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## PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

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### STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is presented in the form of articles and is presented in the following chapters:

- CHAPTER 2: Introduction and statement of the problem**
- CHAPTER 3: Consumer decision-making models within the discipline of Consumer Science: a critical approach**
- CHAPTER 4: The potential of using script theory in consumer behaviour research**
- CHAPTER 5: Justification of a script-elicitation procedure for the acquisition of major household appliances**
- CHAPTER 6: The elicitation and generation of a script for the acquisition of major household appliances within a consumer decision-making context**
- CHAPTER 7: The potential of a script to portray the acquisition of major household appliances in consumer behaviour research**
- CHAPTER 8: Conclusion and recommendations**

This dissertation deviates from the traditional format for dissertations. It is presented in the form of a sequence of articles where every article represents a significant part of the research process from the motivation for the study up to the results and conclusive remarks. Having discussed the motivation for the research and research objectives in chapter 2, every one of the following chapters/articles can be considered independent entities in terms of their topics and contents. For the purpose of conformity, the style and layout as prescribed for the **South African Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences** were used for the technical presentation of the articles.

The published articles included in the dissertation were peer-reviewed before publication and are contained in the published format in annexure A. The unpublished articles have been submitted for publication but won't necessarily be published at the time when the thesis is submitted for examination.

One of the major challenges of presenting the dissertation in this format was that the length of individual chapters/articles was restricted in terms of the authors' guidelines of the scientific journal. This necessitated careful pre-meditation and control of structure and content. Chapters 5 and 6 eventually exceeded the recommended length for articles due to difficulty to reduce content without loss of essential information.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The relevant literature and reference lists are contained in each article instead of providing an integrated literature review and reference list for the study as a whole.

## **RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS**

A study that intends to elicit a script for the acquisition of major household appliances is explorative in nature. The voluntaristic assumption was made that consumers are active agents who interact with their environments and thereby gain experience, generate knowledge, beliefs and intentions, which direct subsequent consumer behaviour. An emic, ideographic approach of enquiry was used where the importance of particular decisive events/actions were investigated rather than to make an attempt to generalize the findings to all purchasing events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:10, 158; Corsini, 1987:563). In this case an ideographic approach also referred to the rigorous analysis of data concerning the event of purchasing major household appliances in an attempt to formulate interpretive statements pertaining to the specific decision-making event (for a specific appliance, namely a washing machine) and to the class of phenomena represented by the event (major electrical household appliances). An ideographic study is characterized by a smaller sample and the use of multiple data-collection techniques (Denzin in Corsini, 1994:205).

Research techniques typical of the post positivist paradigm, namely projective techniques, interviews and focus-group discussions were used during five separate data-collection stages (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:9,10; Hudson & Murray, 1986:347). A post positivist research approach was followed with the intention to construct a cognitive representation of consumers' actions from the point of view of the consumer during a specific purchasing event rather than to establish law like associations between data and to generalize in terms of all purchasing situations and across all consumer types. The research thus aimed to *understand the unique rather than the general* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:9; Nau, 1995:1; Hudson & Murray, 1986:343).



Data-collection commenced in August 2001 (stage 1) and was completed in February 2002 when the focus-group discussions were held to inter alia reflect upon the results obtained through the data of the previous data-collection stages.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Content analysis of data collected during every script-elicitation stage was done immediately before proceeding with the following stage that applied a different data-collection technique. Script norms and script characteristics unfolded during the analysis and interpretation of data towards the eventual generation of an empirical as well as a theoretical script. Script organization required simple statistical calculations to identify the position and sequence of script actions and to determine the level of agreement of the results of the various script-elicitation techniques. This is perfectly compatible with a post positivistic orientation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:9).

## LIST OF REFERENCES FOR THE DISSERTATION

Due to the format of this dissertation, every chapter/article contains the list of references relevant to the specific chapter, instead of having an integrated list of references for the study as a whole.

### REFERENCE LIST

- CORSINI, RJ. 1987. *Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology*. New York. John Wiley.
- DENZIN, NK & LINCOLN, YS. 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2 nd ed. London. Sage.
- HUDSON, LA & MURRAY, JB. 1986. Methodological limitations of the hedonic consumption paradigm and possible alternative: a subjectivist approach. *Advances in Consumer Research* XIII:343-348. Sixteenth Annual Conference. [sl]. Association for Consumer Research.
- NAU, DS. 1995. Mixing methodologies: can bimodal research be a viable post-positivist tool? *The Qualitative Report* 2(3):1-5. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/OR/QR2-3/NAU.HTML>