



GORDON INSTITUTE
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**FAST FASHION RETAIL:
A CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

The superior financial performance of retailers who utilise Fast Fashion strategies have focussed attention on these methods while simultaneously pressurising other retailers to follow suit. Fast Fashion refers to strategies employed by retailers to meet frequently changing consumer tastes and demands by optimising their design and production processes.

This study aimed to determine the applicability of Fast Fashion in South Africa by conducting a study of consumers who frequent fashion retail stores. The literature review indicated that there were four key Fast Fashion variables that were related to consumer behaviour: Renewal Cycles, Supply, Quality and Price.

The findings showed that Renewal Cycles and Price are key variables for consumers in fashion retail, affecting the frequency of purchases and store visits. The implication of this result is that retailers who implement Fast Fashion strategies would do best by selecting strategies that directly impact these key variables.

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Raleshaba Moeng

Name

Signature

Date

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To my family

Thank you for the support and encouragement

To my supervisor: Mr Michael Goldman

Thank you for your guidance and advice in compiling this study

To my fellow students

Thank you for sharing this journey with me



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ABBREVIATIONS

TFG – The Foschini Group

QR – Quick Response

JIT – Just-In-Time

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

This chapter defines the research problem as well as the aims and objectives of the research. The need for the research is explored from an academic as well as a business perspective. Additionally, the relationship between the research problem and the research objectives is defined.

1.2 Defining the research problem and research objectives

The objective of this study is to determine the applicability of Fast Fashion in South Africa by conducting a study of consumers who frequent fashion retail stores. The research problem is discussed below under the following headings: Defining Fast Fashion, and Effects of Fast Fashion.

1.2.1 Defining Fast Fashion

In an article published in the Businessday (2011, June 6), The Foschini Group (TFG), one of South Africa's largest retailers reported a 15.5% increase in turnover and an increase of 19.5% in the sales of its clothing due to their adoption of Fast Fashion. This report was significant not only because of the magnitude of the increases but also because it is the first instance where a

South African enterprise has credited their success to the adoption of Fast Fashion.

Fast moving fashion or Fast Fashion describes a scenario where fashion retailers implement a range of strategies in order to adequately meet market demand by ensuring that they have the right product, in the right place at the right time (Hayes & Jones, 2006). Although the concept began as a method used by European retailers to gain competitive advantage in the market, it has since been accepted globally as a critical requirement of modern day fashion retail.

Fast Fashion is a term that describes a range of systems that aim to give a fashion retailer an advantage in two areas: enhanced design and rapid production (Cachon & Swinney, 2009b). Enhanced design is concerned with achieving better integration with consumers in an attempt to provide goods that meet their changing preferences and tastes while rapid production is concerned with integrating elements of the supply chain in an attempt to minimise lead times in business operations.

In the case of The Foschini Group, the superior set of annual results was credited to the organisations adoption of three specific aspects of Fast Fashion; reduced lead times, improved customer orientation and changing the criteria used to select suppliers (Businessday, 2011, June 6).

Globally, there is a growing body of evidence which demonstrates that retailers who follow a Fast Fashion strategy are able to sell their stock more quickly and are more profitable than the ones who choose not to (Hayes & Jones, 2006). As a result, Fast Fashion is seen as the key strategy for success in fashion retail because of its unique combination of reduced production time and ability to adapt to changes in consumer preferences.

1.2.2 Effects of Fast Fashion

The enormity of the challenges faced by retailers is best described by the following statement: “retailers must commit to their order quantities in advance of observing sales. As a result, they often end up with some popular products that sell out fast, whereas other unpopular products languish” (Liu & Ryzin, 2008, p. 1115). This results in loss of sales due to stock outs combined with further losses that may result from having to sell unpopular stock at a discount. An additional challenge is that modern consumers have adapted to this deficiency in retailers operations and are increasingly timing their purchases to coincide with sales and price reductions, resulting in further revenue losses for retailers.

Fast Fashion strategies evolved as a response to the problems faced by retailers and they have been demonstrated to provide a wide range of positive effects. These effects include an increased consumer traffic in stores as well as

an improvement in ratios that measure the proportion of store visitors who actually end up making a purchase (Barry, 2004).

The increased consumer traffic is quantified by Spanish fashion retailer Zara, which is considered to be the worlds' leading Fast Fashion retailer. The organisation estimates that it gets an average of 17 visits per customer per year compared with an average of four visits for other fashion firms (Castro, 2003 quoted in Lopez & Fan, 2009).

Findings of this nature have led to the emerging view that the basis for competitive advantage in the fashion retail sector has shifted from aspects, such as price and assortment towards having the ability to respond timeously to changing fashion trends and evolving consumer demand (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006).

1.3 Need for the Research

Emerging global trends such as the Fast Fashion model are changing the conventional retail practices and have had a worldwide impact on business and consumers alike. In spite of this, there is an existing gap in the literature in terms of the consumer aspects of Fast Fashion.

The existing body of knowledge includes studies that have examined a number of aspects of the Fast Fashion business model such as: the financial performance of Fast Fashion retailers relative to conventional retailers (Hayes & Jones, 2006), retail buyers and suppliers (Bruce & Daly, 2006), as well as

supply chain management in Fast Fashion (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006; Doyle, Moore & Morgan 2006).

In an article that reviews the existing literature on Fast Fashion, Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) note that there is a lack of research into the response of consumers towards Fast Fashion. “By knowing how and to what extent rapid changing fashion affects consumers’ purchase behaviour and satisfaction levels, retailers can develop strategies that can lead to improved profitability.” (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010, p. 171)

The growing trend of globalisation has led to the internationalisation of retail stores and fashion brands, thus increasing competition in the sector and forcing local industry participants to continuously adapt their processes to ensure that they are able to remain competitive. Internationalisation refers to the practice of corporations entering new markets in diverse geographical areas to spreading cost and risk, gain economies of scale and to gain international status (Lopez, 2009).

An example of this is the recent entry of Spanish Fast Fashion retailer Zara into Australia, a move that is anticipated to take market share from existing players while simultaneously forcing them to improve their ability to bring new merchandise to the market at a rapid rate (The Australian, 2011, April 18). Developments of this nature make it necessary to investigate the various aspects of Fast Fashion in order to gain a better understanding of its implications for business and consumers.

1.3 .1 Link between the research objectives and the need for the research

Studies by numerous scholars including Homburg, Koschate and Hoyer (2005) have demonstrated that consumers who get the products they desire show improved levels of satisfaction, thus enabling businesses to become more profitable by charging higher prices to these consumers.

The implications for business wishing to adopt Fast Fashion are significant. In addition to the costs which need to be incurred in implementing these measures, there are also significant implications related to buying and sourcing strategies as well as aspects related to the geography of their supply chains (Barry, 2004).

Christopher, Lawson and Peck (2004) support this view by noting that it will be necessary to implement radical changes to organisational structures and strategies and to move away from traditional industry practices which are based around forecasting demand months or even years in advance.

In spite of the strong focus on aspects related to business in the existing academic literature, Fast Fashion is still considered to be a consumer-led and consumer-driven innovation. This study expands the existing knowledge by investigating the consumer aspects that are a prerequisite for the successful implementation of Fast Fashion strategies.

1.4 Summary

The South African apparel retail environment is characterised by domination of a small number of large retail chains owning several brands proliferated throughout the country and engaged in intense rivalry to win market share (Datamonitor, 2010). Because of their dominant positions, the movement of these key players towards adopting Fast Fashion cannot be ignored since it will have far reaching implications for the economy and the consumer market.

Gaining an understanding of consumers is critical for business managers who intend to adopt Fast Fashion methodologies in their operations. This study fills the gap in the existing body of knowledge by investigating fashion consumers with the intention of using these results as the basis for a valuation of the applicability of Fast Fashion retail systems in the South African market.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The review of the literature presents an argument based on academic literature. This is organised around three main discussion areas: Fashion retail, Fast Fashion and consumer behavior.

2.2 Fashion Retail

2.2.1 Defining Fashion

Fashion is commonly associated with apparel and clothing, however it is important to note that there is an element of fashion in every facet of modern life and it can be found in even the most unexpected places such as kitchen utensils, gardening, food, furniture and clothing (Ander & Stern, 2004; Stanley, 2006).

In a study that sought to develop a predictor model for fashion trends, Cho and Lee (2005) found that fashion was a general indicator of prevailing market trends that may have been influenced by social, cultural or economic factors. Additionally, fashion trends could be considered to be an indicator of consumers' current point of view or emotional state, meaning that consumers were responsible for setting the trends while it was up to the industry to attempt to follow them (Cho & Lee, 2005).

Evans (1989) also reflects the temporary nature of fashion when he includes an element of time in his definition of fashion as the style or styles being worn by consumers of clothing during a specific time period.

For the purpose of this paper, the scope will be limited to fashion as it applies to apparel retail within the South African market. Fashion will be defined as apparel and accessories that incorporate an element of style or trend that is likely to be short lived (Christopher et al., 2004; Hayes & Jones, 2006).

When one considers fashion in the form of apparel or clothing, it is necessary to make a distinction between functional and innovative products. Functional products are characterised by stable predictable demand coupled with long life cycles, while innovative products have unpredictable demand and short lifecycles (Fisher, 1997).

Although clothing can be regarded as a functional product, fashion clothing, being heavily influenced by elements of style and trends is widely considered to be an innovative product. Fashion retailers must thus continuously predict what customers will want in the future since being able to spot trends and translate them into products in the shop in the shortest possible time has become a pre-requisite for success in the fashion retail sector (Ander & Stern, 2004; Christopher et al., 2004).

2.2.2 The Nature of fashion retail

Retail involves the entire range of activities that are concerned with the goal of the provision of goods and services to customers (Akinboade, 2008). Although the retail value chain typically consists of a number of different organisations and intermediaries each serving a particular role in the provision of goods and services, the role of the retailer continues to grow in prominence. This is additionally highlighted in the observation that power has continued to shift towards the retailers who, in many parts of the industry, can now dictate product, pricing and manufacturing terms (Evans, 1989).

Individual retailers, compete with each other and must find ways to differentiate themselves from competitors in order to become successful at winning market share and becoming profitable. “Differentiation exists when a firm’s offering is preferred on some buying occasions or by some customers over a rival firm’s offerings. This preference presumes that there is some difference between brands and buyers react to these differences” (Sharp & Dawes, 2001, p. 743)

In the opinion of Ander and Stern (2004) a retailer can succeed at differentiating themselves by endeavouring to become superior in one of five critical areas: assortment, price, fashion, solution oriented service or speed oriented service. Assortment refers to the range of products and services on offer; price refers to a retailer endeavouring to offer similar products at a lower price than competitors; fashion refers to consistently having the latest products, brands, colours, or styles; while solution and speed are based on having different service levels to those on offer by competitors (Ander & Stern, 2004).

Ander and Sterns' (2004) inclusion of fashion as one of the key differentiation methods is seen as support for the argument that the basis for differentiation in modern retail has evolved from aspects such as price and location to ensuring that a retailer constantly has items that reflect the current state of consumers fashion demands in stock.

An investigation into the evolution of the fashion industry by Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) revealed three significant changes that have taken place since the 1990's: the fading of mass production systems, increases in the number of fashion seasons and changes in the structural characteristics of the industry. Mass production systems which excelled at producing standardised items at low cost fell out of favour due to evolving consumer tastes while fashion seasons, that is the frequency with which merchandise in stores changes, increased from two seasons a year (summer and winter) to between five and ten seasons per year (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

The rationale for the drastic changes that the industry has experienced becomes more evident when one considers the severe restrictions that traditional practices introduced. Tyler, Jo Heeley and Bhamra (2006) illustrated that traditional fashion industry practices introduce stumbling blocks by hampering the following critical supply chain elements:

- forecasting of trends

- late stage product changes
- geographical proximity of suppliers to the market, and
- minimising stock outs and slow selling products

These findings concurred with earlier research which concluded that the fashion industry practice of outsourcing production to low cost countries made it difficult to re-order garments in response to mid-season changes in consumer demand (Bitran, Caldentey & Mondschein, 1998). Fisher and Rajaram (2000) expanded insight into the extent of this limitation by highlighting two core problems created by conforming to traditional fashion industry practices; ordering too little which may result in loss of potential sales and ordering too much which may result in markdowns that may include selling obsolete stock below cost.

These drawbacks were quantified by Bruce and Daly (2006) who found that up to one in three customers cannot find the goods they require in stock and pre-season forecast errors may be as high as 50%, which negatively affects retailer productivity.

Key structural changes which emerged to counter the problems of lengthy lead times and complicated supply chains associated with outsourced manufacturing included the widespread adoption of just-in-time (JIT) techniques as well as the implementation of quick response (QR) strategies (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). These were supply chain innovations that went a long way towards reducing lead times in the industry.

2.3 Fast Fashion

Fast moving fashion or Fast Fashion describes a scenario where fashion retailers implement strategies to compress their lead times in order to adequately meet market demand by ensuring that they have the right products to meet consumer tastes and demands (Hayes & Jones, 2006). Ander and Stern (2004) expand on this definition by emphasising that implementing Fast Fashion strategies enables retailers to be able to consistently guarantee that they will have the latest products in the required quantities just as customers begin to buy them in volume.

Techniques used in Fast Fashion include optimising the buying cycle, minimising lead times involved in a typical fashion operation, implementing technology and communication systems, as well as consumer feedback mechanisms and processes.

Gaining a precise definition of Fast Fashion is made challenging by the fact that there is ongoing debate in academic and business circles regarding the classification and components of Fast Fashion, each with its own definition. A detailed analysis of these debates is presented in this study.

The most comprehensive definition is put forth by Byun and Sternquist (2008) who define Fast Fashion as: “a marketing approach to respond to the latest fashion trends by frequently updating products with a short renewal cycle and turning the inventory at a rapid rate” (Byun & Sternquist, 2008, p. 135). This definition implies that fast fashion has two broad aims, one concerned with

responding to fashion trends and another that is concerned with having the ability to rapidly update inventory.

Much of the previous research in this field has focussed on the rapid production components and techniques of Fast Fashion by expanding our knowledge of the supply chain aspects of Fast Fashion systems. Milner and Kouvelis (2005) found that quantity flexibility – the ability to determine and produce an appropriate re-order quantity as well as timing flexibility – the ability to alter production schedules, are required components for a supply chain that provides innovative goods with evolving demand. Additionally, Quantity flexibility was found to be of higher value for fashion driven products when compared to timing flexibility (Milner & Kouvelis, 2005).

Christopher et al. (2004) demonstrated that traditional forecast-driven supply chains, designed for a mass-production era, are not adequate to meet the challenges of volatile and turbulent demand which is typical of fashion markets. In addition, the authors argue that gaining the agility in supply networks that enables rapid production necessitates radical changes in organisational structures and strategies as well as a move away from forecast-driven supply (Christopher et al., 2004).

Doyle et al. (2006) found that implementing partially agile supply chains would sufficiently balance the need for customer responsiveness with the need for operational and financial viability. For the scope of this research, responsiveness and agility are defined as a combination of reduced time-to-market, the ability to scale up or scale down quickly as well as the ability to rapidly incorporate consumer preferences (Christopher et al., 2004).

Taking into account the definition of Fast Fashion as both a consumer driven and supplier driven innovation, it is apparent that there is a gap that exists in the current body of knowledge. The existence of this gap has been emphasised as follows: “the literature on fast fashion highlights various aspects of supply chain management, supported by supply chain theory to improve the business model of fashion retailers. It is worth noting that not many studies have addressed fast fashion as a consumer-driven approach, leaving this an under-researched area” (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2009, p. 170).

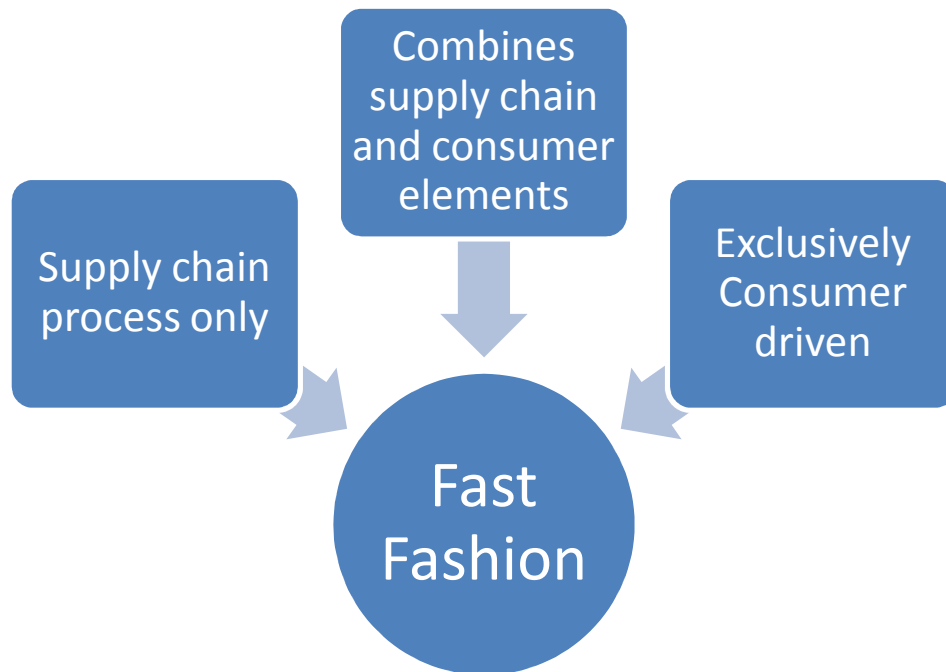
2.3.1 Components of Fast Fashion

The phenomenon of Fast Fashion came to the fore in the late 1990’s with the entry of innovative retailers such as Zara into the mainstream retail market in the UK (Barry, 2004).

In spite of the fact that Fast Fashion is considered to be in its infancy and there is limited academic insight on the subject, there is a vibrant debate taking place in academic literature around the classification of Fast Fashion. Over time, three opposing perspectives have emerged. One holds that Fast Fashion is a supply chain process only while a second asserts that Fast Fashion is an exclusively consumer driven phenomenon. A third argument holds that Fast Fashion represents a new field of study because it represents a unique combination of

supply chain elements as well as consumer aspects. The opposing views are represented visually as follows:

Figure 2.1 – Theoretical perspectives on Fast Fashion



The supply chain only view of fast fashion is spearheaded by studies conducted by Christopher et al. (2004) which demonstrated that traditional forecast-driven supply chains, designed for a mass-production era, were not adequate to meet the challenges of volatile and turbulent demand which is typical of fashion markets. Additionally, they introduced the theory of agile supply chains into the debate when they found that achieving agility in supply networks was the key component that enabled rapid production (Christopher et al., 2004). Their work was later supported Doyle et al. (2006) who concurred with the supply chain only view of Fast Fashion and additionally showed that implementing partially

agile supply chains would sufficiently balance the need for customer responsiveness with the need for operational and financial viability.

Milner and Kouvelis (2005) found that quantity flexibility – the ability to determine and produce an appropriate re-order quantity as well as timing flexibility – the ability to alter production schedules, are required components for a supply chain that provides innovative goods with evolving demand. Additionally, it was found that when dealing with fashion driven products such as fashion clothing quantity flexibility was found to be of higher value than timing flexibility (Milner & Kouvelis, 2005).

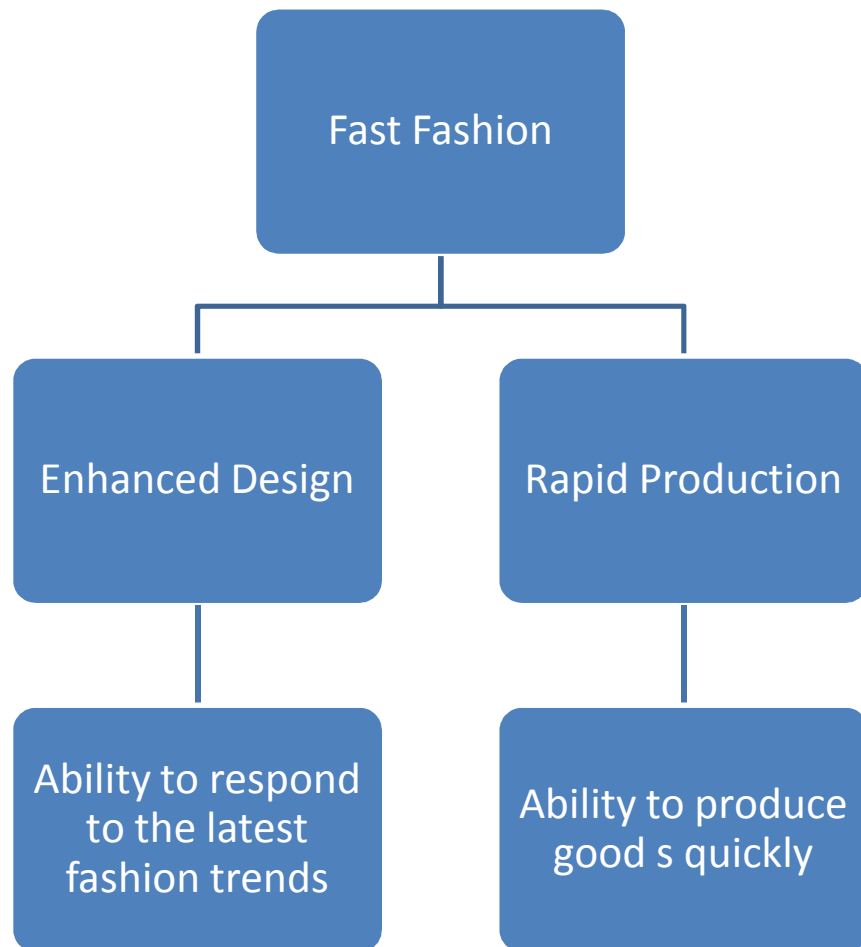
In addition to these authors who equated Fast Fashion to agile supply chains, other studies were conducted which correlated Fast Fashion to other concepts of supply chain theory, namely; just-in-time (JIT) systems and quick response (QR) systems. This view was later strengthened by Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) who demonstrated that just-in-time and quick response strategies are key supply chain innovations aimed at achieving lead time reductions.

The consumer driven view of Fast Fashion was entrenched by Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2006) who held the view that Fast Fashion was primarily a response to changes in consumer demand thus implying that consumers were the key drivers of Fast Fashion. “rather than simply being linked to existing

theory of supply chain management, and being a supply side driven process, fast fashion is an advance in supply chain management theory and is different to existing models of supply chain management as it is a completely consumer driven process” (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006, p. 265).

The most recent perspective combines the divergent philosophies detailed above and appears to be the view that has gained widespread acceptance. In their investigation of the value of quick response and other responsive supply chain techniques, Cachon and Swinney (2009b) assert that Fast Fashion systems can be understood to be made up of a combination of two distinct components, enhanced design and rapid production. Enhanced design is consumer driven, reliant on consumers dictating their tastes and preferences while rapid production is supply chain driven, concerned with reducing lead times as much as possible. This is supported by a number of recent studies in the field including Byun and Sternquist (2008) who define Fast Fashion in terms of its two major objectives, one concerned with responding to the latest trends and another that is concerned with shortening renewal cycles and increasing the turnaround of inventory. This holistic definition of Fast Fashion can be depicted as follows;

Figure 2.2 – Holistic definition of Fast Fashion



2.4 Consumer Behavior

The field of consumer behavior is understood to be an area of study that is concerned with gaining an understanding of consumers' acquisition, consumption and disposal of products (Macinnis & Folkes, 2009).

In spite of a lack of documented academic research on consumer aspects of Fast Fashion, there is widespread consensus that it is a significant area of study since it has had a significant impact on consumers. "fast fashion retailers

dramatically changed a conventional business model by significantly affecting consumer shopping and purchase behaviour” (Byun & Sternquist, 2008, p. 134).

Purchase frequency, a key aspect of consumer behaviour in retailing, has been measured in an attempt to classify individual shoppers according to the characteristics of their shopping excursions. Kahn and Schmittlein (2001) categorised shoppers into those that make many trips to the store and purchase small amounts per trip and those that make fewer trips at more regular intervals.

Another key aspect of consumer behaviour is the concept of forward-looking or strategic consumers, who delay their purchases in anticipation of a price decrease or sale in the future (Nair, 2007). This leads to an expansion of the classification of consumers based on purchasing behaviour by classifying consumers into three distinct groupings: myopic consumers who always purchase at the initial full price; bargain hunting consumers who purchase only if the discounted price is sufficiently low; and strategic consumers who strategically choose when to make their purchases by intentionally delaying purchasing an item at the full price in order to purchase at a discount during an end of season clearance or sale (Cachon & Swinney, 2009a).

In a separate research undertaking Cachon and Swinney (2009b) shed further light on the relationship between Fast Fashion and strategic consumer behaviour when they found that Fast Fashion systems can be of significant value particularly when consumers exhibit strategic behaviour. This supported their previous finding that the value of quick response or responsive supply

chain techniques to a retailer is generally greater in the presence of strategic consumers than without them.

A case study investigation of Zara, a global fast fashion retailer supports this relationship by demonstrating that consumers visited this Fast Fashion retailer 17 times per year on average compared to the number of 5 visits per year that was achieved by conventional retailers (Castro, 2003 cited by Lopez & Fan, 2009).

The authors ascribe this to the effects of Fast Fashion on a number of key retail practices employed by Zara on aspects such as quality, pricing policies and renewal of inventory in stores.

2.4.1 Key Consumer Variables

A number of studies reveal the importance of the renewal cycles in fashion retail as a key variable in understanding consumer aspects of Fast Fashion. As mentioned previously, a fashion season is the period of time during which a specific range of items are sold to consumers. This is thus a measure of the renewal cycle, that is the frequency with which merchandise in stores changes (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Bhardwaj and Fairhurst (2010) identify two key reasons for the increase in the number of fashion seasons in modern day retail; changes in consumer's lifestyles as well as consumers demand for fashion clothing linked to special or specific occasions.

In a study into consumers' behavioural responses to Fast Fashion, Byun and Sternquist (2008) identify the combination of a short renewal cycle and a limited supply of goods as the two most important components of a Fast Fashion strategy. By demonstrating that both variables go hand in hand, in other words, Fast Fashion retailers introduce new products frequently and they introduce products in limited numbers, the investigation shows that these retailers are thus able to encourage immediate action from shoppers. Additionally, a relationship is established between the combination of the short renewal cycle and limited supply, with consumers shopping decisions which may include how often to visit a retail store and how often to purchase from a retail store (Byun & Sternquist, 2008). It is therefore important to investigate these variables simultaneously.

Additionally, it is noted that Fast Fashions' ability to provide the most fashionable merchandise at low prices makes the strategy appealing to younger, fashion conscious consumers while simultaneously encouraging them to purchase immediately and not delay their purchases (Byun & Sternquist, 2008).

These findings which identify renewal cycles and supply as key consumer variables of Fast Fashion are consistent with key discoveries made some decades ago. One such study into renewal cycles or stock turnover dates back to the 1960's. Dalrymple (1964) not only demonstrated that stock turnover had

an effect on a firm's profits, he additionally argued that there were three main strategies which could be used to increase stock turnover. These are:

- Increasing the amount of product advertising
- Lowering prices, or,
- Maintaining small amounts of inventory by eliminating slow-selling items

From definitions presented in this study it is evident that Fast Fashion utilises the third strategy listed above. It is further proposed that a key requirement for retailers who wish to follow this strategy would be the need to have the ability to accurately forecast consumer demand Dalrymple (1964). This has also been demonstrated to be one of Fast Fashions' key strengths.

The perceived availability of supply or inventory is also a key consumer aspect of Fast Fashion. Byun and Sternquist (2008) note that if consumers perceive that a product is scarce or has limited supply, they are likely to find the product more desirable. This would mean that retailers would be able to improve their profitability by maintaining a higher price on these items.

In spite of the theoretical suggestion that consumers will react negatively to limited supply or stock outs of certain products, there is contradictory evidence which demonstrates that consumers may react positively to such conditions. In a study into consumer response to stockouts, Fitzsimons (2000) found that consumers only react negatively to stockouts if they had a high level of commitment to the item in question. These negative reactions were illustrated by subjects showing decreased satisfaction levels and increased levels of

intentions to switch stores. In cases where there was no commitment to the unavailable option, stockouts were perceived to be positive because they simplified the process of selecting products (Fitzsimons, 2000).

The strategy of introducing new merchandise frequently by having multiple fashion seasons necessitates a change in consumer purchase frequency. Retailers would require consumers to respond by increasing the number of store visits thus enabling retailers to realise adequate profit margins from introducing shorter lifecycles. (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010)

This introduces the relationship between the frequency with which consumers visit stores and the number of fashion seasons. These key variables and the relationship between them will be investigated in this study.

The relationship between price and perceived quality is well documented in academic literature. Boyle and Lathrop (2009) found that modern consumers perceive a positive relationship between price and quality when evaluating durable products such as clothing. In an earlier study on factors affecting quality perceptions, Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein (2005) highlight the importance of the core theory of information integration which states that in the absence of sufficient amounts of intrinsic information (information about the physical product), extrinsic information (factors that do not make up the physical product) are used to assess product quality. The research concludes that the relationship

between price and quality holds in the presence of a secondary indicator such as a strong brand or a positive country of origin (Miyazaki et al., 2005).

Crewe and Davenport (1992) proposed a relationship between the perceptions of quality and cost in fashion. They went a step further by segmenting their results according to age, demonstrating that Generation Y (born after 1990) favour low quality clothing with a low cost while baby boomers (born between 1945 and 1965) favour higher quality merchandise (Crewe & Davenport, 1992).

These findings have led to Fast Fashion sometimes being referred to as throwaway fashion, indicating the propensity for young consumers to purchase items of low cost and low quality with the intention of using them infrequently and then disposing of them. This phenomenon as well as its causes is summarised as follows: “The trend of throwaway fashion owes much to increases in fashion purchase frequency and a real reduction in price levels. Furthermore, fast fashion retailers , such as H&M, TopShop and Zara, sell garments that are expected to be used less than ten times at very comparative price points” (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007).

Price is a key variable in measures of consumer behaviour. Literature suggests the existence of a relationship between price and the frequency of consumer store visits. One such study by Yuan and Han (2011) developed a model which

found that when prices increase, consumers respond by increasingly searching for more alternatives while price reductions had the reverse effect.

Quality and price will therefore be considered to be two key variables for this study. The scope of this investigation will be restricted by excluding consumers over the age of 50 and below the age of 15 in order to focus exclusively on the segments that are particularly concerned with fashion. Khare and Rakesh (2010a) support the isolation of these segments when they note that the youth, which they refer to as generation Y, is the consumer segment that is most receptive towards global trends and fashion in general. The authors go further in analysing demographic factors which may be significant by additionally highlighting that perceptions between males and females may differ because women generally place greater importance on issues regarding fashion and clothing (Khare & Rakesh, 2010a).

Workman and Studak (2006) also found that males and females were socialised differently regarding behaviour towards clothing, appearance and dressing, resulting in significant differences in behaviour and attitudes. Their research concluded that men exhibited a need-based approach while women exhibited a want based approach in their decision making processes (Workman & Studak, 2006). As a result of this, the investigation differentiates between male and female consumers by seeking to investigate any differences that may exist between these two distinct segments.

2.5 Conclusion

Fast Fashion describes a collection of strategies that seek to achieve two aims, to better meet consumer demand by providing the products that they desire and to provide these products in a timely manner. The literature indicates that the key variables of Fast Fashion that affect consumer behaviour in fashion retailing are Renewal Cycles, Supply, Quality and Price. Additionally, the frequency of consumer store visits as well as the frequency of purchases are key aspects of consumer behaviour.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

3.1 Introduction

The chapter describes the key variables and propositions that are developed from Chapter 1 and the literature review outlined in Chapter 2.

3.2 Research Propositions

The literature review indicates that the **frequency of purchases and the number of visits** made by consumers is a key measure of consumer behaviour in Fast Fashion (Cachon & Swinney, 2009a; Castro, 2003; Kahn & Schmittlein, 2001; Lopez & Fan, 2009; Nair, 2007). Other key variables which are suggested to have an impact on consumer purchase behaviour include: **Renewal Cycles** (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Byun & Sternquist, 2008; Dalrymple, 1964), **Supply** (Byun & Sternquist, 2008; Fitzsimons, 2000), **Price** (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Boyle & Lathrop, 2009; Crewe & Davenport, 1992; Miyazaki et al., 2005; Yuan & Han, 2011), and **Quality** (Boyle & Lathrop, 2009; Crewe & Davenport, 1992; Miyazaki et al., 2005). **Gender** was also identified as a variable that could introduce differences with respect to consumer variables (Khare & Rakesh, 2010a; Workman & Studak, 2006).

The following propositions were identified.

Proposition 1

Renewal cycles are related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits

Proposition 2

Supply is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits

Proposition 3

Quality is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits

Proposition 4

Price is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits

Proposition 5

There are significant differences between male and female consumers in relation to Renewal cycles, Supply, Quality and Price

Chapter 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study as well as a justification of the methods used. The chapter discusses the research design, population, sampling as well as the collection and analysis of data. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the limitations of the research.

4.2 Research Design

The research design is defined as the basic plan that demonstrates how the research questions will be related to the data gathered as well as the tools and procedures that will be used to answer the research questions (Punch, 2001). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) add that the research design should also demonstrate that the researcher has given careful consideration to the reasons for selecting a particular research design.

The researchers objective to measure selected variables in order to answer the research propositions set out in Chapter 3 resulted in the selection of a quantitative approach. Quantitative research is characterised by the collection and analysis of numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). Data is typically collected using surveys and analysed by statistical methods. This is the methodology used in this study.

The review of existing literature covered in Chapter 2 highlighted the relevant variables for this investigation as well as the gaps that exist in the current body of knowledge.

The quantitative approach was selected as being suitable to answer the research questions since this investigation was deemed to be explanatory in nature as opposed to an exploratory study which would be more suited to qualitative techniques. The data collected in this manner could thus be analysed quantitatively using statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the individual members of the population. The unit of analysis for this study was regarded to be consumers who purchase clothing from retail stores.

For the purposes of this research, clothing was defined as all forms of apparel including menswear, womenswear, childrenswear, underwear and footwear.

4.4 Population

The population is a group that shares some common element. The population for this study was South African consumers who have purchased at least one item of clothing in the past month. A month was defined as a 30 day period. Additionally, as highlighted in Chapter 2, it was determined that individuals

below the age of 15 as well as those above the age of 50 would fall outside the scope of this study.

4.5 Sampling Method

A sample is defined as the selection of members from a population who will be used to represent the population in its entirety (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper, 2007).

According to Saunders et al. (2009), sampling provides a valid alternative for situations where it would be impractical to survey a population in its entirety. Logistical constraints make it unfeasible to conduct an analysis of the entire population, thus the sample will be based on the population of SOWETO, a township located in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Probability sampling requires that the probability of each case being selected is known and equal while in non-probability sampling, the chance of each case being selected is not known (Saunders et al., 2009). Non probability sampling was used in this investigation due to the nature of the research questions requiring the use of a sample in which it would be difficult to compute the possibility of each case being selected.

The convenience sampling methodology was used. Convenience sampling involves selecting cases that are easily accessible to the researcher (Saunders

et al., 2009). The method of convenience sampling is well suited to instances where there is likely to be a low level of variation in the population being investigated. The use of convenience sampling was deemed to be appropriate for this study since results obtained from convenience samples would be generalisable to markets and locations that exhibit similar characteristics to those considered in this investigation (McBurney, 2001). Saunders et al. (2009) also verifies the generalisability of results of non-probability samples.

The researcher aimed to introduce a level of structure to the sampling procedure and improve the possibility of this study being successfully replicated by selecting an initial starting point using a random process and thereafter selecting every fifth respondent encountered. In addition to making the study more replicatable, this measure was also undertaken in order to reduce the level of bias that is often encountered when using convenience sampling.

4.6 Sample Size

According to Tharenou et al., (2007) a sufficiently large sample size is required in order to be able to test quantitative relationships. Saunders et al. (2009) add that a large sample size is desired because it reduces the possibility of errors when generalising the results of a sample to a population, thus making the results of the sample more representative of the population.

A total of 173 responses were obtained of which 136 were valid. Two (2) responses were excluded due to being incomplete or having unanswered questions, eight (8) were excluded due to falling outside of the required age groupings while 27 failed to meet the qualifying criteria which is buying at least one item of clothing in the past month.

A larger sample size would have been preferred however the sample size obtained was deemed to be appropriate. Additionally, it is desirable to obtain a high response rate because this ensures that the sample is representative of the population (Saunders et al., 2009).

Punch (2001) asserts that in order to determine the appropriate sample size in quantitative research, the researcher needs to balance cost and access against the level of precision required and the variability of the population being measured. Additionally, Saunders et al. (2009) state that when using non-probability sampling techniques, the researcher should use a level of discretion in selecting a suitable sample size based on achieving credible results taking the availability of resources into account.

4.7 Instrument

A structured questionnaire was administered to obtain data for analysis. A questionnaire is a data collection technique that requires respondents to respond to the same set of questions in a similar sequence (Saunders et al.,

2009). This technique was deemed to be suitable for this study because of its ability to collect a large number of responses from a large number of respondents in a cost effective manner.

Additionally, Tharenou et al. (2007) highlight that due to their structured format, questionnaires are well suited for the collection of quantitative data.

The questionnaire comprised of a range of closed-ended questions as well as responses based on the Likert scale. Closed-ended questions limit the respondents' possible answers to a set that is determined by the designer of the questionnaire thus making responses easier to analyse (McBurney, 2001).

The choice of closed-ended questions is further justified by McBurney (2001) who notes that these types of questions are well suited to studies of this nature because they do not require respondents to be highly articulate in expressing their responses.

The questionnaire also requested demographic information and included instructions on how each sub-section was to be completed. The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

- Section 1: Demographic information
- Section 2: Purchase Behaviour
- Section 3: Renewal cycle

- Section 4: Supply
- Section 5: Quality
- Section 6: Price

Section 5 of the questionnaire was modelled according to an instrument used in a consumer study by Choi et al. (2010) while Section 3 was modelled according to a consumer study instrument used by Birtwistle and Morgan (2009).

The questionnaire was tested to determine the level of usability. Although no changes were made based on the outcome of the testing, the researcher identified specific questions that were prone to be left unanswered and ensured that these were completed by respondents during data gathering. The questionnaire that was used is included in Appendix A.

4.8 Data Collection

The research was undertaken from the 30th of June to the 9th of July, 2011. The primary data was collected at the Maponya Mall Shopping Centre which is located in SOWETO. This location was deemed to be appropriate because Maponya Mall is considered to be one of the four key retail nodes within SOWETO (Palmer Development Group, 2005).

In addition, there is a significant volume of literature that demonstrates that shopping malls are ideal locations to find large numbers of consumers. An example is the study by Khare and Rakesh (2010b) which demonstrated that shopping malls are able to generate large amounts of consumer traffic when compared to other locations.

The researcher walked in a counter-clockwise direction through the oval-shaped walkway of the mall and requested every fifth person to complete a questionnaire. The first respondent was selected randomly.

The researcher excluded individuals who appeared to be below the age of 15 and above the age of 50 as they were outside the scope of the study and represented extreme cases that were likely to deviate from the typical case. Saunders et al. (2009) provide support for this by stating that when using non-probability sampling techniques, the researcher employs a level of subjective judgement in determining the most appropriate sample.

Each respondent who was approached was informed that the research was for academic purposes and that their responses were completely anonymous. They were informed of the procedure to be followed and asked if they agreed to participate prior to being handed a questionnaire and a pen. Data was gathered using the questionnaire in Appendix A. Each respondent completed a questionnaire while the researcher guided them through each question. The

involvement of the researcher during completion was deemed to be appropriate for the following reasons:

- Because the questionnaire was compiled in English, the researcher needed to translate to an African language in instances where respondents required this
- The researcher was able to clarify questions and instructions in instances where respondents required assistance
- The researcher could minimise the number of questions that were left blank or unanswered

McBurney (2001) voices support for this methodology when he notes that face to face personal interviews have several advantages including the fact that the interviewer can motivate respondents to answer questions carefully, while minimising the possibility of clarifying questions being misunderstood due to factors such as illiteracy or poor vision.

The qualifying question of the questionnaire was whether the respondent had purchased at least one item of clothing in the past thirty days. In instances where the respondent had not made a purchase or fell outside of the desired age groupings, the interviewer continued with the interview but these results were excluded from the final sample since they fell outside of the scope of this study.

The time taken to complete the questionnaire ranged from three minutes to ten minutes depending on the amount of assistance that was required from the interviewer.

To eliminate time and day bias, the researcher undertook the following steps:

- varying the time of day in which the surveys are conducted, and,
- varying the day of the week in which the surveys are conducted

The interviewer worked alone during weekdays since the volume of people in the mall was relatively low. During the weekends, the researcher was assisted by two individuals in order to cope with the increased volume of people.

Both assistants have completed their grade 12 studies. The assistants were briefed on the purposes of the research and were trained on the procedure to be followed in conducting interviews. In addition the assistants were required to observe five interviews conducted by the researcher prior to commencing their duties.

Respondents who declined to participate in the study were not requested to give reasons for their refusal.

4.9 Data Analysis

For the purposes of data analysis, the researcher captured all manual responses into a digital format. The gathered data was captured into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and checked for consistency and errors.

Steps were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. Reliability is defined as the extent to which the data collection techniques used are able to produce consistent findings while validity is concerned with the extent to which the methods employed are able to measure the constructs they were intended to measure (Saunders et al., 2009).

Steps such as varying the time and day of the week were taken to improve the reliability of the data by reducing the level of participant bias. Pre-testing the instrument and using components of instruments that were employed in other successful studies were some of the steps taken to ensure sufficient validity.

Statistical analysis was conducted on the data using IBM SPSS Statistics 19, taking into account the possibility of errors, biases and other research limitations introduced by the methods and procedures selected. Descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics were conducted. Descriptive statistics were used to provide information about the data that was collected. The analysed data was presented in the form of charts, graphs and tables to illustrate the findings.

4.10 Potential Research Limitations

Sample size

A larger sample size would have been preferred as this would have improved the level of confidence of the data while simultaneously reducing the possibility of bias.

Geographic area

Despite the fact that steps were taken to reduce biases, such as collecting data during different days of the week as well as at different times of day, the fact that the research was conducted in a single location may limit the generalisability of the findings and also result in obtaining a sample that does not reflect the diverse characteristics of the population.

4.11 Conclusion

A quantitative research design was conducted. The study involved respondents answering a questionnaire that measured the key variables identified as well as demographic information. A total of 173 responses were collected.

Chapter 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The results to the research propositions outlined in Chapter 3 are presented below. Inferential as well as descriptive statistical techniques are used to present the data.

5.2 Sample Description

A total of 173 responses were obtained of which 136 were valid. 2 responses were excluded due to being incomplete or having unanswered questions, 8 were excluded due to falling outside of the required age groupings while 27 failed to meet the qualifying criteria which is buying at least one item of clothing in the past month.

Table 5.1 – Sample Description

Total Responses	173
Invalid responses	37
Valid responses	136

5.3 Data Evaluation

Data was evaluated to detect any anomalies, missing values and outliers. A decision was taken to exclude all entries that had missing values or questions that were left unanswered. The resulting data was deemed to be adequately discreet and continuous.

The **Store Visits** variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “How often do you visit clothing shops?” and “How often do you buy an item from a clothing shop?”. The **Renewal Cycles** variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “I would visit a clothing store more often if there was a new range of clothing items on each visit” and “I would buy more often if there was a new range of clothing on each visit”.

The **Supply** variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “When I see something I want, I am afraid that I will not get the right size or colour if I do not buy immediately” and “The clothing items I wish to buy are often out of stock”. The **Quality** variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “The quality of clothing items available in stores has improved over time” and “I am satisfied with the quality of clothing items in stores”.

The **Price** variable was computed by combining three questions in the questionnaire: “I would be willing to pay a higher price to get the exact clothing item I want”, “I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items of a higher quality” and “I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items that are fashionable and trendy.”

The internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire was verified using Cronbach's Alpha. The alpha values were 0.769, 0.706, 0.432, 0,638 and 0.654 for Store Visits, Renewal Cycles, Supply, Quality and Price respectively.

Pallant (2001) highlights that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is affected by the number of items used in the scale. The use of only two or three scale items for each construct in this study may therefore result in alpha values that fall below the generally accepted minimum threshold of 0.70. In some cases, the use of alpha values as low as 0.60 is considered appropriate for cases involving the initial validation of a research instrument (Khare & Rakesh, 2010a). The scale and resulting constructs were deemed to be sufficiently reliable to proceed with analysis.

5.4 Survey Results

The results of the survey conducted by means of a questionnaire are presented below. The results follow the sequence of the questionnaire and the relevant research propositions as outlined in Chapter 3 are indicated. The order of the results is as follows:

- Demographic information
- Purchase Behaviour
- Proposition 1: Renewal cycle
- Proposition 2: Supply
- Proposition 3: Quality

- Proposition 4: Price
- Proposition 5: Gender

The qualifying question for the study was whether respondents had made at least one purchase of a closing item in the past thirty days. Only those respondents who answered positively were considered for the study.

5.4.1 Demographic Information

Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the demographic profile of the sample. Three demographic variables were considered as part of Section 1 of the questionnaire: race, age and gender. Figure 5.2 illustrates the profile of the sample according to race, Figure 5.3 illustrates the profile of the sample according to age and Figure 5.4 illustrates the profile of the sample according to gender.

Table 5.2 – Race profile of the sample

RACE			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
BLACK	124	91.2	91.2
WHITE	4	2.9	94.1
COLOURED	5	3.7	97.8
INDIAN	3	2.2	100.0
Total	136	100.0	

91.2% of the respondents were Black. White, Coloured and Indian respondents made up 8.8% combined.

Table 5.3 – Age profile of the sample

AGE			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
15 TO 20	38	27.9	27.9
21 TO 25	35	25.7	53.7
25 TO 30	39	28.7	82.4
31 TO 35	14	10.3	92.6
36 TO 40	4	2.9	95.6
41 TO 45	3	2.2	97.8
46 TO 50	3	2.2	100.0
Total	136	100.0	

The most prevalent age groups were 15 to 20, 21 to 25, 25 to 30 and 31 to 35. Each of these categories had double-digit percentages and a total of 92.6% of the sample fell between these age groupings. The remaining 7.4% fell between the ages of 36 and 50. There were no respondents below the age of fifteen or above the age of 50.

Table 5.4 – Gender profile of the sample

GENDER			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
FEMALE	84	61.8	61.8
MALE	52	38.2	100.0
Total	136	100.0	

61.8% of the respondents were female while the remaining 38.2% was male.

5.4.2 Purchase behaviour

A combination of descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics was used to determine the purchase behaviour of the sample. In Section 2 of the questionnaire, a total of six questions were asked regarding purchase behaviour.

Figure 5.1 – Clothing category purchased most frequently



Womenswear came out as the category of clothing that was purchased most frequently followed by menswear and footwear. Although this supports the findings in past literature by Datamonitor (2006) that illustrate that womenswear

is the most frequently purchased clothing category, it is important to bear in mind that this result may have been influenced by the fact that the majority of respondents in this study were female.

A five point Lickert scale was used for rating questions. The options available were as follows: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree. In addition, there were two questions that utilised a 7 point scale. The descriptive statistics of the rating questions are detailed in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 - Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
REASON_FASHION TRENDS	136	1	5	2.94	1.234
REASON_SPECIAL OCCASIONS	136	1	5	3.25	1.121
REASON_REPLACEMENT	136	1	5	3.26	1.225
REASON_PLEASURE	136	1	5	3.46	1.180
HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT SHOPS	136	1	6	2.82	.950
HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY	136	2	7	3.30	.855
HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NEW STOCK	136	1	7	2.93	1.037
VISIT MORE IF THERE IS NEW STOCK	136	1	5	3.70	1.049
BUY MORE IF THERE IS NEW STOCK	136	1	5	3.47	1.040
SHOPS ARE ADDING STOCK FREQUENTLY	136	1	5	3.29	1.010
WILL NOT GET UNLESS I BUY IMMEDIATELY	136	1	5	3.40	1.237
OFTEN OUT OF STOCK	136	1	5	2.99	1.122
I BUY IMMEDIATELY	136	1	5	3.35	1.044
QUALITY IS IMPORTANT TO ME	136	1	5	4.36	.940
QUALITY HAS IMPROVED OVER TIME	136	1	5	3.40	1.071
EXPECT TO USE ITEMS FOR A LONG TIME	136	1	5	3.87	.977
SATISFIED WITH QUALITY	136	1	5	3.32	1.010
AVERAGE CLOTHING SPEND	136	1	5	1.93	1.117
MAXIMUM CLOTHING SPEND	136	1	5	1.96	1.201
PAY MORE FOR EXACT ITEM	136	1	5	3.79	.977
PAY MORE FOR QUALITY	136	1	5	4.04	.910
PAY MORE FOR FASHIONABLE	136	1	5	3.44	1.059

5.5 Testing the Research Propositions

The propositions being tested are detailed in Chapter 3 of this study and relate to the literature review outlined in Chapter 2.

Descriptive as well as inferential statistics were conducted. The initial examination consisted of compiling a histogram and box plot to conduct a visual assessment, as well as determining the mean, standard deviation and level of normality.

The statistical test chosen was correlation analysis which is described as “the measurement of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables” (Wiers, 2008, p. 567). The Pearson product moment correlation technique was used. This is also known as the sample correlation coefficient. The technique was deemed to be appropriate because it is able to provide a measure of linear association between two variables (Anderson et al, 2007). The scale used for the correlations is as follows: small = 0.10 to 0.29; medium = 0.30 to 0.49; large = .50 to 1.0 (Pallant, 2001).

Additionally, a regression analysis was conducted in order to describe the relationship between variables (Wiers, 2008). This is supported by Anderson et al (2007) who indicate that detecting linear association between variables using correlation does not necessarily imply causation.

Wiers (2008) highlights that as part of the methodology of a regression analysis, a scatter plot or diagram may be constructed and then analysed visually to see if the points could be said to roughly follow the shape of a straight line. This methodology was also followed in this analysis.

For Propositions that require a comparison of groups, the t-test for means was conducted. Wiers (2008) supports this method as a valid method of comparing the means of two samples which are independent.

Measures such as skewness and kurtosis indicate the distribution of variables. Pallant (2001) states that it is necessary to analyse this information when parametric statistical techniques such as t-tests and ANOVA are employed. The skewness and kurtosis of the key variables are illustrated in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6 – Descriptive Statistics: skewness and kurtosis

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Minimu	Maximum	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic		Deviation	Statistic	Std.	Statistic	Std.
PRICE	136	3.00	15.00	2.26885	-.540	.208	.734	.413
SUPPLY	136	2.00	10.00	1.88585	-.305	.208	-.305	.413
RENEWAL CYCLES	136	2.00	10.00	1.83608	-.457	.208	-.362	.413
QUALITY	136	2.00	10.00	1.78249	-.282	.208	-.220	.413
STORE VISITS	136	4.00	17.00	2.35803	.832	.208	1.365	.413

Price, Supply, Renewal Cycles and Quality have a slightly negative skewness value while Store Visits has a positive skewness.

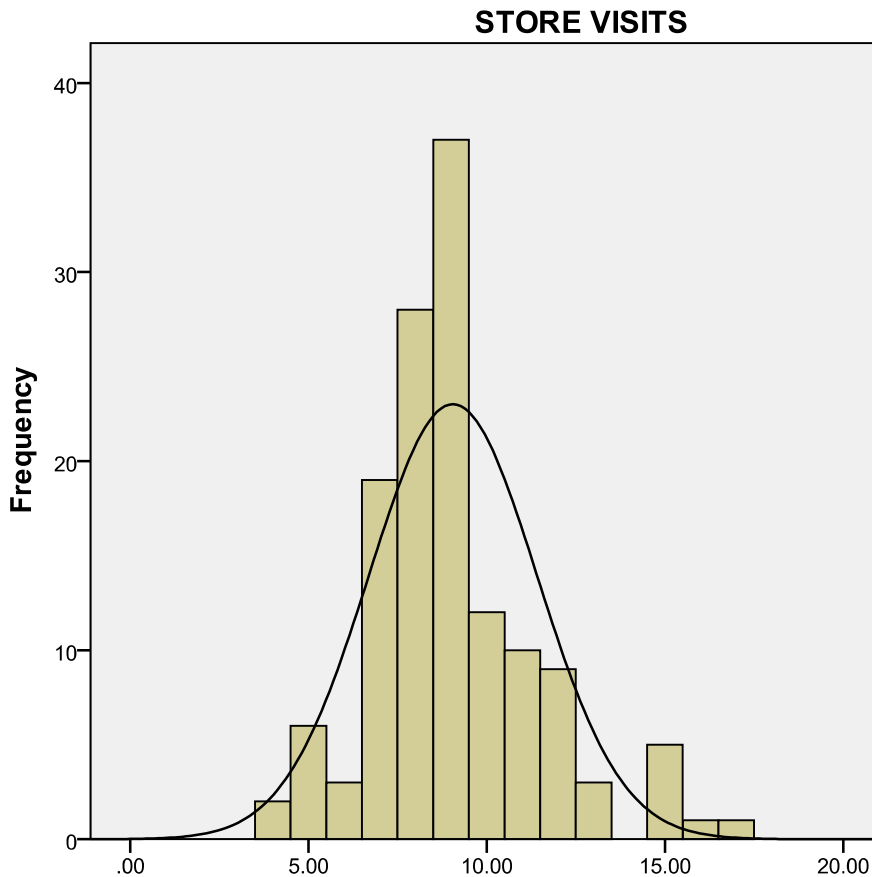
5.5.1 Research proposition 1 – Renewal Cycles

The first proposition related to the existence of a relationship between renewal cycles and the frequency consumers' retail store visits. The literature review indicated that increased renewal cycles were a core component of Fast Fashion and additionally, resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently (Barry, 2004; Byun & Sternquist, 2000).

The analysis was aimed at verifying the existence of this relationship.

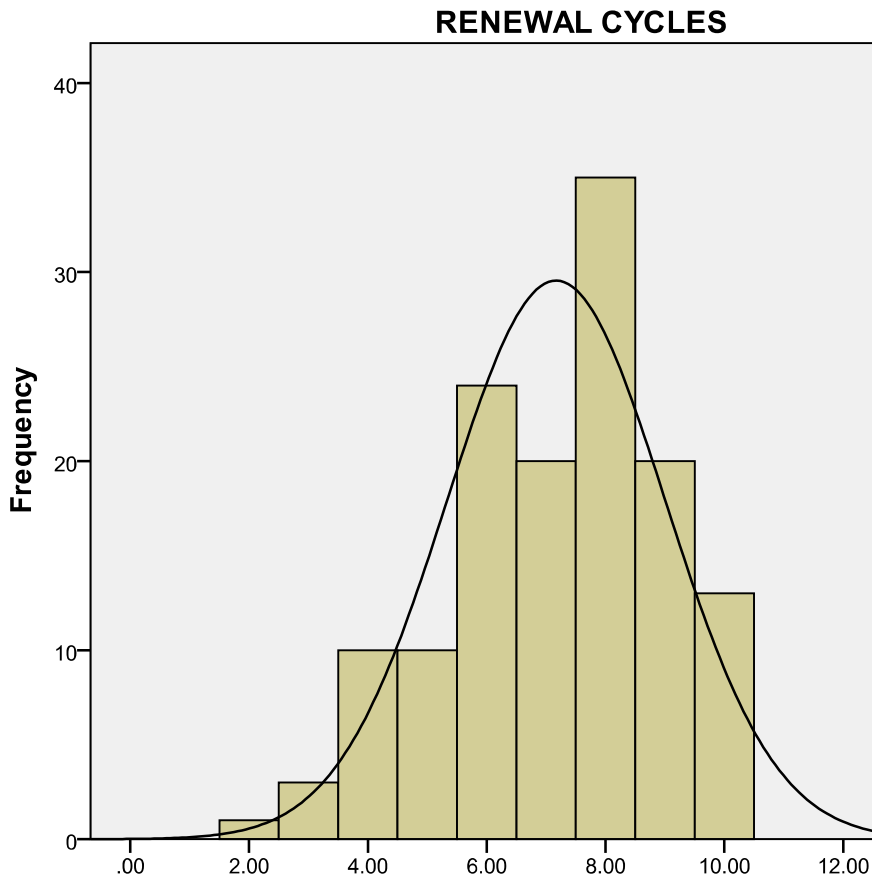
5.5.1.1 Descriptive Statistics and test for normality

Figure 5.2 – Histogram of Store Visits



A visual inspection of the histogram showing the results of the Store Visits variable is illustrated in Figure 5.2 above. The Store Visits variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “How often do you visit clothing shops?” and “How often do you buy an item from a clothing shop?” as discussed in the data preparation section. The figure indicates that the results are normally distributed. This supports the skewness and kurtosis values illustrated in Table 5.6.

Figure 5.3 – Histogram of Renewal Cycles variable



A visual inspection of the histogram showing the results of the Renewal Cycles variable is illustrated in Figure 5.3 above. This supports the skewness and kurtosis values illustrated in Table 5.8. As discussed in the data preparation section, the Renewal Cycles variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “I would visit a clothing store more often if there was a new range of clothing items on each visit” and “I would buy more often if there was a new range of clothing on each visit”. The figure indicates that the results are normally distributed.

5.5.1.2 Inferential Statistics – Correlation

Proposition 1 was evaluated by conducting correlations to determine the nature and extent of the relationship between Store Visits and Renewal Cycles. The bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The output of this is illustrated in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 – Correlations: Renewal Cycles

Correlations			
		STORE VISITS	RENEWAL CYCLES
STORE VISITS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.224**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	136	136
RENEWAL CYCLES	Pearson Correlation	-.224**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	136	136

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The output illustrates that the outcome of the Pearson correlation coefficient is - 0.224. The negative sign indicates that a negative correlation exists between the two variables while the number indicates that the strength of the correlation is small.

5.5.1.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was used to analyse the relationship between Store Visits, which is the dependent variable and Renewal Cycles, which is the independent

variable. The output of this is illustrated in Table 5.8, Table 5.9, Table 5.10 and Figure 5.4 below.

Table 5.8 – Model Summary: Renewal Cycles

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.224 ^a	.050	.043	2.30643

a. Predictors: (Constant), RENEWAL CYCLES

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The R Square value illustrated in the Model Summary is 0.050. This indicates that only 5% of the variance of the dependent variable (Store Visits) is explained by the independent variable (Renewal Cycles).

Table 5.9 – ANOVA: Renewal Cycles

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	37.813	1	37.813	7.108	.009 ^a
	Residual	712.826	134	5.320		
	Total	750.640	135			

a. Predictors: (Constant), RENEWAL CYCLES

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Sig. value of 0.009 indicated in the ANOVA is less than 0.05 which indicates that the result is significant.

Table 5.10 – Coefficients: Renewal Cycles

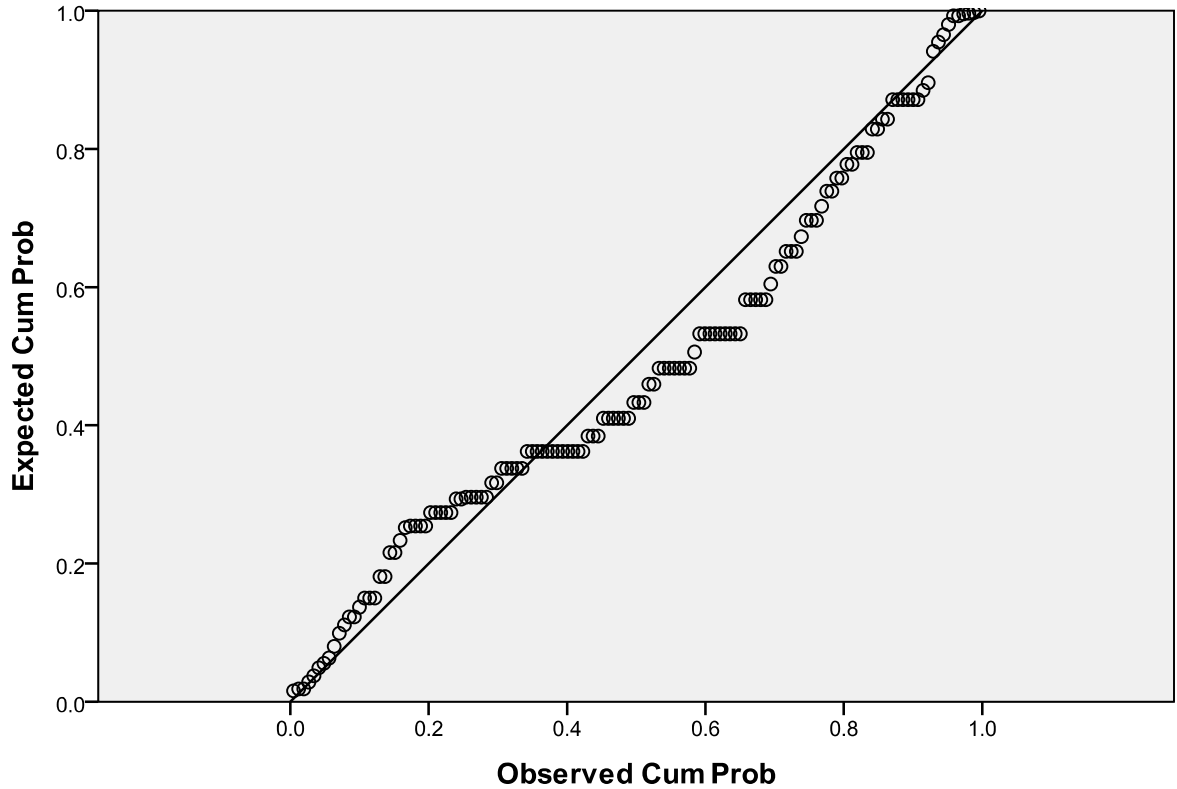
		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	11.118	.800		13.899	.000		
	RENEWAL CYCLES	-.288	.108	-.224	-2.666	.009	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Beta coefficient of $-.224$ along with the Sig value of 0.009 indicates that the independent variable (Renewal Cycle) makes a contribution that is both unique and statistically significant to the dependent variable (Store Visits).

Figure 5.4 – Normal probability plot: Renewal Cycles

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The normal probability plot indicates that the data points follow a relatively straight line that runs diagonally from the bottom left. This indicates normality in their distribution.

5.5.1.4 Research proposition 1 - Conclusion

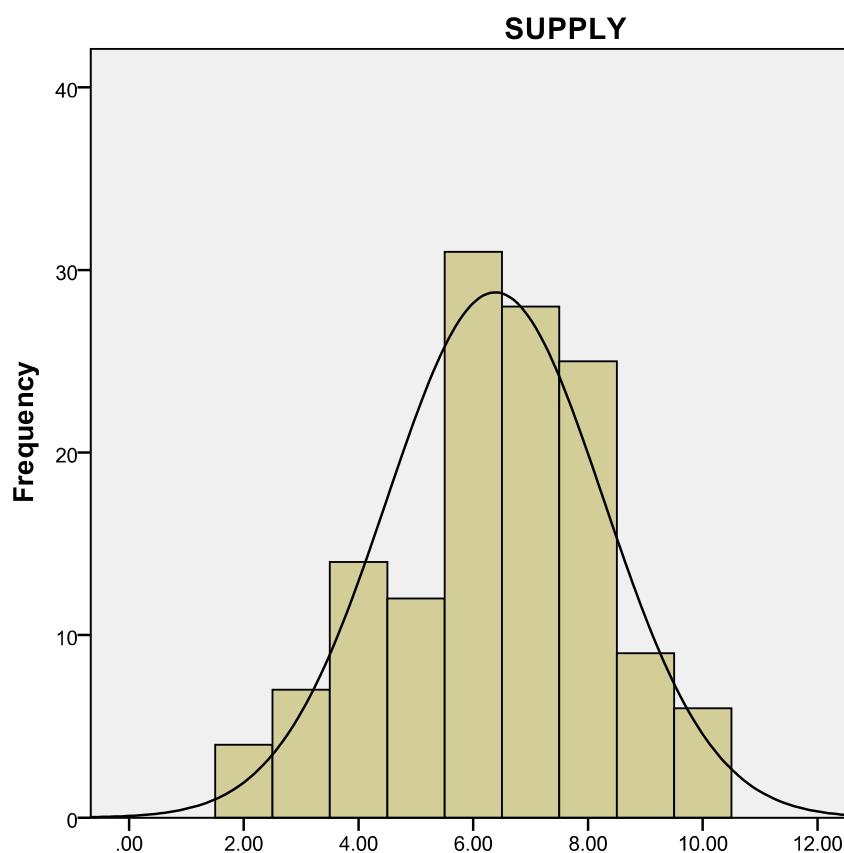
Based on the findings above, Renewal Cycles are related to consumers' retail store visits. The nature of the relationship is: negative, unique and statistically significant.

5.5.2 Research proposition 2 – Supply

The second proposition related to the existence of a relationship between supply and the frequency consumers' retail store visits. The literature review indicated that decreasing supply or creating the perception of reduced supply was a core component of Fast Fashion and additionally, resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently (Byun & Sternquist, 2008)

5.5.2.1 Descriptive Statistics and test for normality

Figure 5.5 – Histogram of Supply variable



A visual inspection of the histogram showing the results of the Supply variable is illustrated in Figure 5.5 above. As discussed in the data preparation section, the Supply variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “When I see something I want, I am afraid that I will not get the right size or colour if I do not buy immediately” and “The clothing items I wish to buy are often out of stock”. The figure indicates that the results are normally distributed. This supports the skewness and kurtosis values illustrated in Table 5.6.

5.5.2.2 Inferential Statistics – Correlation

Proposition 2 was evaluated by conducting correlations to determine the nature and extent of the relationship between Store Visits and Supply. The bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The output of this is illustrated in Table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11 – Correlations: Supply

		Correlations	
		STORE VISITS	SUPPLY
STORE VISITS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.422
	N	136	136
SUPPLY	Pearson Correlation	-.069	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.422	
	N	136	136

The output illustrates that the outcome of the Pearson correlation coefficient is - 0.069. The negative sign indicates that a negative correlation exists between the two variables while the number indicates that the strength of the correlation is very small.

5.5.2.3 Regression Analysis

Table 5.12 – Model Summary: Supply

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.069 ^a	.005	-.003	2.36110

a. Predictors: (Constant), SUPPLY

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The R Square value illustrated in the Model Summary is 0.005. This indicates that only 0.5% of the variance of the dependent variable (Store Visits) is explained by the independent variable (Supply).

Table 5.13 – ANOVA: Supply

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.618	1	3.618	.649	.422 ^a
	Residual	747.022	134	5.575		
	Total	750.640	135			

a. Predictors: (Constant), SUPPLY

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Sig. value of 0.422 indicated in the ANOVA is greater than 0.05 which indicates that the result is not significant.

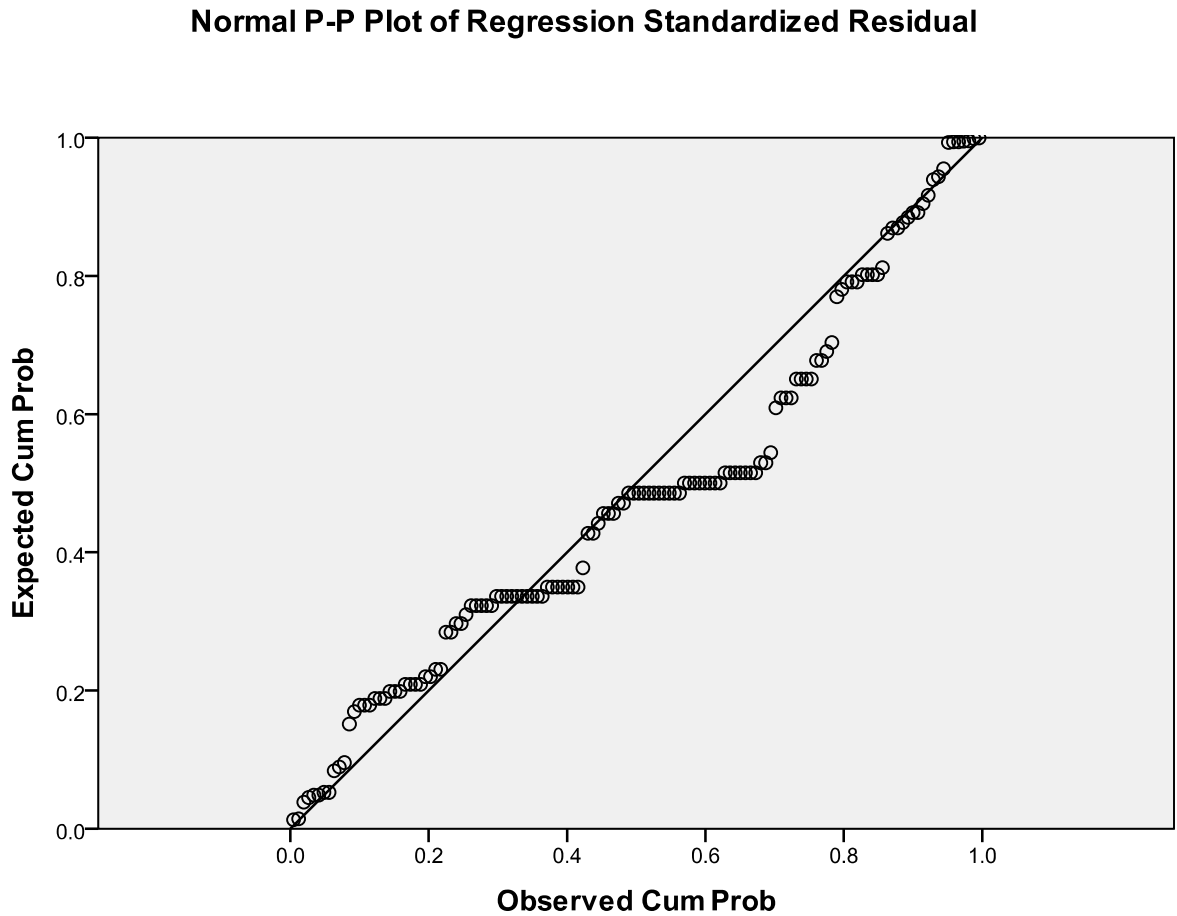
Table 5.14 – Coefficients: Supply

		Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	9.605	.717		13.398	.000		
	SUPPLY	-.087	.108	-.069	-.806	.422	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Beta coefficient of $-.069$ along with the Sig value of 0.422 indicates that the independent variable (Supply) does not make a unique, statistically significant contribution to the dependent variable (Store Visits).

Figure 5.6 - Normal probability plot: Supply



The normal probability plot indicates that the data points follow a relatively straight line that runs diagonally from the bottom left. This indicates normality in their distribution.

5.5.2.4 Research proposition 2 - Conclusion

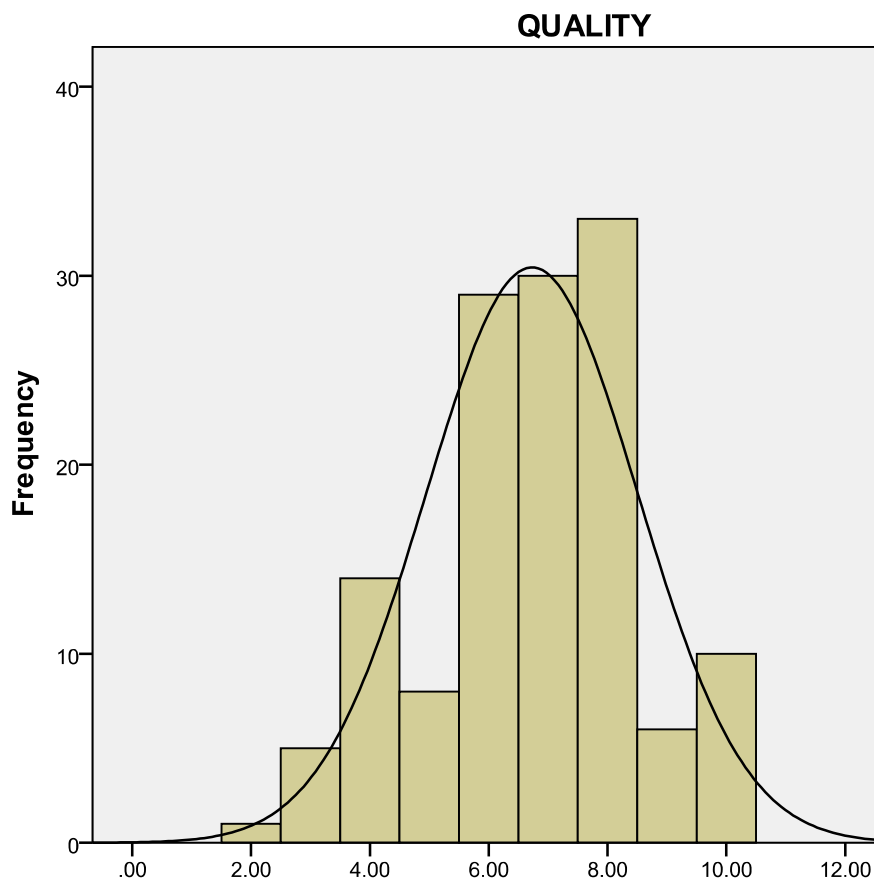
Based on the findings above, Supply is related to consumers' retail store visits and purchases. The nature of the relationship is: negative, but not unique or statistically significant.

5.5.3 Research proposition 3 – Quality

The third proposition related to the existence of a relationship between quality and the frequency consumers' retail store visits. The literature review indicated that reduced quality, which is a core component of Fast Fashion, resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010)

5.5.3.1 Descriptive Statistics and test for normality

Figure 5.7 – Histogram for Quality Variable



A visual inspection of the histogram showing the results of the Quality variable is illustrated in Figure 5.7 above. As discussed in the data preparation section, the Quality variable was computed by combining two questions in the questionnaire: “The quality of clothing items available in stores has improved over time” and “I am satisfied with the quality of clothing items in stores”. The figure indicates that the results are normally distributed. This supports the skewness and kurtosis values illustrated in Table 5.6.

5.5.3.2 Inferential Statistics –Correlation

Proposition 3 was evaluated by conducting correlations to determine the nature and extent of the relationship between Store Visits and Quality. The bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The output of this is illustrated in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.15 – Correlations: Quality

		Correlations	
		STORE VISITS	QUALITY
STORE VISITS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.790
	N	136	136
QUALITY	Pearson Correlation	-.023	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.790	
	N	136	136

The output illustrates that the outcome of the Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.023. The negative sign indicates that a negative correlation exists between the two variables while the number indicates that the strength of the correlation is very small.

5.5.3.3 Regression Analysis

Table 5.16 – Model Summary: Quality

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.023 ^a	.001	-.007	2.36618

a. Predictors: (Constant), QUALITY

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The R Square value illustrated in the Model Summary is 0.001. This indicates that only 0.1% of the variance of the dependent variable (Store Visits) is explained by the independent variable (Quality).

Table 5.17 – ANOVA: Quality

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.400	1	.400	.071	.790 ^a
	Residual	750.240	134	5.599		
	Total	750.640	135			

a. Predictors: (Constant), QUALITY

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Sig. value of 0.790 indicated in the ANOVA is greater than 0.05 which indicates that the result is not significant.

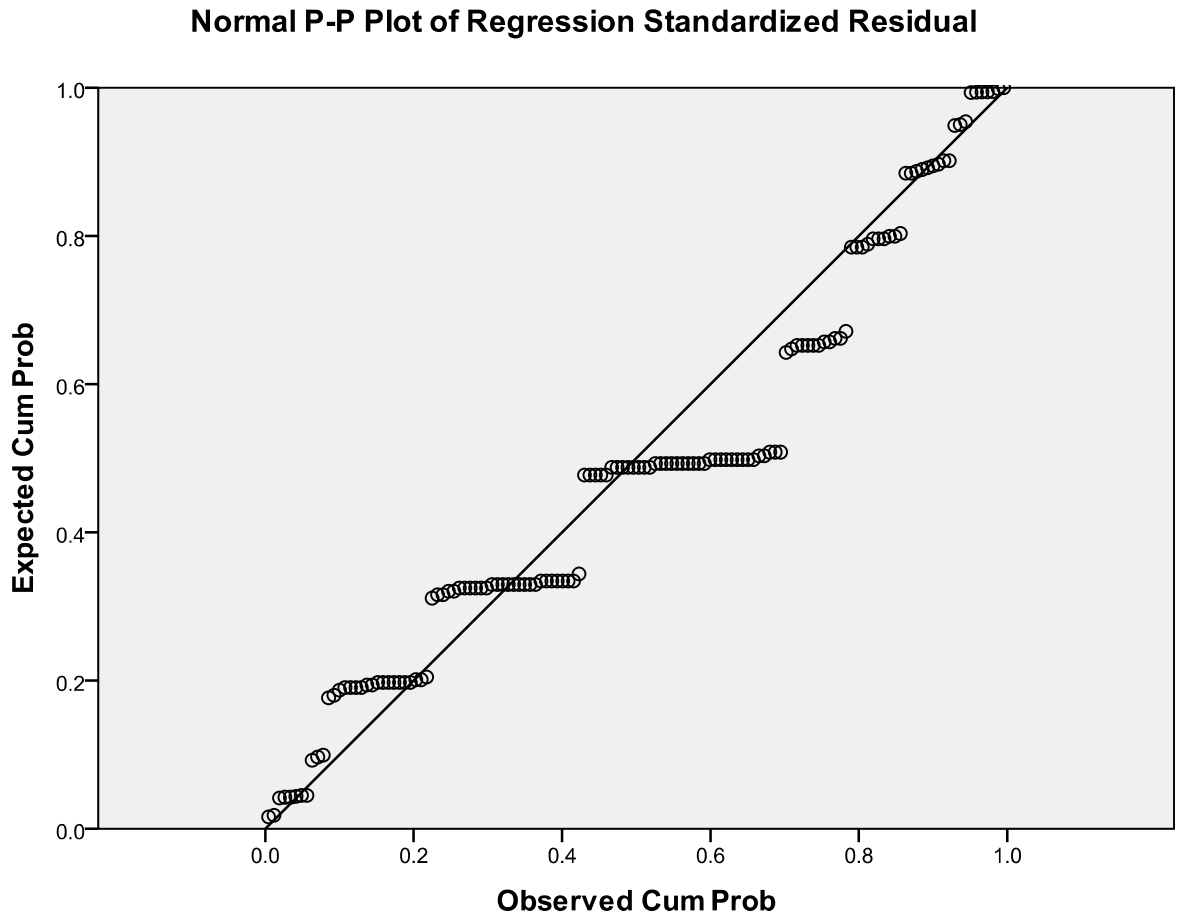
Table 5.18 – Coefficients: Quality

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	9.257	.795		11.644	.000		
	QUALITY	-.031	.114	-.023	-.267	.790	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Beta coefficient of $-.023$ along with the Sig value of 0.790 indicates that the independent variable (Quality) does not make a unique, statistically significant contribution to the dependent variable (Store Visits).

Figure 5.8 - Normal probability plot: Quality



The normal probability plot indicates that the data points do not follow a relatively straight line that runs diagonally from the bottom left. This indicates a deviation from normality in their distribution.

5.5.3.4 Research proposition 3 - Conclusion

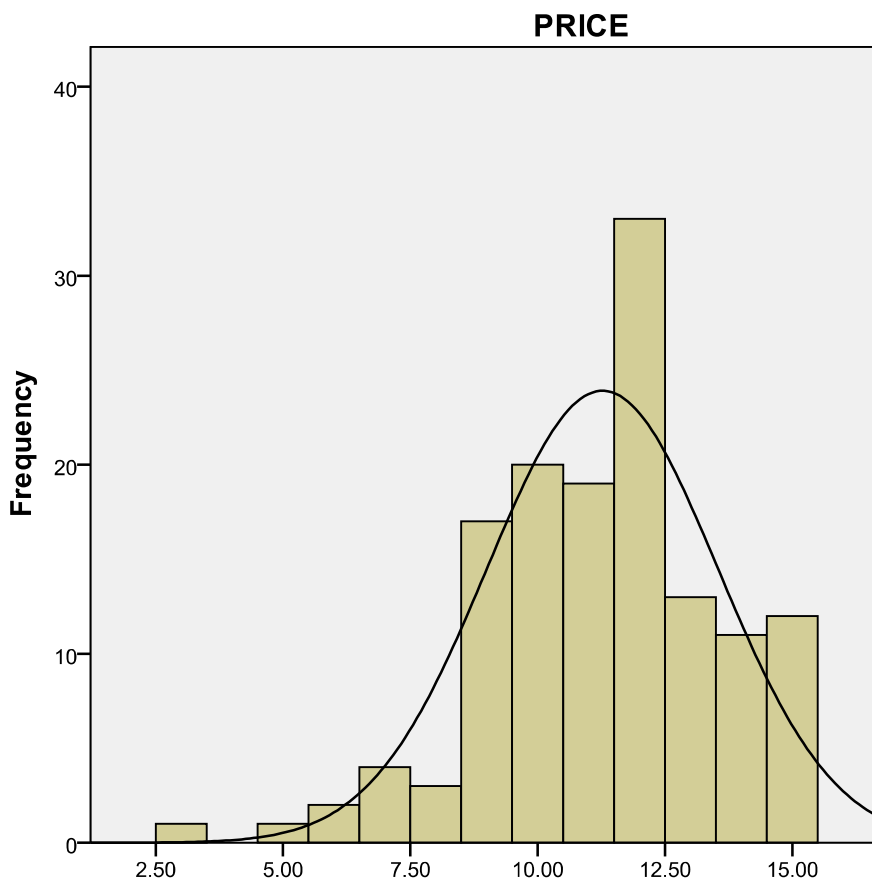
Based on the findings above, Quality is related to consumers' retail store visits. The nature of the relationship is: negative, but not unique or statistically significant.

5.5.4 Research proposition 4 – Price

The fourth proposition related to the existence of a relationship between price and the frequency consumers' retail store visits. The literature review indicated that reduced prices were a core component of Fast Fashion and additionally, resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

5.5.4.1 Descriptive Statistics and test for normality

Figure 5.9 – Histogram for Price variable



A visual inspection of the histogram showing the results of the Price variable is illustrated in Figure 5.9 above. The Price variable was computed by combining three questions in the questionnaire: "I would be willing to pay a higher price to get the exact clothing item I want ", "I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items of a higher quality" and "I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items that are fashionable and trendy, " as discussed in the data preparation section. The figure indicates that the results are normally distributed. This supports the skewness and kurtosis values illustrated in Table 5.6.

5.5.4.2 Inferential Statistics –Correlation

Proposition 4 was evaluated by conducting correlations to determine the nature and extent of the relationship between Store Visits and Price. The bivariate Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The output of this is illustrated in Table 5.19 below.

Table 5.19 – Correlations: Price

		Correlations	
		STORE VISITS	PRICE
STORE VISITS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.212 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	136	136
PRICE	Pearson Correlation	-.212 [*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	136	136

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The output illustrates that the outcome of the Pearson correlation coefficient is - 0.212. The negative sign indicates that a negative correlation exists between the two variables while the number indicates that the strength of the correlation is small.

5.5.4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 5.20 – Model Summary: Price

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.212 ^a	.045	.038	2.31316

a. Predictors: (Constant), PRICE

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The R Square value illustrated in the Model Summary is 0.045. This indicates that only 4.5% of the variance of the dependent variable (Store Visits) is explained by the independent variable (Price).

Table 5.21 – ANOVA: Price

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.643	1	33.643	6.288	.013 ^a
	Residual	716.997	134	5.351		
	Total	750.640	135			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PRICE

b. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Sig. value of 0.013 indicated in the ANOVA is less than 0.05 which indicates that the result is significant.

Table 5.22 – Coefficients: Price

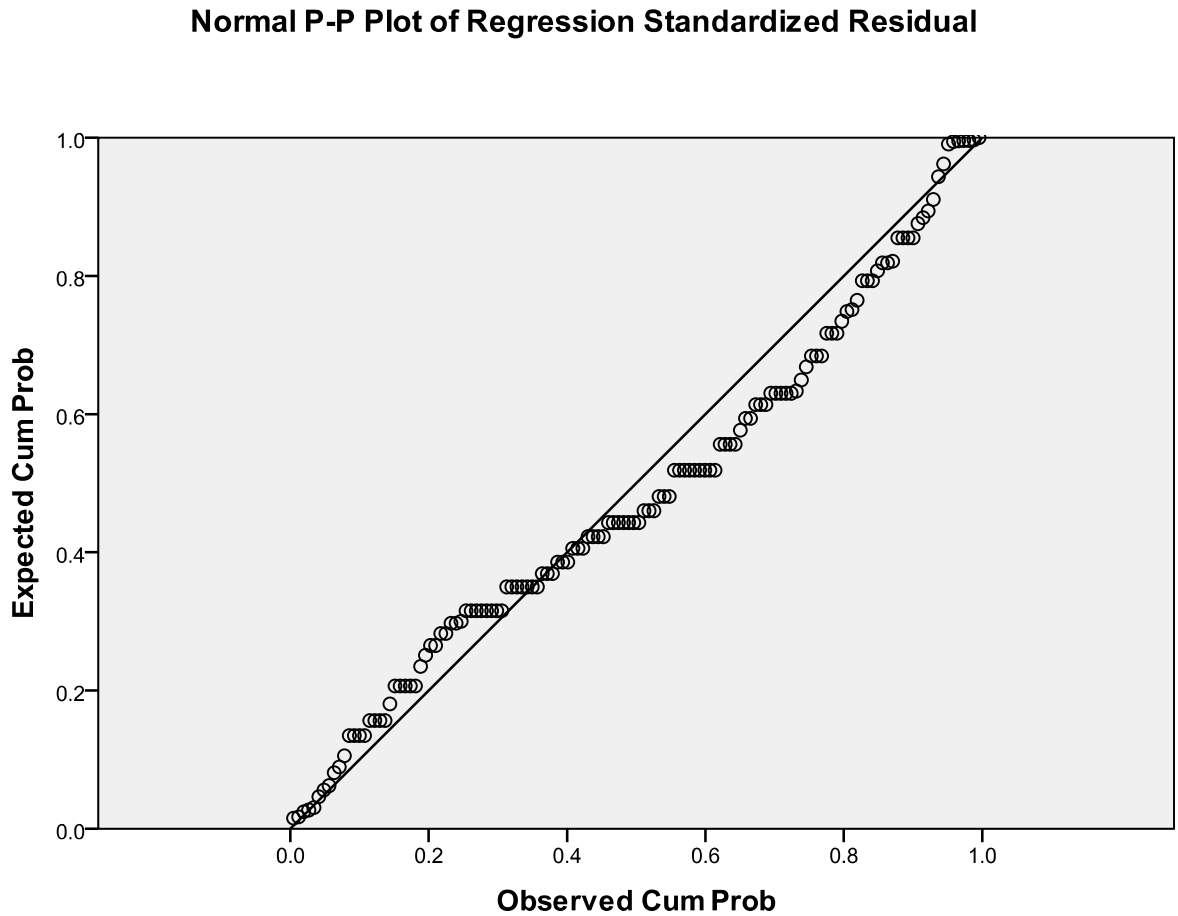
Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	11.532	1.009		11.431	.000		
	PRICE	-.220	.088	-.212	-2.508	.013	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: STORE VISITS

The Beta coefficient of -.212 along with the Sig value of 0.013 indicates that the independent variable (Price) makes a contribution that is both unique and statistically significant to the dependent variable (Store Visits).

Figure 5.10 - Normal probability plot: Price



The normal probability plot indicates that the data points follow a relatively straight line that runs diagonally from the bottom left. This indicates normality in their distribution.

5.5.4.4 Research proposition 4 - Conclusion

Based on the findings above, Price is related to consumers' retail Store Visits. The nature of the relationship is: negative, unique and statistically significant.

5.5.5 Research proposition 5 – Gender

The fifth proposition related to the existence of significant differences between different groups of consumers. The literature review indicated Fast Fashion and fashion in general is perceived differently by consumers based on their age groupings or gender classifications (Khare & Rakesh, 2010a). This proposition focussed of gender as the main differentiating variable and conducted an analysis of the five main variables of this study, namely: frequency of store visits and purchases, renewal cycles, supply, quality and cost.

5.5.5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 5.23 - Gender

GENDER				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FEMALE	84	61.8	61.8
	MALE	52	38.2	100.0
	Total	136	100.0	

5.5.5.2 Inferential Statistics – t-test for means

Table 5.24 – Group Statistics

Group Statistics					
GENDER		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
STORE VISITS	FEMALE	84	8.9881	2.31024	.25207
	MALE	52	9.1538	2.45257	.34011
RENEWAL CYCLES	FEMALE	84	7.2262	1.91601	.20905
	MALE	52	7.0769	1.71323	.23758
SUPPLY	FEMALE	84	6.5714	1.98965	.21709
	MALE	52	6.0769	1.67854	.23277
QUALITY	FEMALE	84	6.6429	1.80790	.19726
	MALE	52	6.8654	1.74927	.24258
PRICE	FEMALE	84	11.2262	2.21904	.24212
	MALE	52	11.3462	2.36713	.32826

Table 5.25 – Independent Samples t-test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
STORE VISITS	Equal variances assumed	.121	.729	-.397	134	.692	-.16575	.41738	-.99126	.65976
	Equal variances not assumed			-.392	103.269	.696	-.16575	.42334	-1.00531	.67381
RENEWAL CYCLES	Equal variances assumed	2.806	.096	.459	134	.647	.14927	.32493	-.49339	.79193
	Equal variances not assumed			.472	117.330	.638	.14927	.31646	-.47745	.77599

SUPPLY	Equal variances assumed	3.586	.060	1.493	134	.138	.49451	.33126	-.16067	1.14968
	Equal variances not assumed			1.554	121.719	.123	.49451	.31829	-.13560	1.12461
QUALITY	Equal variances assumed	.020	.887	-.706	134	.481	-.22253	.31511	-.84576	.40071
	Equal variances not assumed			-.712	110.940	.478	-.22253	.31266	-.84209	.39703
PRICE	Equal variances assumed	.261	.610	-.299	134	.766	-.11996	.40170	-.91446	.67453
	Equal variances not assumed			-.294	102.875	.769	-.11996	.40789	-.92893	.68901

The output of the independent samples t-test gives Sig. (2 tailed) values of 0.692, 0.647, 0.138, 0.481, and 0.766 respectively at the 95% confidence interval. This indicates that there are no significant differences in any of the variables since these values are all above the threshold of 0.05.

5.5.5.3 Research Proposition 5 – Conclusion

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female respondents with regards to the variables in question.

Chapter 6: DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in the introduction detailed in Chapter 1 Fast Fashion has become standard practice for modern fashion retailers. The chapter demonstrated two key business drivers for the adoption of this strategy.

The first key motivator for businesses to adopt Fast Fashion is its ability to provide superior returns and sales when compared to other retailers, this was evidenced by the latest results of South African retail giant, The Foschini Group (TFG) which credited their success on the adoption of Fast Fashion. The second motivator is the adoption of Fast Fashion as a defence against other firms who may seek to gain a competitive advantage by adopting the strategy and thus gain market dominance. This was evidenced by the entry of Fast Fashion retailer Zara into the Australian market, a move that is anticipated to negatively impact retailers sales volumes and prices: “without a doubt, Zara will take market share from other local brands. They will take a little bit from a lot of retailers. Some may not survive.” (The Australian, 2011, April 18, p. 23).

In addition to the business perspective of Fast Fashion, the academic perspective was also introduced. The current body of literature was briefly reviewed while potential gaps relating to consumer aspects of Fast Fashion were highlighted.

The literature review outlined in Chapter 2 distilled a comprehensive definition of Fast Fashion by exploring a range of previous studies on the subject. The context of the phenomenon was created by outlining the challenges faced by retailers and the manner in which Fast Fashion attempted to solve these. The three key theoretical perspectives and the arguments that underpin them were briefly discussed, one asserting that Fast Fashion is a supply chain innovation, another stating that it belongs exclusively in the realm of consumers while a third view held that Fast Fashion is a combination of both.

The perspective which was adopted held that Fast Fashion systems are made up of a combination of two distinct components: enhanced design, which is consumer driven, and rapid production, which is supply chain driven (Byun & Sternquist, 2008; Cachon & Swinney, 2009a). The discussion continued with a focus on the gap that was identified in the consumer aspects of Fast Fashion.

Consumer behaviour was discussed along with its key variables. Renewal Cycles, Supply, Quality, Price and Gender were outlined in the literature as variables that were related to consumers in addition to being critical aspect impacted by Fast Fashion. Potential relationships that exist between these constructs were also highlighted.

Chapter 3 formalised five propositions related to the key consumer variables identified. Data was gathered according to the Methodology outlined in Chapter 4 and the results were outlined in Chapter 5.

6.2 Research proposition 1 – Renewal Cycles

“Renewal cycles are related to the frequency of consumers’ retail store visits ”

The evaluation of the first proposition yielded a mixed set of results. The Literature review suggested that by increasing their renewal cycles (getting new stock more often) retailers were able to encourage consumers to frequent their stores more often. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient however indicated that this relationship is negative in nature, implying that an increase in the renewal cycle is likely to result in reduced frequency of store visits and vice versa.

This unexpected result demonstrates the view that consumers seldom evaluate renewal cycles in isolation and often combine it with other factors. Harrow and Lea-greenwood (2005) found that consumer satisfaction, which is marked by increased store loyalty and increased buying frequency, consisted of three elements: shopping systems satisfaction, buying systems satisfaction and satisfaction derived from the use of the product. The renewal cycle variable in this study explored the shopping system dynamic in isolation which may

account for the mixed set of results. The strength of this negative relationship was found to be small, but statistically significant.

The regression analysis indicated that Renewal Cycles only accounted for 5% of the variation in Store Visits. This was illustrated by The R Square value of 0.050. This result implies that there exists other variables which have a more significant bearing in determining the Store Visits variable. The ANOVA and coefficient beta indicate that the result is both unique and statistically significant.

Both the Renewal cycles and the Store Visits variables were normally distributed. Their cumulative probability plot was also found to be normally distributed.

6.3 Research proposition 2 – Supply

“Supply is related to the frequency of consumers’ retail store visits”

The literature review indicated that reduced supply (by limiting quantities of stock available) resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently. The evaluation of the second proposition revealed that the Pearson correlation coefficient had a negative sign, thus the proposed negative correlation was supported meaning that reducing the amount of stock available resulted in consumers increasing the frequency of their store visits and purchases.

The magnitude of this relationship was deemed to be very small. This was supported by the R Square value which indicates that only 0.5% of the variance in the Store Visits variable is explained by the Supply variable. The ANOVA and coefficients indicate that this result is not unique or statistically significant.

The histogram indicates that the Supply variable is normally distributed.

6.4 Research proposition 3 – Quality

“Quality is related to the frequency of consumers’ retail store visits ”

The literature review indicated that reduced quality, resulted in consumers increasing the frequency of their store visits. Although the negative Pearson correlation coefficient supported this proposition, the result of the ANOVA and regression analysis this result to be very small and statistically insignificant.

This result makes intuitive sense and supports an observation made in the literature review that quality and price are often evaluated simultaneously by consumers. Miyazaki et al. (2005), Grewal and Goodstein (2005), as well as Boyle and Lathrop (2009) all held that a relationship exists between price and

quality because price is often used by consumers as an indicator of product quality. Additionally, other product related attributes such as warranties, country of origin or brand names are used as an indicator of quality and have an influence of the perceptions that consumers have of quality (Miyazaki et al., 2005). Moderating for these external influences or including them in the construct of the Quality variable may be required to gain a clearer perspective.

6.5 Research proposition 4 – Price

“Cost is related to the frequency of consumers’ retail store visits ”

The evaluation of the fourth proposition upheld the findings outlined in the literature review which indicated that reduced prices resulted in consumers visiting stores and purchasing more frequently. The Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.212 supported this negative relationship. It was also indicated that 4.5% of the variance in the Store Visits variable is due to the Price variable.

The ANOVA and coefficients indicate that this result is both unique and statistically significant while the normal distribution of the variables is verified by the normal probability plot.

6.6 Research proposition 5 – Gender

“There are significant differences between male and female consumers in relation to Renewal cycles, Supply, Quality and Cost”

The literature review indicated Fast Fashion and fashion in general is perceived differently by consumers based on their age groupings or gender classifications. The results of the independent samples t-test at the 95% confidence interval indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female respondents with regards to the variables in question.

Although this finding runs counter to the findings of studies mentioned in the literature review outlined in Chapter 2, it is important to note that the sample was collected from a single location which may have limited the variance of responses received.

6.7 Conclusion

The discussion of the results indicates that Renewal Cycles, Supply, Quality and Price are negatively correlated to Store Visits. In addition, Renewal Cycles and Price were found to be statistically significant while Supply and Quality were found to be statistically insignificant.

The discussion indicates that there exist other variables which have a larger impact on Store Visits, thus highlighting a potential area of further research.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter indicates the main findings of the study and indicates areas for future research. Recommendations are put forth and the limitations of the study are outlined.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

As outlined in the introduction presented in Chapter 1, the objective of this study was to determine the applicability of Fast Fashion in South Africa by conducting a study on consumers who frequent fashion retail stores. Key variables relating to Fast Fashion and consumer behaviour were identified and propositions were formulated and measured to gain conclusions which could be analysed.

The evidence presented in this study found that there was only a moderate level of support for two propositions, while there was no support for the remaining three. The propositions that received sufficient evidence to support them were:

- **Proposition 1:** Renewal cycles are related to the frequency of consumers' retail store Consumers, and
- **Proposition 4:** Price is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits

The propositions which were not supported were:

- **Proposition 2:** Supply is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits
- **Proposition 3:** Quality is related to the frequency of consumers' retail store visits, and
- **Proposition 5:** There are significant differences between male and female consumers in relation to Renewal cycles, Supply, Quality and Price

As mentioned previously, the propositions that were supported only received a moderate amount of support. This implies that the key drivers of consumer purchase behavior are still not sufficiently understood and there exist other significant variables that have an impact on this consumer population.

7.3 Research Limitations

Because the research was conducted in a single geographical area, the demographic profile of respondents was dominated by a single racial group and did not adequately represent the demographic diversity of South Africa's consumer market.

Additionally, the instrument used had a limited number of scale items for each construct that was measured. The internal consistency and reliability of the findings could have been improved by using more scale items or questions to measure each key construct or variable.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on these findings, it would seem that Price and Renewal Cycles would be the key factors that would drive consumers towards increasing the frequency of their visits to retail outlets as well as the frequency of their purchases.

As highlighted prior, the consumer is the initiator in the modern retail environment. The retailer is tasked with having to respond to consumer tastes and demands in the provision of goods and services. Should the retailer select Fast Fashion as a means of response, these findings would suggest that it would be prudent to implement Fast Fashion elements that will enable the retailer to provide the consumer with a frequently changing range of products (increased Renewal Cycles) in a cost effective manner (reduced Price).

The practices of international Fast Fashion giant, Zara provide a prime example of mechanisms which can be implemented based on the findings of this study. The first illustration is Zara's low inventory policy: "every store receives small batches of products twice a week, avoiding large inventories and creating a climate of scarcity and opportunity" (Lopez & Fan, 2009, p. 281). Another example is the retailers' implementation of a consumer-centred pricing policy: "Zara follows a market-based pricing strategy which sets the target prices that the buyer is willing to pay" (Lopez & Fan, 2009, p. 281).

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

As mentioned previously, one of the implications of the results of this study is that there exist other variables that may significantly influence consumer behaviour in fashion retail and potentially impact on retailers who wish to implement Fast Fashion strategies. This study identified branding, country of origin, warranties and service levels as potential variables which may be explored.

Furthermore, it has been noted that a potential limitation of this study is the use of a fairly homogeneous sample and a single location. It is suggested that this study be repeated using a broader sample and geographical coverage in order to get a broader perspective that is more representative of South Africa's demographic profile.

7.6 Conclusion

The researcher has found evidence demonstrating that Renewal Cycles and Price are key variables for consumers in fashion retail affecting the frequency of purchases and store visits. In addition, Supply and Quality were found to make no significant contribution while there were no differences observed between different gender groups.

It was recommended that the key variables which were found to be significant to consumers be used as the basis for the implementation of any Fast Fashion retail strategies.

It was further suggested that future research should be conducted to uncover more key variables and to gain responses from demographically diverse groups.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A – RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

FAST FASHION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Section 1: Demographic information										
Race				BLACK		WHITE		COLOURED		INDIAN
Age	UNDER 15	15 to 20	21 to 25	25 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	Over 50	
Gender							MALE		FEMALE	

Section 2: Purchase behaviour								
Have you bought an item of clothing in the last 30 days?				YES		NO		
What type of clothing do you buy most frequently?			Mens wear	Womens wear	Children swear	Foot wear	Under wear	
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:								
My main reason for buying clothes is to follow fashion trends				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My main reason for buying clothes is when I have special occasions to attend				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My main reason for buying clothes is to replace old clothing items				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
My main reason for buying clothes because I get pleasure or enjoyment from it				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Section 3: Renewal cycle								
How often do you visit clothing shops?								
daily	Weekly	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Every 12 months	More than 12 months		
How often do you buy an item from a clothing shop?								
daily	Weekly	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Every 12 months	More than 12 months		
How often would you like to see new clothing items in stores?								
daily	Weekly	Monthly	Every 3 months	Every 6 months	Every 12 months	More than 12 months		
Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:								
I would visit a clothing store more often if there is a new range of clothing items on each visit				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I would buy more often if there was a new range of clothing on each visit				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Shops are adding new clothing items and new stock frequently				strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Section 4: Supply					
Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:					
When I see something I want, I am afraid that I will not get the right size or colour if I do not buy immediately	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The clothing items I wish to buy are often out of stock	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
When I see an item I want, I buy it immediately	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Section 5: Quality					
Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:					
Quality is very important to me	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The quality of clothing items available in stores has improved over time	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I expect to use the clothing items that I purchase for a long time	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I am satisfied with the quality of clothing items in stores	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

Section 6: Price					
On average, how much do you typically spend on one item of clothing?	R500 or less	R501 to R1000	R1001 to R1500	R1501 to R2000	R2001 or more
What is the maximum amount you are willing to pay for a single item of clothing?	R500 or less	R501 to R1000	R1001 to R1500	R1501 to R2000	R2001 or more
Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:					
I would be willing to pay a higher price to get the exact clothing item I want	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items of a higher quality	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I would be willing to pay a higher price to get clothing items that are fashionable and trendy	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

General information	
Time	Date