was a questionnaire. This study took on an experimental design, which is inherently quantitative. A structured questionnaire featuring predominantly closed-ended questions was developed with the guidance of a professional statistician. The questionnaire mainly featured existing scales, which were slightly adapted to incorporate the 'Packaging' construct that was the focus of the study. On a Masters level the inclusion of existing scales are considered acceptable. The scales were nevertheless subjected to statistical tests to confirm the reliability in the context of the study (Cronbach's Alpha). The experimental process was also pre-tested to identify logistical issues with the flow of the experiment as well as any uncertainty with the completion and content of the questionnaire. After the pilot test was concluded some issues with the flow of the experiment surfaced with regards to placement of the research assistant, and these issues were resolved before continuing with the data capturing process. Small issues with the questionnaire were corrected to make instructions for completion clearer. A cover letter was added to the questionnaire to indicate to the respondents that the information generated by the study would be for academic purposes, that participation in the experiment was voluntary and that all information would be kept anonymous and treated confidentially.

The University of Pretoria's Department of Consumer Science and the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Science's Ethical Committee approved the use of the proposed questionnaire prior to the data collection. Data were collected over a period of 6 months with the assistance of one voluntary and one

paid research assistant. As a result of the complexity of the research experiment, as well as time and financial constraints, sampling procedures used for this study were somewhat constrained. Convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling method was used to recruit willing participants for the study. Due to the sampling method the findings can unfortunately not be generalised to a population greater than that of the respondents who participated in the project. Another limitation was the sample size 103, which is not representative of the South African population. For the purpose of the Masters degree, due to the complexity of the experimental design and the envisaged statistical procedures, the statisticians however approved the sample size. The questionnaires were completed by respondents who acted as mystery shoppers in both a Single Brand Retailer and a Department Store. The respondents were motivated to participate through the possibility of winning the products that they selected whilst mystery shopping in a lucky draw. As the data capturing took place over a longer period than expected, the styles that respondents selected to win in the first month of data collection had already been sold out by the time the data capturing was concluded. The prize was then substituted with a Nine West voucher to the value of R2000.

Completed questionnaires were handed over for capturing to the Department of Statistics after they were coded and checked for accuracy by the researcher. A statistician analysed the captured data. Simple descriptive statistics as well as factor analysis, ANOVA and t-tests were done. Cronbach Alphas were calculated on individual items to verify the internal consistency of the responses.

Special attention was given to accuracy, reliability and validity throughout the research project as explained in Chapter 4. Research assistants were well-trained beforehand, the researcher coded and checked the data herself, participants willingly took part in the investigation and were treated to refreshments between the two stages of data collection while they were completing the questionnaire to prevent fatigue. Sales personnel were well informed about the study beforehand although they never knew who the mystery shoppers were until they revealed themselves at the pay point. Participants were kept apart not to influence one another.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As discussed previously, care was taken throughout the study to obtain the most accurate data in a reliable and ethical fashion. Although it was attempted to conduct the study in the best possible manner, the project was still restricted by certain limitations.

The availability of resources was the main restriction. This study was not supported financially by any organisation, and had to be completed on a limited budget. A research assistant was paid to oversee the

data collection process, which was costly due to the time that it took to complete the process. Restrictions from the retailer also influenced sampling as the retailer at some point indicated that they were no longer willing to host mystery shoppers because the process had become intrusive to their daily operations.

Time constraints were problematic as the retailers restricted the days that mystery shoppers were allowed in the stores.

The researcher was also employed full-time during the course of this research project, which exerted pressure in terms of her presence during the data collection procedure and the time required to complete the research. The research assistant was a well-trained fellow Master's degree student who understood the importance of the procedure and attended to the process as though it was her own project.

The research design was restrictive in the sense that only female final year students were included. Limiting the sampling frame to the University of Pretoria's female final year students was due to the fact that they were accessible to the researcher and the research assistant. Looking back, restricting the respondents to only one academic year/group at the University of Pretoria hampered the recruiting process significantly as these respondents were not as readily available and willing to participate as initially anticipated. The young participants in this study were not familiar with different sophisticated brands, which may have influenced their post purchase regret, which seemed noteworthy. The findings of the study therefore do not reflect decisions of more mature females or males. If this study had been conducted with young working professional females for example residing in Sandton, Johannesburg, these respondents would most likely have been more exposed to a variety of brands and the data might have yielded richer results as these shoppers would probably have shown higher brand awareness. These shoppers also support their purchases with their own earned disposable income and are therefore most likely would have been more involved with their purchases than the students in this study who indicated that they mostly cannot afford the shoes sold at the SBR.

In general, the complexity of the research design was a challenge in terms of the time required, appointments that had to be manipulated to keep mystery shoppers apart during time intervals that the stores allowed the mystery shoppers to browse in their stores. Due to the complexity of the research design, the composition of the respondent groups and recruiting of participants were highly reliant on willingness to partake in the study. As the respondents were asked to act as mystery shoppers, the participants' willingness to travel to the specific shopping center also influenced the recruiting process.

Data gathering was difficult. The structured questionnaire used in this research design was quite long and the experimental process took between 45 – 60 minutes to complete. The respondents had to visit and 'shop' in two retailers during the course of the experiment and three sections were repeated in the

questionnaire in order to keep the questioning on the two in store experiences consistent. This resulted in the experiment being very time consuming. Not only did the experiment take up to an hour to complete, but respondents still had to drive to the shopping centre, find parking, find the research station, participate in the experiment, pay for parking and go back home. The entire process could have taken up to 2 hours, which was effortful. This resulted in a large drop out between recruits who committed to an appointment, and those who eventually showed up to participate in experiment. As the researcher or trained research assistant could only manage 2-3 respondents at the same time and appointments were made well in advance because of restrictions from the retailers, recruits not showing up for appointments resulted in a major waste of time and energy. In the meantime the research assistant had to be paid to follow up on missed appointments and attempting to set a new appointment time with the recruit.

Respondents were only allowed to visit the stores on certain days of the month, and no mystery shopping was allowed over weekends. This further complicated the data gathering as willing respondents were not necessarily available at on weekdays on the specific dates which the brand's management required. Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the owners of the brand in South Africa, as well as the brand manager. All dates for data gathering were submitted to the brand manager for approval. Internal miscommunication on the part of the brand hampered the data gathering process as the researcher, research assistant and sometimes even respondents were refused to run the experiment on certain days as the dates were not communicated internally from the operations manager to the store manager or from the store manager to the staff members on duty. In some cases the researcher or research assistant were refused and even scolded by the store manager of the SBR even if all the arrangements had been confirmed and communicated, if the manager felt that the store's sales were under pressure they did not want to spend time on mystery shoppers who would not lead to a real purchase. These restrictions truly hampered the study, and if the retailer was more accommodating, the data gathering would either have happened in a much shorter period of time, or many more respondents would have been able to participate in this study, resulting in stronger outcomes. As a result of the store staff being aware of the specific days in the month when the data gathering took place, this might have resulted in the staff altering their performance to impress customers that they thought might have been mystery shoppers. The effects of personnel's awareness was counteracted by keeping the mystery shoppers completely anonymous until after they had completed the entire in store experience and when they presented the shoes and revealed themselves as mystery shoppers.

The data analysis was particularly challenging. As result of the study being divided into two experimental groups of respondents who visited two retailers (in reverse order), a massive amount of data was gathered, even for a small sample size of 103 respondents. As a result of the multiple data sets, all four

sets for section C (service offering investigation) and section D (brand equity investigation) had to be consistent to allow a comparison between the groups' experiences. This complicated the "best fit" factor extractions during the factor analysis. Factor analysis was done repeatedly and the scrutiny of the multiple data sets was very time consuming. If the research design was simpler (i.e. rather looking at two groups in the same retailer with different packaging strategies put in place for the second experimental group), and did not incorporate a second retailer all together, the data analysis would have been much simpler and less time consuming. The advantage of having four data sets, however, is that allows the investigation of a possible order effect and to make certain inferences regarding why the respondents evaluated the service offerings differently after 'contamination' by their first store experience.

Despite the above, the research which was conducted on a Masters level produced invaluable findings that could be used to structure a more extensive research project in the future. The level of investigation also exceeds the basic requirements for a Masters degree as the investigation involved multiple concepts that were investigated and analysed extensively. The experimental procedure as well as the instrument can be used successfully in the future.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the course of this study, the researcher identified opportunities for further research.

The method of sampling may hold an array of prospects for future research. Firstly, probability sampling methods may be used to obtain a more representative group of respondents, with proportionate numbers of respondents from the different population groups of South African. Using a representative sample will enable a generalisation of the findings. Such a study will also allow a comparison of different population groups. The same could be done with different socio-economic groups, for example the DINKI's (Double Income No Kids), or even more specifically a group like the rising black middle class with access to credit facilities. A larger sample may also augment the findings and make it more credible for international research publications.

A similar study can be conducted with males, which might reveal differences in perceptions and evaluations.

Further research may include qualitative techniques such as focus group discussions to supplement the quantitative findings. Information yielded from focus groups discussions or in depth interviews may enrich this study and fill gaps or answer questions left by the harsh numerical data delivered by a quantitative approach.

As discussed previously, this study was conducted with two comparison groups who visited both a Single Brand Retailer as well as a Department Store that both carried the same footwear and accessory brand. Further research may involve different products and retail formats or comparing consumers, evaluations of a selected Single Brand Retailer across different geographical locations. This study focused on a female fashion footwear brand, but the same information might not be yielded from a sports footwear retailer. The product category may also be changed completely by looking at other fashion retailers such as jeans wear, or formal wear brands for special occasions.

The influence of packaging can also be explored beyond the confinements of the brand equity context. The value of packaging in the clothing retail industry may also be assessed by its contribution to the Country of Origin effect and other heuristics.

The initial idea to execute a research project on packaging in the clothing retail context (shopping bags) was instigated within the mind of the researcher in high school when the researcher was exposed to the use of brands by peers to establish status within a social hierarchy. The researcher deduced that packaging was used as a symbol of status and prestige. At the time, a friend used to frequent the American fashion brand Guess, which was not available in the town where the researcher attended high school. The closest place to find the brand was Pretoria (now known as the Tshwane Metropolitan in the Gauteng Province). This specific friend of the researcher used to go on shopping excursions with her mother to Menlyn Park Shopping Centre in Pretoria where they would shop from the Guess Single Brand Retail Outlet. The researcher's friend always returned from these shopping sprees with expensive merchandise in a premium branded Guess paper carrier bag with black and white campaign imagery featuring the most gorgeous models of that time. The researcher's friend would then display all the shopping bags on the one wall of her room, as a kind of a shrine to the Guess brand, showing her brand loyalty and always reminding her (and others who visited) of her ability to purchase this luxury product and its social value. Even through the clothing that the researcher's friend purchased from the retailer could be described as relatively generic (Guess denim jeans and Guess branded cardigans or basic T-shirts), the researcher's friend won the title 'Most Stylish' pupil in school. It was interesting to the researcher how by just wearing a particular brand, and amplifying her support of the brand by obsessively showing all the branded shopping bags conspicuously, the researcher's friend was labeled as 'most stylish'. In fact, she merely communicated that her family was wealthy. The criteria for the award that she was bestowed did not include considerations such as the fit of the clothing, the styling, how colours were put together, or creativity in dress etc. Throughout the researcher's university and young adult life, the researcher came across more people like her who kept shopping bags in their rooms on display, not necessarily for the purpose of reusability, but because it represented something. That 'something' is what interested the researcher to conduct this specific study on packaging in the female fashion apparel retail context. When the researcher was eventually in the position to conduct a research

project, and looked into what literature exists around shopping bags, it was found that this subject is under researched. This created a wonderful opportunity to conduct descriptive and exploratory research on the subject.

6.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings described in this study may contribute to the information framework used by the academic community, marketing and retailers in clothing, fashion and other consumer industries.

The nature of this study was exploratory and the findings may be used as a foundation for further research as explained in detail in the former section (6.5: Recommendations for further research).

The brand management and marketing teams of international brands that are retailed in South Africa may find the information in this study useful as it indicates the importance of packaging as part of the customer's in-store experience for the local market. Retailers whose packaging strategy is not strong, should consider introducing more prestigious, paper packaging in order to increase consumers' willingness to return to the store as a result of a favourable in store experience as was concluded in this study. This is especially true for Shop-in-Shop concepts where a mini-version of the branded retailer is opened within a department store.

It was also found that consumers' overall perception of the in-store experience/ brand is more favourable in the DS after first being exposed to a SBR (the brand in its true form). This is comforting as it means that consumers who can afford to spread their wings to more up market stores later in life, are impressed and might even become loyal. The primary challenge for SBR is to get shoppers into their stores if they have not been there before. The shop-in-shop concept may be a solution provided the brands insist on using their packaging formats rather than that of the DS where the mini shop is situated.

Marketers may benefit from this research as it shows which marketing elements contribute to brand equity (and in which order of importance) in SBR, DS and cross-contamination scenarios. This information may assist the marketing manager to prioritise the elements of the marketing budget and strategic thought/energy that deserve a larger allocation of their budgets and attention.



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Addenda

ADDENDUMA: PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The Department of Consumer Science places great emphasis upon integrity and ethical conduct in the preparation of all written work submitted for academic evaluation. While academic staff teaches you about referencing techniques and how to avoid plagiarism, you too have a responsibility in this regard. If you are at any stage uncertain as to what is required, you should speak to your lecturer before any written work is submitted.

You are guilty of plagiarism if you copy something from another author's work (eg a book, an article or a website) without acknowledging the source and pass it off as your own. In effect you are stealing something that belongs to someone else. This is not only the case when you copy work word-for-word (verbatim), but also when you submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (paraphrase) or use a line of argument without acknowledging it. You are not allowed to use work previously produced by another student. You are also not allowed to let anybody copy your work with the intention of passing it off as his/her work.

Students who commit plagiarism will not be given any credit for plagiarised work. The matter may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee (Students) for a ruling. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious contravention of the University's rules and can lead to expulsion from the University. The declaration which follows must accompany all written work submitted while you are a student of the Department of Consumer Science. No written work will be accepted unless the declaration has been completed and attached.

Full names of student: **Cornelia Pieterse**

Student number: **04384350**

Topic of work: **The potential of packaging to strengthen brand equity in female apparel retail stores**
Declaration

1. I understand what plagiarism is and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this research proposal is my own original work. Where other people's work has been used (either from a printed source, Internet or any other source), this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I have not used work previously produced by another student or any other person to hand in as my own.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

SIGNATURE

.....

ADDENDUMB: QUESTIONNAIRE



QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Consumer Science

+27 012 420 2531

August 2012

Dear Respondent

The intention with this research is to gain some insight into customers' expectations and their perceptions of clothing retailers. This study will be conducted through an experiment and participation in this study may take an hour of your time to complete because it involves a store visit and the completion of a questionnaire, which is done in two stages. The study forms part of my research for a Master's degree in Consumer Science. All information will be dealt with anonymously. You are invited to provide your cell phone number voluntarily on a separate form so that it could be entered into a lucky draw towards winning the purchase that you have actually selected in the store during the experimental procedure. The winner will be notified telephonically by the end of September. Respondents may also be contacted to take part in a focus group discussion after the initial experiment has been concluded.

Please read the questions carefully and give your honest opinion throughout.

Thank you for your participation!

Cornelia

Student: M Consumer Science Clothing Retail Management



Study Leader: Prof Alet C Erasmus

Pieterse

QUESTIONNAIRE: SECTION A

1. Please confirm your details with an X in the relevant block or Please fill in the information that is required in the open ended questions (for example your age)				For official use only				For official use only		
				Respondent No:				V0.1		
				Experiment No:				V0.2		
1.1. Age in years						years		V1.1		
1. 2. Which Population group do you belong to with reference to the Population Equity Act of South Africa?				Black		1		V1.2		
				White		2				
				Coloured		3				
				Indian		4				
				Asian		5				
1. 3. What is your current educational status?		Busy with final year of study for Bachelors degree	1	Busy with final year of study for a diploma	2	Busy with final year of study in a post graduate programme	3	V1.3		

SECTION B

2. YOUR PREFERRED BRANDS/ STORES WHEN BUYING SHOES OR A HANDBAG							For official use only		
2.1 Which brand or store would you prefer to go to when looking for shoes or a handbag for your first interview?							V2.1		
2.2 How much (in RAND VALUE) are you willing to spend on SHOES for your first interview?				R _____			V2.2		
3. By marking your answer with an X in the relevant box... Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree with the following statements that aim to describe how you feel about clothing for an interview:				Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	For official use only	
It is important what friends think of different brands or products				1	2	3	4	V3.1	
I tend to notice what kinds of people buy certain brands or products				1	2	3	4	V3.2	
I notice what others think of people who use certain brands or products				1	2	3	4	V3.3	
It is important to make a good impression when going for an interview				1	2	3	4	V3.4	
It is important to dress in expensive clothing for an interview				1	2	3	4	V3.5	
It is important to wear good quality clothing to an interview				1	2	3	4	V3.6	
It is important to wear branded clothing when going for an interview				1	2	3	4	V3.7	
It is important to wear good shoes when going for an interview				1	2	3	4	V3.8	

SECTION C:

Please complete this section C with relation to your experience in store A

4. What expectations do you have of a clothing store that would encourage you to become a regular customer? Please mark the relevant answer with an X	Not at all	Occasionally	Preferably	Definitely	For official use only	
A clean store	1	2	3	4	V4.1	
A large product variety/assortment	1	2	3	4	V4.2	
A pleasant store atmosphere	1	2	3	4	V4.3	
An aesthetically appealing store environment	1	2	3	4	V4.4	
Practical, logic display of clothing	1	2	3	4	V4.5	
The shopping bag must display the Brand	1	2	3	4	V4.6	
Availability of credit facilities	1	2	3	4	V4.7	
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	1	2	3	4	V4.8	
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	1	2	3	4	V4.9	
A comfortable in-store temperature	1	2	3	4	V4.10	
Easy access to parking area from the road	1	2	3	4	V4.11	
The shopping bag must be attractive	1	2	3	4	V4.12	
Efficient staff at pay points	1	2	3	4	V4.13	
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	1	2	3	4	V4.14	
Fashionability of clothing items	1	2	3	4	V4.15	
Friendly shop assistants	1	2	3	4	V4.16	
Managers that are approachable	1	2	3	4	V4.17	
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	1	2	3	4	V4.18	
Managers that show interest in clients	1	2	3	4	V4.19	
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	1	2	3	4	V4.20	
Products of excellent quality	1	2	3	4	V4.21	
Regular promotions	1	2	3	4	V4.22	
Good security in the store	1	2	3	4	V4.23	
Other people must notice the shopping bag	1	2	3	4	V4.24	
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	1	2	3	4	V4.25	
Store must be conveniently located	1	2	3	4	V4.26	
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	1	2	3	4	V4.27	
A positive store image	1	2	3	4	V4.28	
The shopping bag must be re-usable	1	2	3	4	V4.29	
A good return and exchange policy	1	2	3	4	V4.30	
The store must appear modern	1	2	3	4	V4.31	
The store must be located in a safe area	1	2	3	4	V4.32	
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	1	2	3	4	V4.33	
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	V4.34	
Well designed fitting rooms	1	2	3	4	V4.35	
A well organised store layout	1	2	3	4	V4.36	
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	1	2	3	4	V4.37	
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	1	2	3	4	V4.38	

SECTION D:

Please complete this section with relation to your experience in store A

5. Having visited the store to select a pair of shoes or a handbag, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please mark the relevant answer with an X	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	For official use only	
	1	2	3	4	V5.1	
The price of Nine West shoes are high	1	2	3	4	V5.1	
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	1	2	3	4	V5.2	
Nine West shoes are expensive	1	2	3	4	V5.3	
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	1	2	3	4	V5.4	
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	1	2	3	4	V5.5	
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	1	2	3	4	V5.6	
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	1	2	3	4	V5.7	
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	1	2	3	4	V5.8	
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	1	2	3	4	V5.9	
Nine West is intensively advertised	1	2	3	4	V5.10	
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	1	2	3	4	V5.11	
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	1	2	3	4	V5.12	
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	1	2	3	4	V5.13	
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	1	2	3	4	V5.14	
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	1	2	3	4	V5.15	
Nine West shoes are of high quality	1	2	3	4	V5.16	
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	1	2	3	4	V5.17	
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	1	2	3	4	V5.18	
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	1	2	3	4	V5.19	
Nine West products must be of very good quality	1	2	3	4	V5.20	
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	1	2	3	4	V5.21	
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	1	2	3	4	V5.22	
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	1	2	3	4	V5.23	
Nine West would be my first choice	1	2	3	4	V5.24	
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	1	2	3	4	V5.25	
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	1	2	3	4	V5.26	
I know what Nine West looks like	1	2	3	4	V5.27	
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	1	2	3	4	V5.28	
I am aware of Nine West	1	2	3	4	V5.29	
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	1	2	3	4	V5.30	
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	1	2	3	4	V5.31	
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	1	2	3	4	V5.32	
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	1	2	3	4	V5.33	
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	1	2	3	4	V5.34	
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	1	2	3	4	V5.35	
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	1	2	3	4	V5.36	
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	1	2	3	4	V5.37	
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	1	2	3	4	V5.38	

SECTION E:

Please complete this section with relation to your experience in store A

6. Please indicate with an X to which extent you agree or disagree with the following question regarding your purchase	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	For official use only	
I regret my choice	1	2	3	4	V6.1	
I think I made an error in judgement	1	2	3	4	V6.2	
Before I received outcome feedback (i.e. comments of others), I knew that I made an excellent decision	1	2	3	4	V6.3	
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	1	2	3	4	V6.4	
Before I should have chosen differently	1	2	3	4	V6.5	
I knew that I should have chosen differently	1	2	3	4	V6.6	
I really feel good about my choice	1	2	3	4	V6.7	
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	1	2	3	4	V6.8	
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	1	2	3	4	V6.9	

 THANK YOU! NOW PLEASE PROCEED TO **STORE 2** BEFORE COMPLETING THE REST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION C2:
Please complete this section C with relation to your experience in store B

7. Please indicate from the list what you expect of a store as pre conditions of becoming a regular customer of the store? Please mark the relevant answer with an X	Not at all	Occasionally	Preferably	Definitely	For official use only	
A clean store	1	2	3	4	V7.1	
A large product variety/assortment	1	2	3	4	V7.2	
A pleasant store atmosphere	1	2	3	4	V7.3	
An aesthetically appealing store environment	1	2	3	4	V7.4	
Practical, logic display of clothing	1	2	3	4	V7.5	
The shopping bag must display the Brand	1	2	3	4	V7.6	
Availability of credit facilities	1	2	3	4	V7.7	
Clean coat hangers/rails/shelves	1	2	3	4	V7.8	
Clear or visible differentiation of departments	1	2	3	4	V7.9	
A comfortable in-store temperature	1	2	3	4	V7.10	
Easy access to parking area from the road	1	2	3	4	V7.11	
The shopping bag must be attractive	1	2	3	4	V7.12	
Efficient staff at pay points	1	2	3	4	V7.13	
Efficient staff assistance within the various departments	1	2	3	4	V7.14	
Fashionability of clothing items	1	2	3	4	V7.15	
Friendly shop assistants	1	2	3	4	V7.16	
Managers that are approachable	1	2	3	4	V7.17	
The shopping bag must reflect the quality of the product purchased	1	2	3	4	V7.18	
Managers that show interest in clients	1	2	3	4	V7.19	
Staff that are neatly dressed in an identifiable uniform	1	2	3	4	V7.20	
Products of excellent quality	1	2	3	4	V7.21	
Regular promotions	1	2	3	4	V7.22	
Good security in the store	1	2	3	4	V7.23	
Other people must notice the shopping bag	1	2	3	4	V7.24	
Short queues at cashiers and a short waiting time	1	2	3	4	V7.25	
Store must be conveniently located	1	2	3	4	V7.26	
Variety of sizes and certainty of good fitting garments	1	2	3	4	V7.27	
A positive store image	1	2	3	4	V7.28	
The shopping bag must be re-usable	1	2	3	4	V7.29	
A good return and exchange policy	1	2	3	4	V7.30	
The store must appear modern	1	2	3	4	V7.31	
The store must be located in a safe area	1	2	3	4	V7.32	
The shopping bag must be environmentally friendly	1	2	3	4	V7.33	
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	V7.34	
Well designed fitting rooms	1	2	3	4	V7.35	
A well organised store layout	1	2	3	4	V7.36	
Well trained, knowledgeable staff	1	2	3	4	V7.37	
The shopping bag must reflect it if the purchase was expensive	1	2	3	4	V7.38	

SECTION D2:

Please complete this section with relation to your experience in store B

8. Having visited store B to select a pair of shoes or a handbag, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		For official use only	
Please mark the relevant answer with an X	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.1	
The price of Nine West shoes are high	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.1	
The price of Nine West Shoes are low	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.2	
Nine West shoes are expensive	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.3	
The stores where I can buy Nine West carry products of high quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.4	
The stores where I can buy Nine West would be of high quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.5	
The stores where I can buy Nine West have well-known brands	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.6	
More stores sell Nine West, as compared to its competing brands	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.7	
The number of stores that deal with Nine West is more than that of its competing brands	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.8	
Nine West is distributed through as many stores as possible	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.9	
Nine West is intensively advertised	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.10	
The ad campaigns for Nine West seem very expensive, compared to campaigns for competing brands	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.11	
The ad campaigns for Nine West are seen frequently	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.12	
Promotions for Nine West are frequently offered	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.13	
Too many times promotions for Nine West are offered	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.14	
Promotions for Nine West are emphasised more than seems reasonable	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.15	
Nine West shoes are of high quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.16	
The likely quality of Nine West shoes are extremely high	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.17	
The likelihood that Nine West shoes would be functional is very high	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.18	
The likelihood that Nine West shoes are reliable is very high	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.19	
Nine West products must be of very good quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.20	
Nine West shoes appears to be of very poor quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.21	
The shopping bag shows that Nine West is good quality	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.22	
I consider myself to be loyal to Nine West	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.23	
Nine West would be my first choice	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.24	
I will not buy other brands if Nine West is available in store	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.25	
I often like to be seen with a Nine West shopping bag	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.26	
I know what Nine West looks like	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.27	
I can recognize Nine West among other competing brands	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.28	
I am aware of Nine West	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.29	
The Nine West Shopping bag is easy to recognise	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.30	
Some characteristics of Nine West come to my mind quickly	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.31	
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Nine West	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.32	
I have difficulty imagining Nine West in my mind	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.33	
It makes sense to buy Nine West instead of any other brand, even if they are the same	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.34	
The Nine West Shopping bag reflects prestige and status	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.35	
Even if another brand has same features as Nine West, I would prefer to buy Nine West	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.36	
If there is another brand as good as Nine West, I prefer to Buy Nine West	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.37	
If another brand is not different from Nine West in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Nine West.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	V8.38	

SECTION E2:

Please complete this section with relation to your experience in store B

9. Please indicate with an X to which extent you agree or disagree with the following question regarding your purchase	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	For official use only	
I regret my choice	1	2	3	4	V9.1	
I think I made an error in judgement	1	2	3	4	V9.2	
Before I received outcome feedback, I knew that I made an excellent decision	1	2	3	4	V9.3	
I am confident that I made the best choice based on the information that I had available	1	2	3	4	V9.4	
Before I should have chosen differently	1	2	3	4	V9.5	
I knew that I should have chosen differently	1	2	3	4	V9.6	
I really feel good about my choice	1	2	3	4	V9.7	
I really feel that I was making an error when I made that choice.	1	2	3	4	V9.8	
The shopping bag makes me feel good about my purchase	1	2	3	4	V9.9	

Thank you for your participation!

Cornelia Pieterse