

**Script-elicitation and script organization within the
consumer decision-making context for the acquisition of
major household appliances**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Ph D

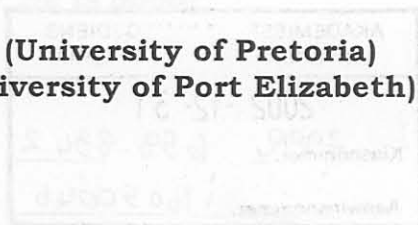
in the

Faculty of Natural Sciences and Agriculture
Department of Consumer Science

University of Pretoria

April 2002

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest appreciation to the following individuals and organisations for their contribution to the successful completion of this study:

- ◆ Professor Elizabeth Boshoff, promoter, for her support, encouragement and professional guidance during the duration of the project.
- ◆ Professor Deon Rousseau, co-promoter, for the positive way in which he contributed to the project.
- ◆ Mr. Rob Marais and Whirlpool SA for the financial support and encouragement, but especially for the company's support of the activities of the Department of Consumer Science, UP as an academic institution that could make a difference to the well-being of consumers and industry in general.
- ◆ Mr. Henk Theron and Annique for the financial contributions and encouragement.
- ◆ Dr Hermie Borraine, Department of Statistics, UP, for her enthusiasm, her statistical advice and guidance with the data analysis and interpretation.
- ◆ Mrs. Rina Owen, Division for Research Support, UP, who has a fine sense of humor and a very special gift to make a researcher feel at ease so that one does not get lost in your own data.
- ◆ Prof Piet de Kock, a special friend, for language editing.
- ◆ My husband, Nico for his understanding, loyalty and support when it was needed most.
- ◆ Our children, Lourens, Tania and Ronel for their continual support, encouragement and prayers.
- ◆ Wonderful friends for continual support

And above all.....

“Thank you to the Lord, for He is good!”

Ps 107:1



ABSTRACT

**Script-elicitation and script organization
for the acquisition of major household appliances
within the consumer decision-making context**

by

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Promotor: **Prof Dr Elizabeth Boshoff** (University of Pretoria)

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The acquisition of major household appliances - in terms of the importance of the purchase, the consequences and impact of purchase decisions - is generally described as complex, high-risk decisions that can create a considerable amount of confusion and tension. The purchasing process is therefore generally approached with uncertainty and rather cautiously. Reports on the ways in which consumers address these difficulties, are however, ambiguous and conflicting. Some reports indicate more extensive information seeking and evaluation while others indicate that consumers handle complex decisions by reverting to more simplistic decision-making strategies.

Traditional consumer decision models which are generally used to direct and structure research in this regard, tend to portray the process of proceeding through a major purchase decision as a logical problem solving matter. In these models, the decision-making process is depicted as multi staged and complex. Objections against the use of traditional consumer decision-making models for all purchasing events, as well as conflicting evidence in terms of how consumers approach complex decision-making in the general instigated the investigation of the implementation of scripts as a more realistic portrayal of specific purchasing events such as the

acquisition of major household appliances. Although the script concept is generally accepted to be a valid construct with wide application in disciplines such as cognitive psychology, little has been done to develop and explore the potential of buying/shopping scripts and to implement it in practice since the first initiatives in the 1980's.

The research was explorative in nature and followed an ideographic approach using research techniques that were qualitatively orientated. Data-collection was done in five phases and multiple data-collection techniques were used. Data-collection was closely interwoven with data analysis so that results could be used to direct subsequent data-collection to address shortcomings in time.

The attempt to elicit and generate a script for purchasing major household appliances within the consumer decision-making context, proved successful. The selection, combination and order of executing the various script-elicitation techniques were effective in eliciting the relevant script norms and in generating a script that coincides with the basic properties and structural characteristics of a script.

The contribution of this study is twofold: in the field of consumer behaviour it firstly provides insight regarding complex consumer decision-making, specifically concerning the acquisition of major household appliances. Secondly, the study, done within the discipline of consumer science, involved theory from the field of cognitive psychology to suggest alternative frameworks to portray consumer decision-making. Expanding this principle to other commodities may entail many advantages for consumer science, retail and industry in terms of consumer behaviour and marketing because shopping scripts portray the reality of consumer decision-making behaviour.

In conclusion, the advantages of a script as a portrayal of a specific purchasing event are explained: in terms of an improved understanding of consumer behaviour and to encourage more focused strategies by professionals in the field of consumer science, retail and industry to address consumers' needs.



**Die onttrekking en organisering van 'n teks
vir die verkryging van groot huishoudelike toerusting
binne 'n verbruikersbesluitnemingsraamwerk**

deur

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Die aankoop van groot huishoudelike toerusting word in die algemeen in terme van die belangrikheid van die aankoop, die gevolge en impak van die aankoopbesluit as komplekse, hoërisiko-aankope beskou. Omdat die besluitnemingsproses tot heelwat verwarring en spanning kan lei, word dit gewoonlik met onsekerheid en omsigtigheid benader. Navorsing oor hoe verbruikers hierdie probleme hanteer, bied egter teenstellende resultate. Terwyl sommige op meer intense inligtingsoeke en produkevaluering voor besluitneming dui, is daar ander wat toon dat verbruikers hulle tot eenvoudiger besluitnemingstrategieë wend.

Tradisionele verbruikersbesluitnemingsmodelle stel die proses van komplekse verbruikersbesluitneming oorwegend as logies en beredeneerde probleemoplossing voor wat in verskillende stadia verdeel kan word. Besware teen die algemene gebruik van hierdie modelle om aankoopgebeure voor te stel, en teenstellende bewyse ten opsigte van die wyse waarop verbruikers komplekse verbruikersbesluite hanteer, het aanleiding gegee tot 'n ondersoek na die moontlikheid om tekse/geskrifte as meer realistiese voorstellings van spesifieke aankoopgebeure soos dië vir die aankoop van groot huishoudelike toerusting te ontwikkel.

Hoewel tekse as 'n geldige konstruk in verskeie dissiplines soos kognitiewe sielkunde erken en gebruik word, is min gedoen om die potensiaal van aankooptekse verder te ontgin en ontwikkel

sedert die eerste inisiatiewe op hierdie gebied in die 1980's. Die navorsing was verkennend van aard en het 'n ideografiese benadering gevolg en navorsingstegnieke geïmplimenteer wat kwalitatief van aard is om van meet af inligting in te win wat spontaan vanuit verbruikers se ervaringsveld gestimuleer is. Data-opname is in vyf fases gedoen en veelvoudige data-insamelingstegnieke is gebruik. Data is onmiddelik na insameling verwerk sodat die resultate in opeenvolgende insamelingssessies in aanmerking geneem kon word om leemtes aan te spreek.

'n Teks vir die aankoop van groot huishoudelike toerusting binne verbruikersbesluitnemingsverband is met sukses gegenereer. Uit die voorgestelde kombinasie van data-insamelingstegnieke kon die toepaslike norme geïdentifiseer word en 'n teks gegenereer word wat voldoen aan die basiese eienskappe en strukturele kenmerke wat vir tekse voorgehou word.

Die bydrae van hierdie studie is tweeledig: eerstens bied dit op die gebied van verbruikersgedrag groter insig met betrekking tot komplekse verbruikersbesluitneming, spesifiek met betrekking tot groot huishoudelike toerusting waarvoor daar min teorie bestaan. Tweedens betrek die studie, wat binne die dissipline van verbruikerwetenskap deurgevoer is, teorie uit die kognitiewe sielkunde om tekse as nuwe raamwerke voor te stel om verbruikersbesluitneming uit te beeld. Die toepassing hiervan op ander kommoditeite kan baie voordele inhou vir verbruikerswetenskap, die kleinhandel en industrie omdat daar op hierdie manier nader aan die werklikheid van verbruikersgedrag gekom word.

In die verhandeling word ten slotte die voordele van die gebruik van 'n teks om 'n spesifieke aankoopgebeurtenis voor te stel bespreek: in terme daarvan om verbruikersgedrag beter te verstaan en om meer gefokusde strategieë deur die industrie, kleinhandel en professionele persone in die studiegebied van verbruikerswetenskap aan te moedig ter wille daarvan om verbruikersbehoefte aan te spreek.

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