



Customer perceptions of the attractiveness of shopping centres in Pretoria

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The primary objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions of patrons regarding the attractiveness of shopping centres in Pretoria. The study was executed in two phases. The aim of phase one was to explore this field of study in the local context, while phase two endeavoured to measure respondents' perceptions with regard to certain attributes of one of the largest shopping centres in Africa. The measuring instrument used in the study was based on scales used in studies abroad and adapted for local use. The study found that male and female customers do not differ significantly with respect to their perceptions of certain shopping centre attributes, while differences do exist between the perceptions of black¹ and white respondents regarding some of the attributes used to measure the attractiveness of the centre.

Introduction

Changes in consumers' natural and social environments have a huge impact on their buying and shopping behaviour (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan 2002; Schiffman & Kanuk 2004). Technology and lifestyle changes largely determine what consumers buy, when they buy and how and where they buy. Consumers have more choices than previously; the Internet offers new channels of distribution for many retailers, and shopping malls offer extended shopping hours. The challenges facing the retail industry, however, are not caused only by changes in demographics, lifestyles or culturally influenced buying behaviours of shoppers, but also by the extremely fierce competitive retail environment (Kaufman & Lane 1996; Frasquet, Gil & Mollé 2001). Levy & Weitz (2004: xi) contend that strategic thinking and the consideration of financial implications "are critical for success in the present dynamic, highly competitive retail environments".

These competitive forces and other environmental factors challenge retailers to employ strategies that will differentiate and position them in the minds of consumers. Managers of shopping centres employ various strategies and tactics to make the shopping experience as enjoyable as possible. Convenient shopping hours, adequate parking facilities and entertainment activities are examples of effective tools to attract patrons to shopping malls (Wakefield & Baker 1998; Haynes & Talpade 1996; Sit, Merrilees & Birch 2003). According to Barnes (2002: 11) shopping centres in South Africa, for example, are increasingly utilising the marketing opportunities offered by various kinds of entertain-

ment activities, not only to draw customers to the centres, but also to build possible long-term relationships. These relationships will become imperative in determining future strategies for shopping centres: "Psychologists have taught us that people form relationships with places. People come to depend on places."

The advent and expansion of planned shopping centres or malls has been one of the major retail revolutions in South Africa over the past 15–20 years. Berman & Evans (2001: 330) define a planned shopping centre as a "group of architecturally unified commercial establishments built on a site that is centrally owned." Further distinguishing characteristics of such centres are that they are based on balanced tenancy and surrounded by ample parking facilities. From a marketing point of view, the balanced tenancy ensures that the stores in the centre complement one another with respect to quality and variety, making the centre an attractive one-stop shopping experience for patrons (Levy & Weitz 2001; Berman & Evans 2001). Other positive attributes or advantages of these shopping centres that promote their attractiveness for consumers are: entertainment (Sit et al. 2003); family shopping (Berman & Evans 2001); merchandise variety (Terblanche & Boshoff 2002); easy access, parking and security (Frasquet et al. 2001); atmospherics and resting seats (Wong et al. 2001); and extended shopping hours (Kaufman & Lane 1996).

According to Howard (in Frasquet et al. 2001) there

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is a serious lack of literature dealing with shopping centre management. Frasquet et al. (2001) further state that the literature on store choice is quite extensive, while the applications to shopping centre choice are not as numerous. In the South African context, a literature study revealed that not a single study had focused on shopping centre attractiveness, shopping centre selection, or the association between shopping centre retail image and shopping preferences.

As will be pointed out in the literature review, authors use different terms to describe the factors that influence consumers' selection of or preference for a specific centre. Frasquet et al. (2001) refer to "shopping centre choice" or "shopping centre selection"; Sit et al. (2003) use the term "shopping centre image"; the main aim of Budkin & Lord's (1997) study was to determine the key reasons that shoppers are attracted to certain centres, while Wong et al. (2001) use the acronym SCATTR (which stands for shopping centre attractiveness). The latter formed the basis for the South African study.

Problem statement and objectives of the study

The challenging retail environment, and the fact that investment of foreign funds calls for effective management of shopping centres, necessitates the need to manage these centres effectively. Wong et al. (2001: 77) report that the various economic reforms taking place in China since 1979 and the gearing towards a more open market economy required an understanding of the consumer market. Likewise, the dramatic changes that have been taking place on the political and social fronts in South Africa since 1994 require a thorough understanding of the tastes and preferences of consumers from all cultural backgrounds in South Africa. No formal studies in this field have been conducted in South Africa to date, and the need for research in this field is therefore evident. The main aim of this paper is to establish a South African perspective of shopping centre attractiveness.

Literature review

The pioneering study to assess and predict shopping centre patronage, consumers' perceptions of a store, or shopping centre image was executed by Martineau in 1958 (Sit et al. 2003). He addressed the retail store image as a multidimensional concept, comprising distinct attributes such as merchandising, accessibility, service and atmo-

spherics. Huff's 1962 study (in Wong et al. 2001) postulates that retail shopping areas or centres were basically similar except for the size of the centre and distance from the consumer. Nevin & Houston (1980), however, suggest that the size of the centre or locational factors might not be good measures of its attractiveness, and that non-locational factors are becoming more important with respect to consumers' perceptions of the attraction of shopping centres.

Referring to work done by Spiggle & Sewall in 1987, Frasquet et al. (2001: 26) are of the opinion that the factors that influence shopping centre selection can be grouped into three categories, namely: consumer characteristics, consumer psychological states and outlet characteristics. This article, in alignment with Frasquet's work, will focus on outlet characteristics. Moreover, Wee (1986) and Frasquet et al. (2001) emphasise that shopping centre choice modelling should be based on attributes specific to the centre, avoiding retailer-specific attributes, for example, in-store shopping experience as discussed by Berman & Evans (2001) and Terblanche & Boshoff (2002). A brief discussion follows of three studies (undertaken in Australia, Spain and China) in which certain dominant attribute types and specific attributes to measure consumer preference in shopping centre selection or attractiveness are identified. The specific attributes form the basis for the discussion of the study undertaken in South Africa.

Shopping centre attributes

According to Sit et al. (2003), a review of the retailing literature reveals four dominant attribute dimensions in shopping centre image (attractiveness) studies: merchandising, accessibility, service and atmospherics. These authors state, however, that the aforementioned 'big four' attributes neglect three other attribute types, namely: entertainment, food and security. The aim of the Sit et al. (2003) study in Queensland, Australia was firstly to identify a model of attributes that represented the shopping centre image, and secondly, to identify market segments of shopping centre patrons. A qualitative phase in this study identified 48 items, which were reduced to 39 attributes representing shopping centre image (Sit et al. 2003: 87). In this phase, the screening exercise revealed that the entertainment dimension should be divided into two separate attributes, namely specialty entertainment and special event entertainment. The accessibility dimension was further divided into two sub-attributes, namely micro and macro accessibility. In total then, 11 attribute dimensions were used in the

Sit et al. study. Further detail with regard to the specific attributes used in the study is presented in Table 1.

The main aim of the study in Spain (Frasquet et al. 2001: 31–32) was to analyse the components or dimensions of the construct 'perceived shopping centre value'. A principal components factor analysis was performed, which resulted in four factor loadings of 19 specific shopping centre value attributes. The four factors (or main dimensions) are as follows:

- Factor 1 contains items mainly referring to retail assortment and quality.
- Factor 2 refers to atmospheric aspects such as events and exhibitions and attractive design and décor.
- Factor 3 applies to the accessibility of shopping centres (for example, easy access and parking).
- Factor 4, termed efficiency, refers to one-stop shopping and time-saving advantages.

Many of the attributes or items in the Spanish study are the same as those in the Australian study. (See Table 1 for a summary of the specific items or attributes that overlap in the various studies.)

The SCATTR instrument

Based on Churchill's (1979) work and the modification thereof by Smith (1999), Wong et al. (2001) developed an instrument to assess the attractiveness of joint venture shopping centres (JVSCs) in China. Planned shopping centre development is a manifestation of these joint venture retail enterprises. The research process followed by Wong et al. (2001: 80–83) for the study entailed the following steps:

1. The work of Nevin & Houston (1980), which identified 14 attributes categorised into three main dimensions, was modified. Some attributes were eliminated and others added that would be more applicable to situations in China.
2. A focus group survey was conducted with 30 Chinese consumers, which led to the establishment of a preliminary SCATTR instrument.
3. A sample of 500 shoppers in a shopping centre was interviewed to test the instrument. They were asked to rank the 21 attributes on a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was then subjected to measures for internal consistency

Table 1: Attributes used in three shopping centre studies

	Attributes Wong (Chinese study)	Corresponding attributes Sit et al. (Australian study)	Corresponding attributes Frasquet et al. (Spanish study)
1. Service quality	✓	✓	✓
2. Owner's reputation	✓	✓	✓
3. Resting seats	✓	×	×
4. Merchandise variety	✓	✓	✓
5. Merchandise quality	✓	×	✓
6. Service variety	✓	×	×
7. Vertical transportation	✓	✓	✓
8. Store atmosphere	✓	✓	✓
9. Special events/exhibits	✓	✓	✓
10. Food court	✓	✓	×
11. Availability of supermarket	✓	×	✓
12. Layout	✓	✓	✓
13. Sales promotion	✓	×	✓
14. Late closing hour	✓	✓	×
15. Adequate entrances	✓	✓	✓
16. Parking facilities	✓	✓	×
17. General price level	✓	×	✓
18. Uniqueness	✓	×	×
19. Fashion	✓	✓	✓
20. Located at retailing belt	✓	×	×

and the assessment of its predictive and construct validity. The final SCATTR instrument (Wong et al. 2001: 82) contains 21 attributes (see Table 1).

Table 1 contains a list of the 21 attributes in the SCATTR instrument, indicating those that were also used in the Australian and Spanish studies that have been discussed. The attributes in the SCATTR instrument form the basis for the comparison because it was used as the starting point for the South African study. It should be noted that it is not the intention to highlight the differences in the studies to indicate possible shortcomings in any study, because the focus, specific objectives and circumstances of the three studies differed. A common factor in the three studies, however, is that they all used certain attributes to determine shopping centre attractiveness or shopping centre image. The information in Table 1 indicates that nine attributes are included in all three studies. Four attributes listed in the SCATTR instrument are not included in either of the other two studies, namely: resting seats, service variety, uniqueness and located at retailing belt. Some other surprising omissions in the Australian study are: merchandise quality, availability of supermarket, sales promotion and general price level. The omissions in the Spanish study are: food court, closing hour, parking and location.

Formulation of hypotheses

The new social order brought about by the post-apartheid era in South Africa after 1994 has resulted in changes on many fronts. Special emphasis has been placed on the role of women in the transformation process, resulting, *inter alia*, in more women in prominent positions in the political, educational and business environments. It is believed that the effect of the emergence of dual-income families has also affected the buying and shopping behaviour of various members of the family. In many family households, husbands act as purchasing agents for family purchases, with the result that they are more exposed to shopping and to visiting shopping malls. In this regard, the following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- H1: No differences exist between male and female patrons' perceptions of the general atmospherics of Menlyn Shopping Centre.

- H2: No differences exist between male and female patrons' perceptions of the attractiveness of décor in Menlyn Shopping Centre.

The new dispensation in South Africa has also witnessed the establishment of roleplayers from previously disadvantaged communities in prominent positions in a wide spectrum of spheres in the economy. Marketing researchers are therefore keen to understand the effects of these changes on the consumer and buying behaviour of customers from various cultural backgrounds. In this regard, many questions need to be answered. The following hypotheses were therefore formulated:

- H3: White respondents who visit the centre are less price sensitive than black respondents.
- H4: Black and white respondents differ with regard to their perceptions of the quality of services rendered by stores in the centre.
- H5: Black and white patrons perceive the attractiveness of décor in the centre differently.

Methodology

This exploratory study was executed in two phases, the first in 2001 and the second in the latter half of 2002. The literature study revealed that the SCATTR instrument had not been used in any formal research in South Africa to date. The main aim of phase one, therefore, was to explore the field of study and to lay the foundation for the follow-up study as described in phase two. A brief overview of the execution and main findings of phase one is presented.

Phase 1

The first survey was conducted during 2001 in the three largest shopping centres in Pretoria. The main objective of the exploratory research study was to determine how customers rate the three centres for 18 of the attributes of shopping centre attractiveness (SCATTR) included in Wong's (2001) scale, and to determine the overall attractiveness of each of these centres. The Kolonnade shopping centre, with a gross leasable area (GLA) of 62 260 m², is situated in the northern suburbs of Pretoria, offering customers a choice of 142 shops. Brooklyn Centre has 160 shops (56 987 m² GLA) and caters mainly for residents of the central and eastern suburbs. Menlyn Shopping Centre offers the widest variety of shops and entertainment facilities to residents who reside mainly in the far eastern and southern suburbs of Pretoria. More than 300 tenants operate in Menlyn centre (118 000 m²

GLA). (SACSC *Shopping Centre Directory* 2002). The demographic profile (for example, income and educational level) of the residents who live close to Brooklyn and Menlyn centres are similar, and the perception exists that these centres cater more for up-market consumers. However, cross-shopping takes place because residents living near the Kolonnade centre can easily travel the 6–7 kilometres to do their shopping in Menlyn or Brooklyn. The distance between the latter is approximately 3 kilometres.

A convenience non-probability sampling method was used in this study. In this mall intercept survey, only respondents who were 18 years or older were approached. To be included in the sample, the respondent had to indicate that he/she had shopped in all three of the shopping centres (namely Kolonnade, Brooklyn and Menlyn) over the past six months. This screening question was followed by a question requiring respondents to indicate which of the three centres they liked most. The rest of the questionnaire contained the statements with regard to the SCATTR attributes and demographic information. The main findings obtained from the information supplied by 228 respondents in the three centres (69 respondents completed the questionnaire in the Kolonnade centre, 79 in Brooklyn and 80 in Menlyn) were as follows:

- Seventy-one per cent of the sample consisted of white respondents; 22% were African; and the remaining 7% were coloured or from other cultural backgrounds. The gender distribution was 66% female and 34% male. Almost half the respondents were in the 18–25 age category.
- Forty-three per cent of the respondents said that they visit Menlyn Centre at least once a month, compared to 10% for Kolonnade and 34% for Brooklyn.
- As expected, Menlyn achieved the highest score (4.7) on a 5-point Likert scale (1=very poor; 5=excellent) for the attribute 'variety of stores and services', compared to 3.6 for Kolonnade and 3.7 for Brooklyn.
- Kolonnade obtained the highest score (3.8) for 'general price level'. By implication, this finding may indicate that the general price level at Kolonnade favours more price-sensitive buyers. This finding is in agreement with the speculation mentioned earlier that the Menlyn and Brooklyn centres cater for more up-market consumers, who are probably less price sensitive.
- Menlyn obtained the highest score for overall

attractiveness (8.26) on a 10-point rating scale (1=not attractive at all; 10=extremely attractive). Brooklyn scored 7.03 and Kolonnade 6.16.

The overall conclusion of phase one of this study was that Menlyn outscored the other centres on most of the attributes in the SCATTR scale. It is not surprising, therefore, that Menlyn Shopping Centre received the International Council of Shopping Centre's award for the best re-developed centre in the world in May 2002 (*Shopping South Africa* 2002). This served as the impetus for phase two of the study.

Phase 2

Qualitative research in 2002 was first undertaken to refine and adapt the SCATTR instrument for use in the Menlyn Shopping Centre survey. The fieldworkers were briefed about the project and asked to roam through the centre for two hours and list their impressions of positive factors that contribute towards the attractiveness of the centre, as well as negative factors that are detrimental to Menlyn's attractiveness as a shopping centre. Following the same procedure as the Wong et al. (2001) study, a focus group survey was then conducted with 25 fieldworkers, which led to the establishment of a SCATTR instrument that would be more suitable for the assessment of Menlyn Shopping Centre. For example, as a result of the high crime rate in South Africa, it was deemed fit to include the attribute 'level of security', which was not on Wong's list. Both Frassetto et al. (2001) and Sit et al. (2003) included security as an attribute. The SCATTR instrument for the Menlyn survey resulted in 20 items. The other six attributes that were added to the attribute list are: clear signage, accessibility of centre from main routes, availability of information help desks, cleanliness of rest rooms, facilities for disabled persons and availability of a play-centre for children.

The sampling procedure followed in phase one was basically repeated for phase two. A convenience sample of 281 respondents was interviewed during weekdays in the parking areas of Menlyn Shopping Centre. Only people older than 18 years were included in the sample.

Empirical results

Descriptive statistics

Two hundred and eighty one respondents completed the questionnaire. Thirty-two per cent said

they visit the centre at least once a week, 39% visit it at least once a month and 16% frequent it at least once every six months. The majority of the respondents are females (66%), while 57% of the sample is in the 18–25 year age group. Twenty-five per cent are in the 26–35 year age group. Four per cent of the respondents are older than 50 years. Sixty-one per cent of the respondents were white, 29% African and 10% from other cultural backgrounds (for example, Indians and coloureds). The instrument for the evaluation of the total data set resulted in very satisfactory reliability test results. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the 20 scale items was $\text{Alpha} = .9000$.

Inferential statistics

Null hypothesis 1 states that no statistically significant differences exist between male and female patrons' perceptions of the general atmosphere of Menlyn Shopping Centre. The research hypothesis states that statistically significant differences do exist between male and female patrons' perceptions of the general atmosphere of Menlyn Shopping Centre. Patrons' perceptions of the general atmosphere were measured by a single item in the SCATTR scale (see Table 2, Q.3). This single item measure was treated as an ordinal scale. Consequently, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was used to test for significant differences between male and female patrons' perceptions of the general atmosphere of the centre. The results indicate that there are no significant differences between male and female patrons' perceptions of the general atmosphere in the centre (See Table 2, Q.3: $p\text{-value} = .683$). Null hypothesis 1 was therefore not rejected.

Null hypothesis 2 states that no statistically significant differences exist between male and female patrons' perceptions of the décor in Menlyn Shopping Centre. Patron's perceptions of the décor were again measured by a single item in the SCATTR scale (see Table 2, Q.20). This item was again treated as an ordinal scale. Consequently, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was again used to test the hypothesis. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female respondents' of the décor in the centre (See Table 2, Q.20, $p\text{-value} = .023$). Null hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected.

It should, however, be noted that the aforementioned result could be the consequence of a Type I error, as the Mann-Whitney U test was part of a series of Mann-Whitney U tests conducted to investigate gender differences across the individual

items included in the SCATTR scale. Green, Salkind & Akey (1999: 395) recommend that a correction method, such as the Bonferroni method or Holm's sequential Bonferroni method, be used to control for Type I errors in analyses involving multiple hypothesis tests. These authors point out that the aforementioned two methods can be used for any application involving multiple hypothesis tests, including applications using non-parametric tests.

When the Bonferroni correction method is applied, the $p\text{-value}$ of 0.023 for question 20 is no longer smaller than the adjusted significance level of $0.05/20 = 0.0025$. With the application of the Bonferroni method, null hypothesis 2 was therefore not rejected.

With regard to hypothesis 3, regarding black and white perceptions of the general price level, the results indicate (at a significance level of 0.05) that there are no significant differences between black and white perceptions of the general price level of products and services offered in the centre (see Table 3, Q.10: $p\text{-value} = .342$). Null hypothesis 3 was therefore not rejected. After applying Bonferroni correction tests to account for the increase in the probability of committing a Type I error when multiple significance tests are conducted, the $p\text{-values}$ Q.12 = .00024879 and Q.20 = .0019339 were found to be smaller than the adjusted significance level of $0.05/20 = 0.0025$. The null hypotheses for hypotheses 4 and 5 could therefore be rejected.

Conclusion and recommendations

The highly competitive nature of the retail environment calls for innovative and effective retail strategies by managers to attract customers to their stores and malls. Kim & Han (2000: 58) assert that many consumers often make purchase decisions based "more on the image of a store or brand than on its actual physical attributes". For many consumers, shopping centres are becoming brands on which they depend to satisfy their needs. These brands need to be managed, and that implies that managers need to know who the target customers are, and which attributes of a shopping centre differentiate it from the competition.

The findings of this study indicate that Menlyn Shopping Centre is not only the most liked centre of the three investigated in this survey, but that it also rates high on most of the attributes used in the survey. The variety of shops and services available

Table 2: Test statistics: Gender differences

Test Statistics (a)				
Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	2-tailed p-values*
1. Variety of stores and services available	7861.500	12047.500	-.355	.723
2. Quality of the merchandise sold by stores	7496.000	22896.000	-.676	.499
3. General atmosphere	7817.500	23570.500	-.408	.683
4. Hosting of special events or exhibits	5273.500	8354.500	-1.102	.270
5. Clear signage in the centre	7626.500	11631.500	-.127	.899
6. Convenient shopping hours	7683.000	11688.000	-.285	.776
7. Adequate parking facilities	7737.500	22788.500	-.084	.933
8. Accessibility of centre from the parking area	7428.500	11614.500	-.703	.482
9. Emergency services (medical care, fire escape)	2450.500	8228.500	-.256	.798
10. General price level	7198.000	11293.000	-.886	.376
11. Uniqueness of the centre	7897.500	12083.500	-.112	.911
12. General quality of service provided at stores	7664.000	11850.000	-.444	.657
13. Accessibility of centre from main routes	7821.000	23221.000	-.096	.924
14. Availability of information help desks	6848.500	21383.500	-.543	.587
15. Availability of resting seats	7366.000	22072.000	-.130	.896
16. Cleanliness of restrooms	7105.500	10933.500	-.533	.594
17. Level of security	5482.500	17572.500	-.219	.826
18. Facilities for disabled people (parking, wheelchair)	3257.500	5087.500	-.888	.374
19. Availability of babysitting and/or play-centre for children	1300.500	1895.500	-1.134	.257
20. Attractiveness of décor in centre	6539.000	10544.000	-2.273	.023
a Grouping Variable: Gender				
* p< 0.05				

Table 3: Test statistics: differences between black and white consumers

Test Statistics (a)				
Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	2-tailed p-values*
1. Variety of stores and services available	6211.500	20072.500	-.030	.976
2. Quality of the merchandise	5307.500	18673.500	-1.716	.086
3. General atmosphere	4968.000	18829.000	-2.604	.009
4. Hosting of special events or exhibits	4018.000	6163.000	-1.234	.217
5. Clear signage in the centre	4746.000	17949.000	-2.484	.013
6. Convenient shopping hours	5669.500	8297.500	-.704	.482
7. Adequate parking facilities	5712.500	8268.500	-.385	.701
8. Accessibility of centre from the parking area	5521.500	19216.500	-1.063	.288
9. Emergency services (medical care, fire escape)	1516.000	5257.000	-2.593	.010
10. General price level	5624.500	18827.500	-.949	.342
11. Uniqueness of the centre	4996.000	18691.000	-2.456	.014
12. General quality of service provided	4319.000	18180.000	-3.664	.00024879
13. Accessibility of centre from main routes	5580.000	19441.000	-1.022	.307
14. Availability of information help desks	4460.500	16706.500	-2.413	.016
15. Availability of resting seats	5534.000	8235.000	-.502	.616
16. Cleanliness of restrooms	4472.500	17192.500	-2.755	.006
17. Level of security	3642.000	12553.000	-2.335	.020
18. Facilities for disabled people (parking, wheelchair)	2749.000	4180.000	-.126	.900
19. Availability of babysitting and/or play-centre for children	982.000	2935.000	-2.325	.020
20. Attractiveness of décor in centre	4514.500	18375.500	-3.100	.0019339
a Grouping Variable: White and black				
* p< 0.05				

and the entertainment value of the centre make it a preferred place to shop. The extended trading hours (especially during the festive season) contribute towards management's goal of offering patrons a pleasant shopping experience.

The results of this study indicate that male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the general atmosphere (for example, lighting, music and use of colour) and the attractiveness of décor in the centre. Hawkins, Best & Coney (2001: 98, 102) report that there is a notable trend for adult consumers to move from the traditional to a more modern gender orientation. Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2001: 385) state that the roles of men in families are changing substantially and that they are increasingly shopping for household products. It can therefore be assumed that men who do their shopping in malls will probably be inclined to notice and pay more attention to detail such as décor, colour and other atmospheric aspects while frequenting a shopping centre. It should be noted that more than 80% of the sample in this study falls into the 18–35 year age group. Likewise, it can be argued that the young adults and consumers in this age category regard shopping also as a leisure and social activity. They are thus more exposed to interior aspects in the centre than older people.

A limitation of the study is the fact that the sample does not reflect the composition of the South African population. There is definitely a need in South Africa to learn more about the shopping behaviour of consumers from black cultural backgrounds. Future studies in this field should therefore endeavour to include more black respondents. Over weekends especially, Menlyn Shopping Centre attracts many customers from nearby townships (for example Mamelodi and Eersterust). Unfortunately, permission was granted to the fieldworkers conducting the research for this study on condition that interviews were conducted on weekdays only. The fact that only 29% of the sample comprised black respondents emphasises the need for future studies to include more respondents from black and other cultural backgrounds. The finding that no differences exist between black and white respondents' perceptions with regard to the general price level was therefore not expected. It is also not clear why black patrons do not rate the quality of service as high as white patrons. Future research is recommended among a larger sample in similar sized malls. As expected, respondents in the various cultural groups perceived the attractiveness of décor in the centre differently. It was not the aim of this study to determine why these differences

exist between sub-samples, and it is therefore recommended that this aspect be addressed in future studies.

Future research could also focus on entertainment as a means of differentiating a centre from other centres. The influence of cross-shopping between shopping centres should also be investigated. Future studies could focus on the buying patterns of patrons in the centre, and also determine the role or influence of children in family choices with respect to shopping centres. Future studies could also reflect more demographic details of respondents such as the marital status and monthly income of respondents, number of children in the household, and whether the respondents are employed full-time or part-time. It is very likely that such differences will impact on the buying behaviour patterns of consumers. Lastly, it is suggested that a SCATTR instrument be developed to determine the perceptions of shopping centre attractiveness among children in various age groups.

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