# Conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands

by

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# Conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands

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Abstract

The thesis investigated the topic of localised retail design. The problem was to gain an understanding of the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

Localised retail design is the design of physical retail stores that respond to their location. When localising retail design, the conditions of retaining global brand consistency and mediating global brand and local authenticity require consideration. These have been partially addressed in the discourse. Although several global brands practice localised retail design, there is limited documentation of these design strategies within the discourse. This demonstrates a gap between the theory and practice of localised retail design.

The study aimed to address this by developing conditions and determining strategies for localising retail design for global brands. The research objectives were to clarify the ways in which global brand consistency can be retained when localising retail design; identify areas in which global brand and local authenticity may be mediated when localising retail design; and determine strategies for localising retail design for global brands. Semi-structured interviews with 18 retail designers and a documentation of 20 artefacts of localised retail design for four global brands were conducted and analysed using the constructivist grounded theory method.

The study findings were:

The conditions for retaining global brand consistency are consistencies in designer choice; consistencies in approaches to localising retail design; and creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design. The areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity are in authorship; informants; and inhabitation of retail design. The strategies for localising retail design for global brands are local creative collaboration; locally responsive design; and local consumer relevant experience.

The study contributes new knowledge through developing conditions and determining strategies for localising retail design for global brands. This has implications on the theory and practice of retail design.

Keywords global brands; globalisation; localisation; localised retail design; retail design

# PREFACE

My history with design formally began in 2004 at the start of my studies in Architecture in Durban. In my undergraduate education, I was educated in values of critical thinking, creativity, and social justice. While in the East-Coast educational tradition of the time, this was translated to gum-pole architecture and long drop toilets, my taste for social justice was broadened through my exposure to projects of heritage significance, community-based buildings, social housing, and medical spaces in two years of practice after my undergraduate degree. Following this, I obtained a professional Masters' degree in Interior Architecture, in which I focused on the adaptation of heritage buildings for new occupation – a skills training centre. This felt like an appropriate reconciliation of interior design and social justice. In reassigning an outdated heritage building to new occupation for an upliftment programme, social justice was compatible with interior design.

Newly graduated, I interviewed for positions at multiple interior design practices. Opportunities for employment were abundant, I easily found a job at a well-known design agency, specialising in retail design. Excited to learn about the world of retail and the creative opportunities it offered, I soon learned that what I was equipped to do and what I would actually be doing were two different things. Most surprising was the revelation that my work was not part of a system of apparent social good. There was no community initiative, betterment of society, or anything else that indicated that there was a greater good at play in the way we designed for retail. The reality was that retail design was a consumptive practice influenced by the client's drive to create spaces that promoted purchase behaviour and generate profits. This was distant from the social causes that I had believed interior design was central to. I had relinquished my social responsibility to a career in support of the superficial act of consumption. Being a part of this world left me with questions: questions about my values and questions about my education. How could conventional interior design practice contradict my values formed in the academy so offensively? Years of learning about retail in practice illuminated the possibility that an educational injustice had occurred.

The creation of spaces that supported the important work of constructing one's identity was not superficial, nor was it unethical. Retail design is a complex activity that challenges the designer's moral consciousness in a way that differs from the ethical conditioning received in academia. Inherently, retail spaces affect the behaviour and identities of the consumers who inhabit them. The roll-out of a store design can be the catalyst for major societal shifts, given the large number of people who inhabit retail stores and the number of times this inhabitation is repeated throughout the consumer's life. The far-reaching effect of these spaces is an immense responsibility for the designer, although this is not acknowledged in the academy, and it is rarely identified in practice. Practitioners are not explicitly equipped to make this conscious leap of uniting moral responsibility with retail design. The missing link in education has its repercussions. My colleagues of the time were equally unprepared on entering practice, relying on their self-taught methods to guide their responsibility to retail clients and consumers through design. Although they revealed promising and intriguing processes, their insights were isolated and had the potential to be taken further with the introduction of research to inform practice. On return to academia, this time as researcher, I identified the opportunity to bring awareness to this field and address a topic that could bridge practice and research for retail design.

الله أكبر

# DEDICATION

**For Nana, Ross, and Grace.** Special souls who left this world but are always in my heart.

# THANK YOU

Suhale, for dreaming big and without limitation, for your seamless mental transitions, for accepting me for who I am and wanting the best for me.

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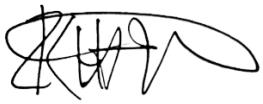
- Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology Curriculum Transformation Committee at University of Pretoria
- TUKS Up&Out
- Women in Academia Support Network (Facebook)
- International Federation of Interior Architects / Designers (IFI)

# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned author, declare that the applicable research ethics approval has been obtained for the research described in this work and that I have observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for Researchers and the Policy Guidelines for Responsible Research.

This treatise is submitted in fulfilment of part of the requirements for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Interior Architecture at the University of Pretoria. No part thereof has already been, or is currently being, submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university. I declare that the thesis is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



**Zakkiya Khan**

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# RELATED RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

## Book Chapters

Khan, Z and Königk, R., 2018. A thin veneer: interior design's social compact. In: *Standing items: critical pedagogies in South African art, design and architecture.* Johannesburg: Jacana Press, pp. 45-64.

Khan, Z., 2021. Local Collaboration in Retail Design: A Strategy for Localising Global Brands. In: *The Value of Design in Retail and Branding.* Bingley: Emerald Publishing, p. 179–191.

## Journal Articles

Khan, Z., Königk, R., and du Plessis, C., 2021. A Balancing Act. Mediating Brand and Local Authenticity in Localised Retail Design*. Corporate Reputation Review*. [online]: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41299-021-00133-5. (accessed 24 January 2022)

## Conference Proceedings

Khan, Z. 2018. Localising global brands: co-creation in retail design. Presented at the *4th International Colloquium for Design, Branding and Marketing*. University of Hasselt: Belgium. 6-7 December 2018. Pp 4 – 11.

## Conference Presentations

Königk, R. and Khan, Z. 2018. Ensembles of tastegoods: Moodboards as interiorist practice. Presented at the Interior-Inferior - In Theory? Contemporary Positions in Interior Design Theory Conference. Berlin International University of Applied Sciences. Germany. 17-18 May 2018.

## Workshops

Khan, Z. 2021. Local Creative Collaboration: A Strategy for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands. Presented at the Emergence of SIG Designing Retail & Services Futures Workshop, Festival of Emergence (Online). Design Research Society. 16 September 2021.

## Seminars

Khan, Z. and Konigk, R. 2019. A thin veneer: interior design's social compact. Presented at University of Lincoln, Lincoln, United Kingdom. September 2019.

# RELATED TEACHING CONTRIBUTIONS

## Studio Design Project

Khan, Z. 2019. Collaborative retail design: localising global brands. Retail Design Studio Project. Presented to and undertaken by Design 303 (ONT 303) students enrolled in Year 3 of the 'BSc Interior Architecture' degree, at the Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria (coordinated by Zakkiya Khan)[1]

[1] The teaching contribution was enriched with a teaching exchange in which Year 3 students of University of Johannesburg's Bachelor of Interior Design conducted the design project under the coordination of Ilse Prinsloo. This was followed by a student exhibition showcasing selected projects from University of Pretoria and University of Johannesburg at **'The Retail Day'** on 12 August 2019, University of Johannesburg. The event was hosted by University of Johannesburg in collaboration with University of Pretoria, attended by Prof Dr Katelijn Quartier, University of Hasselt, Belgium.

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# Chapter 1 **INTRODUCTION**

# 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Shaped by our desires to express who we are and whom we associate with, the act of shopping plays a profound role in our identity construction processes (Douglas & Isherwood, 2021 [1996]). As we associate with brands and products, we emit signals about our lifestyles, our aspirations, and our communities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Shopping is demonstrative of our discerning tastes (Douglas, 1996). As we choose to make one consumption choice in favour of another, or demonstrate disdain for a brand or a product, we are using consumption as a means to express our values (Douglas, 1996). We display these dimensions of our identities by acquiring products and demonstrating our use of these.

Shopping, however, does not operate as a purely consumer-initiated activity. The presence of brands in our physical and digital environments, closely interwoven with our social worlds, confront us with influences that 'sell' the story of a life that we may have otherwise not known (Riewoldt, 2002). As brands compete with each other for our attention, they identify areas with which to appeal to us in emotionally striking ways that gain our interests and secure our loyalty (Quartier, 2017). As we consume these brands, their environments, and experiences, we re-define ourselves, finding our identities in a continuous state of flux (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013; Alexander & Kent, 2017; Petermans & Kent, 2017).

In the case of global brands, the provision of a universal access to products, information, and stores extends the act of shopping to a global scale. The shaping of a global consumer culture ensues (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). As societies across the world are exposed to a globally aspirational standard of living, acquiring global goods, and engaging in globally standardised modes of shopping, they are imprinted with a universal global taste that imparts a homogenising global culture (Isar & Anheier, 2010; Sharma, 2017).

The retail store plays a role in this process. As the space that facilitates the (re-)production of consumption rituals, and exposes consumers to a global standard of products and lifestyles, the retail store for the global brand is in a position to shape culture (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017). In contexts that are not originating in globally dominant regions, the practice of advancing a global consumer culture is questionable as it threatens cultural diversity and overrides locally distinctive behaviours (Isar & Anheier, 2010; Sharma, 2017).

My research considered the topic of localised retail stores for global brands. I take the position that retail design for global brands should be an act of consciousness towards the cultural influences of globalisation. I consider localised retail design (the design of retail stores unique to a location) as an opportunity for retail designers to act as socially responsive mediators between global brands and local cultures. This thesis aims to develop the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

This chapter (Chapter 1) introduces the research study on localised retail design for global brands. The chapter provides a background on the research topic. Thereafter, research opportunities are provided. These precede the main research problem, aims, questions, and objectives. The theoretical and practical importance of the research follow. Subsequently, the delimitations of the study and assumptions on which the study was based are discussed. The definitions and abbreviations of terms used in this thesis are listed. Finally, the structure of this thesis is outlined.

# 1.2 BACKGROUND

The background of the thesis introduces the topic of localised retail design for global brands. The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with an understanding of localised retail design within the framework of retail design practice. This section further motivates the importance of localised retail design.

The background consolidates the following:

- The field of retail design is contextualised within the discipline of interior design,
- The specialised nature of retail design is explained,
- The practices of standardised and localised retail design are introduced and defined, and
- The concept of consumer culture in relation to standardised and localised retail design is discussed.

## 1.2.1 Retail design in interior design

The current commercial orientation of interior design emerged in the 1950s and emancipated the discipline from its domestic origins in interior decoration into a formal discipline established in the academy (Königk, 2010). Retail design, as a commercial practice, is rooted in the interior design discipline (Prinsloo, 2011a:165; Prinsloo, 2011b; Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2010:22). Today, retail design is practiced as a specialised interdisciplinary field that synthesises branding, marketing, retailing, and (interior) design expertise (Quartier, 2017; da Costa *et al*., 2017:4). Retail design is the practice of designing physical, virtual, and omnichannel (a combination of physical and digital) retail spaces. The study focuses on the design of physical retail stores (which may also integrate digital technology).

## 1.2.2 The specialised nature of retail design

Retail design is a specialised practice with unique considerations.

1. The retail store design represent a brand (therefore, brand identity is an informant to the retail store) (Baker *et al.*, 1992:329),
2. The retail brand may be represented by multiple spaces that co-exist in various locations (Quartier, 2017:37), and
3. Retail stores conventionally communicate the retail brand with consistency (in order to maintain the integrity of the brand) (Quartier, 2017:37).

The retail brand acts as a tool to differentiate one retailer from the next. As the brand represents the product, services, heritage, and values of the retailer, it is created to resonate with consumers' ideals and values (Riewoldt, 2002:8). This mirroring of identity is reciprocal. As consumers consume from brands that reflect their values and aspirations, they signify a subscription to a community who finds affiliation with these brands (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:873). Brands are most credible to consumers when they are consistent (Quartier, 2017:44; Jones *et al.*, 2010:247). This means that consumers can expect a constant experience and quality of that brand wherever they find it. These factors require brand management (the management of brand identity and communication across various channels) (Alaali & Vines, 2020).

## 1.2.3 The practices of standardised and localised retail design

In retail design, brand consistency is managed through standardised retail design (Quartier, 2011:28). Standardised retail design is the continuous repetition of store design across various retail sites (Quartier, 2011:28). This means that multiple retail stores for the same brand are identical. This is in order to enhance brand recognition and retain the quality and standards that brands must uphold (Kent & Stone, 2007:534).

For global brands, standardised retail design entails escalating these repeated store designs to locations across the world (Quartier, 2011:28). Stores in various regions are identical and design adjustments are pragmatic. These adjustments are informed by site and legislative constraints (Turely & Chebat, 2002:134).

As an alternative to standardised retail design, the practice of localised retail design entails the negotiation of retail design across the world (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017). This requires the adaptation of retail stores in response to local contexts (Kent, 2007:738; Sharma, 2017). This means that store designs differ from country to country. These localised retail stores may be standardised within a region (all stores within the country are standardised) or they may be hyperlocalised (adapted according to the immediate site, neighbourhood, and community surrounding the retail store) (van Veen, 2014). Localised retail design may compromise brand consistency, since retail store design is no longer consistent (Turley & Chebat, 2002; Schueller & Morath, 2018). Considerations into the mediation of brand consistency and localising retail design are needed.

### 1.2.4 Consumer culture in relation to standardised and localised retail design

The mode of retail design (whether standardised or localised) influences the role of consumption in producing consumer culture (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Consumer culture informs and is informed by processes of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Consumption is realised through the goods we buy, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and whom we associate with (Douglas & Isherwood, 2021 [1996]). Consumption signifies social affiliation (Douglas,1996). We may define ourselves by not consuming, or making one consumption choice in favour of another, or expressing disdain over a consumption opportunity (Douglas, 1996). Consumption can be seen as an act of ‘protest’, signifying what we stand for and what we stand against (Douglas, 1996). Brands play an important role in processes of consumption (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:464-465). As the prominence of competing retailers saturate the market, our choices of which retailer to consume from is influenced by branding. In this way, consumer culture is reshaped – brands may take the aspirations of the consumer into a space that allows them to enact common values through consumption (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:464-465). New behaviours and ideals may be normalised and re-inform consumption. This is an act of cultural production – as consumers consume from the brand, a reciprocal cultural exchange occurs. Consumers inform the brand’s proposal of shopping experiences and these experiences can enact a further shift in consumer culture. This is a cycle of production and consumption (see Figure 1.1).


Figure 1.1 Cycle of production and consumption

It can affirm and re-affirm the values of consumers. Retail stores enrobe these experiences of consumption. They translate the brand’s identity into an inhabitable world that facilitates consumption. The inhabitation of retail spaces influence consumers’ shopping experiences and their behaviours and it facilitates identity construction (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The retail store can provide opportunities to re-enact brand values through rituals involved in inhabiting the store. Askegaard (2006:83) argues that global brands may encourage a homogeneity of culture, in which the world sees less distinction and more universal or generic culture. Global brands (as brands that have retail presence across the world), see this complex role in cultural production being performed through their channels and media (Askegaard, 2006). Standardisation (of products, marketing, and retail stores) across global consumer markets finds a basis in an established global consumer culture (Hlophe, 2012; Moodley, 2015).

This implies that the global brand portrays a universal set of values that appeal to consumers who have access to this global meaning.

This global consumer culture positioning strategy (Hlophe, 2012) is founded on the acknowledgment of extant global consumer bases resulting from processes of globalisation. It is also founded on the brand's objective to retain consistency and express its identity in recognisable formats across the globe (Down & Paphitis, 2019:175).

Global consumer culture provides a rationale for standardising retail design. However, the processes of globalisation present complex cultural interventions. These are particularly problematic in contexts where global culture is not structurally in favour of non-Western culture (Scholte, 2005). These power dynamics reinforce a global (Western-originating) culture in favour of local expressions. The prominence of Western models and meaning have meant a widespread internalisation of Western cultures in non-Western environments (Isar & Anheier, 2010). Western goods, services, and modes of production may be elevated over local counterparts. This has the effect of overshadowing, suppressing, and terminating local offerings integral to the cultural practices of local societies (Isar & Anheier, 2010). This has a broader cultural impact. Through globalisation, the spread of uniformity can lead to cultural dilution and homogenisation, and the loss of cultural diversity across the globe.

This process of globalising culture is partly perpetuated by standardised retail design (Sharma, 2017). Through inhabiting the global brand's standardised retail stores, consumers subscribe to global values inherent to the brand. As the retail experience has influence on consumer culture, consumers may find both a reinforcement and adjustment of their cultural preconditions in favour of global ideals. As consumption and culture are interrelated, this can catalyse cultural shifts (Julier, 2008). For example, fast food global brands are infamous for their roles in perpetuating shifts in consumer culture by promoting unhealthy lifestyles in a trade-off for an aspirational and global way of living (Askegaard, 2006:81; Sharma, 2017).

In standardised retail design, a global consumer culture is assumed and reinforced (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017). Sharma (2017) points to the impacts of standardised retail design as being as severe as cultural homogenisation and dilution. Further, the homogeneity of standardised retail design communicates a detachment of retail design from 'place'. 'Placeless-ness' or 'non-place', (the detachment of idiosyncrasy, meaning, and distinction from a space), is seen as a symptom and instigator of cultural erosion (Alexander & Kent, 2017). The design of these ubiquitous spaces further detracts from the integrity of interior design practice, which is mandated to promote the retention of cultural diversity in a globalising world (IFI, 2011). Further scholars argue that this generic form of retail design detracts from the authenticity of the brand and of design itself (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). They argue that localising retail design can enhance authenticity through the provision of original retail stores that are located and rooted in a time and place (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015).

Globalisation sees a positive influence in providing universal access to knowledge and media that would otherwise be inaccessible (Askegaard, 2006). According to Askegaard (2006), it can also emphasise cultural diversity as a global norm, thereby embracing regional variations. This implies scope for localising retail design as a means to support cultural diversity (following IFI, 2011). Further, a universal access to technology and social media is responsible for spreading a societal awareness of social and environmental causes (Bouvier, 2020:1). Consumers have embedded these values in their consumption choices (Bouvier, 2020:1) which may re-inform the global brand's response towards society and encourage them to pursue culturally responsive methods of expressing their identity. This is an incentive for global brands to localise retail design.

In localised retail design, a local consumer culture is acknowledged and considered in the design process and outcome (Sharma, 2017). Localised retail design addresses the unique cultural circumstances of regions through tailored design for local markets. By localising retail design, global brands communicate an appreciation of local culture (Sharma, 2017).

They may view their presence in these contexts as a form of cultural exchange (Sharma, 2017). They may communicate both the global brand identity and be informed by local consumer culture to generate locally relevant experiences. This can facilitate a mutual interchange of global and local culture (Sharma, 2017) while enhancing the authenticity of the retail design (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015).

### 1.2.5 The value of localised retail design

Global brands may localise retail design in order to provide valued experiences to consumers. As the retail industry becomes increasingly saturated, the competition between retailers to gain the interests of consumers necessitates that retailers differentiate themselves through providing valued experiences for consumers (Servais *et al.*, 2018:42). Value becomes a means through which consumers may discern between retailers and express their loyalty to one brand over another.

Value is perceived differently in the marketing and retail design fields. From a marketing perspective, Servais *et al.* (2018:43) assert that value is derived from brands applying a consumer-centric approach to their retail offering. Value is said to be determined by consumers as opposed to retailers or designers (Servais *et al.*, 2018: 43) and value may be perceived differently by consumers depending on time and location (Leroi-Werelds *et al.*, 2014). From a retail design perspective, value is determined from a designer's perspective and perceptions of consumer needs due to the absence of concrete standards that benchmark the promotion of value in retail design (Servais *et al.*, 2018:45).

As brands seek to differentiate themselves from competitors, they may use retail design to express value across various dimensions. Servais *et al.* (2018:46) compared the marketing and retail design perspectives of value and identified five key dimensions in which value can be perceived. These value dimensions are functional, cost-related, emotional, social, and altruistic (Servais *et al.* 2018, 46). Localised retail design is a way for global brands to speak to emotional, social, and altruistic dimensions of value to consumers.

- From an emotional perspective, the aesthetics of the retail store can be enhanced through portrayal of a local identity and through the provision of experiences compatible with local consumers' interests. For example, Starbucks connects with consumers through retail stores that communicate a local identity and address local interests.
- From a social perspective, localised retail design can become a space that responds to and extends on the contextual social activities as an enhanced public space, particularly expressed in localised flagship retail stores (Sharma, 2017).
- From an altruistic perspective, localised retail design can express the global brand's commitment to culturally responsible and inclusive practices reflecting the ethical priorities of the brand and retail design (Dincay, 2015).

Localised retail design is therefore a way for global brands to provide more value to consumers through retail design, thus attaining their interest and loyalty as factors that support the brand's survival.

This dimension of value can be enhanced by authenticity of retail design.

This section served to situate the topic of localised retail design for global brands. I contextualised the field of retail design within the interior design discipline. I explained the unique considerations made in designing retail stores, namely, the consideration of brand as informant and the importance of retaining brand consistency in retail design. I discussed standardised and localised retail design as modes of retail expression for global brands. I concluded this section by motivating for localised retail design as favourable to standardised retail design for global brands. This is supported by arguments on retaining cultural diversity and promoting design authenticity in the context of globalisation.

This is further supported by demonstrating the ways in which localised retail design contributes value for consumers and the brand. This provides both a context to and motivation for localised retail design for global brands.

The following section describes the research opportunities within the topic of localising retail design for global brands.

# 1.3 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

In this section, I explain the opportunities for investigating localising retail design for global brands. The purpose of this section is to situate the research questions within research opportunities.

First, I provide a brief overview of the state of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands.

The sources (that represent the state of knowledge) are based in both the discourse and in practice. These consider the topic of localised retail design for global brands.

Thereafter, I highlight three research opportunities that I pursue in this thesis. The research opportunities are identified in:

- Global brand consistency and localised retail design,
- Authenticity and localised retail design for global brands, and
- The practice of localised retail design – strategies and techniques.

## 1.3.1 State of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands

Although studies exist in the field of retail design, there is limited investigation into localising retail design for global brands. Within the field of retail design, studies exist in consumer behaviour, virtual retail, omnichannel and multi-channel retail, retail typologies, the retail design process, the definition of the retail design discipline, the use of well-being in retail design, lighting in retail design, the value of retail design, experience in retail design, co-creation in retail design, adaptive reuse for retail design, and the sensory aspects of retail design.

In the discourse, localised retail design is an acknowledged topic. The dialogue on localised retail design includes:

- The problems of standardised retail design as perpetuating cultural dilution in the context of globalisation (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017; Schueller & Morath, 2018; Alaali & Vines, 2020),
- Localised retail design as a culturally responsive alternative to standardised retail design for global brands in the context of globalisation (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017; Schueller & Morath, 2018; Alaali & Vines, 2020),
- Localised retail design as an authentic alternative to standardised retail design (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015),
- The factors that determine the extent of localising retail design (Schueller & Morath, 2018),
- The strategies for localising retail design as employed by high-end fashion global brands using flagship retail formats (Sharma, 2017),
- The implementation of regionalist principles in localising retail design (Noorwatha, 2018), and
- The brand management processes conducted by globally distributed teams for global brands, Starbucks and IKEA (Alaali & Vines, 2020).

Web searches on localised retail design for global brands reveal that while there is an absence of academic research placed on the topic of localised retail design, there are designers and global brands who are engaged in a dialogue on the topic.

- Designers' reports, for example, "Shopping the Globe" by Gensler (Gensler, 2015) and "The future of Retail" by Arup (Arup, 2017),
- News interviews with design agencies such as Design Partnership (Taylor, 2016) and Clair van Veen (Van Veen, 2014),
- The documentation of localised retail design on design blogs for example, Dezeen, Retail Design Blog, and Frame (Rueda & O' Sullivan 2020), and
- The documentation of localised retail design in global brand publications (books and websites), for example, Starbucks (Stories.starbucks.com, 2019), Dolce & Gabbana (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]), Nike (News.nike.com, 2018a), and Aesop (Taxonomyofdesign.com, *s.a.*[b]; Down & Paphitis, 2019).

This indicates that the dialogue on localised retail design for global brands is topical. With designers' voices becoming authoritative in the field of localised retail design, it is clear that scholarly attention is required to support localised retail design practice.

Opportunities exist to contribute original research on the subject of localised retail design for global brands from the perspective of interior design. The following research opportunities are identified:[2]

### 1.3.2 Opportunity 1: Global brand consistency and localised retail design

Brand consistency is the continued and consistent way in which brands communicate across products, services, channels and marketing. Brand consistency can be upheld through retail design that is standardised. Brand consistency is crucial in communicating the values and identity of the brand to consumers (Quartier, 2017:37). It enhances the trust consumers have in brands, as the quality of the experience that they expect is upheld in every retail store for that brand (Jones *et al.*, 2010:247). It acts to differentiate the global brand from competitors by imprinting a strong message of the brand through the unique identity that it portrays (Quartier, 2017:37).

Brand identity is an important consideration for global brands entering new markets. As market introduction is a way to introduce a new consumer base to a brand that may be otherwise unfamiliar, brand consistency can link this new market to the global identity and standard associated with a brand (Sharma, 2017). In retail design, this is typically achieved through standardised expressions of the retail store (Quartier, 2011).

However, standardised retail design poses cultural risks. Through the repetition of standardised formats of retail design, the transferral of global culture may occur at the expense of local diversity and encourage cultural homogenisation and dilution (see section 1.2.4).

A comparison between the impacts of standardised and localised retail design on consumer culture and brand consistency are illustrated in Figure 1.2 below.

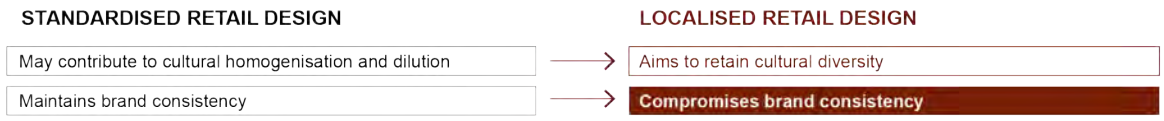



Figure 1.2 Consideration into the ways in which global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design is needed

[2] Research opportunities are presented in this section to introduce the reader to the research questions of the thesis and align with the objectives of the study. An extensive demonstration of the gaps in the literature is provided in Chapter 2 (Literature Review).

Although the practice of localising retail design is motivated by an effort to retain cultural diversity, it presents risks to retaining brand consistency. Localised retail design may compromise brand consistency as it represents a negotiation of retail design across local contexts. This can cause a dilution of the global brand's identity (Schueller & Morath, 2018). Brand consistency may be compromised.

Consideration into the ways in which global brands can retain brand consistency when localising retail design is needed. This pre-empts research question 1: What are the ways that global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?

### 1.3.3 Opportunity 2: Authenticity and localised retail design for global brands

Localised retail design for global brands is argued as a more authentic form of retail design (Gilmore & Pine, 2007), since the design outcome is original and grounded in a time and a place (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015). Teufel and Zimmermann (2015:41-44) motivate that authentic retail design can add value to a brand and by extension, its product, by demonstrating a sense of scarcity and distinction that can be comparable to museum environments and objects.

They advocate for localising retail design as a means to demonstrate authenticity as the link between place and retail design can demonstrate a unique dimension of the store by grounding it in a time and place (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44). Similarly, Gilmore and Pine argue that a retailer's association with locale can enhance its value (2007). Localised retail design is therefore an opportunity for brands to demonstrate authenticity.

However, Pine and Gilmore (2008) argue that a brand must remain authentic to itself before expressing localisation. This means that in order to localise retail design, a brand must prioritise an authentic expression of its own identity (Pine & Gilmore, 2008). Contradictions between a brand's own values and identity and the localisation can signal inauthenticity and compromise consumer trust (Pine & Gilmore, 2008).

Further complexity arises in an authentic representation of place, as brands can demonstrate cultural insensitivity if local capital is not appropriately translated into retail design (following Rogers, 2006). This interpretation and expression of local culture plays a role in the authenticity of localised retail design (Pine & Gilmore, 2008).

Factors such as cultural appropriation and inclusivity are at the tip of global consumer consciousness (Akwei, 2018; Kiewit, 2020; Mngadi, 2018). The cultural responsibility of global brands in authentic local representation is essential. This presents a need for mediation between brand authenticity and local authenticity when localising retail design for the global brand. These tensions are depicted below in Figure 1.3.

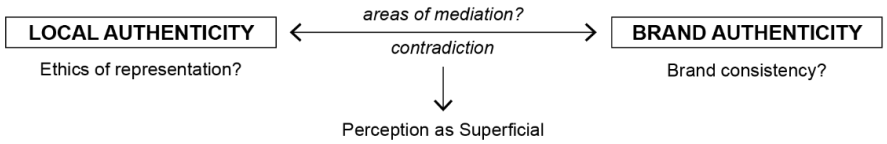



Figure 1.3 Mediation between brand and local authenticity in localising retail design for global brands

The tensions between brand and local authenticity are known but the areas in which brand and local authenticity are to be mediated are unclear. This pre-empts research question 2: What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design?

### 1.3.4 Opportunity 3: The practice of localised retail design for global brands – strategies and techniques

Localised retail design for global brands is occurring in practice. Brands such as Starbucks (Stories.starbucks.com, 2019), Aesop (Taxonomyofdesign.com, *s.a.* [b]), Nike (News.nike.com, 2018a), and Dolce & Gabbana (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]) all describe their retail design as localised. These brands have successfully demonstrated retaining brand consistency while localising retail design (Down & Paphitis, 2019).

Although this phenomenon is occurring in practice and certain global brands do state their objectives to localise retail design, their practices are occurring tacitly and in isolation from each other. This means that brands and designers are employing strategies to localise retail design in individual ways.

These practices have not been studied (observed, synthesised, compared, and consolidated) with the objective to generate strategies for localising retail design for global brands beyond a specific brand (Alaali & Vines, 2020; Thompson & Arsel, 2004), region (Alaali, 2019), and category (Sharma, 2017). There is a need for these strategies to be determined and made explicit through a global study. This can serve to re-inform localising retail design for global brands in practice. This need is depicted below in Figure 1.4.


Figure 1.4 Implicit practice knowledge on localised retail design for global brands may be made explicit through theory building

This presents a further problem: the need for tacit practice to be made explicit through theory building regarding the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. This pre-empts research question 3: What are the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands? This section provided an overview of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands. Three areas for research development were identified. Each area was concluded with a research question that addresses a gap in the knowledge area. The research questions of this thesis are presented in the following section. These are reiterated beneath an overarching problem statement, research aim, and objectives.

## 1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM, AIMS, QUESTIONS, AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the main problem of the thesis. This is followed by the aims, the research questions, and research objectives. The purpose of this section is to provide the research focus of the thesis in relation to the study topic.

### 1.4.1 Main problem

The thesis investigated the topic of localised retail design for global brands. The main problem was to gain an understanding of the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

### 1.4.2 Aim

The study aimed to develop the conditions for localising retail design for global brands, and to determine strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

### 1.4.3 Research questions

The research questions were:

1. What are the ways global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?
2. What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design? and
3. What are the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands?

### 1.4.4 Research objectives

The research objectives were:

1. To make explicit the ways in which brand consistency can be retained when localising retail design for global brands,
2. To identify the areas where global brands may mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design, and
3. To develop detailed strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

The investigation was grounded in the analysis of a) elicited interviews with retailer designers and b) extant artefacts of localised retail design for global brands.

The section provided an overview of the problem, aims, research questions, and research objectives. The following section details the importance of the study. This is demonstrated in both theoretical and practical terms.

## 1.5 IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

This section demonstrates the importance of this study. This occurs in the contribution of new knowledge on the topic of localised retail design for global brands.

The study is important because it has implications on both the theory and practice of retail design. The study proposed original and significant contributions.

### 1.5.1 Theoretical importance

The research study offers a contribution to the field of retail design. It builds theory on localised retail design for global brands that is derived from practice. This addresses gaps in the discourse on localised retail design and makes tacit practices explicit.

The specific areas for original theoretical contribution are in:

- Demonstrating ways of retaining brand consistency when localising retail design for global brands,
- Identifying areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design, and
- Generating strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

Further, the documentation tool for capturing artefacts of localised retail design for global brands (Appendix D) is an original device developed for this study. This resource aids researchers to conduct further studies on localised retail design for global brands.

### 1.5.2 Practical importance

The research study contributes new insights into the practice of localised retail design for global brands. These original practical contributions exist in two areas.

- Expanding the conditions for localising retail design for global brands and
- Generating the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

These are new contributions to knowledge. They provide a practical basis to inform retail design practice. These are of importance to global brands and retail designers practicing localised retail design.

The theoretical and practical importance of the study were highlighted. The following section provides the study delimitations.

## 1.6 DELIMITATIONS

This section provides a number of study delimitations in order to delineate the scope of the research study.

1. The study is synchronic in nature and does not aim to explore the evolution or changes in literature, data, or retail stores.

2. The study does not seek to evaluate the ethical viability of a study in retail design, nor does it question its commercial associations. The study acknowledges that socially responsive design is plausible through commercial design (Khan & Königk, 2018). The study accepts that retail design exists is a valid and significant commercial practice rooted in the formalisation of the interior design discipline (Königk, 2010).

3. The study does not aim to argue for or against consumption. Consumption is acknowledged as an existing phenomenon.

4. The goal of the thesis is not to argue against globalisation or the spread of global brands across the world, nor the opening of retail stores for global brands across the world.

5. The study does not aim to solve globalisation. Although the negative impacts of globalisation are explored, this is to provide background knowledge on the role of retail design in the cultural system of globalisation. This is in order to highlight the importance of localising retail design. The study acknowledges that localised retail design cannot singularly address the cultural influences global brands have on local societies. Further, the global brand's marketing efforts, combination of retail channels, and branding practices, its history, and the unique context in which the global brand is positioned contribute towards its role in cultural production.

6. The study is delimited to the investigation of physical retail design. Although contemporary definitions of retail design include all channels of retail (including online stores), this study focuses on the physical retail space and seeks to contribute knowledge to the design of physical retail spaces. This may include omnichannel retail design (integrated physical and digital spaces).

7. The study is delimited to investigating design practices in localising retail design for global brands. Although the viability and efficacy of localising retail design for global brands are related study areas, these fall outside the study scope. The thesis presents the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands. It does not aim to test or evaluate these, but rather illuminate these practices and discuss their application.

8. The study does not focus on a particular retail category, retail brand, region, or target market. The aim is not to deliver expertise in these individual areas but to consolidate knowledge on the practice of localised retail design for global brands.

9. Consumer perceptions of localised retail design lies outside the scope of the study.

10. The global brand management, design management, and project management implications of localising retail design lie outside the scope of this study.

11. The study did not seek a Covid-19 perspective on localised retail design for global brands. Further, the viability of retail design for global brands in the context of Covid-19 is outside the scope of this study. The study incorporates the views of the respondents on Covid-19 and retail design where relevant. It is acknowledged that the pandemic absent or in its early stages at the time of data collection (2019-2020).

This section detailed the delimitations of the study. The following section lists the assumptions on which the study is based.

## 1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

The study occurs with the following assumptions.

1. The study views retail design as inclusive of hospitality design (restaurant and eatery spaces). The problems associated with retail design for global brands in the context of globalisation are motivated with examples from the hospitality sector (Askegaard, 2006; Sharma, 2017;) This sector has demonstrated localised retail design artefacts (for example, Starbucks). Further, the increasing evolution of retail spaces as mixed-programmed (for example, including exhibition design with retail design) and multi-sensorial (engaging the sense of taste among other senses in retail stores) (Christiaans, 2017; Quartier, 2017) motivates the inclusion of hospitality global brands in the study of localised retail design.

2. The study assumes that physical retail stores are still significant in the context of covid-19 and that consumers will resume consumption practices as it is safe to do so. Localised retail design is supported as a way to connect consumers to acute and relevant experiences especially during the pandemic and with an omnichannel approach (Rueda & O' Sullivan, 2020). Quartier and Petermans (2021:223) reinforce the continued importance of a rising consumer interest in 'local' retailers and digital integration into retail design since the arrival of the pandemic. The study supports this view and assumes that physical retail design is still relevant.

This section listed the assumptions on which the study is based. The following section provides definitions of terms used in the thesis.

## 1.8 DEFINITIONS

The list below includes definitions of terms used throughout this thesis.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Authentic retail design** | Authentic retail design is defined as retail design that is original or unique and non-repeatable (or repeatable in limited quantities) (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015). Authentic retail design for a brand is also identified as being true to the brand itself (Pine & Gilmore, 2008). Unique retail design (once-off or non-reproduced) may improve the authenticity of retail design. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Brand** | A brand is defined as “a class of goods identified by name as the product of a single firm or manufacturer” and “a public image, reputation, or identity conceived of as something to be marketed or promoted” (Meriam-Webster.com, *s.a.*). A global brand is a brand that is marketed across various countries using the same name and identity. The global brand is recognisable across various countries. |
| **Brand consistency** | Brand consistency is the continued and coherent communication of a brand across channels, marketing communications, and product. Brand consistency indicates a constant standard and quality that consumers can expect from the brand. Consideration of brand consistency extends to the design of retail stores, which are often standardised to maintain a coherent image. |
| **Glocalisation** | Glocalisation is a term that refers to the mediation between local and global culture in the context of globalisation. Glocalisation is viewed as a power-neutral form of cultural co-existence across the globe (Dinçay, 2015:173). Tinson and Nuttal (2007) argue that glocalisation further differentiates the global brand from competitors. Retail design finds compatibility with *glocalisation* when it takes on local cultural cues as opposed to a standardised expression (Thompson & Arsel, 2004:632; Dinçay, 2015:173). |
| **Inhabitation** | Inhabitation is the act of occupation and use of the interior by the intended users or inhabitants. Inhabitation occurs when the space is operational. In retail design, this phase occurs once stores are open and accessible to consumers. |
| **Localised retail design** | Localised retail design is the design of a retail store that is informed by and reflective of the local context. Localised retail design may be standardised across a country or it may be hyperlocalised (each retail store is unique to the immediate site, neighbourhood, and/or city) (van Veen, 2014). |
| **Place (and non-place)** | Place is defined as spaces that possess unique and distinctive characteristics associated with a location. These characteristics may be tangible or intangible features and are associated with the meaning people associate with the space (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). Non-place, by contrast, is indicative of spaces that do not exhibit distinctive characteristics, and may possess generic or non-place specific features. This condition is also described as ‘placelessness’ (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). |
| **Retail design** | Retail design is the process of designing retail stores for a retailer or a brand. Retail design further refers to the product – the retail store. Retail design may be physical stores, virtual (online) stores, or omnichannel (a combination of physical and digital) stores. The study uses the term ‘retail design’ to refer to the design of physical retail stores that may encompass (but is not limited to) omnichannel retail design. |
| **Roll-out** | The roll-out of retail design is the replication of a retail design across multiple locations (Quartier, 2011:28). The roll-out of the prototype retail design can be limited to a single country or extend to international markets. Design adaptations are informed by differences in the store site and regulations across locations. The international roll-out for a global brand is known as a ‘global store concept’ (Quartier, 2011:28). |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Standardised retail design** | Standardised retail design is the continuous repetition of store design across various retail sites (Quartier, 2011:28). This means that multiple retail stores for the same brand are identical. This is in order to enhance brand recognition and retain the quality and standards that brands must uphold (Kent & Stone, 2007:534). For global brands, standardised retail design entails escalating these repeated store designs across the world (Quartier, 2011:28). |

The key terms above are used throughout the thesis. The following section is a list of abbreviated terms used in the thesis.

## 1.9 ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the thesis.

| | |
|---|---|
| **CAQDAS** | Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software |
| **CGT** | Constructivist grounded theory |
| **EBIT** | Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology |
| **GCCP** | Global consumer culture positioning |
| **IFI** | International Federation of Interior Architects / Designers |
| **LCCP** | Local consumer culture positioning |

The abbreviations have been listed. The following section provides the structure of the thesis.

## 1.10 THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis structure lists each chapter within this document. The contents of each chapter is provided in brief.

**Chapter 1. Introduction.** This chapter provides the background to the study on localised retail design for global brands. The study questions, aims, and objectives are outlined. The introduction further provides delimitations, limitations, and assumptions in the study. The importance of the study is provided.

**Chapter 2. Literature Review.** This chapter provides an overview of the state of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands. The context of retail design as a knowledge area is provided. Thereafter, the topic of localised retail design for global brands is presented. The chapter makes a case for localising retail design for global brands. It provides a definition on localised retail design and an overview of the discourse on localised retail design for global brands, emphasising the gaps in knowledge pertaining to this topic. The literature review is concluded with an overview of the research opportunities for conducting an original study. These opportunities situate the research questions explained in Chapter 3. Research Methods.

**Chapter 3. Research Method.** This chapter introduces the research philosophy, approach and methodology (constructivist grounded theory). The research design of interviews and theoretical sampling of artefacts are explained. The research procedure is provided.

**Chapter 4. Conditions for localising retail design for global brands.** This chapter answers Research Question 1: What are the ways that global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design? The ways in which brand consistency may be retained when localising retail design for global brands are explained.

This chapter also answers Research Question 2: What are the areas for mediating brand and local authenticity when localising retail design for global brands? The areas are identified and a conceptual model demonstrating the areas of mediation is provided.

**Chapter 5. Strategies for localising retail design for global brands.** This chapter answers Research Question 3: What are the strategies for localising retail design for global brands? The findings of the study are presented. Each strategy is discussed. The application of the strategies are demonstrated and explained through techniques for localising retail design for global brands. The application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands are demonstrated through four cases (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks).

**Chapter 6. Conclusion.** This chapter concludes the thesis. A summary of findings is provided. The original knowledge contributions are outlined. The limitations are listed. The thesis is concluded with recommendations for future research.

**Appendix A** – Semi-structured interview instrument

**Appendix B** – Informed consent letter

**Appendix C** – Ethics approval letter from the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) at University of Pretoria

**Appendix D** – Documented strategies of localised retail design for global brands Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks

The thesis structure was provided. The following section concludes Chapter 1.

## 1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the research topic of localised retail design for global brands.

A background on the current state of retail design for global brands was provided, with emphasis on the role that global brands play in perpetuating the cultural impacts of globalisation through standardised retail design.

The research opportunities were presented. These were identified as addressing knowledge gaps in the theoretic discourse of retail design. This was followed by the research problem, aims, questions, and objectives. The study objectives were:

1. To make explicit the ways in which brand consistency can be retained when localising retail design for global brands,
2. To identify the areas where global brands may mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design, and
3. To develop detailed strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

The theoretical and practical importance of the study is detailed. The chapter provided delimitations and assumptions of the study. This was followed by definitions and abbreviations of terms used throughout the thesis. Finally, the structure of the thesis was provided.

The following chapter, the literature review, consolidates the state of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands. This contextualises the research study and illuminates the areas for research development within the topic of localised retail design for global brands.

# Chapter 2 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

# 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review chapter provides a background to the study while positioning this in relation to the discourse. This is in order to motivate both the importance of the study and to demonstrate research opportunities.

The review is written as a synthesis of literature derived from the retail design and related discourses. This allows the presentation of relevant concepts and themes pertaining to localised retail design for global brands. This further enables the representation of interdisciplinary insights that have implications on physical retail store design. By presenting literature within fields of design, branding, and marketing, the review illustrates gaps within the retail design field and between retail design and related disciplines. Additional gaps are illustrated between the practice and theory of localised retail design for global brands.

This study was conducted from an interior design perspective. As such, the primary outcome of the review is to highlight a potential contribution of knowledge in the area of physical retail design as a practice conducted by interior designers in interdisciplinary teams (including marketers, digital retail designers, and brand managers). Due to the interdisciplinary nature of retail design, the study may have broader implications, although these originate from an interior design perspective.

The literature review is presented in a linear and narrative format. It is structured as two dominant sections that fulfil individual roles in the chapter:

**SECTION 1: RETAIL DESIGN**

The section provides a background on retail design. The aim of this section is to provide a background on the retail design discipline and practices. This is in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the state of the discourse on retail design and to emphasise the importance of research in retail design. Conventions of retail design practice are presented. Further, this part of the chapter underpins the rationale for localising retail design for global brands.

- First, a definition of retail design is provided. This is supported by an overview of the state of the retail design discourse and motivate for research in the retail design field,
- Thereafter, the concept of brand consistency (retaining a consistent experience) in retail design is explored. This is deliberated from a design management perspective, and
- Finally, standardised retail design as a conventional format of retail design for global brands is discussed. The issues pertaining to standardised retail design are outlined.

**SECTION 2: LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS**

The second section of the literature review provides an overview of the discourse on localised retail design for global brands. The aim of this section is to present the knowledge on localised retail design for global brands as it stands in the discourse. The objective is to demonstrate what is known and unknown about localised retail design for global brands. This is punctuated with critique on the discourse through identifying oversights, gaps, and research opportunities. This section is structured as follows:

- The occurrence of localised retail design as a response to the cultural impacts of globalisation is explained,
- A definition of localised retail design is provided,
- Thereafter, the challenges associated with localised retail design for global brands are explained. These are authenticity, brand consistency, the retail design process, and the applicability of regionalism to localising retail design, and

- Finally, the known strategies for localising retail design for global brands as per the discourse are explained with emphasis on the gaps in the discourse.

The literature review is concluded with research opportunities. This positions the substantive area (the delineated study topic) in relation to research gaps and opportunities in localised retail design for global brands. This in order to indicate areas in which this thesis provides an original (and pertinent) research contribution.

# SECTION 1: RETAIL DESIGN

This section of the literature review affords the reader with a context of the retail design field. The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of conventional retail design practices.

This section discusses the following:

- An overview of retail design (as a practice),
- The importance of brand consistency in retail design, and
- The convention of standardising retail design.

## 2.2 RETAIL DESIGN

With implications for the fields of interior design, marketing, branding, retailing, and consumer studies, the retail design discourse has been characterised by multiple disciplinary perspectives. This summary on the retail design field aims to arrive at a current and contemporary definition of retail design. This is to provide a context to the research study and to demonstrate that retail design is a specialised knowledge area that is of scholarly importance.

In the introduction to their edited volume, *Retail Design, Theoretical Perspectives*, Kent and Petermans (2017:8) assert that retail design practice is influenced by three key areas that demonstrate its interdisciplinary interests. These areas are:

- **Brand** (in assigning identity and differentiation to the retailer, while contributing consistency through retail design),
- **Consumer** (and the reciprocal relationship between consumption and retail design), and
- **Technology** (in propelling omnichannel retail design as the integration of digital technology in physical retail design).

The above areas and their relation to retail design are discussed in further detail below.

### 2.2.1 Brand

The recognition of brand identity in retail store design can be traced back to the initial use of the brand's logo as a form of signage to signify the store's identity, along with window displays that told the story of the brand (Kent & Stone, 2007:533; Quartier, 2017:37). Initially, the functionality of retail spaces informed its design – the retail store was viewed as a place in which one could purchase products (Quartier, 2017:37).

The boutique (as a unique, stand-alone retail store) was an exception, in that it combined aesthetic and consumer considerations in design. These one of a kind retail stores were bespoke and reflected the designer’s style or conceptual perspectives, offering consumers an exclusive and intimate experience (Quartier, 2017:31). This was followed by the design of department stores with multi-level, service-oriented, innovative shopping experiences that was also multi-sensorial (Quartier, 2017:31-32).

This evolution of store formats played an important role in shifting the design of retail from once-off, stand-alone expressions, into standardised and rolled out (repeated) stores that became the grounds for a consistent identity in retail design (Quartier, 2017:37). In the 1960s, the retail design discipline formalised with the need for linking consumer behaviour to functionality and branding (Quartier, 2017:37).

The reflection of brand identity in retail design was fuelled by the retailer's quest to differentiate themselves from competitors and to secure consumer loyalty, an occurrence that developed in the 1980s (Quartier, 2017:38). Branding, therefore, originated as a response to retailers wanting to express a unique identity that provided identifying features to their goods and services and set them apart from competitors (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004:332; Saraswat *et al.*, 2010:169-170; Sharp & Dawes, 2010).

Brand identity is "the arrangement of words, ideas and associations that structure the total perception of the brand" (Naresh, 2012:32). It is a unique combination of elements that define what the brand represents, namely, background (roots and heritage), its purpose and ambitions, its values, and its visual identity (van Gelder, 2003:35-40). The development of brand identity began to see its expression in the retail store design (Doyle & Broadbridge, 1999:72). This act of differentiation in retail design was accomplished through brand representative retail store designs that compelled consumers to choose one brand over another (Quartier, 2017:38). Mesher (2010:20) argues that retail design is centred on the attributes of the brand and its products. By expressing the aspirations and characteristics of the brand, the retail store acts as a messenger to consumers in order to communicate what the brand stands for.

The expression of brand in retail design continues to provide opportunities for consumers to remember and connect with the retailer through the retail store (Riewoldt, 2002:8). Brand consistency emerged as a concept, indicating that retail brands needed to maintain a constant reference to their identities (Quartier, 2017:44). This communication of identity required a constant reference to the brand through retail design, thus supporting a consumer's perceptions and expectations of the retailer (Quartier, 2017:44). The contribution of branding to retailers is summarised in Figure 2.1 below.

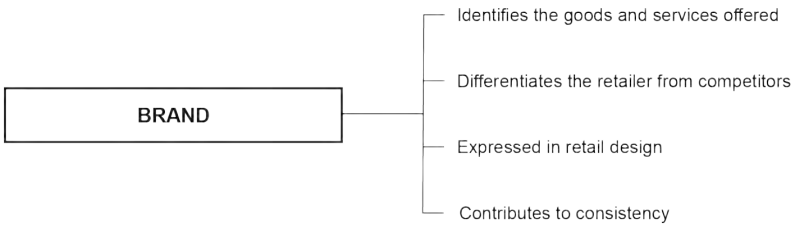



Figure 2.1 The contribution of the brand to retailers

Brands hold varying levels of influence on consumer behaviour depending on product type (Niosi, 2018). Brands with high involvement product (for example apparel and accessories stores) may respond to shopping behaviour by prioritising retail design over brands with low involvement product (for example supermarket brands). In low-involvement product retail stores, the importance of design may be de-prioritised, as consumers may inhabit these stores out of necessity and utility and value convenience over opportunities to express status (Niosi, 2018). Conversely, high fashion brands may invest much effort into retail design in order to capture the attention of consumers and express the creativity and cutting-edge taste they possess that is associated with high fashion, an association with which consumers express their status (Niosi, 2018).

While the attention to the quality of retail design may differ according to the degree of product involvement and its influence on shopping behaviour, consumption across all product involvement levels persists to influence consumer culture.

From Douglas's (1996) seminal statement of the significance of everyday shopping to identity construction to the relationship between conspicuous consumption and high fashion (Barnett, 2005), the reciprocal influence between shopping and identity construction remains across the spectrum of product-types acquired (whether high or low involvement). Retail design holds a key with which brands of varying levels of product involvement can establish and maintain a connection with consumers.

The brand continues to exist as an entity that possesses a distinct identity representative of a retailer and holds an objective to forge connections with consumers (Riewoldt, 2002:8). This is true for retail design for brands that possess products of various involvement levels.

### 2.2.2 Consumer

The emergence of the Western concept of consumer and producer saw the existence of the consumer as a key role player in economic development. This led to the prioritisation of the consumer's best interests as a driver for retail design, since consumers' feelings, behaviour and personalities were important and could be supported through retail design (Quartier, 2017:38). The concept of consumer and producer further highlighted the connections between brand consumption and identity construction for consumers (Quartier, 2017:38). Consumers began associating with brands that represented their identities, aspirations, and social affiliations (Riewoldt, 2002:8).

> *Brands signal our membership of an 'in' group. They are the tools with which we build status.*
> (Riewoldt, 2002:8)

Shopping was seen as a form of identity construction and the retail store supported such a crucial act (Quartier, 2017: 39-40). Arnould and Thompson (2005:871) identify this process of identity construction as "identity projects" that are personal to individual consumers.

They assert that consumption choices made by consumers are indicative of a deliberate choice to "enact" and "personalise" their identities within the structural parameters of the broader cultural system (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). A consumer's choice to inhabit a retail store is therefore indicative of their broader social ideals but is also informed by an overriding system of culture in which common consumption choices indicate social and status affiliations (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:873).


Figure 2.2 Untitled (I shop therefore I am) by Barbara Kruger (Kruger, 1987)

Douglas and Isherwood (2021 [1996]) extend this concept of self-definition through consumption. They note that consumption choices are socially driven. The display of identity is both individual and collective - the consumer's choice of goods convey one's position in social systems. Similarly, the consumer's choice not to consume goods demonstrates identity through the consumer's resistance to associate with a particular societal group who do identify with these products (Baudrillard, 1996:4; Douglas & Isherwood, 2021 [1996]; Khan & Königk, 2018).

The retail store, as a space that facilitates the acquisition of goods, reinforced these dynamics of identity construction through consumption. This was addressed in retail design through increased attention on visual merchandising that represented brands and consumer behaviour (Kent & Stone, 2007:534). This was also supported by mixing retail with social spaces (mixed-programming) which allowed consumers to express their social affiliations (Kent & Stone, 2007:534). 'Third space' originated in the 1980's as a way to describe retail stores as fulfilling an instrumental social function that is "neither home nor work" (Kent, 2007:737-738). The concept of 'third space' satisfies experiential design by embodying 'homeliness' through personalised spaces that represent brand values while forging emotional connections with consumers (Kent, 2007:738).

By fulfilling in-store experiences linked to their self-enrichment, consumers' attachments to brands were enhanced (Kent, 2007:738; Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:464-465). Since the inhabitation of retail stores signifies affiliation to brands and are an expression of consumers' identities (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:464-465), consumers' participation in experiences secured their allegiance to the brand. This is because they were actively involved in creating their own meaning out of their experiences (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:462).

The shift towards online shopping denoted further changes in consumer expectations. Physical retail stores were revisited in light of online shopping which provided the convenience and functionality that consumers no longer valued as a primary purpose to shopping in physical stores (Quartier, 2017:38).

The design of retail stores became experience driven, where retail design took a prominent focus in delivering memorable, multi-sensorial, and interactive experiences for consumers (Quartier, 2017:38). Retail design became an expression of the brand through aesthetics, layout, touchpoints, programming, and experience (Kent & Stone, 2007:534).

This was followed by the emergence of the concept of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) that positioned retail design as a source of experience and entertainment for consumers, fulfilling a role that moved well beyond functional shopping (Kent & Stone, 2007:534; Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2009; Quartier, 2017:38).

Petermans, Plevoets, and van Cleempoel (2015:26-28) frame this within three generations of the experience economy:

- The first generation of the experience economy sought to communicate that retail experiences are brand determined,
- The second generation of the experience economy indicated that retail design experiences are collaborative between the consumer and the brand, and
- The third generation of the experience economy suggested that retail experiences are consumer driven and determined.

The third generation of the experience economy saw the consumer at the centre of the design of experiences (Petermans *et al.*, 2015:28). This marked a synergy with consumer-centric design in retail design practice. Consumer-centric design is the design of spaces that are tailored to consumers (Niienen *et al.*, 2007:266). This requires the brand to become an expert in their consumers' identities by understanding their habits, behaviour, needs, and desires (Niienen *et al.*, 2007:266). Consumer-centric design aligns the consumer's lifestyle with the brand, its products, and services. In turn, consumers become attached and loyal to these brands (Saraswat *et al.*, 2010:168-169). These identity construction processes in relation to consumer-centric design are depicted in Figure 2.3 below.

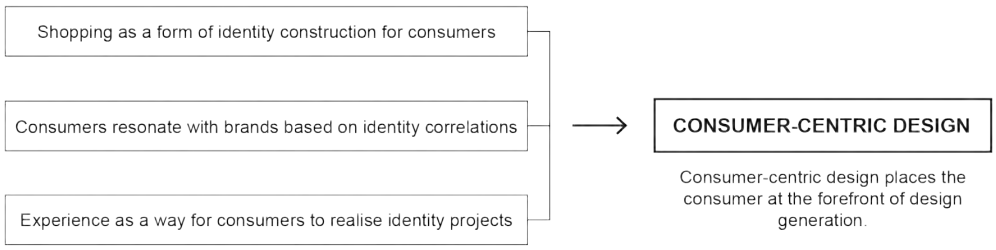



Figure 2.3 Identity processes and consumer-centric design

Consumer-centric design places the consumer at the forefront of design generation (Niienen *et al*., 2007:266). As active participants in their experience of the brand, consumers are self-defining their identities (Petermans & Kent, 2017:27). Brands benefit from consumer-centric design through attaining consumer loyalty, and consumers benefit through valued experiences that are specific to their needs (Niienen *et al.*, 2007:266).

Kent (2007) extends the idea of personalised experience in retail design to acts of creativity. Creativity, in retail environments, may be introduced through novel experiences that are also familiar to consumers (Kent, 2007:736).

As an individual act of reconfiguring meaning, creativity became an opportunity for consumers to express themselves (Kent, 2007:736). Kent (2007:737-738) identifies these opportunities to elicit consumer creativity through experiences for personalisation, sensorial engagement, and interaction.

This sees retail design as concerned with experience creation as a tool to enhance the connection between brands and consumers, by enabling consumers to use their retail experience as an extension of self-expression, thereby signifying conspicuous consumption by acting as an indicator of identity and status (Petermans & Kent, 2017:14;18).

### 2.2.3 Technology

The arrival of online shopping not only changed consumers' expectations of retail design (it was expected to provide experience over utility), it also saw a move towards the integration of digital technology into retail design (Alexander & Kent, 2017:79). Known as omnichannel retailing (see Figure 2.4), the seamless integration between physical and digital retail (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014:5) saw the presence of convenient and experiential technological interfaces as necessary components in enhancing the experiential value of shopping while reducing the 'hassle'. This is addressed through enhancing convenience through digital service provision (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014:7) such as self-pay stations, paying through apps, and using click and collect functions (Christiaans, 2017:222).

Technology was used to streamline in-store experiences and to enhance the consumers' self-expression through integrating social media with store design, allowing consumers opportunities to personalise their experiences in store by providing interactive components that consumers could exert control over (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014:7-8). Digital technology continues to influence the role of physical stores, encouraging a growing movement towards omnichannel expressions. These spaces allow consumers to interact with both digital and physical elements of the brand concurrently (Alexander & Cano, 2019; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014:5).

Covid-19 has accelerated the interest in omnichannel retail environments (Quartier & Petermans, 2021:221). The risks associated with physical touchpoints in retail store experiences has reinforced the consumer's need for digital and self-service touchpoints that are characterised in omnichannel retail experiences (Rodríguez-Torrico *et al.,* 2020). These address consumers' health and safety concerns when shopping (Rueda & O' Sullivan, 2020). This turn in consumer behaviour has pressurised the retail industry, as consumers have opted for online shopping as a safer alternative to shopping in stores (Ogden, 2020).

Convenience-led digital integration addresses consumers' priorities for safer shopping through the provision of contact-free touchpoints while still providing a place for multi-sensorial and memorable engagement with brands that online shopping cannot provide. Retailers facing the economic downturn because of Covid-19 may benefit from omnichannel strategies as a means to ensure safer consumer experiences (Hwang *et al.*, 2020; Quartier & Petermans, 2021:222).

Ongoing research suggests that omnichannel retail design may play an even greater role in the future of retail given the pressures of Covid-19 (Ogden, 2020). While the pandemic continues to influence the role of retail stores (Rodríguez-Torrico *et al.*, 2020), omnichannel strategies can assist retailers to address consumers' concerns for health and safety (Hwang *et al.*, 2020) while providing the brand experience and social and sensorial engagement that is absent in online shopping experiences.

### 2.2.4 Defining retail design

Retail design has evolved into a trans-disciplinary practice that requires the synthesis of design, research, and behavioural sciences in consumer marketing (with related disciplines such as environmental psychology and sociology) (da Costa *et al*., 201749; Quartier, 2017). Although retail design is still seen as a field that is largely practiced at the discretion of interior (or other types of spatial) designers, the movement towards omnichannel retail (the integration of digital technology in physical retail) requires the integration of various expertise to produce retail design (Christiaans & Almendra, 2012:1893; Quartier *et al.*, 2017:S1286). This is supported by the need for a consistent message to be communicated across all channels for the same brand, whether these are physical stores or online shops (Quartier, 2017). This thesis uses the term 'retail design' to refer to the design of physical stores. These may integrate digital technology. The definition of physical retail design is summarised.

- Retail design is a spatial experience **representative of a brand.** The brand acts to differentiate the retailer.
- Due to multiple channels and chains, **brand consistency** is important. Retail design needs to convey the brand's identity consistently (across stores and channels). This is to maintain quality and enhance brand recognition.
- The retail store provides a crucial opportunity for **consumers to exercise identity construction**. Retail design informs and is informed by consumer identity.
- The role of online shopping in retail has placed emphasis on the **experiential value** of retail design as consumers no longer shop in stores out of convenience.
- This has also seen an integration of digital technology into physical store spaces, contributing to seamless, **omnichannel** retail experiences. Omnichannel retail design sees a shift in the definition of the retail designer, requiring interdisciplinary design expertise that integrates physical and digital design knowledge areas.
- The arrival of Covid-19 has seen a pressure on brands to produce retail stores that offer unique experiential value for consumers while incorporating increased measures towards health and safety and enhancing social and sensory engagement. These demands are emphasising the value of the omnichannel store as the **future of retail.**

### 2.2.5 Importance of retail design research

Retail design may be viewed as a distinctive discipline that is related to the interiors field (Quartier, 2017:40). The situation of retail design between fields of branding, marketing and design see retail design as requiring a unique discourse and practice that is distinctive to conventional spatial design practices. Although retail design is represented in individual discourses pertaining to each field, there is a need for interdisciplinary research in the field of retail design. This motivates the importance of research in the retail design discipline.

## 2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAND CONSISTENCY IN RETAIL DESIGN

Brand consistency is the uniform and recognisable expression of a brand in various channels and formats. As asserted by Quartier (2017:44), consistency between the retailer's channels is important in order to enact a sense of continuity for the brand and to ensure that consumers are able to recognise the brand throughout multiple stores and across virtual, in-store, and omni-channels (Julier, 2014:250). The consumer's experience of the retail store constitutes both the service experience and the interior (and spatial) design (Petermans & Kent, 2017:25). These elements contribute towards the consumer's holistic perception of the brand and require brand management in order to convey brand consistency (Petermans & Kent, 2017:25).

Brand consistency provides reassurance to consumers. This is through the provision of a consistent experience that does not change over time or between locations. This requires that the brand be carefully controlled across various channels and platforms (Jones *et al.*, 2010:247). This consistent image assists the brand to differentiate itself from competitors and can aid profitability (Simões, 2015). Inconsistency may lead to unmet consumer expectations and threaten the relationships between brands and consumers (Jones *et al.*, 2010:247).

Agarwal, Garg, Chhikara, and Deshpande (2020:1888) recognise that retail stores fulfil several functions for global brands.

1) They portray the identity of the brand,
2) They are a channel with which to sell the brand's products, and
3) They connect the brand to consumers.

As such, retail stores form an interface between the brand, consumer, and product and must exhibit consistency across these interfaces (Agarwal *et al.*, 2021:1888). Hlophe (2012) discusses the act of managing consistency in brand identity for global brands. Brand managers ensure that the brand is accurately and appropriately represented across marketing channels, such as retail design (Hlophe, 2012:2). Brand identity (characterised by the colours, graphics, spirit, values, and stories associated with a brand) is conventionally managed using a brand manual that details the brand or corporate identity of the retailer (Jordá-Albiñana *et al.*, 2009:174).

Brand manuals are crucial in the management of brand identity, which extends to the management of retail design. They provide guidelines and parameters that ensure that the integrity of the brand is upheld in a consistent way (Jordá-Albiñana *et al*., 2009:174). This is through stated and illustrated principles of applying the brand (Jordá-Albiñana *et al*., 2009:174). These principles act as a system to guide the application of the brand (Jordá-Albiñana et al., 2009:174).

These are illustrated and detailed as an instruction guide to ensure that the brand is applied consistently through repeated graphic and spatial expressions (Hlophe, 2012:16-17). These guidelines pertain to dimensions, proportions, colour, materials, design of units, the selection of furnishing and products in store, and detailed drawings of the retail fit-out (Hlophe, 2012:15-16). It can also include signage details, guidelines for placement and layout, consumer journey principles, touch points, and more.

For global brands, brand consistency becomes a globally managed system in order to ensure that the quality of the brand is maintained across international markets and that the brand remains recognisable across all locations (Agarwal *et al.*, 2021:1888). Jordá-Albiñana *et al.* (2009:175) note that brand consistency is not reliant on a rigid application of a brand (they note that it should be both instructive and adaptable). However, in retail design, the tendency is for brands to retain consistency by opting for standardised expressions (Quartier, 2011:54).

This entails a consistent application of colours, lighting, artworks, and graphic branding throughout the store design (Quartier, 2011:54). This favours a rigid as opposed to flexible approach to brand consistency. This entails the repetition of a prototypical retail store design across multiple locations (Quartier, 2011:28;54). Standardised retail design contributes to brand consistency by ensuring that consumers are exposed to an identical retail store regardless of where that store is based (Quartier, 2011:28). This ensures that consumers' expectations of the brand are met equally and consistently in every store they inhabit (Quartier, 2011:28). While brands conventionally see the standardised expression of retail design in the 'roll-out' store format, brands also possess further store types in their portfolios (Quartier, 2011:28-29).

Each retail store format has a unique and strategic purpose for the brand (Quartier, 2011:28-29).

- **Flagship stores** are designed to build brand awareness and forge connections with consumers (Arrigo, 2015:518). These stores offer exclusive experiences and merchandise and the store design is memorable and outstanding (Petermans & Kent, 2017:24). They are often located in distinctive neighbourhoods or districts (Alexander & Kent, 2017:76). Consumers expect a unique experience with flagship retail stores. Christiaans (2017) foresees a growing emphasis on flagship retail stores in the future.
- **Pop-up stores** are temporary retail stores used by the brand to promote brand interest and/or to test retailing ideas (Alexander & Kent, 2017:76).
- **Outlet stores** are affordable shops that sell out-of-season product ranges as discounted goods. These stores are afforded a lower budget and are located in value retail centres and districts (Quartier, 2011:29).
- When the brand or retailer develops a new retail store concept, this is tested in a prototypical store known as a **'concept' store.** The concept store is then tested and iterated before rolled out across the brand's store network. These chain stores fulfil the purpose of bringing the retailer's product to the consumer (Christiaans, 2017).
- **Roll-outs** are retail stores that are repeated across various locations for the brand (Quartier, 2011:28). These stores are seen as the most frequently constructed designs and form a large proportion of the brand's retail portfolio (which may contain other store formats too). Roll-out stores form the core identity of the brand with high reach and impact. These stores may be located in everyday shopping environments, such as malls or high streets. Roll-out stores contribute to consumers' predominant perception of consistency for global brands (Quartier, 2011:28-29).

Standardised roll-out stores serve to uphold the consistent image of the brand and are conventionally repeated in design across various locations, including internationally.

## 2.4 STANDARDISATION AS A CONVENTIONAL APPROACH TO RETAIL DESIGN

Standardised retail design is the replication of a retail design concept between different locations. For global brands, standardised retail design extends to the reproduction of the retail store across various locations in the world (Quartier, 2011:28). This global roll-out of retail design originates from a global retail design concept that becomes the model for all other stores world-wide (Quartier, 2011:28). Quartier (2011:28) refers to these standardised retail stores as "uniform stores" that are repeated from a single concept. The concept is recognisable and consistent in its look and feel (Quartier, 2011:28).

Standardised retail design may be subject to adjustments across varying locations (Quartier, 2011:28). The extent of these adjustments are pragmatic (Turley & Chebat, 2002:134). These are influenced by local legislation and the size and proportions of the retail store site (Quartier, 2011:28; Turley & Chebat, 2002:134).

Standardised retail design emerged as a product of globalisation, where global brands began to create chain stores that represented a consistent image across the globe (Dinçay, 2015:174). Brands reproduce standardised retail expressions across differing locations in order to retain consistency and promote brand recognition. In retail store design, brand consistency is apparent on a store-by-store basis (Quartier, 2011:28). The brand must ensure that retail design is managed to convey a uniform identity that consumers can recognise and trust as meeting the standard of the brand (Kent & Stone, 2007:534). Brand consistency is conveyed through standardised retail design, which enables the brand to retain control over the internal and external meaning interpreted from this expression of the brand (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010:522).

Brand consistency enhances brand recognition (the ability for consumers to recognise brands) and controls a consistent quality of the retail design (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010:522). Mesher (2010:20) emphasises the importance of brand consistency:

> *Everything about the brand must be consistent – from the associated colour and graphic style to the product range, whether graphic or focused on the interior. This consistency makes the message stronger and affirms the brand's worth.* (Mesher, 2010:20)

Brands opt for standardised modes of retail design, not only to maintain a level of brand consistency across all retail expressions (Jones *et al*., 2010:247), but to also address the economies of scale involved in reproducibility (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). The reproduced retail design contributes to brand consistency and is economical to roll out.

### 2.4.1 Design process for standardised retail design

Retaining brand consistency has implications on the design process. This sees the development of a unique design process (when compared to spatial design processes) in which brand identity is an informant of retail design (Mesher, 2010:20). This differentiates the retail design process from conventional spatial design processes (Mesher, 2010:20). The retail design process considers "consumer, psychological and aesthetic" factors (Kent & Stone, 2007:534).

Kent (2007), Quartier (2011:53), Claes *et al.* (2016), and Servais *et al.* (2019) all contribute towards the contemporary understanding of the retail design process within the discourse. Kent (2007:739-740) establishes that the retail design process is a discrete practice to product design for the retail brand by defining the differences between these practices. According to Kent, retail design is a responsive process, in which designers are required to respond to predetermined parameters through problem solving and anticipation (Kent, 2007:740).

In his comparison between retail design and product design, he demonstrates that while both require prototype development, the retail store is continually iterated according to evaluations of prior expressions of the retail store concept (Kent, 2007:740).

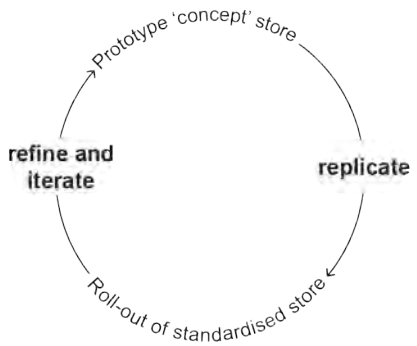



Figure 2.4 Standardised retail design as a prototype to roll-out

Although not presented as a model for a particular store type, recently published retail design process models (Claes *et al.,* 2016; Servais *et al.*, 2019; Servais *et al*., 2021) support Kent's assertion of retail design as a continued iteration of the prototype. The retail design process is geared towards roll-outs.

This supports standardised retail design as a conventional practice. The model sees the process outcomes as developing a "prototype" concept store, that is subjected to "evaluation" and that is finally "rolled-out" (Claes *et al.*, 2016; Servais *et al*., 2019, Servais *et al*., 2021). The cyclic nature of the retail design process is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

## 2.4.2 Issues pertaining to standardised retail design for global brands

Standardised retail design presents several concerns. First, as consumption is an act motivated by identity construction, the consumption of standardised global modes and expressions of brands (including standardised retail design) can contribute towards cultural homogeneity (Sharma, 2017). Second, as a duplicated form of design, standardised retail design presents a less authentic form of design that is unoriginal and could be located anywhere (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015). Localised retail design may be regarded as an alternative means to address the concerns related to standardised retail design.

These conditions are explained in detail below.

### 2.4.2.1 Standardised retail design and cultural homogeneity

The consumer's frequent exposure to standardised retail design has implications on consumer culture (Abstract. The Art of Design, 2017), particularly if the brand is a global brand and standardisation occurs on a global scale. In this context of globalisation, global brands have agency in the process of cultural transformation, homogenisation, and dilution through retail design (Sharma, 2017; Dinçay, 2015).

Dinçay (2015:175) traces standardised retail design as a product of globalisation emerging with modernity. She relates standardised retail design to globalisation theory. Globalisation is viewed a form of Westernisation in which global cultural ideals are perpetuated through consumption culture (Dinçay, 2015:174). This also sees "reverse colonisation" theory in which non-Western regions may have an impact on globally dominant regions and influence global norms (Dinçay, 2015:174).This implies that standardised retail design can originate from any region and that global dominance may be perpetuated through standardised retail design due to the role of consumption in cultural formation (Dinçay, 2015:173).

While Dinçay (2015) does not take a position on whether or not to localise retail design for global brands, Sharma (2017:200) advocates for localising retail design by discussing the effect globalisation has on cultural homogenisation. She considers that standardised approaches to retail design are problematic on a global scale (Sharma, 2017:200).

The influence of retail design on the identity construction processes for consumers indicate the importance of the retail design itself. For global brands, (which operate within the systems of globalisation), retail design becomes an opportunity with which the brand can reinforce and re-inform local culture through localisation, or cause homogenisation and dilution by taking on a standardised global form (Sharma, 2017:198).

The decision to localise or standardise a brand is determined through consumer culture positioning (Hlophe, 2012:8). Consumer culture positioning is the process by which a brand positions itself according to whether its consumer market is more global or local (Hlophe, 2012:18). Global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) is a strategy that communicates that a brand is a "symbol of a given global culture" (Gammoh *et al.*, 2011 in Hlophe, 2012:18).

Local consumer culture positioning is:

> *…a strategy that associates the brand with local cultural meanings, reflects the local culture's norms and identities, is portrayed as consumed by local people in the national culture, and/or is depicted as locally produced for local people.* (Gammoh, *et al.*, 2011 cited in Hlophe, 2012:18).

This can expressed through "language, aesthetic styles and story themes" (Gammoh *et al.*, 2011 in Hlophe, 2012:18). A global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) strategy is appropriate where consumers identify with a global identity (Gammoh *et al.*, 2011 in Hlophe, 2012:19). Consumer culture positioning can inform the extent to which a global brand will opt for standardised or localised retail design. Moodley (2016) reflects on the concept of global consumer culture. She asserts that global consumption culture is driven by status consumption. This sees an influence on societal behaviour towards materialism (Moodley, 2016:12). Moodley (2016:12) argues that this form of consumption occurs at the expense of local consumption – the favouring of local goods and businesses. Global consumer culture originates as a result of local cultural dilution in favour of global ideals (Moodley, 2016:12).

Arnould and Thompson reinforce the vulnerability of local consumer culture within a global “mediascape” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:869).

> *Further, consumer culture describes a densely woven network of global extensions through which local cultures are increasingly penetrated by the forces of transnational capital and the global mediascape (Appadurai 1990; Slater 1997; Wilk 1995).* (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:869)

Moodley asserts that global consumer culture is a result of Westernisation in post-colonial contexts, in which the systems of colonialism are still active (Moodley, 2016:10-11). This poses an ethical concern since the structural impacts of colonialism have led to reinforcing and legitimising a global consumer culture in post-colonial societies. Although this study does not take a particular regional perspective on localising retail design for global brands, the globalisation of consumer culture is a dynamic field and one that has distinctive influence in post-colonial contexts. This implies that standardised retail design for global brands may have varying impacts on consumer cultures in different local contexts.

The study of consumer culture occurs beyond the scope of this thesis but is a necessary backdrop to understand the discrepant geographic impacts of standardised retail design on cultural production.

Sharma (2017:202) associates a growing global consumer culture with global brands deliberately imparting global tastes in order to guarantee market success. She implies that this is an insidious process of cultural dilution. Although standardised retail design may be motivated by the presence of a global consumer culture in a particular location, it may also contribute to the growth of global consumer culture and risk promoting cultural homogenisation. Global consumer culture positioning is therefore a questionable strategy to determine whether the global roll-out of standardised retail design is an appropriate practice.

Standardised retail design is responsible for the continued practice of cultural homogenisation in a globalising context. The homogeneity of standardised retail stores further raises questions about authenticity.

#### 2.4.2.2 Standardised retail design and (in)authenticity

Standardised retail design sees the duplication of store design across multiple locations. As a form of mass-produced interior design, standardised stores may be questioned as an inauthentic practice.

Teufel and Zimmermann (2015:42) argue that although standardised retail design is hinged on the brand's efforts to express its identity as an ultimate demonstration of an authenticity toward itself (Pine & Gilmore, 2008), standardisation depletes authenticity of the retail design. This is because mass-produced design tends to devalue the brand by rendering it commonplace (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). Alexander and Kent (2017:63) discuss the advent of the non-place as providing a contextual anonymity to the retail environment. They describe environments such as malls as signifying "non-places" – these are spaces without a distinct "identity, history or relation" (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63).

Alexander and Kent (2017:63) see non-places as both contextual to the retail store and as the retail store itself. They note that the retail store can also demonstrate this characteristic of placelessness (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). Standardised retail design is arguably a non-place as it demonstrates no explicit link to its context and is generic to place. This is exacerbated by a context that possesses placeless characteristics (the shopping mall). De-Juan-Vigaray & Seguí (2019:300 [7]) concur that placelessness threatens authenticity. They further state that these non-places can diminish the brand's ability to differentiate itself (De-Juan-Vigaray & Seguí, 2019:300 [7]):

> *In the future, "no places" or cloned spaces will be in crisis. Consumers are aware of the fact that the retail offer is being replicated everywhere by the same brands, the same logos, and the same products,* ***leading to a loss of differentiation and authenticity*** *(Foglio and Stanevicius 2007).* (De-Juan-Vigaray & Seguí, 2019:300 [7])

Teufel and Zimmermann (2015:41), similarly argue that non-places are inauthentic as they lack the characteristics of being specific to a time and place. They propose that the alternative to mass produced retail stores is unique retail store design in order to demonstrate a greater authenticity (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44).

Gilmore and Pine (2007) support this notion of unique retail design as authentic and deem this as compatible with consumers' needs. They advocate that authentic retail design is demanding differing stores according to the locations of these stores (Gilmore & Pine, 2007).

This necessitates that global brands consider alternatives to standardised retail design in an effort to demonstrate authenticity. Localised retail design may counteract the negative implications of standardised retail design on culture and authenticity.

#### 2.4.2.3 Towards localised retail design for global brands

Standardised retail design for global brands act within a system of globalisation to promote a global consumer culture. This may displace local cultural expression and diversity in favour of homogeneity. The cultural implications of standardised retail design infer that global brands should reflect on their retail design practices in order to address their responsibility in cultural production.

Standardised retail design also has a negative impact on the authenticity of the global brand. While standardised retail design reinforces brand recognition due to consistency, the reproduction of retail design is deemed inauthentic. In order for retail design to take on an authentic form, it should be non-scalable, non-repeatable, original, and grounded in the 'here and now'.

The negative impacts of standardised retail design are presented below in Figure 2.5.

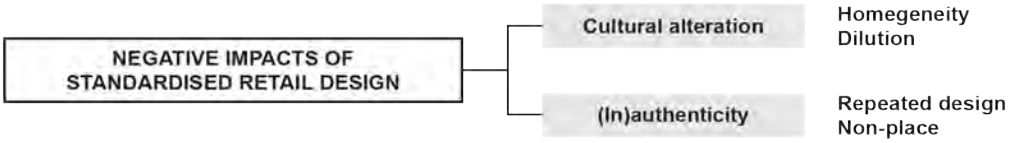



Figure 2.5 Negative impacts of standardised retail design

Localised retail design can be considered as an alternative to standardised retail design, as it presents a plausible avenue for the global brand to express cultural responsiveness (in light of a growing global consumer culture). By taking a unique and grounded expression, localised retail design may be perceived as more authentic than standardised retail design. This motivates the importance of localised retail design for global brands.

## 2.5 SUMMARY OF SECTION 1: RETAIL DESIGN

This section provided an overview of the retail design discipline.

- The role of brand, consumer, and technology as unique factors that contribute to retail design practice have been discussed.
- The importance of brand consistency in retail design was emphasised.
- The practice of standardised retail design, as a response to brand consistency was outlined.
- The retail design process and issues pertaining to standardised retail design were explained.

The following section (Section 2), introduces the topic of localised retail design for global brands.

# SECTION 2: LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

This section introduces the concept of localised retail design for global brands. The section discusses the following:

- The practice of localised retail design as a response to globalisation is motivated.
- A comprehensive definition of localised retail design for global brands is provided.
- The challenges of localising retail design are noted.
- Known strategies for localising retail design for global brand are presented.

## 2.6 LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN AS A RESPONSE TO GLOBALISATION

> *Retailing is a global activity, but one not necessarily requiring a global solution.* (Alexander & Kent, 2017:62)

Localised retail design can be viewed as a culturally responsive measure to combat the negative impacts of globalisation. Dinçay (2015:173) evaluates localised retail stores as demonstrating the theory of '*glocalisation*'. *Glocalisation* is viewed as a power-neutral form of cultural co-existence across the globe (Dinçay, 2015:173). Tinson and Nuttal (2007) argue that *glocalisation* further differentiates the global brand from competitors. Retail design finds compatibility with *glocalisation* when it takes on local cultural cues as opposed to a standardised expression (Thompson & Arsel, 2004:632; Dinçay, 2015:173).

Sharma (2017:200-201) develops this argument in detail by motivating that localising retail design is a necessary effort that global brands should make in order to mitigate the cultural dilution and homogenisation that occurs with global consumption. Global brands have the potential to instrument global cultural shifts (Sharma, 2017:198). Global brand McDonald's, for example, has become a symbol for standardisation and vehicle for cultural homogenisation across the globe (Kincheloe, 2002:8; Sharma, 2017:198). The brand has been influential in shaping consumer behaviour around fast food (Kincheloe, 2002:8).

Ilse Crawford, designer of StudioIlse, observes that global brands may harness their societal impact and use it to influence positive consumer behaviour (Abstract. The Art of Design, 2017). Having designed the canteen promoting healthy eating for IKEA across the United Kingdom market, she saw the potential for the roll-out of the model to normalise a consumer taste for healthier eating choices.

As Christiaans and Almendra (2012:1894) assert:

> *Retail mirrors society: social, economic, political and sustainable retailing that attempts also to be successful, calls for appreciation of the way in which the global and local shopping cultures both shape and are shaped by their respective societies.* (Christiaans & Almendra, 2012:1894)

Retail design is both informed by and shapes culture (Christiaans & Almendra, 2012:1894; Petermans & Kent, 2017:17). The International Federation of Interior Architects / Designers (IFI) relates the responsibility of designers in "facilitating the retention of cultural diversity" (IFI, 2011). While retail design plays an increasingly interdisciplinary role, the impact of space, and particularly, retail space on human culture implies a sense of social responsibility that retail designers have as cultural mediators within a global design context (IFI, 2011).

This is of importance because consumers are demonstrating an increasing emphasis on ethical consumption and are vocal about their perceptions of the brand's socio-cultural and environmental practices (Zeng *et al.*, 2020). Global brands are in a position to reflect on localised retail design as a practice of corporate social responsibility. This can help the global brand to retain a positive reputation and demonstrate their socio-cultural consciousness (Zeng *et al.*, 2020).

For global brands that are opening retail stores across the world, the prototypical global store concept may be reviewed in light of the cultural impact of products of globalisation (Isar & Anheier, 2010; Dinçay, 2015). As shopping is an act of conspicuous consumption (Douglas & Isherwood, 2021 [1996]), the spaces in which consumers shop aid in shaping their identities and supporting this process of self-definition (Petermans & Kent, 2017). Standardised retail design sees the enactment of cultural homogenisation through the translation of global values into homogenous retail design (Petermans & Kent, 2017:27; Khan, 2021).

Conversely, localised retail design offers the global brand an opportunity to resonate with local consumers by informing retail design in the local cultural context and to facilitate locally relevant identity construction (Khan, 2021). Sharma (2017:198) motivates for the importance of localised retail design for global brands in the context of the cultural impacts of globalisation. She advocates that a localised retail design expression may be a form of cultural exchange, signifying appreciation for both the global brand and the local context (Sharma, 2017:202). Alaali (2019:542-543) views the need for localising retail design as an ethical response to globalisation. She views localising store design as a means to address the cultural, environmental and social impacts of organisations (Alaali, 2019:542).

Localised retail design is a response to the negative impacts of standardisation on culture. Global brands may demonstrate cultural sensitivity by opting to adapt their brands across locations and according to the local context.

This can enhance the connections that consumers make with the brand as localised retail reflects and reinforces local society (following Christiaans & Almendra, 2012:1893). Localised retail design can demonstrate the social awareness of global brands and resonate with the ethics and values of consumers. This provides a motivation for global brands to opt for localised (as opposed to standardised) retail design.

## 2.7 DEFINING LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

The concept of 'localised retail design' was first introduced in the discourse by Kent (2007) who raised the idea of 'located' retail stores. He recognised that retailers would be able to differentiate themselves by expressing creativity through retail design (Kent, 2007:738). He noted that this can be accomplished through experience creation, interactivity, social spaces, designing retail stores in historic buildings, and designing landmark architectural retail stores (Kent, 2007:738). The latter requires a unique (as opposed to standardised) and localised approach to retail design. This "located" approach (Kent, 2007:738) pre-empts the contemporary definition of localised retail design.

Localised retail design is the design of retail stores that are informed by and responsive to the location in which they are situated (Sharma, 2017). Dinçay positions localised retail design as an expression of 'glocalisation' in which the world is seen as a global community of inherent cultural differences, with which society finds unity and there are no globally dominant forces at play (Dinçay, 2015:175). These glocalised expressions of retail design portray the global brand while taking on characteristics informed by local culture (Dinçay, 2015:175).

Similarly, Sharma (2017:202) views localised retail design as a form of "cultural exchange" in which the global and local fuse in order to generate a design that is neither explicitly global nor local.

As retail design is expressive of a brand, localised retail design is expressive of both (global) brand and local context. Global brands may consider the local context to be as broad as an entire nation or as narrow as the specific site in which the store is located. Therefore, localised retail design may take on regionally standardised or hyperlocalised expressions. These are illustrated in Figure 2.6 below.


Figure 2.6 Degrees of localised retail design

1. **Regionally standardised retail design** sees standardisation on a local (countrywide) scale as opposed to a global scale. This means that localised retail design may take the form of a national concept. This concept may be rolled out across various sites within the region. The extent of decentralising the design concept occurs on a countrywide as opposed to a global scale.
2. **Hyperlocalised retail design** is the acute design of a retail store according to specifics of the place in which the store is located (van Veen, 2014). This entails the design of individual retail stores and no two stores for the same brand are the same (van Veen, 2014). Hyperlocalised retail design is an escalation of authentic retail design.

This is because hyperlocalised retail design is not only a unique expression of the local context; each store is also a once-off design that is not repeated (following Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44).

The extent of individuality of localised retail stores may differ on a brand-to-brand and a store-to-store basis. The unique retail expression may find partial, limited or no reproduction.

- **Partial reproduction** entails reproducing some features or elements of the localised retail design in various locations (for example, Primark Flagship stores by Dalziel & Powexpress consistencies in the application of localised graphics and storytelling).
- **Limited reproduction** entails the repetition of a localised retail store design in limited quantities (as a limited edition design) (for example the Walk in Progress Camper store is rolled out in limited quantities).
- **No reproduction** entails that the localised retail store is hyperlocalised and is not repeated in other locations (for example, each of Aesop's retail stores are individual or unique).

The extent of reproduction has implications on the authenticity of localised retail design (following Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015; Appadurai, 1986). Although the characteristics of localised retail design are not presented in the discourse as above, its occurrence in practice substantiates its inclusion in the literature review. This is in order to consolidate a timely definition of localised retail design and to situate the study as it is occurring in practice[3].

Localised retail design can be expressed in various store scales and formats. It may follow a boutique format of retail design by representing unique, experiential stores that feel exclusive to consumers (Quartier, 2017:31) as seen with Aesop's small scale localised retail stores. Alternatively, it may follow a department store format as multi-level, service oriented and sensorial experiences, as seen with Nike's House of Innovation concept.

# 2.8 CHALLENGES OF LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

Several challenges exist when localising retail design. These occur in accomplishing authentic localised retail design, retaining brand consistency, in following the conventional retail design process, and applying the approach of regionalism in order to localise retail design. These challenges are discussed in detail below.

## 2.8.1 Authenticity in localised retail design

Localised retail design may be considered as authentic in comparison to standardised retail design. This is due to the design as being more unique, grounded to a time and place, and limited in its reproduction (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44). In localised retail design there are differing views on authenticity. These various views, along with brand authenticity require mediation. The authentic nature of localised retail design, the varying perspectives on local authenticity, and the mediation of authenticity in localised retail design for global brands are discussed below.

#### 2.8.1.1 Localised retail design as authentic retail design

While initiatives towards localised retail design are motivated by the cultural context of globalisation, it may also enhance consumers' perceptions of a brand's authenticity. Teufel and Zimmermann (2015:41-44) define authenticity in retail design as the design of spaces that are non-scalable, non-repeatable and specific to the here and now. Authentic retail design is of benefit to brands since it can enhance product value (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44).

[3] Quartier *et al.* (2016:38) recognise the gap between practice and research in retail design stating that more practice derived knowledge is needed to bring the discourse up to speed with current affairs in retail design

In a similar way that artworks are scarce and accessed in one-of-a-kind museum locations, the localised retail store can communicate the exclusivity of product through location scarcity (Appadurai, 1986; Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42).

In opposition to the ubiquity of standardised retail design ("non-places"), Kent (2007:738) promotes the use of unique store design as a tool to differentiate a retailer from its competitors and express creativity. Retailer creativity is important as it demonstrates to consumers that the brand is evolving and is responsive to consumers and the times (Kent, 2007:738). Unique retail design therefore accomplishes a degree of design integrity by exerting authenticity (Gilmore & Pine, 2007:58-59).

The drive towards authentic retail design is consistent with consumer demands (Petermans & Kent, 2017:28; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). According to Gilmore & Pine (2007), consumers desire authenticity. Grounding the retail design to its location as well as creating unique retail design can enhance the authenticity and value of the brand (Pine & Gilmore, 2008). Consumers value original consumption experiences that resonate with their social (or ethical) values and demonstrates a grounding to the 'here and now' (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015). Localised retail design can satisfy consumers' demand for originality (Petermans & Kent, 2017). The rise of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011) sees the prioritisation of unique experiences in retail store design. Through localising retail design, the experience of the retail store becomes exclusive to the place in which the store is located. Here, localising retail design can enhance the experiential value of the retail store by providing consumers with an authentic environment that motivates them to visit the retail store (Plevoets *et al.*, 2010). Although the experiential value of retail design can be heightened through unique retail design, localising the retail design adds a special dimension to the originality of the retail store. It aids in grounding the retail design in the context and connects consumers to the brand in a way that they are unable to experience elsewhere. This is of value to both local and global consumers (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010).

Bengtsson *et al.* (2010: 521-522) find that global consumers seek different value from brands across global contexts, necessitating that brand identity be communicated in unique ways across the globe. Apart from localised retail design being tailored to the tastes of local consumers (hence attaining local support), global consumers are similarly reassured with localised retail design (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010:520). This is because the localised retail design for a familiar brand contributes both a sense of home (and familiarity) and a sense of travel for the global consumer (Bengtsson *et al.*, 2010:521). The notion of local authenticity is also of importance. When retail designers localise retail design, they source inspiration from the local context. This entails a process of exerting judgment and discretion (Gray & Boling, 2018; Isar & Anheier, 2010). This process requires the designer to interpret and translate local capital into retail design that reflects the local place (Khan, 2021). This has implications for authenticity in the representation of local identity.

The concept of local authenticity in localised retail design is multifaceted. Global brands may opt to localise retail design in an effort to accomplish authenticity, however this requires an authentic representation of and response to place. There are multiple considerations retail designers may make when regarding authentic local expression in retail design. This includes:

A. Authentic approach to place
B. Authentic response to historic buildings as site
C. Authentic representation of local culture

These are described below.

**A. Authentic approach to place**

In retail design, the concept of place may pertain to the context in which the retail store is located or the retail store itself (Alexander & Kent, 2017). I consider the influence of place on retail design. I define place, the attributes of a significant place and then, present relevant terms to designing for and in places. I relate these concepts to the practice of localised retail design for global brands.

i. Significance of Place

Berleant (2003:43) describes the attributes of place.

- Place may be physically characterised by recurring features that are topographical, landmarks or centre points, common social spaces and other physical elements unique to that location .
- Place can also be characterised by a sense of coherence of physical features. This is the repetition of recognisable and unique characteristics of the region.
- Place may also be defined by its "conscious significance" through its associations with a memorable human experience. These associations can be elicited by historical and cultural events that define the significance of a place.
- Place is further intertwined with experience - through experiences of a place, people may discover connections to their own identities (Berleant, 2003:42-43). In this way, place is inseparable from the meaning that people associate with it (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63).

Retail stores may not always be situated in a ‘place’. Alexander and Kent (2017:63) mark this distinction. They assert that the artificial and commercial environment of the mall can be considered as a ‘non-place’ (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). Retail stores located in these contexts find less connection with the local place than a shop in an arcade or high street. Place is distinctive, recognisable, and holds meaning to inhabitants. The significance of a place is indicative of its value and meaning to people.

Places may take on significant attributes when they are deemed “sacred”. Berleant (2003:47) identifies that sacred places hold deep associations with the social and cultural self and are informative of the individual's self-identification.

Berleant (2003:46) suggests the concept of the ‘aesthetics of place’ as a perceived human experience of a specific environment with a unique identity that possesses coherence and shared meaning with how we perceive this place.

The significance of place may be attributed to the concept, *genius loci*. *Genius loci* (spirit of place) relates to inherent properties and experiences of place that signify its distinctiveness and importance. *Genius loci* may be determined by identifying the unique features of a place (Thompson, 2003:67).

Thompson (2003) argues for three facets that determine *genius loci* and recommends a “trivalent” design approach that incorporates these three aspects. These are:

- Aesthetics (repeating the style of the surroundings),
- Ecology (using indigenous materials of the place, without ecological harm), and
- Community (a place that fosters community and cohesion).

Identifying the *genius loci* provides a meaningful argument for sensitive approaches to places through design and urban development, while mitigating potential harm to place (Thompson, 2003:68). This implies an effort to retain the authenticity of place.

*Genius loci* forms a useful informant for localising retail design for global brands where retail stores are positioned in places of significance that hold unique characteristics that contribute to a valued spirit of place.

- The significance of place has implications for retail design for global brands.
- By locating a retail store in a place of significance to local consumers, the brand lends an identity association to retail design.
- Although global brands have seen placement in significant places as a strategic objective to enhance the authenticity of the retail design and connect with local consumers (Plevoets & van Cleempeol, 2009), the ways in which retail design integrates with place may be destructive towards its authenticity.
- Retail stores, themselves, may be regarded as 'place' (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63).

Determining the significance of a place is a fruitful analytical exercise towards retaining the authenticity to place when localising retail design for global brands. The way in which significant places are consumed also have bearing on authenticity.

ii. Place consumption

Place consumption relates to the inhabitation or frequency of places of significance. Place consumption becomes problematic in contexts where the consumption of the place threatens its authenticity.

Venice, Italy, is an example of a city in which tourism has compromised the authenticity of place. Venice is currently uninhabited in its original sense and is primarily a tourist site, where tradition and culture are re-enacted to cater to tourists rather than to the daily life of the locals (Minoia, 2017). In this case, place consumption risks local authenticity and redefines the meaning of places to locals and tourists (Minoia, 2017).

Rakić & Chambers (2012:1612) argue that place consumption is a reciprocal act of place production and consumption: places are continually defined as they are consumed. This has implications for authenticity as the redefinition of place through processes of consumption could enhance or detract from its authenticity. Zukin (2008:732) argues that this can lead to displacing residents and inhabitants of a place and that commercial and retail activity function within the system of place authenticity. Global brands are influential in this process of place consumption and production.

Should the retail store be situated in a place of significance (or what Alexander and Kent [2017] refer to as a 'place' and not a 'space'), the design of the retail store can enhance or detract from the authenticity of the place. Therefore, the global brand's selection of store locations and their response to its inhabitants and context have implications for authenticity.

Scope exists to develop the ways in which global brands can act in a responsive manner to local place in ways that do not detract from the significance of these places and diminish their authenticity.

Further, the development of retail stores as places themselves (Clarke & Schmidt, 1995), (that elicit the characteristics of place as defined by Berleant [2003]), sees a cyclic relationship between place making and place-response when localising retail design for global brands. These concepts require interrogation in the practice of localising retail design for global brands.

iii. Place-based branding

In place-based marketing, the concept of place-based branding pertains to the association of brands to a place. This means that a brand and place are inseparable in identity (following Cardinale *et al*., 2016). For example, a wine brand's association with a vineyard can enhance consumers' attachment to that brand (Cardinale *et al.*, 2016). This is reliant on the brand's identity and its authentic association with particular places.

Global brand, Dolce & Gabbana, for example draws on the founders' Sicilian roots to inform the brand identity (Winston, 2016). Sicilian references are embedded in the brand's retail design (Winston, 2016).

Place-based branding is carried in the brand's heritage, specifically, where that brand originates. The brand's association with an original place can enhance consumers' perceptions of the authenticity of that brand (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). This is because the brand is referring to its real roots and origins, which make it unique. For localising retail design, place-based marketing founded on the local place, may contradict authenticity for the global brand as the brand's association with a place that differs from its roots may come across as superficial (Pine & Gilmore, 2008) or as appropriation (Khan, 2021).

To Sharma (2017:202) these contradictions can co-exist as a form of cultural exchange, however a process of negotiation is presented in employing place-based branding. This necessitates consideration of the global brand's authentic representation of place in localised retail design.

**B. Authentic response to historic buildings as site**

Plevoets & van Cleempoel (2011) explore the concept of authenticity in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for retail stores. They posit that brands opt to position their retail stores in sites of historic significance in order to enhance retail design (Plevoets *et al.*, 2010:4). They recognise that disciplines of heritage conservation, adaptive reuse and retail design have a unique stake in authenticity and these require consideration in retail design in heritage buildings (Plevoets & van Cleempoel, 2011).

Perceptions of authenticity differ according to various stakeholders (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006:75). These, at times, competing areas of authenticity demonstrate that in localising retail design, the global brand should not only demonstrate authenticity to itself (Pine & Gilmore, 2008:36), it should also demonstrate local authenticity.

In demonstrating local authenticity, a layered consideration is needed. The aspects requiring mediation within local and brand authenticity (in localising retail design for global brands) are undefined.

**C. Authentic representation of local culture**

Authentic localised retail design also requires consideration towards an authentic representation of local culture through retail design. This representation of the local place raises questions on authenticity, particularly as the representation of local culture occurs in the retail design.

Sharma (2017) found that high fashion global brands might appoint high profile designers in order to imbue exclusivity into the retail design through portraying their own stylistic interpretation of the brand. She notes that in order to localise their retail design, some of these global brands appoint high profile local designers to design their retail stores. Similarly, Starbucks localises its store design by appointing local artists to create a unique mural in each of its stores (Alaali & Vines, 2020). Although no explicit connection between local creativity and authenticity is made, Sharma's (2017) emphasis on local authorship implies that localising retail design is more complex than what is designed, it is also about who designs and makes the retail store.

Noorwatha (2018) describes the interpretation of Indonesian cultural symbols and artefacts and its translation in retail design. He found that brands could benefit from viewing local culture as its own brand and mediating local culture and brand identity to create a hybrid and contemporary retail design that adds value to the brand, particularly when localising retail design (Noorwatha, 2018).

Noorwatha (2018) emphasises the value of local cultural representation as contributing towards retaining cultural practices. He advocates for a *glocal* retail design that combines Indonesian and brand identity to create a culturally accessible retail design. However, he does not question the degree to which local cultural heritage may be interpreted and by whom it should be interpreted as these relate to authentic representations of local culture.

Discourses on cultural representation are predominant in the fashion design field. As a practice of referencing indigenous and traditional cultures in the design of garments, campaigns and spaces, cultural appropriation reflects poorly on the global brand and originating culture subjected to appropriation (Rogers, 2006). Cultural appropriation has an impact of trivialising the significance and symbolic meaning of a cultural community in support of the commercial gain of global brands (Rogers, 2006). As global brands are culturally influential, this practice further endorses cultural appropriation among the brand's consumer base, perpetuating cultural harm (Khan, 2021). In localising retail design for global brands, an authentic representation of place is needed.

In this regard, Sharma (2017) advocates for cultural exchange, where the global brand and local place meet and mutually benefit through initiatives supported through localising retail design. She uses the example of collaborations with local designers (Sharma, 2017). The global brand may benefit from a local identity while the local designer is showcased on a global stage through association with the global brand (Sharma, 2017).

The representation of local conditions in design is a nuanced topic. This is further complicated in retail design, which further requires an authentic representation of the global brand. This process of mediation of authenticity is explored below.

#### 2.8.1.2 Mediating authenticity in localised retail design for global brands

Pine and Gilmore note that while the global brand is demonstrating authenticity through unique and localised retail design, it must also demonstrate authenticity to itself (Pine & Gilmore, 2008:36). Should a brand contradict its own values in order to demonstrate authenticity to localised retail design, it risks portraying itself as superficial and may lose consumer trust (Pine and Gilmore, 2008:36).

Frosh (2001) connects the concepts of creativity and authenticity by noting that these concepts are not necessarily enmeshed. He notes that while cultural producers seek to express authenticity as original, non mass-produced goods, the notion of production and authenticity is more complex, as consumers seek out authentic goods, which are subjected to the ecologies of commercial production (Frosh, 2001). This reinforces Pine and Gilmore's (2008) assertion that in order to remain authentic in localised retail design, the global brand should concurrently be true to itself. Localising retail design for global brands originates from the global brand's objective to express authenticity. The tensions between authenticity towards the brand and authenticity towards place provide potentially competing and discrepant interests in authenticity that may be mutually beneficial or harmful. The mediation between authenticity to brand and authenticity to place is crucial when localising retail design for global brands. This has not been considered in the discourse.

There is scope to explore the areas in which authenticity to both brand and place may be mediated when localising retail design for global brands as an original research contribution.

### 2.8.2 Global brand consistency in localised retail design

Localised retail design presents an additive to the retail design process: that is the addition of local place as influential to the design outcome. The representation and recognition of the brand's identity in retail design is a non-negotiable factor in the design of retail stores (Quartier, 2011). This poses difficulties in light of localising retail design for global brands. Localising retail design may threaten brand consistency, however, some global brands do demonstrate the possibilities to localise while retaining consistency. These require a process of mediation between brand and local informants.

The following section discusses localised retail design as a threat to brand consistency, the compatibility of localising retail design with brand consistency, and the mediation of global brand and local authenticity in localising retail design.

#### 2.8.2.1 Localised retail design as threat to global brand consistency

Should the global brand add 'place' as influential to retail design, variations in retail design across the globe and the region may risk brand consistency. Should brands opt to produce unique and localised stores across varying sites, the consistency in experience is compromised, as consumers are inhabiting different stores and having differing experiences of the brand. Inconsistency in brand experience can lead to threats to consumer connection and trust in the brand (Jones *et al*. 2010:247).

This means that localised retail design cannot occur without consideration towards brand consistency and local identity cannot be expressed at the expense of brand recognition. Schueller and Morath (2018) see a tension in the brand's prerogative to retain consistency while localising retail design. They identify that the extent of adapting retail design for local markets (as a decentralised design strategy) is based on: "products/services sold, the brand positioning, the heritage of the brand, and the local country culture of the subsidiary's location" and that brand identity must be carefully managed to avoid diluting its identity (Schueller & Morath, 2018:1224). Turley & Chebat (2002) similarly identify this tension. They view localised retail design as "images and decorations which are indigenous to that particular community or region" (Turley & Chebat, 2002:134). They claim that a localised approach to retail design threatens brand consistency as it leads to the discrepant portrayal of the brand that may not render each store equally attractive (Turley & Chebat, 2002:134). This also risks brand authenticity since consistency contributes to the maintenance of a brand's expression of itself (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:41). Turley & Chebat propose a conservative approach to localised retail design in which a combination of prototypical retail design and decentralisation (adaptation) of the design is mediated (Turley & Chebat, 2002:134). This blended approach of localised retail design ensures that the brand can retain consistency while displaying distinctive features recognisable to the local community.

Turley and Chebat (2002:135) state that the extent of localisation is to be negotiated according to regional legislation and contextual and site constraints in order to connect with local markets. This sees a pragmatic approach to local adaptation, rather than localising retail design as inherent to the creative process of retail design.

#### 2.8.2.2 Global brand consistency as compatible with localised retail design

Christiaans (2017:215) takes a more flexible approach to brand consistency. He describes the mediation of brand consistency in localised retail design as "unity in diversity". By promoting variation according to the same informants in each individual design, the retail store communicates consistency.

This approach to brand consistency when localising retail design is evidenced in practice. For example:

- Camper views diversity as a way to communicate brand consistency through unique expressions of retail design (Quartier, 2011; Koivu, 2015). Store design differs, yet the brand is recognisable.
- Aesop (Down & Paphitis, 2019) notes the areas in which the brand remains consistent in its retail design. This is in the principles of visual reduction and abundance and is realised through visual merchandising. Aesop is committed to continually localising its retail design through response to the neighbourhood, building and inhabitants of the area in which its stores are situated (Down & Paphitis, 2019). As no two stores are alike, Aesop has discovered ways to retain consistency while localising retail design by linking its efforts to brand and location (Down & Paphitis, 2019).

#### 2.8.2.3 Mediating global brand and local authenticity in localised retail design

The continued practice of localising retail design for global brands indicates that it is possible to mediate between brand consistency and local identity in retail design. However, these approaches have not been studied across various brands at the same time.

Further, there are isolated narratives between practice and the discourse that contemplate this. No known studies exist to consolidate the ways global brands can retain consistency when localising retail design. The concept of retaining brand consistency is seen as an important area for original research development in the thesis as this is a condition for localising retail design for global brands.

## 2.8.3 The retail design process

The retail design process is of importance when considering localised retail design. This is because:

- Retail design is a specialised form of design that reflects the brand.
- The retail design outcome is a spatial prototype, which may be designed for roll-out. This indicates that it requires a specialised design process.
- Localised retail design presents an irregularity to the retail design process. This is because localised retail design should be both reflective of brand and location while demonstrating consistency. It is therefore not a typical form of roll-out design.

Localised retail stores are a further specialised form of retail design as it occurs in opposition to conventionally standardised roll-outs of an initial concept store design (see 2.4). It is therefore imperative to study the retail design process and its compatibility with localised retail design for global brands.

Claes *et al.* (2016) consider the retail design process as a cyclic programme involving various stakeholders at varying stages of the process. The model sees several phases occurring cyclically in the retail design process. In Figure 2.7 below, relevant steps to localised retail design for global brands have been indicated.

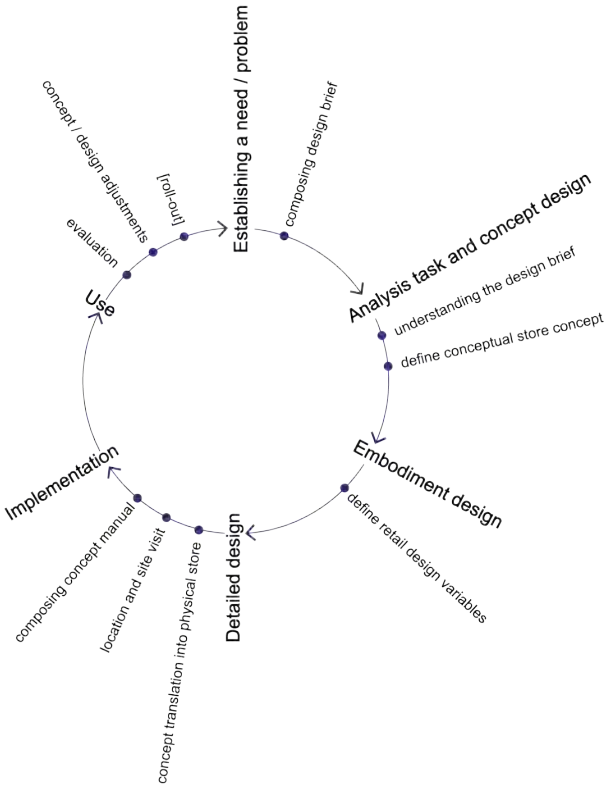



Figure 2.7 Retail design process model highlighting steps relevant to localised retail design for global brands (adapted from Claes et al. [2016])

The steps of the model and their relationship to localised retail design are discussed below.

**1. Establishing a need / problem**

*Composing design brief:* Claes *et al.'s* (2016) model sees the "market, target group, brand DNA, retail strategy, practical and financial constraints, and project objectives" as components informing the retail design brief.

Site and location are not identified as components within the retail design brief. If localised retail design is a strategic decision originating with the global brand marketing team, then the imperative to localise retail design will originate within the retail strategy.

**2. Analysis Task and Concept Design**

*Understand the design brief:* Here, the designer unravels the brief provided by the global brand. Should the imperative to localise retail design be inherent to the retail strategy, the designer will generate localised retail design in response to this component of the brief.

*Define conceptual store concept:* This aspect of the retail design process indicates that the design concept is generated at this point. The outcome is the design of a "concept" store (which is intended for testing and for roll-out).

**3. Embodiment design**

*Define retail design variables:* Claes *et al.* (2016) define several variables in the design. These include "exterior shell, interior shell, furniture, sensory elements, identity and communication, and decoration & extra".

Although the model tends towards new design with the option for roll-out design (which is conventionally standardised), these variables provide scope for creative adjustments in the retail design process. This indicates compatibility with localised retail design (in which brand consistency is crucial even though localised retail design implies a negotiation of identity).

**4. Detailed design**

*Concept translation into physical store (pilot store):* This aspect of the process indicates that the retail design generation is done with intention for roll-out. The preceding aspects of the process build up to inform the design of the first (or pilot) store that will be replicated. The model does not specify that this should be standardised.

*Cost / calculation:* The process model indicates that location and site visit occurs after conceptualising the design of the retail store as part of cost / calculation phase of the project. This implies that site and location are not conventional informants to the design of the retail store and are considered as pragmatic components. If considered conceptually, these may be embedded in the retail design strategy during the brief development.

*Composing a concept manual:* The design guidelines are formulated on the basis of the pilot / concept store.

**5. Implementation**

This phase entails the design resolution and construction of the retail store.

**6. Use**

*Evaluation:* This phase entails evaluation, in which the store is analysed when in use.

*Concept / design adjustments:* The store analysis thereafter informs improvements to the following roll-out or new store designs. Claes *et al.* (2016) indicate that this can occur in conceptual and design phases, not only as a pragmatic adjustment.

*Roll-out:* This is followed with rolling out the store concept. While roll-out design is conventionally standardised, Claes *et al.* (2016) propose that the retail design process is cyclic, indicating that various stages of the process may be revisited in order to roll-out a concept. This means that the process model may repeat itself as each store is evaluated and refined through future roll-outs. The point of re-entry into the process model is not stipulated. However, should the designer return to '3. Embodiment design' as the start of the renewed retail design process, the variables (if informed by the objective to localise retail design) may enable localised retail design while retaining global brand consistency.

Claes *et al.'s* (2016) model demonstrates compatibility with the objective to localise retail design for global brands.

- The model is cyclic (indicating re-visiting creative aspects of the process to generate retail stores for the same brand)
- The model identifies the presence of design variables (these variables could be the local context, thus enabling localising retail design while retaining brand consistency).

However, the model presents some areas requiring specialised consideration for localised retail design for global brands:

- It does not explicitly identify localised retail design as a potential outcome of the retail design process.
- It sees the definition of designer as "retail designer / design agency". This is a limitation of the model since in-house designers, design agencies, or high-profile designers may conduct retail design for global brands.

Subsequent to this study, Servais *et al*. (2021:167) published adaptations to Claes *et al's* (2016) retail design process model documented above. They suggest the addition of contextual elements as design informants (Servais *et al.*, 2021:167). These include "offer and service", "unexpected factor" and "physical space" (Servais *et al.*, 2021:167). Although these contextual elements may be feasible to generate a localised retail design (that is unique to a site and context), the outcome is to "roll-out" and to address open-ended "next steps" of the design process. Their retail design process model resembles Claes *et al's* (2016) by taking an overarching approach to retail design and viewing roll-out as a standard outcome of retail design processes.

Both models presents areas of generalisability that are required with a 'broad-strokes' retail design process. They do not explicitly address localised retail design or multiple expressions of localised retail design for a single brand as a possible outcome of the retail design process. This illustrates a need for a specific retail design process for localised retail design that considers the condition of brand consistency.

A further limitation of existing retail design process models is in the absence of identifying which type/s of designer/s would use these models. As retail design for global brands may be conducted by design agencies, high profile designers, or in-house designers (Quartier, 2011), or a combination of designers working collaboratively (Down & Paphitis, 2019), the unique processes and abilities of designers to generate retail design has implications on the retail design process and outcome. Consideration is needed in the different design processes used by varying types of designers appointed for designing localised retail stores.

This is partially addressed by Alaali and Vines (2020) who investigate localised spatial experiences for the global brands, Starbucks and IKEA. They were particularly interested in gaining a brand management perspective on localising retail design using globally distributed design teams**.**

Alaali and Vines (2020) found four areas of design management that signified Starbucks' and IKEA's efforts in enabling localised retail design. These are in 1. Design team, 2. Sources of inspiration, 3. Design approach, and 4. Quality assurance procedures.

**1. Design teams**

Both Starbucks and IKEA had teams who designed globally. IKEA also possessed local designers present in the local context. Starbucks possessed regional design teams (teams working across selected continents) (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1600).

**2. Sources of inspiration**

Both brands conducted research into consumer products from the local context. In IKEA, the team visited the store location and conducted visits to local homes to understand how people related culturally to furniture (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1602). Starbucks saw selected designers conducting store location visits, while all designers tested foods and coffees originating from the country in which they were designing (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1602).

**3. Design approach**

In the case of IKEA, the brand used a standardised product range (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1603). They localised some spatial aspects of the design according to how locals live and behave in their own homes (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1604). In the case of Starbucks, the designers selected local furniture and artworks from a catalogue compiled within Starbucks (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1602-1603).

**4. Quality assurance procedures**

The Starbucks team have an iterative drawing procedure that entails checking work and translation for local contractors (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1604). This ensures the quality of the retail construction. IKEA conducts store visits across the globe to ensure that the local retail design is of consistent standard (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1604).

In scope, Alaali and Vines's (2020) study is specific to two global brands. In method, their study seeks knowledge from global team members, taking a design management perspective on retail design. This has implications on the design process for localising retail design for global brands when conducted by internal brand designers who are in globally distributed teams.

This partially informs the retail design process with insights into the practices conducted by global brands in localising retail design (using internal designers who are in globally distributed teams). Alaali and Vines's (2020) study leaves areas to consider in light of the retail design process and localising retail design for global brands:

Starbucks and IKEA differ in their design management processes when localising retail design for global brands, indicating that Alaali and Vines's (2020) findings may not be applicable to broader practice where brands do possess globally distributed teams, although it does illuminate the ways in which these teams operate.

Although Alaali and Vines (2020) consider brand consistency as crucial when localising retail design for global brands, their findings do not explicitly state how global brands maintain brand consistency when localising retail design. This signifies a need for a specialised retail design process that addresses localising retail design for global brands. This can involve studies in localised retail design for global brands according to:

- Numerous designer types,
- A broader sample of global brands,
- Mediation of brand and location (this is unique to localised retail design for global brands), and
- Retention of brand consistency when localising retail design for global brands.

This demonstrates a research opportunity for expanding the retail design process to enable localising retail design for global brands while managing brand consistency.

### 2.8.4 Applicability of regionalism as an approach to localising design for global brands

The process of localising retail design for global brands entails considering the local place as an informant to the design process. In retail design, localisation is an unconventional practice. As retail design is an interdisciplinary field, the applicability of architectural approaches to localisation are considered. The purpose of this exploration is to understand the extent to which regionalism is applicable to localising retail design for global brands. This is in order to demonstrate where there is scope for an original research contribution in localising retail design even when applying regionalism as a direct design approach.

Regionalist expressions of architecture are generated from re-interpretations of both "traditional built form" and "traditional ways of living" (Barker, 2012:109). Regionalism transcends both indigenous and traditional forms of architecture, as an act that is consciously rooted in responding to the region and its conditions (Barker, 2012:109).

Fagan (1982) (cited in Barker [2012:109]) notes the distinction between indigenous and vernacular architecture.

- Indigenous architecture may be defined as an unconscious reaction to building motivated by necessity, implying a non-deliberate approach to the design of built form.
- Vernacular architecture is more deliberate in the representation of living rituals and repeated expressions.

This distinction differentiates regionalism as an act rooted in expertise rather than amateurism (Fagan, 1982:3 in Barker, 2012:109).

Canizaro (2007:18) sees regionalism as an act of resistance towards homogeneity by deliberately pursuing the specifics of a region to reflect a unique architectural outcome (Barker, 2012:109). This coincides with the assertion that localising retail design contributes towards design authenticity, since localised retail design sees a distinct representation of the local context in favour of standardised forms of retail design. Barker (2012:109-110), however, argues that regionalism is both resistive and conforming. By drawing on the regional condition as a generator for the design, designs within the same region will share similar attributes that do not significantly differentiate regionalist expressions of design from each other (Barker, 2012:110).

Similarly, in retail design for global brands, the representation of the same global brand in each localised retail store will demonstrate this homogeneity through retail design as necessary to retain brand consistency. Buchanan (1983:15) sees regionalism as a resistance to the uniformity and ubiquity of modern architecture. In opposition, critical regionalism takes an approach of generating local and global forms of architectural identity (Barker, 2012:110). The emergence of critical regionalism saw a broader mediation between the specifics of the local and the universality of the global (Lefaivre & Tonis, 2003:10; Lefaivre & Tzonis, 2011). These movements arose in differentiation to regionalism, which sought to represent a higher concern for regional identity in architecture (Barker, 2012:110). The mediation between global and local identities in critical regionalism finds some resonance with the practice of localising retail design for global brands, as this practice also requires a mediation between the global (brand) and local.

Noorwatha (2018) considers this connection. He suggests that regionalism is a viable way to localise retail design in his study on imbuing a Balinese identity into retail design (Noorwatha, 2018). He recommends converging the global and the local into a consolidated localised retail design. Noortwatha (2018) recognises the importance in representing the brand in localised retail design and suggests that regionalism may provide a key to informing the *glocal* identity this form of design requires.

Although Noorwatha (2018) sees potential in developing localised retail design using the principles of regionalism while representing the global brand, his study reaches the extent of motivating for this practice. There remains room to contemplate which dimensions of global brand and place require mediation to ensure the representation of both.

While regionalist principles can inform and enhance the ways in which designers can respond to the local context through localised retail design, the approach has shortcomings to the application of localised retail design for global brands.

These limitations are depicted in Figure 2.8 below.


Figure 2.8 Limitations in applying regionalism to localising retail design for global brand

The limitations are summarised below:

- Given that regionalism is rooted in the development of stylistic architecture that represents a regional identity in opposition to the uniformity of modernism, its relevance towards the commercial imperative of retail design is reduced.
- Regionalism is concerned with the response to regional conditions and reflecting this in design. This approach may be viable for representing local identity in retail design; however, the mediation of brand identity in localised retail design is unaddressed.
- Regionalism is largely applicable to architecture (the design of buildings) rather than retail design (which is experienced within the interior). The interior provides unique dimensions with which to consider localisation, such as temporality, experience, and atmosphere.
- Regionalism, as a response to regional conditions, has limited application in retail sites located in malls or existing buildings.
- The complexity involved in altering existing (for example, heritage) buildings in ways that are reflective of a regionalist identity is unexplored.

Regionalism is an appropriate stylistic and philosophical informant to localising design however it has limitations when applied to retail design. The representation of brand identity, the commercial nature of retail, and the nature of retail sites as existing built structures present a need for specialised approaches to achieving localised retail design for global brands.

## 2.9 KNOWN STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

Although localising retail design for global brands is occurring in practice, there are limited research investigations into how global brands localise retail design. This section summarises what is known on the ways in which global brands localise retail design within the discourse.

A single key study considers strategies for localising retail design for global brands. Sharma's (2017) study focuses on l**ocalised retail design in the high-end fashion industry.** Her study delimits the flagship retail store as a channel through which global high-end fashion brands express localisation.

Her study provides pertinent insights that substantiate the importance of localised retail design for global brands, while providing research opportunities for broader studies that connect practice to the discourse. I present Sharma's study findings with a synthesis of related literature. This is in order to enhance the understanding of what is known (and what is not known) on how to localise retail design for global brands. This is also in order to position the research substantive area (and demonstrate the originality of my investigation) within the core of the discourse on localised retail design for global brands.

### 2.9.1 'Globalisation and Localisation – The high-end fashion retail perspective' (Sharma, 2017)

Bhakti Sharma published her study on localised retail design for high-end fashion brands in the book, 'Retail Design: Theoretical Perspectives' (Petermans & Kent, 2017). Sharma's study takes a high-end fashion retail perspective. High-end global fashion brands have been at the forefront of retail experience innovation due to a consumer-demand for luxury and exclusive experiences associated with the elitism of the high-end brand (Sharma, 2017:198). Localising retail design has become a way for the high-end fashion global brand to communicate this exclusivity while cultivating interest in the brand across the globe for the global consumer. Sharma (2017:198), therefore views the high fashion global brand as an optimal retail category with which to study localised retail design.

Sharma (2017:200) links the occurrence of localised retail design for high-end fashion brands within flagship retail stores. She states that the flagship store is the ideal retail format with which to localise retail design due to its exclusive experiential offering (Sharma, 2017:200). She notes that consumers define themselves through consumption and that experience, events and objects play a role in enhancing this self-definition (Belk, 1988 as cited in Sharma, 2017:200). This provides a link to flagship retail design as playing an enhanced role in localisation as the store purpose is to forge and retain connections with consumers and exclusive experiences facilitate this process (Sharma, 2017:200). Dinçay (2015:176) supports this. She further recognises that the flagship store is a store format in which *glocal* retail stores are frequently expressed (Dinçay, 2015:176).

Sharma (2017) views the relationship between the flagship retail format and localised retail design as reciprocal. Flagship stores are unique and large-scale experiential stores in key locations (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013). The intention of flagship stores are to forge connections with consumers (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:461), by transforming conventional shopping into memorable experiences in order to build brand awareness (Arrigo, 2015:518; Kozinets *et al.*, 2002:17). The flagship store promotes the brand through experience creation. These experiences embody the brand (Webb, 2009:23). Flagship retail stores are characterised by their purpose to enable "brand building" rather than to generate profits (Webb, 2009:23). These flagship retail stores offer high quality interiors that are created at a higher budget and standard than the remaining brand's portfolio (Webb, 2009:23). The flagship store allows brands to integrate multiple facets of brand meaning (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:461).

This means that the single interpretation of brand meaning that is portrayed in chain retail stores (or what Dolbec and Chebat [2013:461] refer to as brand stores) can be extended, layered and re-imagined in the flagship retail format that offers a unique environment that is committed to brand building (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013:461). Flagship retail design is an accepted retail store format for international market entry (Sharma, 2017:205). The flagship store can be used to establish brand awareness by expressing the brand's identity, especially in international markets where consumers may be unfamiliar with the brand (Arrigo, 2015:519).

Sharma (2017) defines several strategies using flagship retail stores that demonstrate ways in which global brands localise retail design. This includes 1. Collaboration with local high-profile designers, 2. Distinctive retail design and architecture, and 3. Distinctive store locations.

I will explain each of these known strategies for localising retail design for global brands as presented by Sharma (2017). The explanation of the strategies is enhanced with a synthesis of relevant literature.

#### 2.9.1.1 Collaboration with local high-profile designers

Sharma (2017:206) asserts that the appointment of high profile local designers can enable differentiation and localising retail design concurrently. She argues that the local star architect acts strategically with their knowledge of local culture to aid the brand to position itself to connect with local consumer markets (Sharma, 2017:206).

Webb identifies the appointment of high profile designers as a defining characteristic of flagship retail design. He notes that “premium brands” appoint these designers to assign exclusivity and prestige to their retail stores, enhancing the media attention that these destinations receive (Webb, 2009:21). This results in a striking store design differentiating the retail store from competitors (Nobbs *et al.*, 2012:926).

In localised flagship retail design, Sharma (2017) views the role of the local star architect as providing a local packaging to the global brand. While the appointment of high profile designers lend prestige and exclusivity to the brand through the provision of a stylised store (whether this is through a new building and/or through the interior), Quartier (2011:54) argues that the expression of the designer’s personal style may overshadow brand recognition.

In a flagship retail format, the consumers’ expectation for exclusivity may not find conflict with a designer’s stylistic expression in the retail design, however in conventional retail stores, this may threaten brand recognition.

The implications of using high profile local designers to fulfil the strategic and creative roles of localising retail design for the global brand are both costly and may threaten brand consistency. Further, from a design management perspective, it is unclear as to the way in which design scope is managed between high-profile local designers and global brand internal designers (in scenarios where global brands possess an existing internal global design team) or further types of designers appointed for retail design. Consideration is needed in the variety of designer types involved in localising retail design.

#### 2.9.1.2 Distinctive retail design as architecture

Sharma (2017:207) suggests that the appointment of high profile local designers results in the design of distinctive architecture that promotes brand interest. The retail store becomes a local landmark, expressing the brand through a local lens (Sharma, 2017:203).

The store as an architectural spectacle originated in the 1990’s and is a continued practice in retail design (Petermans & Kent, 2017:23). The building in which a retail store is located lends identity to the brand and can serve to differentiate it from competitors (Kirby & Kent, 2010:435[a]). Kent particularly advocates for retail design to become an architectural statement, drawing attention to the retailer as a landmark (Kent, 2007:738). This approach sees the appointment of celebrity architects designing new built structures for global brands. Kirby and Kent (2010a) describe categories of these signature buildings.

They are single or multiple “landmark or iconic” buildings, architecture that refers to history of the location (including the re-use of historic buildings), and stores that demonstrate similarities of “successful” buildings (Kirby & Kent, 2010a:436).

Sharma (2017:200) views these localised buildings as providing a lasting, local translation of the global brand to the local market. She asserts that flagship architecture can communicate the brand's heritage and take on a contemporary identity concurrently (Sharma, 2017:204). Quartier refers to this technique as the use of the "archetype" to distinguish the brand, however critiques the iconic design as compromising the shopping experience (Quartier, 2017:36). Kirby and Kent extend the role of architecture as landmark to the use of heritage buildings for retail design (Kirby & Kent, 2010b).

Petermans *et al.* (2015) support that global brands can accomplish distinctive identity through association with historic buildings. The brand's approach to altering existing buildings have implications on brand recognition and perceptions on localisation. Petermans & Kent (2017:27) see the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for retail design as both a display of the brand's efforts towards sustainability and its association with the "local", which is of importance to consumers. Kent (2007:739) also advocates for the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings as a means to differentiate retail stores and link them to a specific place. Plevoets and van Cleempoel (2011) argue that the retail stores housed in historic buildings can contribute towards authenticity. This is consistent with Plevoets *et al.'s* (2010) relation of retail design authenticity to the location of stores in historic buildings. They claim that these buildings contribute authenticity to retail design due to the unique character that is established in the history of a place. However, the alteration of historic buildings is a specialised practice with unique implications on authenticity and identity (Plevoets & van Cleempoel, 2011:8-9). This sees a specialised research area pertaining to the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for retail design.

Sharma (2017) states that global brands may use distinctive architecture as a signifier of brand identity and localisation. Although she does not refer to the re-use of existing buildings as contributing this differentiating identity to the global brand, Kirby and Kent (2010b) see this as a strategy to demonstrate the global brand's attitudes towards the local context and as providing a conflict in representing the identity of the retailer while retaining the integrity of the historic building. While distinctive architecture may contribute towards a localised retail design, the scope of the interior and the use of existing buildings in localising retail design require consideration.

#### 2.9.1.3 Distinctive store location

Sharma (2017) relates the connection between flagship store formats, distinctive urban districts and localised retail design in her study on high-end fashion global brands.

The selection of sites for flagship stores are based on this prime location – the location is often one that has unique and exclusive characteristics associated with arts, culture or other activities that render the location as a destination with its own sense of place and community (Sharma, 2017:203). The selection of a store location with distinct characteristics associates the uniqueness of the location with the global brand. This also sees the placement of flagship stores in historic buildings that contribute the differentiating and prestigious experience expected of flagship stores (Nobbs *et al.* 2012: 926).

Roodhouse defines these locations as cultural quarters, strategically selected by retailers for the unique characteristics and occupants of these districts (Roodhouse, 2009:107). Cultural quarters are a district known for the conglomeration of buildings and spaces dedicated to significant cultural and artistic activities within a town or city (Roodhouse, 2009:107). These districts have a unique identity that correspond with the activities of the area (Roodhouse, 2009:107). Alexander & Kent (2017:63) similarly advocate for retail stores to be located in a 'place'. They explain the distinction between the place and space in retail.

Place is understood as having meaning, and exhibit a distinctive identity, have relations and history (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). Places are defined by one's emotional connections with them (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63). These connections are said to be formed through social interaction (Alexander & Kent, 2017:63).

Place occurs in opposition to what Alexander and Kent (2017:63) refer to as “non places”. They describe non-places as settings that demonstrate no distinctive identity, history or personal connection to users. As such, non places demonstrate ubiquity and homogeneity (Petermans & Kent, 2017:27).

Place has implications on retail design.

- The selection of the store location: retailers should select locations that are places, not spaces in which to position their stores.
- The retail store may become a “place” if it is imbued with the characteristics of places. This idea is compatible with the notion of “brandscapes” (Riewoldt, 2002) that see retail stores as places that represent the brand.

In the second case, flagship stores located in derelict sites may become a “place”. Sharma (2017:203) describes these locations as “brownfield sites”. Kent (2009:8) defines this type of flagship store as having a strategic purpose of catalysing regeneration. Bianchini et al. (1992) echo that flagship developments can catalyse urban regeneration and garner financial interest.

Sharma (2017) notes that global bands may uplift the area through regeneration. However, Zukin (2008) argues that this form of urban regeneration can entail gentrification, which often occurs at the expense of inhabitants of working class profiles in favour of middle to upper income inhabitants, and can lead to displacement by attracting middle-class consumers into the area.

As the flagship model originated as a strategy to regenerate derelict urban districts, the flagship store is both responsive to and catalytic in its context (Kent, 2009:8). Consideration is needed in the response of localised retail design to place and its influence on place.

### 2.9.2 Research gaps and opportunities pertaining to the known strategies for localising retail design for global brands

Sharma’s study focused on the localisation of high-end fashion global brands through retail design. Sharma’s argument for studying this category is that luxury fashion brands are at the forefront of retail design. As these brands commit to localising retail design, the design practice may filter down to mainstream brands (such as H&M’s new concept stores and Primark’s flagship retail design exhibiting a “local flavour”) (Sharma, 2017). Sharma’s study became delimited to the flagship retail format due to her focus on high-end fashion global brands. This retail category may use flagship retail stores in a more prolific way than other categories of retail.

Christiaans (2017) predicts a growing emphasis on flagship formats over other retail formats, supporting research into flagship formats as the future of retail. However, global brands such as Starbucks, Aesop and Nike demonstrate localised retail design as an established norm and integral to mainstream retail stores within their portfolios. In the case of Starbucks and Nike, localised retail design occur across a variety of store formats.

The flagship retail format is not an exclusive avenue to localise retail design for global brands. Further, the flagship store does not mitigate the cultural harms or the inauthenticity associated with standardised retail design. A study of mainstream retail store formats is needed. Further, consumers expect unique experiences in flagship stores that make design consistency far more negotiable in this format. As consistency is negotiable in flagship retail design, other retail formats provide a more viable sample to study brand consistency in localised retail design.

This provides an opportunity to investigate localised retail design beyond the flagship format and beyond the high-end fashion retail category. This also leaves scope to investigate brand consistency as a consideration when localising retail design for global brands by studying a differing sample.

Further, Sharma conducts her study using secondary sources. She recommends further research into localised retail design for global brands through an empirical research study.

Sharma identified three strategies for localising retail design for high-end fashion global brands. These were the use of local, high-profile designers, distinctive retail design through architecture, and distinctive store location. While these strategies are novel, there is scope to expand these strategies considering the specialised nature of both retail design and localisation. This leaves scope to expand Sharma's identified strategies for localising retail design. The following areas for research development were identified:

- **Local high-profile designers:** Consideration of designer's self-expression is needed. Consideration of variety of designer types involved in retail design is needed.
- **Distinctive retail design through architecture:** Consideration of existing buildings is needed. Consideration of distinctive interior design (independent of the building) is needed.
- **Distinctive store location:** Consideration of response to and influence on place is needed.

Because Sharma's study focused on the category of high-end fashion and the flagship format, a research study that encompasses further categories and formats of retail may yield new results. A reconsideration of the strategies for localising retail design for global brands is needed. **This provides scope to identify strategies for localising retail design for global brands** as a new study.

The research opportunities emanating from Sharma's study are consolidated in Figure 2.9 below.


Figure 2.9 Research opportunities emanating from the discourse on strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

## 2.10 SUMMARY OF SECTION 2: LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

The section provided an understanding of the practice of localised retail design for global brands. Localised retail design was presented as an alternative to standardised retail design in response to the cultural impacts of global brands in the context of globalisation. The definition of localised retail design was provided. Challenges of localising retail design for global brands were presented. This occurs in mediating authenticity between brand and location, retaining brand consistency, the application of the retail design process (which is geared towards a standardised outcome), and the application of the design approach of regionalism.

The known strategies for localising retail design followed. These known strategies illustrated areas for research development. The following section consolidates the literature review and presents research opportunities.

# 2.11 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

Localised retail design for global brands is an existing phenomenon entailing the design of retail stores that are decentralised and are designed according to the local place. Localised retail design is an alternative to standardised retail design and can be seen as a more culturally responsive means of addressing local contexts. Standardised retail design presents risks of cultural homogenisation and devalues brand authenticity as it is mass-produced from a concept store as prototype. Mass production is the result of the global brand's intention to retain brand consistency and recognition across the globe. This has a negative impact on culture and depletes brand authenticity. Conversely, localised retail design strives to enhance authenticity through tailored retail design that is specific to a time and place. Localised retail design arguably mitigates the risks of cultural homogenisation by demonstrating compatibilities with the local market. However, localised retail design presents complexities when considering mediating authenticity and brand consistency. Brand consistency and mediating authenticity to brand and location are viewed as conditions for localising retail design for global brands.

## 2.11.1 Conditions for localising retail design for global brands

#### 2.11.1.1 Brand consistency

Localised retail design presents a challenge to the global brand consistency as it necessitates a unique expression of retail design (whether this is on a countrywide or a site scale). The variety of designed spaces may threaten consistency and recognition of the brand. Therefore, consideration is needed into the ways in which global brands may localise retail design and retain brand consistency.

#### 2.11.1.2 Authenticity

In the area of authenticity, localised retail design sees the competing interests of the brand and place as requiring authentic representation in retail design. This tension is recognised in the discourse, however, it is unclear as to which areas of brand and place are to be mediated in order to attain authenticity. Research is needed into the areas requiring mediation to attain global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design.

## 2.11.2 Strategies for localising retail design for global brands

Localised retail design may be accomplished through various strategies. A single study considers strategies for localising retail design for global brands as used in the high-end fashion category (Sharma, 2017). The identified strategies are limited to the retail category of high-end fashion, and consequently, the flagship format. The research design hinders the application of the study to broader categories of retail design and to further formats of retail stores. There is scope to formulate a renewed study to determine strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

This may be differentiated from Sharma's study through:

- A broader sample of retail categories,
- A variety of store formats, and
- A consideration of various types of designers involved in localising retail design for global brands.

This has implications on study sampling. Further, the identified gap between the practice and discourse on retail design has implications on a research design:

- Data should be sought or elicited from practice (practitioners, global brands, and the study of retail stores). This is in order to bridge the voids between the practice of and discourse on localised retail design for global brands.

### 2.11.3 Retail design process for localising retail design for global brands

While the retail design process is identified as an area requiring development to enable localising retail design for global brands, it is viewed as an area contingent on developing conditions for localising retail design for global brands and on identifying strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

Developing the retail design process to facilitate localised retail design for global brands is viewed as an area for future research.

### 2.11.4 Research gaps

The following research gaps are identified as opportunities for original study contribution:

1. Ways to retain global brand consistency when localising retail design,
2. Areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design, and
3. The strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

These align with the study objectives.

## 2.12 CONCLUSION

The literature review chapter positioned the research topic in relation to the state of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands.

Section 1 (Retail Design), provided an overview of the conventional practices in the retail design discipline. The areas of Brand, Consumer, and Technology were elaborated on as key attributes informing retail design practice.

- Retail design is a reflection of brand identity. Branding acts as a tool for differentiation.
- Consumers associate with brands as a display of identity and social affiliation. Retail design responds as a consumer-centric practice tailored for consumer expression.
- Technology sees the ongoing interest in omnichannel retail design that combines digital and physical aspects into retail spaces thus enhancing consumer experiences and contributing to the relevance of physical retail stores to date.
- Brand consistency was explained as a particular consideration in retail design (as opposed to other forms of spatial design) practice.
- Brands accomplish consistency in retail design through a roll-out of standardised retail stores based on a prototype store concept. The retail design process is specialised and geared towards this standard outcome. Standardised retail design is viewed as problematic on a global scale due to its poor reflection on authenticity and its contribution towards cultural homogenisation and dilution.

The conventions of retail design and its practice underpin the understanding of localised retail design for global brands as Section 2 (Localised Retail Design for Global Brands) of the literature review. An overview of the state of knowledge on localised retail design for global brands was provided. Localised retail design was positioned as a counteracting approach to the negative impacts of standardised retail design. Localised retail design was defined as a decentralised design that is unique to a location (location may vary from countrywide to site scale).

The challenges associated with localising retail design were discussed. These were in:

- Demonstrating dual authenticity (in which brand and local authenticity may compete for prominence),
- Managing brand consistency (which is at threat when decentralising design),
- The retail design process (which presents limitations in considering the possibilities of designer-types involved in retail design), and
- Applying regionalism to localising retail design for global brands (as being limited due to its origins in an architectural style and its inconsideration towards brand identity as an aspect requiring representation in retail design).

An overview of knowledge on strategies for localising retail design for global brands was further provided. These presented research opportunities for re-determining the strategies for localising retail design for global brands through adjusting the research methods in light of shortcomings in the discourse. These research opportunities were identified as:

- A broader sample of retail categories,
- A study including a variety of store formats,
- A consideration of various types of designers involved in localising retail design for global brands, and
- Data sought from practice (practitioners, global brands, and the study of retail stores) in order to bridge knowledge between practice and the discourse.

The final part of the literature review entails ‘Positioning’ the study in relation to the research gaps and opportunities in the discourse on localised retail design for global brands.

The research opportunities are identified as:

1. Clarifying ways to retain brand consistency when localising retail design for global brands,
2. Identifying areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design, and
3. Determining the strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

Although the retail design process is viewed as relevant to the study topic, these are informed by conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands. The study of the retail design process in order to enable localising retail design for global brands is viewed as an area for further research.

The following chapter, (Chapter 3, Research Method), considers the evolution of the research project using the constructivist grounded theory approach. The research philosophy, approach, design, data collection procedures, and analytical process are outlined.

# Chapter 3 **RESEARCH METHOD**

# 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to situate the study within systems of knowledge.

First, the research project and its situation in knowledge is discussed.

- The substantive area is described and explained.
- The connection between knowledge in design practice and theory is deliberated. This entailed exploring the connections between the theory and practice of design as an overview of the nature of the study in relation to knowledge. This sees the generation of theory from the study of design practice (by deriving design knowledge and studying design artefacts).
- The research paradigm (constructivism) is related to the subjective nature of design and its situation in the fabricated world.
- The ontological (subjective) and epistemological (interpretive) position is explained in relation to the study's substantive area (localised retail design for global brands). This sees the existence of multiple realities in the understanding that reality is interpreted to uncover its underlying meaning. This relates to the process and product of design that is instrumental to the social world.
- The situation of the constructivist grounded theory (CGT) approach in the social constructivism paradigm is explored.

Second, the constructivist grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014) is discussed. This approach sees the generation of theory (the strategies for localising retail design for global brands) as rooted in the data (interviews and artefacts). The application of this method is described in relation to the research design (interviews and artefactual analysis).

Third, the research procedure in light of the study outcomes is deliberated. The research project is mapped according to the study of the process and product of localising retail design for global brands in order to generate the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. Finally, the ethical considerations of and tools used in the study are explained.

This chapter establishes the research framework for the theory discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. The research framework is depicted in Figure 3.1 below.

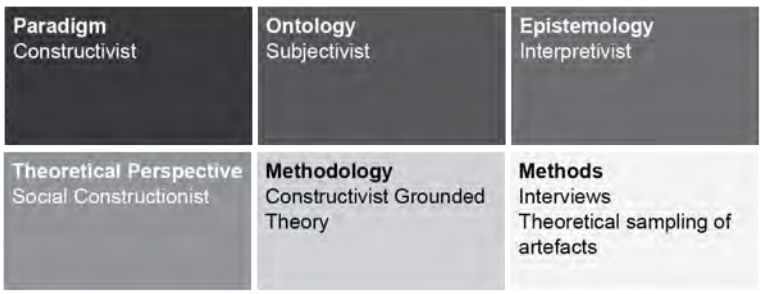



Figure 3.1 The situation of knowledge for the study (from Hay, 2002)

## 3.2 THE NATURE OF THE STUDY IN RELATION TO KNOWLEDGE

This section explores the situation of the study within systems of knowledge. The purpose of this section is to motivate the research approach in relation to the study topic.

- The approach of practice informing theory is explored,
- The study is thereafter positioned in the constructivist paradigm,
- This is followed by an overview of the subjective ontology and the interpretivist epistemology as underpinning the approach to research, and
- Finally, the CGT approach is situated in social constructionism.

### 3.2.1 Practice generating theory

The study originates in the identification of the substantive area: localised retail design for global brands. This area pertains to the practice or vocation of retail design. As Chapter 2 illustrates, extant theory presents gaps in understanding the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

As a study based on the practice of retail design, this gap could be alleviated through accessing practice knowledge. This knowledge is identified as 1) retail designers' considerations towards localised retail design for global brands; and 2) built artefacts that demonstrate localised retail design for global brands.

This sees the generation of a research study as an expansion of the theoretical discourse based on retail design practice. Glanville (2015:15) advocates for this union of theory and practice in design research by emphasising designers' vocational knowledge as a viable source of research about design. He describes the difference between theory and practice as theory being external to the designer and practice as the designer being instrumental to the research system.

While Glanville provides this explanation as a rationale to practice-based research, his emphasis on the practitioner as a producer of knowledge in design research (Glanville, 2015:16) is a key point for the research design: interviewing practitioners knowledgeable in localised retail design for global brands and the study of designed artefacts of localised retail design for global brands. The design practitioner's direct relationship with the study phenomenon is accessed as a source of knowledge-building.

This supports the epistemology of creating of knowledge that is integral to the participants involved in the process. The interviewing of multiple participants sees the openness to multiple truths, as well as the broadening of a sample of respondents that allow an interpretive episteme. Consistent with Glanville's (2015:17) proposal, the study sees the relationship between theory and practice as reciprocal.

Rather than theory telling practice what do (Glanville, 2015:17), practice informs theory in this study. The theory (the strategies for localising retail design for global brands) is generated from the analysis of research interviews with designers.


Figure 3.2 The extension of theory founded on practice-based knowledge in the study

This is founded on “the appreciation that practitioners have their own ways of learning and a particular species of knowledge” (Glanville, 2015:15). This approach of deriving practice from theory is illustrated in Figure 3.2 above. The illustration depicts the potential of practice to inform theory and for this theory to re-inform practice.

The study of designed artefacts relates to the bridging between practice and theory. This enhances the utility of research due to its applicability to design. Glanville echoes this sentiment:

> *I believe greater value in our research will come from helping designers designing.* (Glanville, 2015:15)

This formed the premise for the situation of the study in the constructivist paradigm.

### 3.2.2 Constructivist paradigm

The research paradigm provides an overview of how “we construct and understand the world” (Wickramasinghe, 2010:74). It explores the assumptions about knowledge that contextualise this study. It provides a platform for the role of knowledge in relation to the study phenomenon (localised retail design for global brands).

The paradigm provides a background to knowledge (ontology) and the role of humans in understanding and creating knowledge (epistemology) in relation to the research questions (following Kuada 2012:71).

As constructivists, we acknowledge the existence of multiple realities and that reality is a result of social construction. We seek to understand phenomena, with a key interest in the distinctive and unique aspects of reality (Kuada 2012:71). Constructivism is a subjective approach to research, favouring qualitative study.

Constructivists answer the same questions from different perspectives and in multiple ways, acknowledging the differences in human interests in the interpretation of phenomena (Kuada, 2012:71). Poldma argues that interior design requires the use of constructivist approach to design research. She argues that design itself is constructed on the basis of continuously changing circumstances and is a subjective field in which multiple design ideas can be equally valid (Poldma, 2010). This is compatible with the view of multiple and dynamic realities that differ based on the individuals, research subject, context, and times (Jain, 2019:10).

In design research, constructivism is a relevant research philosophy. Design is a subjective practice, in which multiple approaches and expressions are valid. The process and product of design is entangled in the subjectivity of the designer. This, in turn, affects and is affected by the subjective user of design products (such as retail stores). The experiences of design producers and consumers is a subjective one. This subjectivity is relevant to the study of localising retail design for global brands.

### 3.2.3 Subjective ontology

The study takes an anti-positivist as opposed to positivist approach to knowledge. Anti-positivism regards the positioning of humans in subjective realities and perceptions in their surrounding worlds. Positivism sees that the individual is isolated from this process and that the social word occurs independently of the human interaction (Kuada, 2012:73; Jain, 2019:10). Jain (2019) sees this anti-positivist approach as a relativist approach to research. She sees relativism as a “subjective process that is based on data” (Jain, 2019:10). This ontology sees the existence of multiple truths and realities. This is relevant to the practice of design:

> *… design is a form of bricolage because of the pragmatic, contingent, adaptive and pluralistic nature of its practice.* (Roxburgh, 2015:349)

Design processes see creativity and intuition enmeshed with pragmatic and parameter-based problem solving decisions (Franz, 1994). This process of design is inherently subjective, as is the experience of designed spaces, and the observation and evaluation of design (Franz, 1994). This subjectivity occurs as designers use their own interpretations of the social world to create designed objects that are experienced subjectively by users. Subjectivity is layered within the production and consumption of design.

In the research project, the study of the retail design process and product occurs within this subjectivist ontology.

### 3.2.4 Interpretivist epistemology

Subjectivism acknowledges the existence of multiple realities while objectivism sees reality as static and factual (Kuada, 2012:73). In the case of the study substantive area (localised retail design for global brands) the study phenomenon demands a compatible view on knowledge. This is because the act of design is "subjective, personal and experiential" (Glanville, 2015:18).

The study topic and the research process entail layers of human interpretation. The interpretation of reality occurs on several levels:

- Designers interpret reality in designing,
- Users of design interpret design in experiencing artefacts of design,
- The researcher interprets knowledge of designers and designed artefacts (through interviews and artefactual analysis)

The social world is inherent to the product and processes of design, which is a socially constructed phenomenon situated in the interpretivist episteme (Chon, 2015:72).

### 3.2.5 Social constructionism

The study of localised retail design for global brands takes a social constructionist perspective. This underpins the CGT approach to the study. As interior design is a practice set in and for the human world, its experience cannot be isolated from the connection between reality and the social systems governing this. Social constructionism allows researchers to anchor the study in the social world based on social consensus (Andrews, 2012:39). It acknowledges the participants' and researchers' roles in the construction of reality (Charmaz, 2008:397). Social constructionism encourages the reflection on not only what participants do, but also how and why they do it (Charmaz, 2008:397).

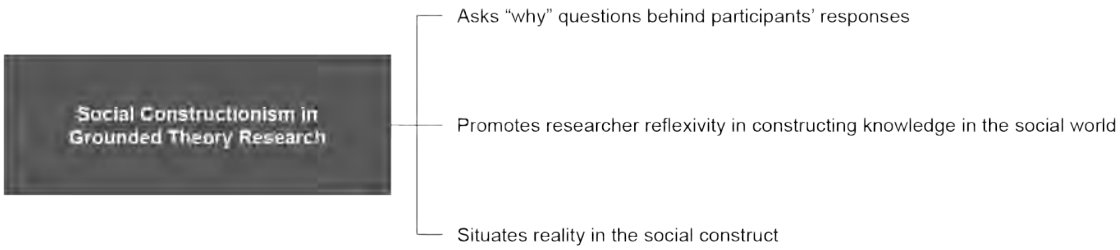



Figure 3.3 Social constructionism in grounded theory research (summarised from Charmaz, 2008)

Figure 3.3 above summarises the facets of social constructionism in grounded theory research.[4] This is relevant to the analysis of interview data in the study and can be illustrated through my research process: In interrogating the interview data, I considered reasons behind respondents' measures of localising retail design for global brands. I sought to understand how they instituted these. This assisted me to develop theoretical insights that view the study area through a social construct.

[4] I discuss aspects of the research process in first person. This follows the reflective approach I took in addressing my position as researcher throughout the research project. This is aligned with the constructivist grounded theory philosophy.

Although social constructionism has broader implications for sociological research, (that by its very essence, concerns the social world and the participation of humans in this world), design research also lends itself to social constructionism. Retail stores are designed for a particular time and place, and have the purpose of facilitating human consumption of brands, space, and products.

Retail design is an entirely human-made construct. The connection between consumption and identity construction in retail relates social constructionism as a relevant theoretical perspective. Beyond the respondents' participation in operating within the social construct, the research study sees my position as researcher as also being impacted by and affecting the creation of knowledge within the construct (Charmaz, 2008:397). The CGT approach sees this positionality as a source of possible bias in the research outcome, and promotes continued researcher reflexivity in light of this subjective world.

The study applies a CGT approach rooted in social constructionism. It seeks to discover the 'how' and 'why' behind the respondents' assertions with reflection on my own position within the social construct as producer of knowledge. This pre-empts a discussion on the constructivist grounded theory method.

## 3.3 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY METHOD

The study takes a constructivist grounded theory approach. The constructivist grounded theory method presents key differences from grounded theory methodology, namely in identifying the researcher as holding subjectivity. The differentiating features of constructivist grounded theory and the relevance of this approach to the study are discussed below.

### 3.3.1 Grounded Theory Method

The study applies the constructivist grounded theory method as developed by Kathy Charmaz and described in her book *'Constructing Grounded Theory'* (2014).

The grounded method originated with Glaser and Strauss in 1967 with the development of a systematic procedure of analysis on their qualitative study on death and dying in hospitals (Charmaz, 2014:5). Their emphasis was on the development of theory from observation of the qualitative data rather than deducing a hypothesis by applying existing theory to the data (Charmaz, 2014:6).

Glaser and Strauss's method was rooted in the positivist paradigm, emphasising objectivity, generalization and replicability of research. This assumed an impartiality on behalf of the researcher and that research could be repeated in the same way, each time using this method (Charmaz, 2014:6).

Glaser and Strauss's characteristics of grounded theory research still hold true in the constructivist paradigm on a procedural level (Charmaz, 2014:7-8):

- Simultaneous data collection and analysis
- Development of codes and categories from the data
- A process of constant comparison between data, codes, memos, and categories
- Development of theory throughout the research process
- Using memo writing as a tool to develop categories, relationships and gaps
- Conducting theoretical sampling
- Reviewing literature after the analysis

As grounded theory became rooted in a positivistic paradigm, this denounced the interaction of the social world in processes of constructing knowledge (Charmaz, 2014:12).

By contrast, the constructivist turn in grounded theory sees the situation of the grounded theory method in a constructivist paradigm (Charmaz, 2014:12). Knowledge is seen as subjective, pluralistic, influenced by the social world, and open to interpretation.

The key difference is that constructivist grounded theory promotes researcher reflexivity. It reminds the researcher of their role in the construction of knowledge through interpretive processes that are within or outside their awareness (Charmaz, 2014:13). As retail design is a practice conducted in the social word for human use, the situation of research on design is subjective and interpretive. The constructivist grounded theory method sees the same rigorous procedure pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (that was positivist) but with the explicit difference that the researcher is instrumental in shaping theory and that the same theory may not be exactly replicable, as the interpretation of the researcher leads to the knowledge founded on interpretation (Charmaz, 2014:15).

Constructivist grounded theory is an appropriate method for the study on localised retail design for global brands because it helps alleviate the preconceptions of the researcher, it entails gathering 'rich' data, it addresses the need for substantive theory building in retail design, and it enhances the quality of the research. These are described below.

#### 3.3.1.1 Addressing preconceptions

Given my exposure to the retail design practice and ideas on the research topic, I wished to choose a method that could help me exercise continued reflection on my preconceptions and allow the emergence of a field contribution with minimal personal bias. Therefore, the inductive nature of CGT and the procedure of CGT in generating theory from data held value for this study.

#### 3.3.1.2 Gathering rich data

Charmaz's development of CGT into the constructivist realm sees research participants as a key contributor to research and theory. According to Charmaz, researcher and participants co-construct data. With theory grounded in data, the method became more useful as it deals with a practitioner as expert. The practitioner's voice is under represented in the discourse on localised retail design for global brands. I wanted to conduct interviews and generate rich data that could lead to meaningful theoretical insights.

#### 3.3.1.3 Addressing the need for substantive theory building in retail design

CGT is focused on building theory. The potential of escalating the study into theory has implications that are instructive as opposed to observational. This is crucial to the practice of design, and the gap in knowledge identified.

The absence of knowledge in localised retail design for global brands sees a disadvantage to both the discourse and to practice. The consolidation of this theory can inform the development of both spheres of retail design (theory and practice) and enhance the connections between these areas.

#### 3.3.1.4 Enhancing the quality of the research

The iterative nature of CGT allowed me to be in a continued analytical and reflective mind set about the data. The method provides guidelines that enable a rigorous study of the data. Not only is collection and analysis iterative, but analysis is repeated over same segments of data in different ways, requiring constant comparison. This grounds the study in the data. The procedure of theoretical sampling also lends credibility to the research as theory undergoes a process of verification and development. Through data collection and documentation of the artefacts of localised retail design for global brands, I was able to verify and develop theoretical insights. These enhanced the quality of the research.

The CGT approach underpins the research study. This approach was selected as it addresses researcher preconceptions and bias, enables the collection of rich data, and places measures that enhance the quality of research (such as iterative data collection and analysis and constant comparison). The following section describes the complete procedure followed in the study.

## 3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The constructivist grounded theory approach was structured into a research programme. This procedure (Figure 3.4) demonstrates the concurrent steps of memo writing, constant comparison, and theoretical sampling that occurred during phases of data collection and analysis.

While the programme is presented as a sequence, these overlapping stages demonstrate the iterative nature of data collection and analysis when constructing grounded theory. The study saw the application of the constructivist grounded theory method using the procedure depicted in Figure 3.4.

The research procedure is explained in detail thereafter.

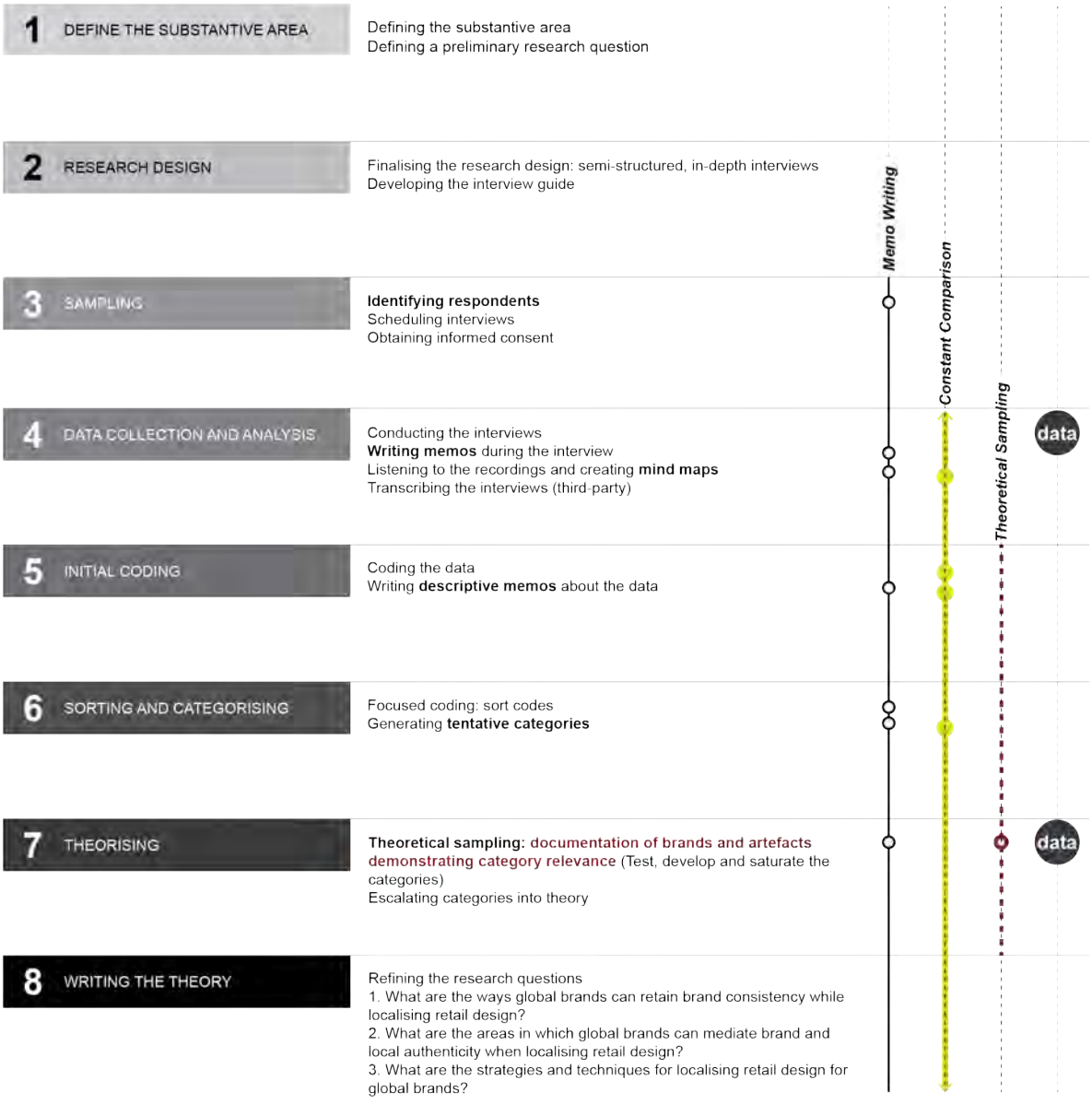



Figure 3.4 The constructivist grounded theory method as applied to the research study (from Königk, 2015:104)

## 3.4.1 Substantive area

### 3.4.1.1 Defining the substantive area

The research project sees the development of a substantive as opposed to a formal theory. Urquhart (2019:93) explains the difference between substantive and formal theory in the terms of categories, relationships between theoretical codes, and study scope. While formal grounded theory finds basis in the occurrence of fewer instances of the theory in the data, substantive theory sees the substantial development of “one or two core categories” that are rooted in empirical investigation that has a more tangible as opposed to “abstract” nature (Urquhart, 2019:93).

Substantive theory also emerges from the process of coding and the relationships between these codes are rooted in the coding and memo-writing process. This alludes to a sense of traceability of the theory through to the data. This is in opposition to formal theory where the emphasis is on relationships over codes.

The scope of substantive theory is limited to the substantive area, while formal theory may extend its scope to comparative studies of various “substantive cases” (Urquhart, 2019:93).

The emphasis was on the categories and saturating these in order to develop a substantive theory. This is in opposition to producing a formal theory focused on relationships through a comparative study. Substantive theory is appropriate for theory building in the retail design discourse, as there is an underdevelopment of existing theory as a basis for formal theory building. The need to develop a substantive theory in localised retail design for global brands is due to this gap in the discourse.

### 3.4.1.2 Defining a preliminary research question

The research question evolved with the study process. In order to remain open to the data, I kept the conversation focused on designers’ considerations towards localising retail design for global brands. The emergence of theory came from the coding of empirical data (interview transcripts), and can be traced back to the data through the coding and memo writing processes. The study saw the development of a few categories as the basis for the substantive theory (strategies for localising retail design for global brands). This retrospectively defined the main research question: What are the strategies for localising retail design for global brands?

## 3.4.2 Research design: interviews

### 3.4.2.1 Finalising the research design: interviews

As a form of elicited data, interviews with research participants formed the primary data used in the research study in order to answer research question: what are the strategies for localising retail design for global brands? In order to address this research outcome, I wished to access designers’ knowledge through the process of interviews. Although the study of artefacts would have been a viable research design, an in-depth engagement with a variety of brands and/or artefacts representative of the study substantive area would have entailed in-person visits to retail across the globe. This was not feasible due to costs and the timeline of the project.

### 3.4.2.2 Developing the interview guide

As illustrated in the literature review (Chapter 2), the absence of scholarly attention on designers’ approaches towards localising retail design for global brands meant that research engagement with designers was needed to alleviate this gap. No appropriate research instruments currently exist to engage designers in understanding their approach towards localising retail design for global brands. It was therefore necessary to create a research instrument (interview guide) appropriate to the research question.

The approach of a semi-structured in-depth interview was chosen. This allowed me to delve into the designers' approaches towards localised retail design in a way that is led by the respondents' discussion. Using the guidelines provided by Charmaz (2014:56), the interview guide approach was taken. This allowed me to formulate some key questions surrounding the retail design process based on themes. All interviews were focused on the study's substantive area: **localised retail design for global brands.**

I used the following measures to provide some structure to the interviews:

1. Explaining localised retail design

It was necessary to illuminate the definition of localised retail design in the context of the study prior to the interview. I provided respondents with a definition in the informed consent form.

> In this study, localised retail design is defined as the design of unique retail stores for global brands across international locations. The study focuses on localised retail design on the international scale. Specifically, the study considers localised retail design to be adaptations in retail store designs between one nation and another. Localised retail design can include hyper-localisation, that is, changes in store-design between locations (cities) within a country.

Figure 3.5 Explanation of localised retail design for global brands

I commenced research interviews with discussion on specific reasons on why I contacted the respondent. This includes examples of public statements that the respondents have made pertaining to the topic, their own practice examples that are relevant to the study, and their relevant position and credentials within practice. This provided a relevant point of departure for the interviews, while placing respondents in a position of expertise.

3. Prompting specifics through reference to the retail design process

The interview guide was structured according to the Retail Design Process Model (derived from Claes *et al.,* 2016). This process (which has been discussed in Chapter 2), provided a universal field from which I could relate questions and tie them back to the study area. The retail design process was used as a positioning device. It was used to assign and relate practices and considerations to specific phases and stakeholders in the process of localising retail design for global brands. Since all respondents had experience in retail design, their familiarity with the retail design process was also a consistent benchmark with which to relate the discussion. The interview instrument is in Appendix A of the study.

4. Discussing best practice

I concluded each interview by asking respondents to refer to any global brands, designers, and/or retail stores they believed to be noteworthy and relevant to the study. These allowed the respondent to discuss ideas beyond the obstacles and exposure of their own positions in practice. This served to highlight techniques and strategies that they may have not discussed but still identify as viable to localising retail design for global brands. This also assisted me to sample artefacts and illustrative examples used to demonstrate the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in this thesis.

5. Asking key questions related to respondents' expertise

Where respondents were identified for specific expertise or experience, I prepared a few specific questions. This was the case where the respondent (and/or the brand they worked with) demonstrated authority in the substantive area of localised retail design for global brands. These respondents had either issued public statements or conducted media interviews or written about localised retail design.

The five parameters above were used dynamically between interviews depending on the respondents' openness to discussion, the focus on the topic, and the respondents' own experiences with localised retail design for global brands (for example, some respondents discussed one example in great detail while some respondents compared approaches between brands they had worked with) and the flow of conversation.

I remained open in the interview process and gently guided the discussion according to the respondents' own direction, while probing further into relevant areas.

Although the semi-structured interviews were guided by the research guide (Appendix A), these were used flexibly and in conjunction with the leads I wished to follow on as I discovered them in the mind mapping process (see 3.4.4.4).

## 3.4.3 Sampling

### 3.4.3.1 Identifying respondents

The interview respondents were selected according to their suitability to the study's substantive area (localised retail design for global brands).

Respondents either had direct experience working on localised retail design for a global brand or expressed authority in the practice or study of localised retail design for global brands. The respondents were identified through publications (practice-based, press-based and/or academic) and practice-based artefacts of localised retail design for global brands. This ensured the relevant selection of respondents as experts in the substantive area (Charmaz, 2014:48).

1. Purposive Sampling

For the purpose of the study, I identified respondents who are designers possessing knowledge on localised retail design for global brands. I identified various designer-types:

- In-house brand designers
- Designers of small practices
- Designers of design agencies
- High profile designers

Due to the global nature of retail design for global brands, it was important to ensure that the sample of respondents was representative of various regions. This involved the selection of designers based in regions across the globe (see Figure 3.6).

I identified respondents in three ways:

a) I searched for localised retail design for global brands. When I found artefacts that were relevant to this definition, I located the designers of these artefacts and listed them as prospective respondents.
b) I searched for localised retail design on the internet. I found a range of statements, blog posts and media interviews with designers speaking about localised retail design for global brands. I added these prospective respondents to my shortlist.
c) I asked respondents in the interview process to recommend further brands and designers that would be relevant for the study. Once verified for relevance, I added relevant prospective respondents to my shortlist.

Consistent with Charmaz's guidelines for sampling, the sample is based on the selection of respondents with appropriate expertise in the study substantive area (Charmaz, 2014:82). Due to the topic, global representation was important and it was pertinent to interview respondents in different regions.

#### 3.4.3.2 Scheduling Interviews

In order to schedule interviews, I found contact details for the place of work of relevant designers that I wished to interview. Depending on the scale of the practice I was making contact with, my first point of contact was administration staff, press staff (dealing with media queries), or the designer I wished to interview.

1. Response rate

I contacted 33 persons for interviews. Of the 33 persons, 18 agreed to be interviewed, three declined interviews and I did not receive responses from twelve persons. The response rate (55%) is not viewed as problematic as the sample was sufficiently representative of varying regions and designer types.

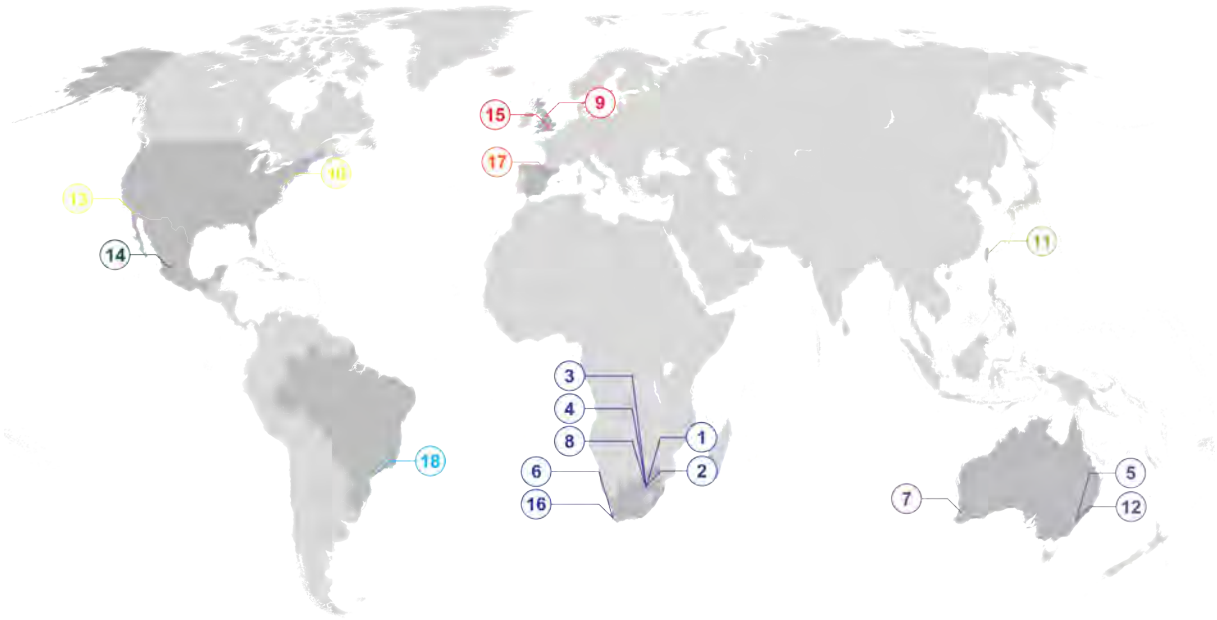
Localised retail design for global brands is not standard of retail design practice (see 2.4). This limits the pool of respondents with expertise in localised retail design. It was necessary to interview respondents with knowledge and experience in this type of practice to ensure relevant data collection. The following page illustrates the sample (Figure 3.6).

2. Sample

The research sample is presented in Figure 3.6 according to designer type, interview formats and the timeline for data collection. I have also illustrated the base location of respondents at the time of the interview. The base location indicates their city of residence and work. The nationality and country of residence of respondents did differ for some respondents, and certain respondents worked on retail design projects outside of their base location. This is reflective of the global nature of retail design work for global brands and does not present a variable. Although the concentration of respondents varies per region, this does not pose concern in the study due to the global nature of retail practice. It is conventional for retail designers conducting work for global brands to accomplish a global portfolio of work. This ensured a global representation of respondents due to practice impact beyond their base locations.

#### 3.4.3.3 Obtaining informed consent

When respondents confirmed their availability for the interview, I sent them the informed consent letter for signing, informing them of rights to participate in the study and requesting them to indicate if they would like to remain anonymous. As several respondents opted to remain anonymous, all study responses have been anonymised. This is in order to maintain consistency and to safeguard the integrity of the study.




1. **Pretoria, South Africa,** Designer: Small Practice, In Person Interview, 06/09/19
2. **Pretoria, South Africa,** Director: Small Practice, In Person Interview, 04/02/20
3. **Johannesburg, South Africa,** In-house Brand Designer, Online Interview, 30/06/20
4. **Johannesburg, South Africa,** Director: Design Agency, Online Interview, 03/07/20
5. **Sydney, Australia,** Director: Small Practice, Online Interview, 04/02/20
6. **Cape Town, South Africa,** Director: Small Practice, Online Interview, 13/07/20
7. **Perth, Australia,** Consultant: Design Agency, Online Interview, 14/07/20
8. **Johannesburg, South Africa,** Designer: Design Agency, Online Interview, 17/07/20
9. **Manchester, United Kingdom,** Director: Small Practice, Online Interview, 23/07/20
10. **New York, United States of America,** In-house Brand Designer, Online Interview, 28/07/20
11. **Taipei, Taiwan,** Director: Small Practice, Online Interview (visuals presented), 30/07/20
12. **Sydney, Australia,** Director, Small Practice, Online Interview, 06/08/20
13. **Los Angeles, United States of America,** Director: Design Agency, Online Interview, 12/08/20
14. **Guadalajara, Mexico,** Director: Design Agency, Online Interview, 20/08/20
15. **London, United Kingdom,** Designer (15a), Director (15b): Design Agency , Online Interview (visuals presented), 13/07/20
16. **Cape Town, South Africa,** In-house Brand Designer, Online Interview, 14/07/20
17. **Barcelona, Spain,** High Profile Designer, Online Interview, 17/07/20
18. **Sao Paulo, Brazil,** High Profile Designers (18a & 18b), Online Interview, 23/07/20

Figure 3.6 Respondents base, designer-type, interview format and interview programme

## 3.4.4 Data collection and analysis

Charmaz recommends an appropriate selection of respondents with direct experience in the research area; an in-depth engagement in these experiences through the interviews; working with open-ended questions; eliciting detail in the responses; highlighting the importance of the participants' perspectives and experiences; and following up on research leads (Charmaz, 2014:56-57). These guidelines formed the basis for my data collection and data analysis. Key to a successful research project is the quality of the data on which the study is founded. In the CGT tradition, the process of collecting rich data calls for the researcher to be reflective about the situation of data in the knowledge paradigm (Charmaz, 2014:56). Given the absence of data on the substantive area, my research design entailed eliciting my own data.

By conducting research interviews myself, I was in direct control of the research study. This means that my own recollection of interviews privileged me to the direct relationship between the data and the analysis of the data. This also means that data is relevant to the study substantive area as it was collected specifically for this study. Although eliciting data does raise the involvement of the interviewer as a role player in the creation of the data, the situation of the study in the constructivist paradigm supports that interview data is not neutral and is inherently subjective (Charmaz, 2014:27). It is coloured by the participants and researchers involved in the process (Charmaz, 2014:27). As participants and researchers shape the outcome of the research process, the subjective nature of the research should be mediated by continued reflexivity of the researcher in processes of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2014:27).

The elicited interview data is particular to the study substantive area. My engagement and analysis of this data provided the framework for a grounded theory.

### 3.4.4.1 Conducting the interviews

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the research participants (designers). The participants were contacted and their availability was secured for the interviews on an appointment basis. Two of the interviews (Interviews 1 and 2) were conducted in person prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. Due to Covid-19, and the consequent restrictions on movement, Interviews 3 - 16 were conducted online, using digital communication platforms (Google Meets and Zoom). These interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. At the request of the respondents, Interviews 17 and 18 were written responses to questions sent on email.

In the case of online and in-person interviews, I recorded the interviews using both a mobile device and built in recording functions on the online meeting platforms. I considered the primary study data as the interview recordings, interview transcripts, and the written interview responses. The process of data collection and analysis occurred concurrently. This means that although the coding process commenced after the completion of interviews, analytical practices were in place throughout the interview processes. This means that I was conducting interviews while creating memo mind maps of prior interviews.

### 3.4.4.2 Researcher conduct during interviews

The conduct of researcher and respondent as holding inherent power dynamics required reflection from my point of view as researcher dealing with interviewing respondents from different locations and cultural backgrounds (following Wickramasinghe, 2010:33). To sensitise my approach, I exercised self-awareness, allowed the respondents to lead the discussion, provided reassurance where I sensed hesitation or apprehension, and probed further into the respondents' discussions by using their own words. A shared interest in retail design and recognition of respondents' expertise in the field as an informant to my sampling assisted the dialogue and helped to balance the "power dynamics" in the researcher/respondent relationship (Charmaz, 2014:86).

I expressed appreciation and emphasised the value of the respondents' input in the study. Some respondents were second-language English speakers. I spoke in simple terms and asked questions in different ways if misunderstandings arose.

Charmaz (2014:86) described her sensitivity to respondents, through the quietening of voice and demeanour to allow respondents to feel enough comfort to open up about their experiences. In the case of design practice, respondents were not in a position of emotional vulnerability, as research in psychology would require. However, my interviews did require openness about respondents' practices and their commercial clients. I used my own discretion in avoiding scenarios that may compromise client/designer confidentiality. Should confidentiality of clients have played a role in the respondents' hesitance to communicate, I reassured them with study anonymity and my research design. In one case, a respondent opted to retract some of their statements. I sent them the transcript of their interview to retract these components, which they returned to me. I conducted analysis of the renewed transcript.

#### 3.4.4.3 Writing memos during the interview

During the interview process, I had access to a pen and paper. I used this to take hand written notes and make diagrams that gave me the grounds to pose questions to respondents as they raised pertinent areas that I had not considered in my interview guide. These memos, although rough and quickly written, helped me remember thoughts I had during the interviews and assisted me to remain focused during the interview processes, particularly the online interviews.

#### 3.4.4.4 Listening to recordings and creating mind maps

This second memo writing iteration was to listen to the interview recordings while mind mapping the concepts in conscious light of the study topic (localised retail design for global brands). I continually reflected on 'what story is this respondent telling? What are primary messages and ideas in this data and what supports these main ideas?' I found that the mind mapping was a useful precursor to coding since it articulated segments of the data into overriding ideas and into tentative categories.

The mind maps served as visual summaries of the interviews while allowing me to arrange concepts in ways that were relevant to the substantive area of the study while revealing connections between concepts.

I managed my analytical schedule through a timetable in which I could reflect on my application of the method in light of iterative analysis and collection, while conducting constant comparison between the concepts depicted in the mind maps. I dated and filed each mind map. These served as later references during the coding process, sorting and during the study write up. Roxburgh (2015:49) deliberates the connection between mind maps and write up as synergetic with the design process.

> *In design practice, these visualisations form the basis of the designed object whereas in design writing the visualisations for the basis of designed writing.* (Roxburgh, 2015:49)

The introduction of the memo mind map as an intermediate and rapid analytical step improved the thoroughness of my knowledge and analysis of the data. It gave me an alternative way to envision data alongside the coding process. Roxburgh (2015:352) sees the rigorous iteration of research through coding and visual mapping as having "epistemological consequences". By employing a similar procedure, he was able to create a platform for generating and explaining design knowledge (Roxburgh, 2015:353). My experience of introducing the mind maps into my research procedure yielded similar intimacy with the data while improving rigour through an additional iterative step.

Re-listening to the interview recordings gave me a direct connection with the data that the transcript provided distance from. The visual mind maps gave me an overview of the interview. It was easier to view the narrative of each interview as a bigger picture and to view this in the context of other interviews.

As I collected interview data, I continued the process of initial coding, while taking time to code according to CGT method. This process was less daunting as I had already conducted an analytical iteration through mind mapping. I was familiar with the data and I had a 'bigger picture' mind map per interview that I could refer to as another tool for comparison. The words in the memos, comparison between them and comparison with the transcripts provided grounds for naming of codes and structuring these with confidence. I deviated from the process of initial coding as the introductory analytical step in approaching the data. CGT sees the collection and analysis of data as a continually iterative process (Charmaz, 2014:26). This is usually through coding while collecting data. In the study, I used mind maps as the introductory analytical step. This allowed emerging ideas to inform the collection processes continuously.

Two of the study mind maps are on the next page (Figure 3.7)

#### 3.4.4.5 Transcribing the interviews

In order to save time during the study, I sent audio recordings of the interviews to a third party transcription service company. I used the same company for the entire research project. This assisted me to attain consistency in the transcription quality. The transcription company guaranteed the confidentiality of my data.

In conventional interviewing processes, data is treated as the transcript of the interviews. Being the sole researcher in this project, I conducted all interviews and elicited the data. I analysed both the interview recording and the interview transcript myself. My closeness with the data (both in collection and analysis) reinforced the accuracy of the data. I was able to identify and rectify transcription errors due to my first hand knowledge of the data.

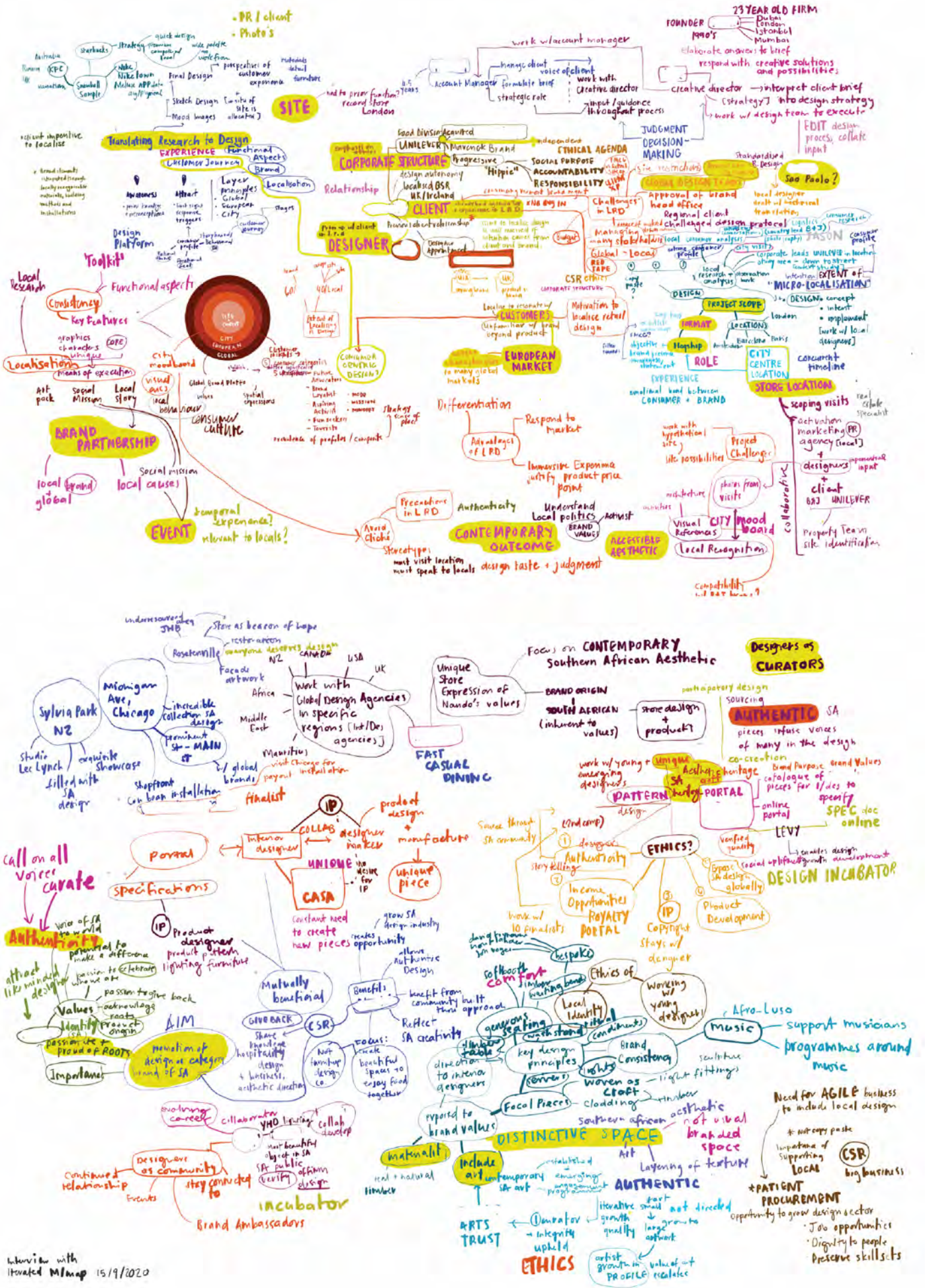



Figure 3.7 Mind maps from the research process (edited for anonymity)

## 3.4.5 Initial coding

### 3.4.5.1 Coding the data

Following the interviews and while formulating mind maps throughout the interview process, I began initial coding. During the coding process, my initial approach was to code in gerunds. Charmaz (2014:120-121) advises this practice as it promotes the active engagement of the meaning of data as opposed to the theming of data and it helps the researcher to remain close to the data. Although this approach is viable, it led to misdirected focus in my study. When coding in gerunds, I noted that my coding fixated on the perceptions of respondents rather than their design practices. Therefore, I made an informed departure in coding using thematic words instead of 'action' words. My coding remained in vivo (using the words of participants) however; codes were short and related to the study area in order to assist me to stay in control of the coding process.

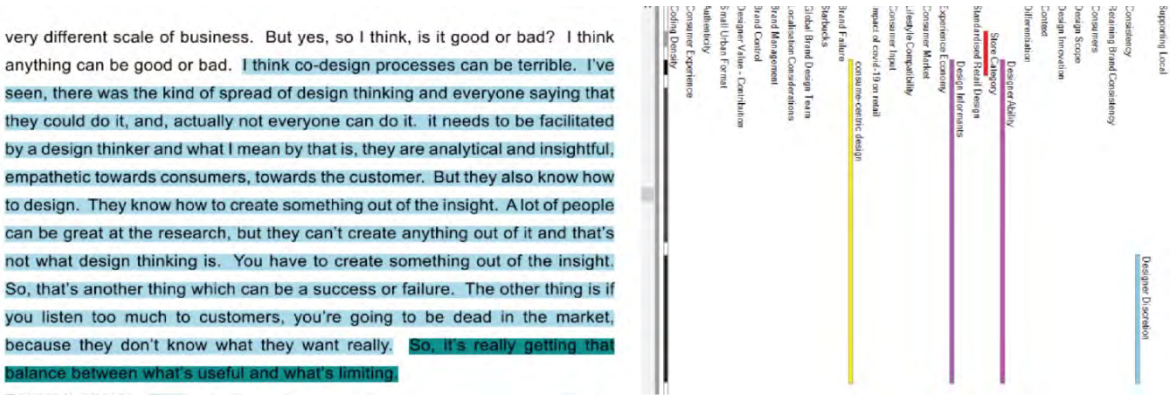



Figure 3.8 Interview transcript and coding excerpt of interview 6 (NVivo 10 screenshot)

An example of the coding of data using QASDAS is demonstrated in Figure 3.8 above.

### 3.4.5.2 Writing descriptive memos about the data

I remained close to the constructivist grounded theory method by using memos to purposefully describe, synthesise, compare, and probe concepts within and between interviews and codes. The memo writing procedure served as summaries of segments of data, comparisons between data, and as a record of insights pertaining to the segment of data that I was working with. This approach supports the practice of segment-by-segment coding (Charmaz, 2014:124-125) but sees memos as a manageable and open-ended way to segment data (Roxburgh, 2015:351).

This example demonstrates the analytical turn from a descriptive memo to a synthesised and comparative memo (Figure 3.9).

20/10/20 Respondent 6 cautions that co-design as a process used in consumer-centric design comes with its own difficulties. They believe that the ability of the facilitator and designer in the co-design process is crucial to the success of implementing findings as design informants. The co-design process is a research method that should be conducted with empathy towards the consumer and requires analytical and insightful abilities. It also needs to be conducted by someone who can translate the outcomes into spatial design. Like Respondents 15a & b mentioned, the ability of the designer to employ informants to localising retail design is a crucial factor that can make or break a successful project for the global brand. The quality of design is important for a global brand, as well as consistency. The ability or inability of designers to have discretion, or the inability of a brand to find a local designer of reputable capabilities in a foreign market can provide strong discouragement for a brand to localise their retail design. Not only is it a matter of selecting a local designer, it is also a matter of finding a designer with the ability to localise retail design while responsibly mitigating brand capital, brand consistency and local informants. Perhaps, in the case of Respondents' 15a & 15b work with [BRAND 1], their prior experience with [BRAND 2] as a localised QSR project, provided motivation for the client to trust them in localising the retail design for [BRAND 1]. Other respondents indicated that they often went beyond the appointment scope to prove the necessity of localising retail design or to demonstrate the design value of localising retail design or to even make local identity work in the retail design (so that it is of the quality and standard come to be expected of that global brand - see Respondent 14). Without the benefits of prototyping a "localised" store, the brand has to embrace the risk with being experimental in its retail design. [BRAND Z], for example, has internalised the value of being different in its brand identity, so much so, that it has admitted that while some store concepts are not as effective as others, the benefits of collaborating with renowned creative designers has been a move to build an identity for the brand, more so than for financial gain.

Figure 3.9 Example of memo on highlighted text in interview 6

The study memos formed a collection of segmented insights on the data in relation to the study area. I worked intensively with the memos to develop the study write up and to trace back findings to specific segments of data ensuring that the theory is grounded in data. Memo writing centres the researcher in the process of interpretation of data. This practice relates to directly representing the researcher's thoughts in the research process (Burton & Perdersen, 2015:433). This coincides with Charmaz's assertion that the use of memo writing provides a reflexive opportunity for identifying our knowledge assumptions (2003:261).

## 3.4.6 Sorting and Categorising

### 3.4.6.1 Focused coding

During the focused coding process, I began to map out the emerging codes that indicated importance to the research topic of localised retail design for global brands This involved:

- Renaming codes (for example, 'design considerations when localising retail design' was split and renamed to 'conditions for localising retail design' and 'strategies for localising retail design')
- Merging codes (for example 'individual design' and 'unique design' were merged into 'unique design')
- Structuring codes in hierarchies (for example, 'authenticity' was structured beneath 'conditions for localising retail design'. 'Brand authenticity' and 'local authenticity' were structured below 'authenticity')

These formed the basis of developing categories. The categories became overarching concepts signifying grouping of codes according to common values. The focused coding and categorising phases occurred concurrently.

### 3.4.6.2 Categorising

By clustering codes, I was able to identify tentative categories that grouped ideas according to common threads. I began to consider how these categories (for example, who designs, what informs design, and how design is experienced) could be aligned and grouped according to the study topic of localised retail design for global brands. I used mind maps developed earlier in the research process to compare the developing categories with the codes and the data in the context of a broader study narrative. Roxburgh supports the connection between mind mapping and coding.

> *The rigorous use of coding is both a pragmatic device essential to navigate through data and find ideas within the large volume of material, contained in both note and map form and framing device that reflects and shapes the theoretical construct of the research.* (Roxburgh, 2015:352)

I worked on the sorting of codes and memos through the use of the coding software. I was able to sort memos according to key words used in the memos, chronology of the written memos (as I dated each memo), and comparison between codes, memos, the data, and early mind maps.

This process saw the breaking of data into many pieces and relationships. I worked manually in a table format to list the techniques, codes, respondents and tentative categories over several iterations as I considered various possibilities for how these all fit together.[5]

[5] For example, the strategy of 'Local Creative Collaboration' evolved as a consolidation of 'Local Collaboration' and 'Designer Choice'. Both concepts were categorised under 'Authorship'. These were sorted under 'conditions for localising retail design' (as the condition of mediating brand and local authenticity through 'authorship') and strategies for localising retail design (as 'local creative collaboration').

My emerging understanding of the categories was the result of continuous iteration of these spread sheets, and the presented theory in this thesis was further iterated in the drafting process.

## 3.4.7 Theorising

### 3.4.7.1 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling involved the return to key categories and identifying gaps or ideas that needed development and verification. This led to a second phase of data collection that was acutely focused on saturating and verifying the emergent theory (conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands). Flick (2019:137) connects the process of theoretical sampling to a preliminary form of triangulation – that is testing a theory using another research design:

> *In theoretical sampling, no one kind of data on a category nor technique for data collection is necessarily appropriate. Different kinds of data give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties; these different views we have called slices of data.* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 65 in Flick, 2019:137)

In this study, theoretical sampling is intended to saturate the categories and to verify theoretical leads. In the selection of data for developing theory, I opted to review artefacts of localised retail design for global brands. Although my interview respondents indicated that they were amenable to follow up questions, I wanted to develop categories according to another source of data that represented design knowledge. The description of design as opposed to design processes provided viable grounds to collect data about the same brands discussed in interviews from differing sources.

I began by interrogating the application of the theory in extant practice. I looked at examples of localised retail design in four global brands and documented these alongside the emerging categories through a desktop analysis of artefacts. This analysis is presented in Appendix D. Charmaz (2014:51) describes the presentation of evidence for theory in texts. I view artefacts – the retail stores - as providing visual and textual evidence that supplement the theoretical development.

### 3.4.7.2 Retail stores as artefacts

The classification of interiors as artefacts is derived from material culture studies. As “extant cultural objects”, interiors communicate the cultural context and meaning in which they are situated (Burton & Pedersen, 2015:437-428). Artefactual analysis entails the study of artefacts within this situated context according to frameworks related to the “object, milieu and use” (Burton & Pedersen, 2015:438). In the study, the documented retail stores are regarded as such artefacts that demonstrate the study phenomenon.

Following the social constructivist perspective, these artefacts cannot be observed independently of the researcher, the social world, and its constructs (Andrews, 2012). Instrumental to generating the strategies for localising retail design for global brands was my own involvement, as researcher, in the process of collecting and analysing data (through interviews).

The developing codes formed the basis for the analytical procedure for documenting artefacts demonstrating localised retail design for global brands. While this form of artefactual analysis is descriptive as opposed to critical, the study of artefacts acted to test the initial findings or the emerging theory (strategies for localising retail design for global brands) by demonstrating their holistic application in a sample of 20 artefacts (for four global brands).

This was the primary purpose of the documentation of artefacts. The second purpose was to provide designers and researchers with a sample of artefacts that demonstrate the study phenomenon as an appendix to this study. See Appendix D.

1. Sample

The global brands were selected according to their alignment with the study's substantive area (localised retail design for global brands). In order to focus the investigation acutely on the emerging theory, I created an initial list of brands identified by the study respondents.

Following this, the initial list of global brands were subjected to a series of questions to determine their inclusion in the study:

- Does the brand have retail store designs across multiple locations in the world?
- Has the brand made statements about its localised retail design?
- Does the brand have multiple examples of localised store designs?
- Is there adequate and accessible information pertaining to the brands and their artefacts?

I finalised a selection of four global brands.

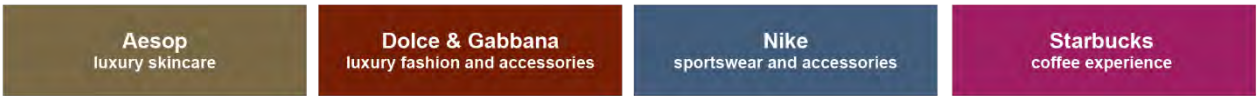



Figure 3.10 Sample of global brands

The complete sample of artefacts and their locations are indicated in Figure 3.11.


A1 **Aesop Kyoto.** Kyoto, Japan. Shinichiro Ogata (Simplicity), 2014
A2 **Aesop Flinders Lane.** Melbourne, Australia. Aesop Design Department, 2015
A3 **Aesop Brera.** Milan, Italy. Vincenzo de Cotiis Architects, 2015
A4 **Aesop Vila Madalena.** São Paulo, Brazil. Estudio Campana, 2016
A5 **Aesop Park Slope.** New York, United States. Frida Escobedo, 2019
D1 **Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama.** Tokyo, Japan. Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2016
D2 **Dolce & Gabbana London.** London, United Kingdom. Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2017
D3 **Dolce & Gabbana Saint Barthélemey.** Gustavia, Saint Barthélemey. Steven Harris, 2017
D4 **Dolce & Gabbana Rome.** Rome, Italy. Eric Carlson (Carbondale), 2019
N1 **Nike Live Melrose.** Los Angeles, United States. Nike Global, 2018
N2 **Nike House of Innovation 001.** Shanghai, China. Nike Global, 2018
N3 **Nike Rise Guangzhou.** Guangzhou, China. Nike Global, 2020
N4 **Nike Unite Concept.** Asia, United States, United Kingdom. Nike Global, 2020
S1 **Starbucks The Bank.** Amsterdam, Netherlands. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2012
S2 **Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu.** Tokyo, Japan. Kengo Kuma and Associates, 2012
S3 **Starbucks Mall of Africa.** Johannesburg, South Africa. Starbucks EMEA, 2016
S4 **Starbucks Reserve Seattle.** Seattle, United States. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2014
S5 **Starbucks Reserve Milan.** Milan, Italy. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
S6 **Starbucks Reserve New York.** New York, United States. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
S7 **Starbucks Reserve Tokyo.** Tokyo, Japan. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2019

Figure 3.11 Map indicating sample of artefacts

2. Data sources

I sought data from secondary sources. A combination of audio-visual, visual, and textual data was used. Data was derived from:

- Books written about the selected global brands and/or their retail design (for example, '*Aesop'* by Jennifer Down and Dennis Paphitis)
- Books written about retail design that included the selected global brands and artefacts (for example, '*Holistic Retail Design*' by Philipp Teufel and Rainer Zimmermann)
- The websites of the selected global brands (for example, *News.nike.com*)
- The websites of retail designers who designed the studied artefacts (for example, *Simplicity.co.jp*)
- Web articles written about the global brands and artefacts on design blogs (for example, *Dezeen.com*)

3. Documentation tool

For this phase of sampling, I decided to standardise the documentation of artefacts according to the study focus. This was due to the inconsistency in the sources from which I collated the data on each artefact. By creating a consistent tool for documenting multiple artefacts of each global brand (see Figure 3.12), I was able to reflect on, test, and refine the strategies and techniques of localising retail design for global brands. The complete documentation of artefacts can be found as Appendix D of the study.

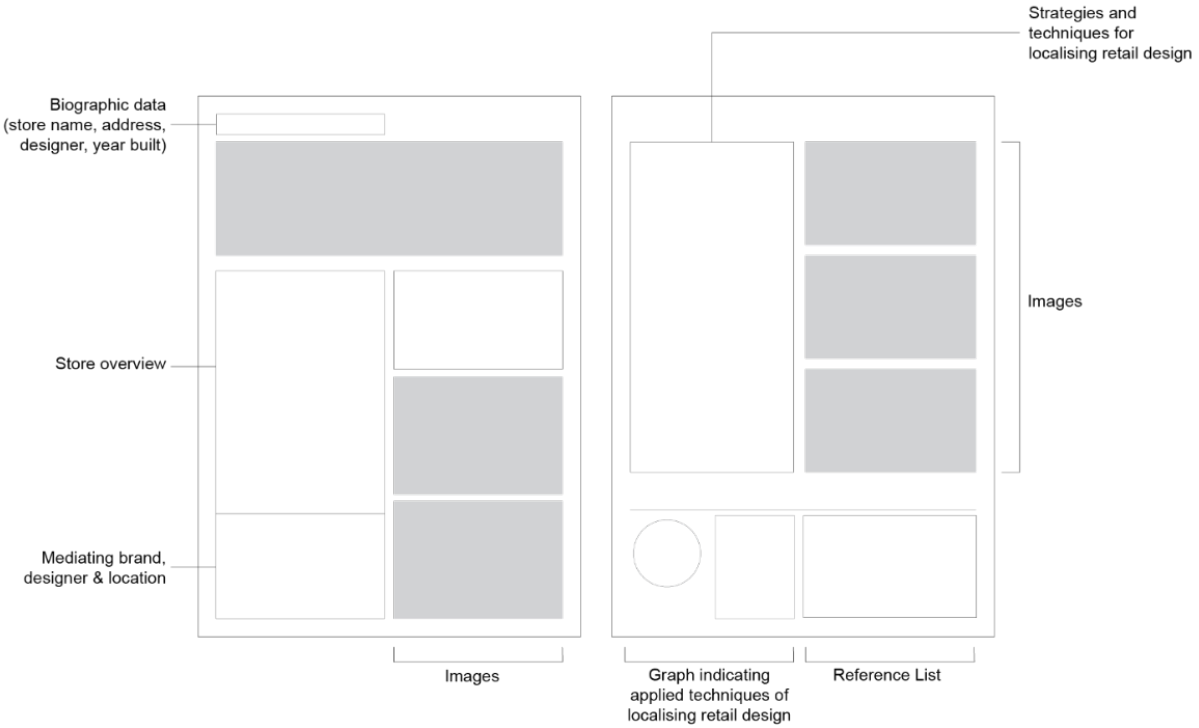



Figure 3.12 Artefact documentation tool

I used the graph below (Figure 3.13) to illustrate the application of the techniques for localising retail design within each artefact. These formed the basis for examining the occurrence of strategies consistently across the artefact. The diagram consolidates the alignment of strategies and techniques used in each artefact. When compared across the artefacts, the reader can identify the most frequent techniques occurring across the sample and this can be used to compare the occurrence of strategies and techniques across artefacts and brands.

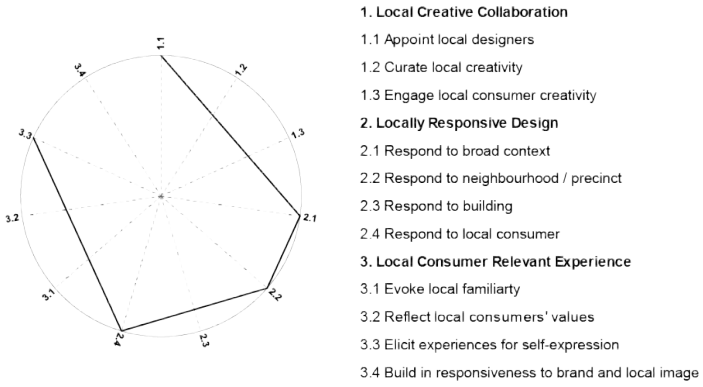



Figure 3.13 Graph indicating the techniques for localising retail design for global brands

This section provided detail on the research procedure. A step-by-step account of each research phase was provided. The following section consolidates the procedure in relation to the emergent theory.

## 3.5 SUMMARY OF STUDY PROGRAMME

The study programme is summarised below. The diagram consolidates the research process in stages reflected chronologically (Figure 3.14).

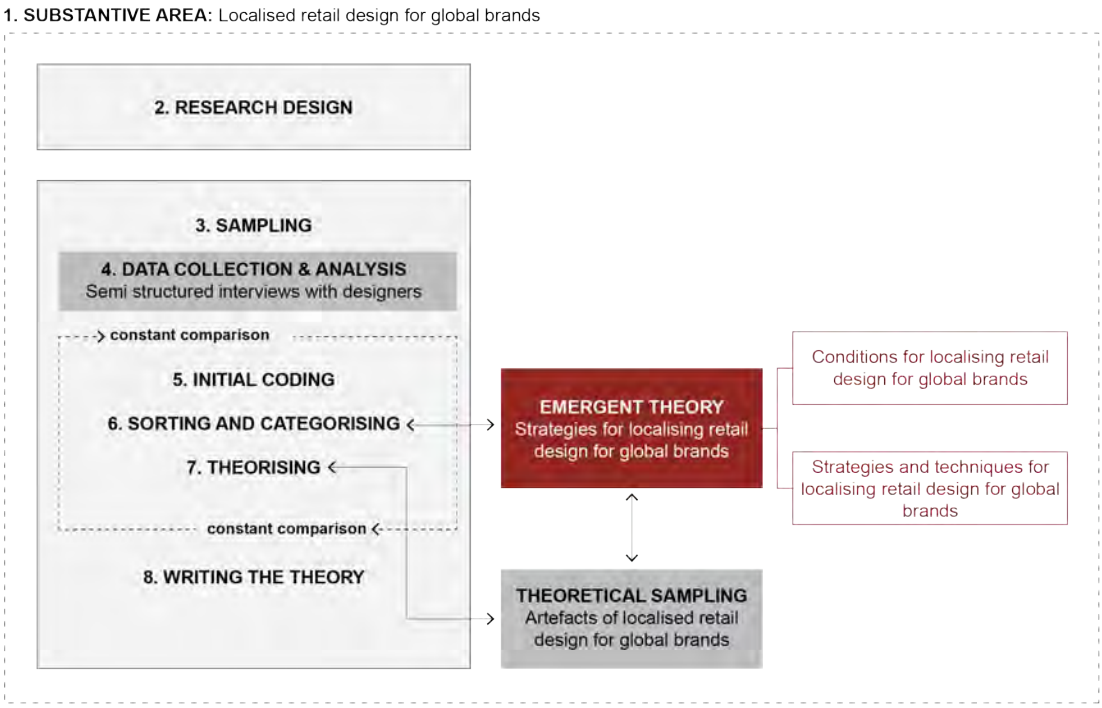



Figure 3.14 The study programme

The study programme diagram above is numbered according to the procedure followed in applying the CGT method. It demonstrates the way this led to developing the substantive theory: the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. This was answered through:

1. Conditions for localising retail design for global brands, and
2. Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

The findings are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The study programme and identification of emergent theories led to defining the research questions.

## 3.6 DEFINING THE STUDY QUESTIONS

This section discusses the emergence of the research questions in alignment with the emerging theories (conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands). I describe the way in which the categories were escalated into theory, conceptualising the theory, and drafting the theory.

### 3.6.1 Escalating categories into theory

In the analytical phase of the research, the categories were identified through a grouping of prominent and frequently occurring codes in the data (see Figure 3.15).


Figure 3.15 Word cloud depicting frequently occurring codes in the data

The data contained ideas on who designs and/or creates the retail store, what informs the design, how it is translated to design, and what is experienced once consumers are using the retail store. I considered all of the emergent codes in relation to a larger topic or grounded theory category. These categories formed the basis of conceptualising the grounded theory that later informed the literature search.

Two main areas were identified:

1. Conditions for localising retail design for global brands (Chapter 4)
2. Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands (Chapter 5)

By clustering the codes, I was able to classify information according to three categories that pertained to the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. These were:

- Authorship
- Informants
- Inhabitation

The categories of Authorship, Informants and Inhabitation led to a theoretical bridging between the categories into the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. These strategies were:

- Local creative collaboration
- Locally responsive design
- Local consumer relevant experience

While the categories demonstrated neutral clusters for emerging ideas in the data, the strategies escalated this into a theoretical stance. These strategies translated the categories into theoretical concepts. The translation of data into theory is listed above with the purpose of highlighting their emergence through the research process. The findings are re-iterated and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

### 3.6.2 Conceptualising the theory

In reflection of the study data and emergent theory, I refined the study sub questions. This saw an evolution of the study focus from the substantive area of ‘localised retail design for global brands’ to ‘designers’ considerations towards localising retail design for global brands’ to ‘conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands’.

These led to three final questions explored in the thesis.

1. What are the ways global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?
2. What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design?
3. What are the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands?

### 3.6.3 Drafting the theory

The final phase of the research was the writing up process of the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands. This entailed consolidating the theory and translating memos, categories, and codes into a complete draft.

I used examples from the data, discourse, and practice to substantiate the theory development in Chapter 4 (Conditions for localising retail design for global brands) and Chapter 5 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands).

The emergence and evolution of the study questions in the written thesis has been explained. The following section discusses the ethical considerations made in the thesis.

## 3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study took the following ethical considerations in both interviews and image use.

### 3.7.1 Interview ethics

Prior to conducting interviews, I consulted my institution’s (University of Pretoria) ethics approval procedure to ensure that I followed appropriate protocol for engaging with study respondents. This process entailed the drafting of an interview guide, details of the study and the creation of an informed consent template form.

These were approved by Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology’s (EBIT) research ethics committee. The ethics approval letter is included in Appendix C. All participants were provided informed consent forms to sign prior to the interview. The template is included in Appendix B.

To comply with the research ethics agreement, all respondents have been anonymised in the study. The brands referred to in the interview processes were also anonymised. This is in order to reduce risk to participants and their clients. In several interviews, respondents opted to be identified instead of being anonymous in their informed consent forms. I have taken a blanket approach of anonymising respondents for consistency in presenting data and findings.

### 3.7.2 Image use

The artefactual analysis was desktop research based on extant texts (or secondary sources). Documented artefacts in Appendix D are fully cited in text and referenced on each page. A complete reference list is provided in the thesis. All images that are not my own have been cited and referenced in the thesis. This is used within a fair use approach as the intention of using images in the thesis is to demonstrate application of the findings for educational purposes and not to claim authorship over material.

As this thesis is for academic and non-profit purposes, images are used exclusively for enhancing the understanding of the thesis and with single-use limited to this thesis and its readers. The online publication of images in the thesis will be limited to those for which written permission or rights of use were obtained.

Any images that have been used for publications outside the thesis (while emanating from the study) were used with permission from the copyright holders and according to procedures stipulated by the publishers. The list of publications is provided in the foreword of the thesis.

The ethical considerations pertaining to interviews and image use have been explained. The following section lists tools used in the study process.

## 3.8 STUDY TOOLS

### 3.8.1 Tools and software supporting the study development

The study tools above enabled the iterative process of data collection and analysis by offering various mediums to explore research ideas. The research method was supported by this variety of tools. A combination of analogue (hand) and digital tools were used in the study.

The following tools were used to generate hand drawn mindmaps:

- I used markers, paper, cardboard, tape, and sketchbooks to draw and iterate mind maps.
- I used the Adobe Draw app, an Apple Pencil, and an Apple iPad to draw mind maps.

The following programmes were used on my computer:

- I used Adobe Illustrator to create diagrams, formalise maps, generate data visualisations, and create templates for this thesis.
- I used Microsoft Excel for sorting codes and categories.
- I used Microsoft Word to write up the study.
- I used QASDAS Nvivo 10 software for coding and writing memos.

The tools and devices above supported both the analytic procedure and the presentation of data and ideas in this thesis. The following section concludes this chapter.

## 3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the philosophical and procedural underpinning for the research study. The generation of the study as one in which practice informs theory was discussed. This study situation in the constructivist paradigm is deliberated in ontological and epistemological terms. The constructivist grounded theory method is described as a relevant qualitative and inductive method of research. This follows with a systematic explanation of the research programme and the measures taken to apply these throughout the study. Finally, ethical considerations and study tools are described.

Chapter 4 sees the description of the theory ‘Conditions for applying the strategies for localising retail design for global brands’. Chapter 5 sees the description of the theory ‘Strategies for localising retail design for global brands’.

# Chapter 4 **CONDITIONS FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS**

# 4.1 INTRODUCTION

As established in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), the conditions for localising retail design are in retaining global brand consistency and in mediating global brand and local authenticity. The review demonstrates that although these conditions for localising retail design for global brands are identified in the discourse, existing studies at the time of this thesis do not explore the details of these in the practice of localised retail design for global brands.

This chapter aims to address this gap through answering Research Questions 1 and 2.

**Research Question 1.** What are the ways that global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?

**Research Question 2.** What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design?

The objectives are to:

- Expand an understanding of the conditions for localising retail design for global brands (namely, in retaining global brand consistency, and in identifying areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity), and
- Establish the conditions as a grounding for applying the strategies for localising retail design for global brands (discussed in Chapter 5).

The chapter explains each condition in a narrative format and illustrates their application in practice through excerpts from the interview transcripts, built practice examples, and explanations derived from the discourse. The chapter identifies the ways in which global brands can retain brand consistency when localising retail design. Thereafter, the areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity are discussed.

This underpins the strategies for localising retail design for global brands (in Chapter 5).

# 4.2 RETAINING GLOBAL BRAND CONSISTENCY

The first condition for localising retail design for global brands is in retaining global brand consistency. Throughout a process of localising retail design for global brands, a brand's core identity, values, collateral, and other characteristics are a platform for creating a consistent perception of the brand across the globe (Hlophe, 2012:15-17). In order to remain authentic to the brand, retail design should play a role in retaining this consistency and communicating a universal image of the brand.

Brand consistency is evident through recognisable design features between stores as well as through a consistent quality of retail design. This can range from standardised retail design (where stores are identical in all design features) or adapted retail design (where stores are individualistic in design features yet carry some recognisable associations with the brand identity). Localised retail design is a form of adapted retail design in which the location informs the design adaptations. It is important to note that there are factors that contribute to brand consistency beyond the scope of the retail designer, although some of these factors may support and inform retail design. These include operational models, service models, the demeanour of the retail staff, the emotional preconditions of the consumer, service experiences, integration with digital modes of retail design, the reasons for consumers visiting the retail store, and more. Retail design (in the case of the study, the design of the physical store) plays a part in communicating brand consistency to consumers.

Research Question 1 asked: What are the ways that global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?

The study found that these are in consistencies in designer choice; consistencies in approaches to localising retail design; and creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design. These are discussed below.

### 4.2.1 Consistencies in designer choice

Global brands may retain consistency when localising retail design through consistencies in designer choice.

Global brands who possess in-house retail designers or who appoint the same designers benefit from the brand expertise these designers have. These designers can aid in accomplishing brand consistency due to their familiarity and experience working with retail design for the brand.

When localising retail design, the brand knowledge possessed by the in-house designer may require mediation as these designers' familiarity with the brand may limit their creative ability to localise retail design:

> *"I knew the brand inside and out and I could really design for it" … "but I knew that some muscles atrophied."* – Respondent 10 (referring to their experience as an in-house global brand designer)

Brands can take a mediated approach of working with in-house/repeat, and local designers. This can bring a balance of creativity and consistency to the brand's retail design. This aids in achieving localised retail design with brand consistency. This would require a collaborative approach in which brands can consistently appoint local designers to work collaboratively with their global designers to support localising retail design. Australian skin-care global brand, Aesop evidences this approach. Through collaboration, the brand sees the combination of designer creativity with the aesthetics and standards of the brand expressed in every retail store design (Down & Paphitis, 2019:151). The brand works collaboratively between an in-house design department and external designers. This allows the brand identity to be communicated with a degree of consistency while being mediated with local identity. Consistencies in designer choice by establishing collaboration structures may support this process while enabling the creativity required to localise retail design.

### 4.2.2 Consistencies in approaches to localising retail design

Global brand consistency can be reinforced through a consistent approach towards localising retail design. This means that global brands may select the same conceptual approach to localising retail design in each retail store. A consistency in consumer journey can allow each touch point of that journey to be localised. This can enhance localisation and reinforce brand consistency.

Dolce & Gabbana (an Italian originating global luxury fashion brand) takes a consistent approach to localising retail design. The brand embarked on a campaign in 2016 to localise retail design. The intention was that "aesthetics and brand values are combined with unique features and elements of excellence of each city" (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]). This provided a parameter for the designers to source inspiration from the locations in which they were designing. First, they would be looking at the location on city level; and, second, they would be looking at what makes these cities "unique" and "excellent". This is both a consistent approach to localising retail design and a point of resonance between the global brand and local context (excellence of the city). This would be a consistent consideration for designers for Dolce & Gabbana's localised retail design boutiques.

Aesop stipulates several procedures for their designers to follow in order to draw inspiration from the location. This includes site visits, reading key literature, envisioning the experience of the customer in the actual site, and connecting to the neighbourhood in which the stores are located (Down & Paphitis, 2019:171-2).

Brand consistency and localisation can be mediated by regarding the global brand as a lens through which to localise retail design. This forms a consistent approach to localising retail design. Crucial brand elements are established as non-negotiable, recognisable features that should create a golden thread throughout retail design expressions. Subservient to this lies the creative freedom to interpret location and reflect this in retail design.

Respondents 15a and 15b described a global brand retail project for which they localised retail design in several locations in the United Kingdom and Europe. Region acted as a filtering device with which to express the localised retail design for the global brand. The global brand formed an overarching identity beneath which the designers identified factors that may be localised:

> *"The personality must be translated as more local, still fun, but more sophisticated, clever and subtle and that led us to this sort of idea of a core personality which is 60% recognisable global [BRAND 1] and then a 40% layer of local cultural adaptation, which is a sort of a factor of the European adaptation together with the city adaptation together with the individual location"* – Respondent 15b

Brands may also define consistency through localised retail design by defining consistent elements that can be locally interchangeable in each localised retail expression. Starbucks (an American originating global coffee brand) take this approach. Their store designs always contain a Siren (the brand's iconic symbol). The Siren is expressed in different ways in different locations. In Starbucks Reserve Milan, the Siren is a marble statue in the building's entrance (Stories.starbucks.com, 2018). In Starbucks Mall of Africa, the Siren is carved into the timber wall cladding. It is also painted as a mural by a local artist (retaildesignblog.net, 2016).

Global brand consistency may be retained through consistent approaches to localising retail design.

### 4.2.3 Creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design

Brand consistency in retail design is managed using a brand manual. The brand manual, corporate identity document, or brand guidelines document is an instruction guide for implementing the brand's graphic and spatial expressions (Hlophe, 2012:16). The brand manual stipulates the ways in which the brand can be adapted and applied in different sites. It includes the conceptual underpinning behind the retail design, the elements that should be included in the retail interior, guidelines for flow and layout, and specifications of materials, furniture, lighting products, colours, textiles, and more. The document can also include a standard drawing set for layouts, details, and shop-fitted elements as well as installation and assembly instructions. The brand manual is described in detail in Section 2.3 in Chapter 2 (Literature Review).

In standardised retail design concepts, the brand manual will offer little scope for deviating from design guidelines. Usually adaptation is limited to adjusting dimensions of units, quantity of units, and spatial layout based on the site constraints and/or budget. Local considerations may play a role in terms of local availability of materials and technology, which require alternative solutions that achieve the same look and feel.

Some brands offer greater flexibility. These brand manuals would provide guidelines to retain key consistencies in the retail store while presenting options for colour palettes, materials, furnishing, graphics, and lighting. They may provide scope for the designer to include a limited number of 'bespoke' (unique) design elements in store and provide design parameters for these elements.

In localised retail design, the brand manual offers a greater degree of flexibility. Brand standards may include key dimensions, visual merchandising principles, touch-points, and flow.

The remaining design may be negotiable within the parameters of the brief; the brand's defined strategies for localising retail design; and other requirements pertaining to the local context (such as national building standards, proprietor requirements, and local technology). Retail designers work with brand manuals to implement retail design concepts that may offer more or less creative scope to localise retail design. New retail concepts may be generated, using existing brand guidelines. The designer or design agency may generate a brand manual on this basis. Respondent 8 (who worked for a design agency) described their experience in compiling a brand manual for a new concept for BRAND 3.

> *"So from a structure perspective we kind of took a combination of the UK and American and previous brand manuals just to kind of build a framework of what it is that they needed. But to localise it, they have this sort of brief of this bold urban language that they wanted to incorporate into the spaces but the briefing that they sort of developed wasn't very African in a way. Okay, it was African but in the city kind of sense not in a [BRAND 3] kind of sense. So we kind of took that as a concept and tied it in with the sort of lengthy history of the [BRAND 3] brand."* – Respondent 8

Designer Martí Guixé reinterpreted the idea of the brand manual for Spanish global footwear brand, Camper (see Figure 4.1). He created a series of instruction cards that resemble "aircraft safety" information to communicate the design system and make roll-out comprehensible (Koivu, 2015:246-247).

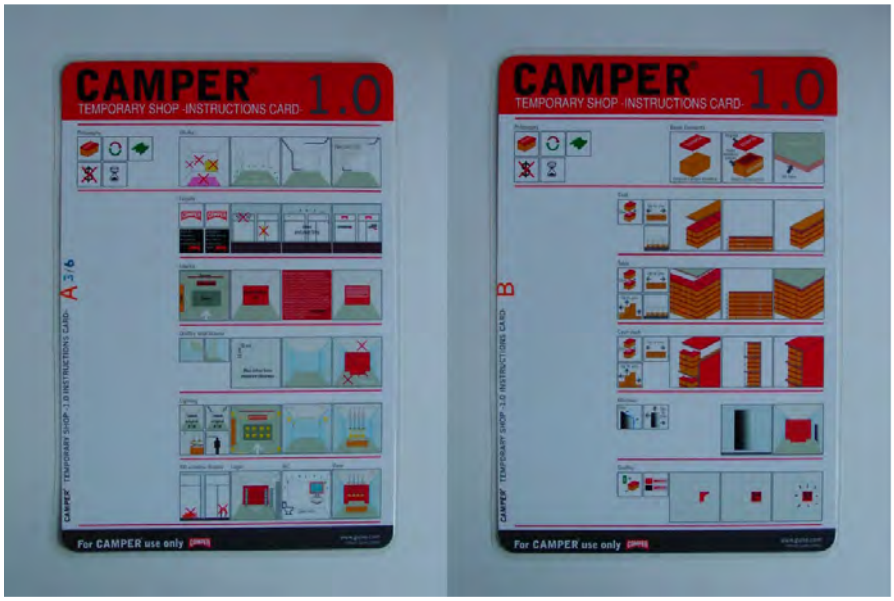



Figure 4.1 Martí Guixé's instruction cards for Camper's concepts communicate consistent principles. Photo copyright Inga Knölke (used with permission of designer and photographer)

Brand consistency requires greater attention in cases of localised retail design due to the open creative scope that allows brand interpretation. Due to the creative scope afforded in localised retail design, brand consistency becomes further negotiable. This requires retail designers to consciously mediate between brand and local essence in order to ensure brand consistency is retained when localising retail design. The brand manual is a tool that can assist retail designers to navigate mediating between brand and local essence ensuring that brand consistency is retained. These brand manuals are an opportunity for a global brand to manage the negotiation of identity by delineating the scope for the creative freedom associated with localising the retail design. It can stipulate areas for design interpretation while communicating the fixed requirements for each localised retail store design.

Figure 4.2 below illustrates the considerations that designers should take towards brand consistency.

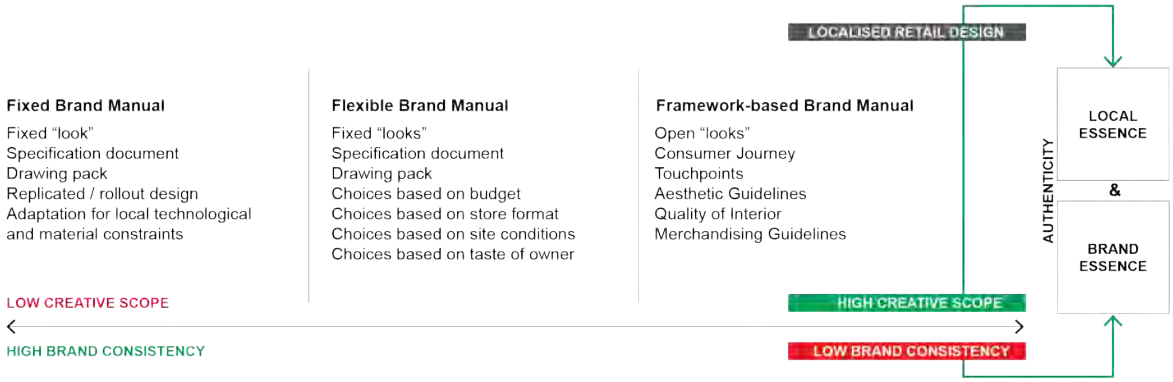



Figure 4.2 High creative scope in localised retail design requires increased attention to brand essence in order to ensure brand consistency

Retaining global brand consistency is a condition for localising retail design for global brands. This section aimed to develop the ways in which global brands may retail consistency when localising retail design. These were in consistencies in designer choice, consistencies in approaches to localising retail design, and creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design.

Retaining global brand consistency is recognised as a condition for localising retail design. A further condition for localising retail design is in mediating global brand and local authenticity. The areas for mediating this authenticity is discussed in the following section.

# 4.3 MEDIATING GLOBAL BRAND AND LOCAL AUTHENTICITY

This section discusses the concept of authenticity in localised retail design. As a condition for localising retail design, the mediation between global brand and local authenticity is an established concept in the discourse. It is recognised that an authentic representation of both the global brand and the local context require mediation when localising retail design. This has been established in Chapter 2.

The areas for mediating brand and local authenticity remain unknown. The section aims to illuminate this through addressing research question 2.

Research Question 2 asked: What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design?

The study found that the areas for mediating authenticity in localised retail design are in Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation of localised retail design. These are discussed below.

## 4.3.1 Authenticity in retail design

Teufel & Zimmermann advocate for the authenticity of retail design. They describe that consumers enjoy spaces that have a "non-repeatability of the offerings that can only be found here" (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:39). They assert that there is an intrinsic connection between the "aesthetic" and the "ethics" of retail to satisfy "a need for the real, undistorted and unmediated" (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:39). They describe that a condition for authenticity is not necessarily the "realness" of the form of something, but rather, how unrepeatable it is. "The problem is not the form but its scalability" (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:41).

Spanish global footwear brand Camper has been able, by this argument, to produce retail design of high authentic value. By the brand's own intention, "you can't help but notice the blood, sweat and tears that went into building these spaces: just try hanging thousands of shoelaces from the ceiling in a prescribed pattern" (Thiemann in Koivu, 2015:259). An installation of this nature is not easily scalable, increasing its authentic value (Mairs, 2015). An example is in the design of *Camper Melbourne* (Figure 4.3). The designers, Atelier Brajovic, used red shoelaces to create a ceiling installation.


Figure 4.3 Camper Melbourne,2015 (designed by Atelier Marco Brajovic) features a ceiling installation of red shoelaces (markobrajovic.com, s.a.)

Mass production is viewed as an ethical concern (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:41). Teufel and Zimmermann note that this is attributed to "transparency" over the "source of goods and the conditions under which these were produced", noting that the less authentic something is, the more socially and ecologically harmful it can be (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). They believe that authenticity can be deemed credible by how close an object's form is to its "source" and how "unique" it is (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). Authenticity can be recognised by the "scarcity" of an object – its "one of a kind" attributes that cannot be sourced or experienced elsewhere. Authentic retail design, in turn, is unique and unrepeatable in aesthetics and experience (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). This adds value to the product within the store, even if it is repeatable (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42). Gilmore and Pine (2007) also advocate that authenticity is something that consumers want. They describe the ways in which authenticity can be achieved:


Figure 4.4 Ways in which retailers can achieve authenticity (Gilmore & Pine, 2007:49)

All five dimensions play a role in creating retail design that is authentic to a brand. From material use and lighting quality, to the originality of retail design, to the quality of the design, to experience creation, to expressing social causes and initiatives in store design. In localised retail design, the authenticity of goods plays the largest differentiating role in ensuring that a store design is unique. All other factors may be (by Teufel & Zimmermann's [2015] assertions) scalable and not necessarily unique.

In localised retail design two degrees of authenticity need to be attained. The retail design should demonstrate authenticity to the global brand and authenticity to the location. Respondent 7 emphasises this balance between brand and localisation:

> *"…I think that with this [BRAND 4] example, in localising the stores, they didn't do it in a kitsch, small way. They did it in a big corporate way. But that's okay. Because that's still authentic to them."* - Respondent 7

Although brands pursue the desire to remain authentic through conventional standardised modes of retail design, it is argued that they may enhance authenticity by reimagining their identity in unrepeatable and unique retail design expressions that increase their value propositions (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:44). These unique retail design expressions can be articulated through localising retail design.

In the process of localising retail design, two degrees of authenticity are to be mediated: authenticity to the brand and authenticity to the location. Localising retail design is a means through which brands can express their authenticity, as localised retail design finds limited reproducibility when compared to standardised retail concepts, and an additional layer of originality through expression of the local context in retail design. These degrees of authenticity are illustrated in Figure 4.5 below.


Figure 4.5 Degrees of authenticity in retail design

Mediating authenticity to the global brand and location are conditions to localising retail design. The areas for mediating authenticity are discussed below.

## 4.3.2 Areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity in localised retail design

Localised retail design presents an opportunity for global brands to express authenticity. As identified in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) and above, authenticity to both the brand and location is a condition for localising retail design for global brands. Authenticity between brand and location require mediation when localising retail design for global brands.

Research Question 2 asked: What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design?

The authenticity to global brand and location is mediated in three areas: Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation. These concepts are defined:

**Table 4.1** Definition of areas for mediating brand and local authenticity in localised retail design for global brands

| | |
|---|---|
| ***AUTHORSHIP*** | Authorship pertains to who designs the retail store. It specifically refers to the stakeholders who provide the creativity imbued in the conception (conceptual design) and making (assembly, composition, and construction) of the retail store. Design authorship is attributed to the designer or design team, but it can include stakeholders beyond designers. Authors contribute creativity to realising a project. The appointment, team-composition and roles of authors is of importance. |
| ***INFORMANTS*** | Informants pertains to the processes engaged in the sourcing of knowledge (as informants to design); the knowledge produced, and the process of synthesising and translating this knowledge into conceptual decisions realised in retail design. The designer, and at times, brand, are instrumental in this process of research and analysis, while designers are responsible for the interpretation, conceptualisation, and expression of informants into a design proposal. |
| ***INHABITATION*** | Inhabitation pertains to store occupation, the processes involved in inhabitation and the experiences in the retail space. The primary stakeholder involved in inhabitation is the consumer. Although not the focal inhabitant, the staff of the retail store also partake in the inhabitation process. |

Table 4.1 above defines Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation of localised retail design for global brands. The mediation of global brand and local authenticity in each area is described below.

#### 4.3.2.1 In the area of authorship, mediation is required between brand and local design expertise

This can occur through the appointment of both brand designers and local designers. Authenticity to the brand requires expertise pertaining to the brand itself. In-house global brand designers and/or designers who have been appointed to work with the brand before will possess the knowledge and expertise in working with the brand's capital. These designers possess expertise in the global brand. Their experience in translating core aspects of the brand into retail design ensures brand consistency. Due to positionality and power balances between the brand's originating and destined locations, as well as the global values carried by the brand, the voice of local designers is needed in order to localise retail design. Collaboration is also important as the singular author interpreting local capital can lead to pitfalls and threaten resonance with local consumers. Therefore, a collaboration can aid consensus and diversity in the representation of location, supporting authenticity. This means that authorship by local designers is needed in order to localise retail design for global brands. Local authorship can further be sought from local creative individuals (such as artists, furniture and product designers, *etc*.) to imbue a variety of local voices into the retail design. Further, the creativity of consumers may be sought to enhance this creativity. The process of working with local creativity is discussed in detail in the strategy of 'Local Creative Collaboration' in Chapter 5 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands).

Global brand and local authenticity can be mediated in the area of authorship of retail design through collaboration between local and brand designers.

#### 4.3.2.2 In the area of Informants, a mediation of both brand and local essence is essential

This can occur through the design informants of both brand and local essence. As Newman and Dhar (2014:372) describe, this essence is the core or root of the informant.

In the case of the global brand, returning to the brand's roots, its heritage, its place of origin and its values form a basis from which to draw informants. Authenticity to the brand entails returning to the essence of the brand itself and expressing this through retail design. Respondent 9 emphasises the importance of being true to the essence of the brand:

> *"If you've got a proposition and you are true to it and it's a proposition that has a soul and a heart, I think people will believe in that. And therefore, our job is to dig into that and reveal that whole heart, isn't it? That's a designer's job…"* – Respondent 9

Returning to the roots of a brand for inspiration provides scope for originality. Newman and Dhar (2014:372) describe brand authenticity as a return to the "essence of a brand". They assert that a return to origins is a key ingredient for brand authenticity and can enhance consumers' value for that brand (Newman & Dhar, 2014:372).

The traceability of a brand to its authentic essence or a "verifiable truth" can enhance consumer connection to that brand (Newman & Dhar, 2014:372). Returning to the essence of the brand for sources of inspiration can enhance the authenticity of retail design. According to Gilmore and Pine (2007:57), "being original is more than just introducing something new". They use the analogy of a Coca-Cola glass bottle in comparison to a plastic bottle to illustrate consumers' perceptions of authenticity as an "*original – original*", associating authenticity with an original format of the product (Gilmore & Pine, 2007:57).

In retail design, this could mean delving into deeper research into a brand's roots. This may occur beyond the content that is provided from the brand itself. Gilmore and Pine (2007:19-58-59) reinforce the value of returning to the essence of the brand as an opportunity to express originality and counteract the "sameness" that depletes brand authenticity. They relate the idea of the brand's "firsts" as a rich source of inspiration to express authenticity (Gilmore & Pine, 2007:19-58-59).Respondent 9 spoke about their design process, echoing the same sense of seeking brand firsts that Gilmore and Pine relate. They discuss the way in which they delved beyond the brand's face value to discover more insight into the roots of the brand:

> *"we dive into their archives, find out where they come from, and we'd always do that" … "we'd draw that out more and more you know, this guy is an outdoor retailer, there is this lovely picture that is on their website I think, I've seen it, of their first store in 1933" … "that was when people had store staff or Shopkeepers and there is a nuance in that word; Shopkeeper."* - Respondent 9

Respondent 8 also spoke about the way in which they looked into the brand's history of firsts to derive a unique aspect to reflect in the retail design:

> *"I mean the first [BRAND 3] (…store…) ever, for many years they had the pitched roof and we kind of want to do a contemporary version of that"* – Respondent 8

Brand essence can enhance brand authenticity (Pine & Gilmore, 2008). The brand essence can be drawn from its original "production methods, product styling, connection to a particular location, and firm values" (Newman & Dhar, 2014:372). Designers need to draw on brand essence as an informant to localised retail design.

A further example of a brand drawing from its essence is Primark. Primark (an Irish originating global fast fashion brand) entered the United States market for the first time in 2015 with a flagship store in Boston. The designers, Dalziel & Pow (a United Kingdom based design agency appointed for multiple flagship store designs for the brand) used graphics to communicate the story of the Primark brand and its journey to Boston (retaildesignblog.net, 2015). The role of retail design was to communicate both the essence of the brand and the local context of Boston.

> *Dalziel & Pow played a strategic role in this project, applying the brand in a new territory with limited recognition, ensuring clear expression of fashion and value for the brand.*

(retaildesignblog.net, 2015) … *this high-impact VM display brings Primark's brand promise 'Amazing fashion, Amazing prices' to the forefront, and communicates these values to the US market.* (retaildesignblog.net, 2015)


Figure 4.6 Primark Boston, 2015 (by Dalziel & Pow) communicates the brand's values and roots through graphics and visual merchandising. Images courtesy of Dalziel & Pow (Montgomery, 2015)

Statements of brand identity were of importance to familiarise a new consumer market with the Primark brand. The communication of brand identity may require continued efforts in order to respond to the dynamic nature of brand image, which is consumers' responses and perceptions of the brand (Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011:169).

In the case of deriving informants from the local essence, the retail designer may access the unique and idiosyncratic aspects of local place to enhance the unique expression and response to location through retail design. Local authenticity can be accomplished through the process of understanding the local context, identifying sources of information that communicate the essence of the location, collecting information pertaining to the location, examining, understanding and analysing this information and then translating this into design. Localised retail design should therefore use the local essence as a design informant. This can be accomplished through 'Locally Responsive Design' (see Strategy 2 in Chapter 5).

The process of deriving local informants and translating these into localised retail design is discussed in detail in the strategy of 'Locally Responsive Design' in Chapter 5 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands).

#### 4.3.2.3 In the area of Inhabitation, the reflection of both brand and consumer identity is needed

This can occur through finding opportunities for the retail design to demonstrate both the identity of the global brand, while allowing consumers to construct their own identities in inhabitation processes. In reflecting brand identity, it is crucial for the global brand to establish an impression of its identity, its story, and what it stands for through retail design (following Sharma, 2017). In international markets, retail store design can be used as a method for market entry for the global brand (Sharma, 2017).

It is of importance that the global brand express their story to local consumers as a means to enhance connection and to differentiate themselves from competing brands in the local market. Inhabitation provides an opportunity for global brands to assert a statement about what the brand stands for and who they are to consumers.

In the case of global brands, this is particularly important where consumers have limited familiarity with the brand or if the brand was not present in this region before (see 4.3.2.2). It is also an opportunity for brands to shift perceptions of whom they are in markets where they already exist. This means that retail design must communicate the identity of the brand to consumers.

As inhabitation of retail spaces facilitate identity construction (Veblen 1889), localised retail design should platform its local identity on local consumer identities. Through inhabitation, consumers find personal connections with the retail brand. This process of inhabitation has an influence on consumer culture (Dolbec & Chebat, 2013). Inhabitation of the retail store occurs as a process of identity construction (Petermans & Kent, 2017) and requires mediation in order for consumers to feel represented and culturally aligned with the global brand. This is also viewed as a form of cultural responsibility for the global brand. Instead of imprinting global consumer culture on local consumers (Isar & Anheier, 2010), the global brand can allow local cultural nuances to inform the creation of experiences of inhabitation within the retail store in order to acknowledge a re-enacting of local cultural ideals in exchange with the global brand's capital (Sharma, 2017). This can be accomplished through consumer-engagement during design process, meta design that allows flexibility for consumers to find representation in the design, personalising experiences, partnering with local favourite brands, and being responsive to the ongoing changes that consumers encounter. This requires the provision of local consumer relevant experiences in localised retail design.

The process of creating these experiences in localised retail design is discussed in detail in the strategy of 'Local Consumer Relevant Experience' in Chapter 5 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands).

Mediating global brand and local authenticity is a condition for localising retail design for global brands. This ensures that localised retail design is representative of both global brand and local context, and that this representation is authentic. Mediating global brand and local authenticity occurs in three areas: Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation of localised retail design. The following section consolidates the conditions for localising retail design for global brands.

## 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter developed the conditions for localising retail design for global brands. The conditions for localising retail design for global brands are in retaining brand consistency and in mediating global brand and local authenticity. These conditions for localising retail design for global brands were expanded on through the analysis of interviews with retail designers who possess knowledge and expertise in localised retail design for global brands. The findings (summarised below) were enhanced by the theoretical sample (artefactual analysis of localised retail design for four global brands).

Research question 1 asked: What are the ways that global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design? The study found that global brands can retain brand consistency when localising retail design through:

- Consistencies in designer choice
- Consistencies in approaches to localising retail design
- Creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design

Research question 2 asked: What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design? The study found that global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity in the areas of:

- Authorship (by mediating between brand and local designers)
- Informants (by mediating between brand and local essence)
- Inhabitation (by expressing the identity of the brand and facilitating identity construction for consumers)

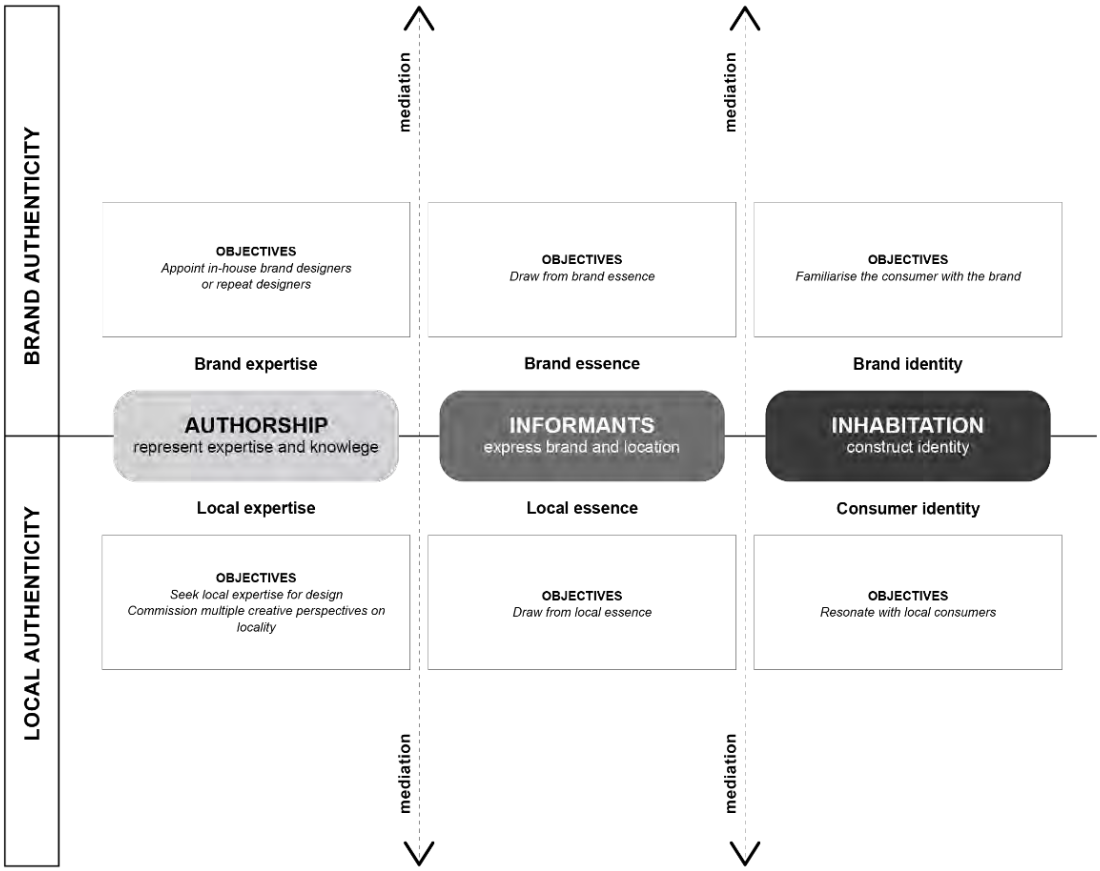



Figure 4.7 Areas of mediating between global brand and local authenticity as a condition for localising retail design

The diagram (Figure 4.7) demonstrates the areas for mediating brand and local authenticity when localising retail design for global brands (authorship, informants, and inhabitation). The objectives for both brand and local authenticity are illustrated. This diagram positions the strategies for localising retail design for global brands within each area of mediation.

Chapter 5 extends on these areas of mediation through detailing the strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

# Chapter 5 **STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS**

# 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As established in Chapter 4, the conditions for localising retail design are retaining global brand consistency and mediating global brand and local authenticity. This chapter identifies, discusses, and demonstrates the application of strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. This chapter responds to Research Question 3.

**Research Question 3.** What are the strategies for localising retail design for global brands?

The aims are to:

- Determine the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands,
- Discuss the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands, and
- Demonstrate the application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

The objective is to develop the retail design discourse by addressing gaps in the knowledge of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. These gaps were demonstrated in the literature review (Chapter 2).

This chapter is structured in three sections.

**Section 1: Findings**

This section presents the main findings of the study: the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. A demonstration of the instances in which the identified strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands appear in the interview data and artefactual analysis follows. This is to motivate the validity of the findings.

**Section 2: Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands**

This section discusses the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. This is written in a narrative format. Each strategy for localising retail design is introduced and defined. The techniques for applying each strategy are discussed through reference to the interview data, the discourse, and illustrative examples from the practice of localised retail design. The purpose of this section is to enhance the discourse with knowledge on localised retail design for global brands.

**Section 3: Applied strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands**

This section demonstrates the application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for four global brands (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks). The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the strategies and techniques for localising retail design through synthesis of artefactual analysis of multiple retail stores for each of the selected global brands.

# SECTION 1: FINDINGS

Section 1 presents the findings: the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. The strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands are listed. Thereafter, the findings are supported with instances in which the identified strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands occured in the interview data and artefactual analysis. Finally the validity of the results is argued.

## 5.2 IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

The strategies for localising retail design for global brands follow and develop from the areas of mediating global brand and local authenticity as a condition for localising retail design (Chapter 4). The areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity are in Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation of retail design.

The strategies and techniques were developed through the iterative data collection and analysis phases described in Chapter 3 (Research Method). The role of the data is described:

- The interview data generated the main findings and discussion in this chapter (strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands).
- The artefactual analysis (as a theoretical sample) served to verify that a) the developed strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands were evident in practice and b) to saturate the techniques through sourced examples that demonstrate the application of the strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

The findings are provided and their occurrence in the data is presented below.

### 5.2.1 Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands

The study found three main strategies and eleven techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

**Strategy 1. Local creative collaboration** occurs during the **authorship** of localised retail design. This refers to the local creative authors who contribute towards a localised retail design.

The techniques for applying the strategy of local creative collaboration are:

a. Appoint local designers
b. Curate local creativity
c. Engage local consumer creativity

**Strategy 2. Locally responsive design** pertains to the **informants** of localised retail design. The strategy explores the processing and expression of local informants through localised retail design.

The techniques for applying the strategy of locally responsive design are:

a. Respond to broad context
b. Respond to neighbourhood or precinct
c. Respond to building
d. Respond to local consumer

**Strategy 3. Local consumer relevant experience** occurs during the **inhabitation** of localised retail design. This strategy engages with how localised retail design connects to local consumers in a relevant way.

The techniques for applying the strategy of local consumer relevant experience are:

a. Evoke local familiarity
b. Reflect local consumers' values
c. Elicit experiences for self-expression
d. Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

The occurrence of the findings in the data are explained below.

### 5.2.2 The occurrence of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in the data

The strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands were the result of the analysis of interview data through the procedure of coding, memo-writing, categorising, and constant comparison. The complete procedure is described in Chapter 3 (Research Method). The artefactual analysis (Appendix D) occurred concurrently with interview data collection and analysis.

As the strategies and techniques emerged through coding and memo-writing processes applied in the interview analysis, these were tested against the selected artefacts and re-informed the discussion of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

This iterative process led to the development and refinement of the analytic tool used to document to artefacts in Appendix D. This tool is the result of the continued interrogation of the visual and textual sources consulted for each artefact and their constant comparison with emerging findings from the interview analysis.

Both data sets are therefore recognised as contributing to the study findings. Both analytical exercises revealed the existence of the techniques for localising retail design for global brands in the data.

The instances of the techniques in the data are presented in the following infographics:

1. Figure 5.1 consolidates the instances in which each interview referred to a technique for localising retail design for global brands. The infographic further draws out a key quote from each interview that represents a technique that was central to the topic.

2. Figure 5.2 consolidates the instances in which the techniques for localising retail design occurred in the studied artefacts for the selected global brands (as presented in Appendix D).[6]

This is followed by a consolation of the findings from the data.

[6] These artefacts were individually documented and included the following: store overview, mediating brand, designer (in relevant instances), and location, and documentation of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design. These were supported with captioned images of the artefact referring to applied techniques for localising retail design. Each artefact was consolidated with an analytic graph that documents the applied techniques for localising retail designing that artefact. Each artefact possesses a list of sources consulted.

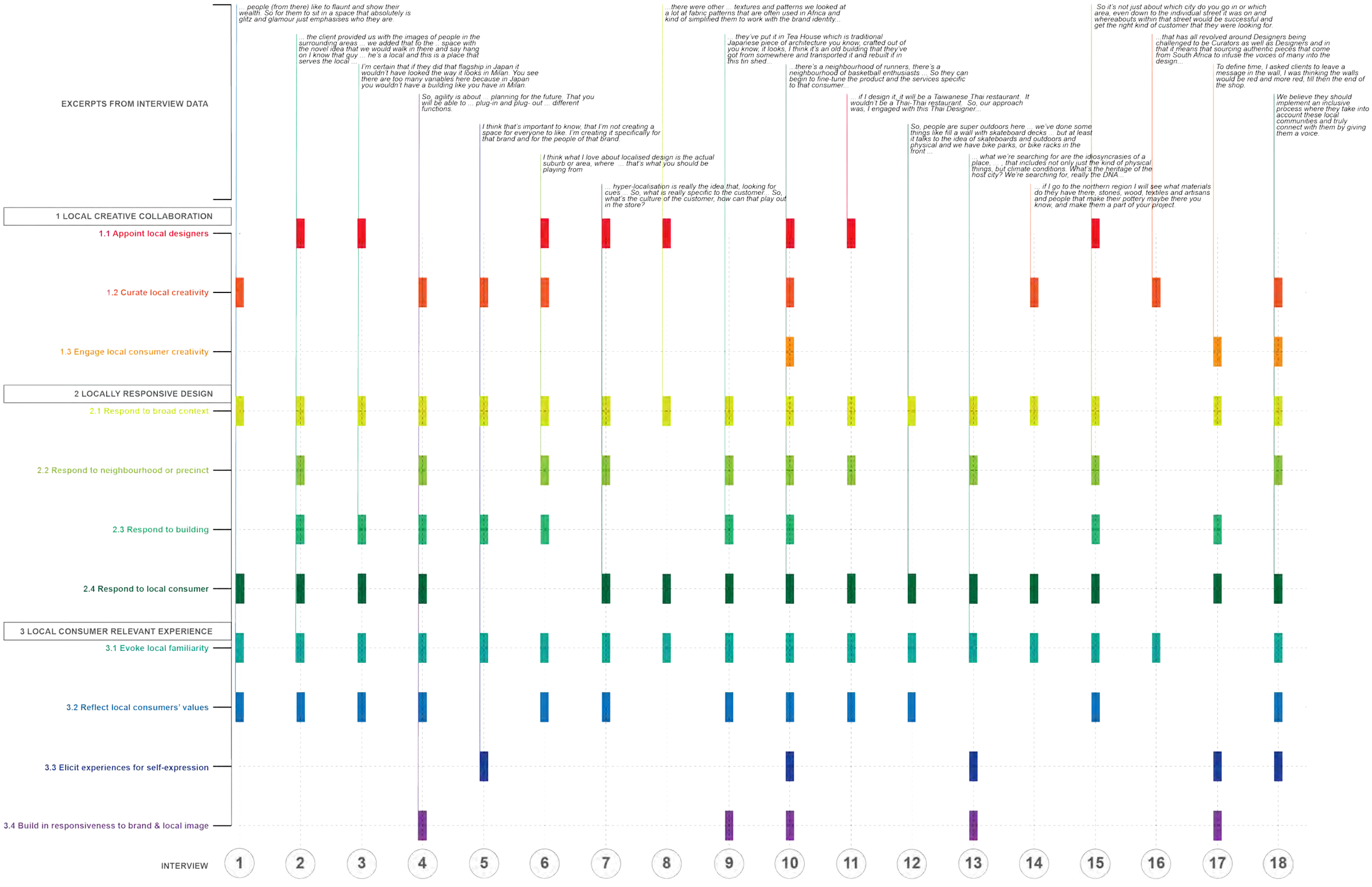
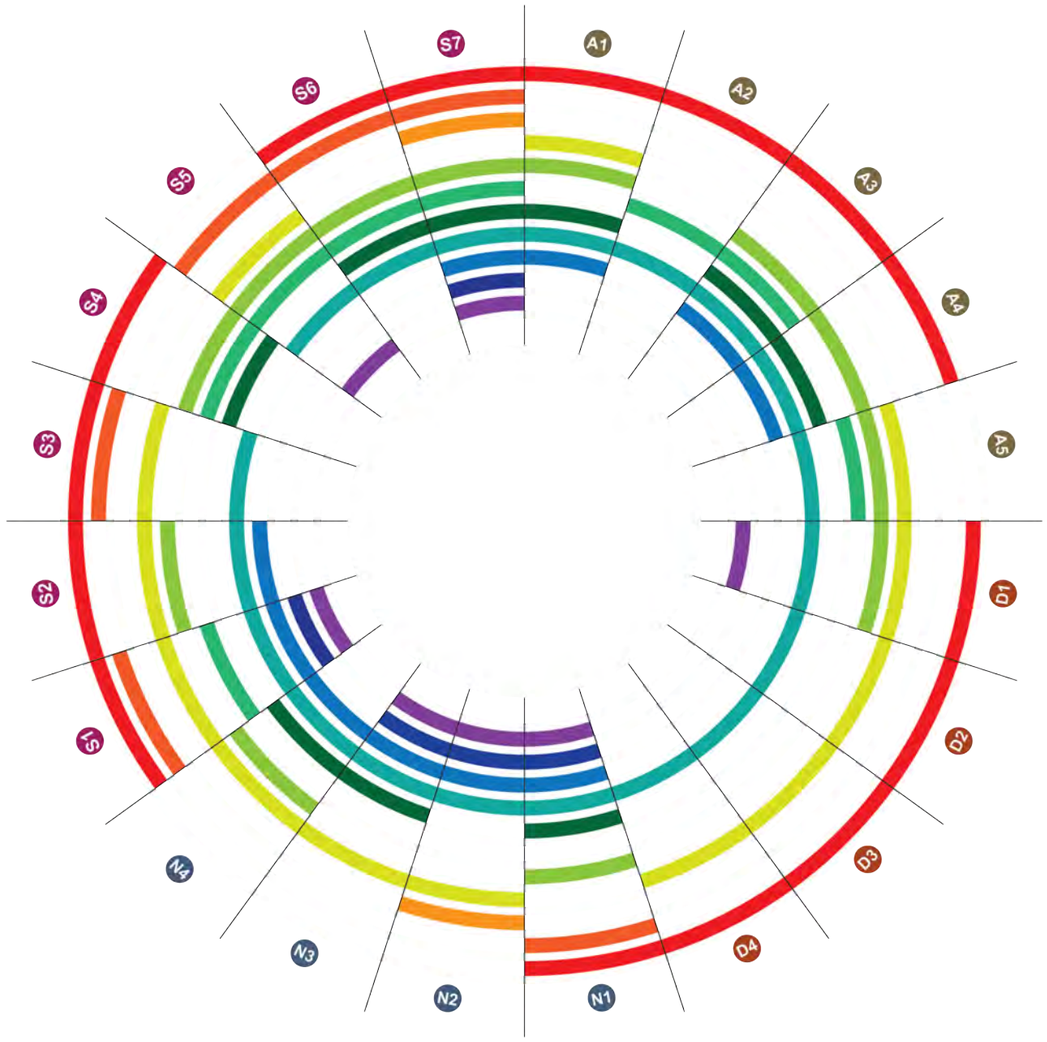



Figure 5.1 Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in alignment with the interview data




**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS**

**1 LOCAL CREATIVE COLLABORATION**

- 1.1 Appoint local designers
- 1.2 Curate local creativity
- 1.3 Engage local consumer creativity

**2 LOCALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN**

- 2.1 Respond to broad context
- 2.2 Respond to neighbourhood or precinct
- 2.3 Respond to building
- 2.4 Respond to local consumer

**3 LOCAL CONSUMER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

- 3.1 Evoke local familiarity
- 3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
- 3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
- 3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand & local image

**ARTEFACTS OF LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOABL BRANDS**

**ARTEFACTS OF LOCALISED RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOABL BRANDS**

A1 **Aesop Kyoto.** Kyoto, Japan. Shinichiro Ogata (Simplicity), 2014
A2 **Aesop Flinders Lane.** Melbourne, Australia. Aesop Design Department, 2015
A3 **Aesop Brera.** Milan, Italy. Vincenzo de Cotiis Architects, 2015
A4 **Aesop Vila Madalena.** São Paulo, Brazil. Estudio Campana, 2016
A5 **Aesop Park Slope.** New York, United States. Frida Escobedo, 2019
D1 **Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama.** Tokyo, Japan. Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2016
D2 **Dolce & Gabbana London.** London, United Kingdom. Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2017
D3 **Dolce & Gabbana Saint Barthélemey.** Gustavia, Saint Barthélemey. Steven Harris, 2017
D4 **Dolce & Gabbana Rome.** Rome, Italy. Eric Carlson (Carbondale), 2019
N1 **Nike Live Melrose.** Los Angeles, United States. Nike Global, 2018
N2 **Nike House of Innovation 001.** Shanghai, China. Nike Global, 2018
N3 **Nike Rise Guangzhou.** Guangzhou, China. Nike Global, 2020
N4 **Nike Unite Concept.** Asia, United States, United Kingdom. Nike Global, 2020
S1 **Starbucks The Bank.** Amsterdam, Netherlands. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2012
S2 **Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu.** Tokyo, Japan. Kengo Kuma and Associates, 2012
S3 **Starbucks Mall of Africa.** Johannesburg, South Africa. Starbucks EMEA, 2016
S4 **Starbucks Reserve Seattle.** Seattle, United States. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2014
S5 **Starbucks Reserve Milan.** Milan, Italy. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
S6 **Starbucks Reserve New York.** New York, United States. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
S7 **Starbucks Reserve Tokyo.** Tokyo, Japan. Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2019

Figure 5.2 Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in alignment with the artefactual analysis

### 5.2.3 Consolidating the occurrence of the techniques for localising retail design for global brands in the data

The frequency of the occurrence of each technique for localising retail design for global brands in the data is summarised in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1** Frequency of the occurrence of the techniques for localising retail design for global brands in the data (interviews and artefacts)

| | Interviews (out of 18) | Artefacts (out of 20) |
|---|---|---|
| **Local creative collaboration** | | |
| a. Appoint local designers | 8 | 15 |
| b. Curate local creativity | 8 | 6 |
| c. Engage local consumer creativity | 3 | 2 |
| **Locally responsive design** | | |
| a. Respond to broad context | 17 | 13 |
| b. Respond to neighbourhood or precinct | 10 | 12 |
| c. Respond to building | 9 | 8 |
| d. Respond to local consumer | 15 | 9 |
| **Local consumer relevant experience** | | |
| a. Evoke local familiarity | 17 | 19 |
| b. Reflect local consumers' values | 12 | 10 |
| c. Elicit experiences for self-expression | 5 | 5 |
| d. Build in responsiveness to brand and local image | 5 | 7 |

This demonstrates that the findings were frequent enough to capture. These are evidence that the theory (strategies for localising retail design for global brands) is grounded in the data.

While the technique of 'engage local consumer creativity' arose the least in the data, it was included in the study findings. This is motivated by:

1. The technique arising in more than one interview case (three times) and more than one artefact (two times), and
2. The technique arising in 16.7% of interview cases and 10% of artefacts.

The following section discusses the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. Thereafter, the application of the strategies and techniques are demonstrated through a reported synthesis of the artefactual analysis for each of the four global brands (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks).

# SECTION 2: STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

This section discusses the strategies and the techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

1. Each strategy for localising retail design is introduced and defined. Their contribution to local authenticity in localised retail design is motivated. 2. Thereafter, the techniques that support the application of the strategies for localising retail design follow. These techniques are substantiated by the interview data, practice-based examples, and the discourse. This is illustrated through descriptions, diagrams, quotes, and visual examples.

## 5.3 STRATEGY 1: LOCAL CREATIVE COLLABORATION

This section describes the strategy of local creative collaboration and its associated techniques.

The strategy of local creative collaboration is defined. The ways in which local creative collaboration contributes to the local authenticity of retail design is discussed. The techniques for applying the strategy of local creative collaboration are elaborated on. These are: Appoint local designers (5.3.1), Curate local creativity (5.3.2), and Engage local consumer creativity (5.3.3).

The strategy of local creative collaboration advocates for a collaborative authorship of retail design that includes the creative voice of local individuals. Depending on the brand, its corporate structures, and the local context, the global brand may employ one or more of the techniques within the strategy of local creative collaboration to localise their retail design. Kent (2007:741) asserts that engaging external parties in retail design process can stimulate creativity and enable a “novel” design outcome.

This form of creative collaboration can be supported by open design. Open design is a philosophy that sees collaboration as an opportunity to promote innovation and equality through design practices (Cruickshank, 2014). The concept of open design is useful in understanding the opportunities for localising retail design for global brands through creative collaboration. Open design asserts that design has evolved from an individual act into a collaborative act, demonstrating a collaborative synthesis of creativity into design (Cruickshank, 2014:11). Cruickshank (2014) asserts that creativity is involved in both the design and making of designed objects. This collaborative form of design improves design outcomes as it involves the creative input of various stakeholders in the design process (Cruickshank, 2014:13).

Edquist and Vaughan (2011:13) speak about the idea of a “design collective” as a collaborative, consensus-seeking approach to design. They believe that the collective should be “grounded in a shared passion or commitment to the practice of design and its social or cultural impact” implying that they have a “shared meaning”. Although they see the assembly of a collective as a “studio”, they acknowledge that the assembly of any particular collective is contextual and may be temporary (Edquist & Vaughan, 2011:13).

Open design advocates for the process of joint efforts towards design as opposed to a singular perspective. Cruickshank (2014:14) argues that the concept of the designer as a “gatekeeper of the means of production” is becoming less relevant and that a new collaborative model of designing improves social equity. He notes that the day of the individual “star designer” is waning.

As a strategy towards differentiating and adding value to retail design, global brands (particularly in the luxury fashion industry) appoint celebrity designers (see world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [d]). Sharma (2017:206) argues that the appointment of a celebrity designer is not mutually exclusive to localising retail design if that designer is a local star designer. Non-luxury global brands may not see it in their budgets to appoint star designers, nor would they benefit from a luxury interior that may repel middle-class consumers.

Local creativity is still of importance. In this case, the brand may either appoint a local designer or they may collaborate with local designers (that is, work with both in-house global brand and local designers). The global brand's internal team must afford creative scope to local collaborators. This approach can enhance authenticity for both the brand and the location as a local designer may provide a creative local voice, while the brand designer ensures brand consistency within the parameters of localising retail design.

It is also plausible to engage local creativity in retail design through the technique of curation. The designer acts as a curator of local creativity: local creative products such as art, craft, furniture, light fittings, materials, and textiles are sourced to bring local creativity to the making of the retail store. These may occur within the parameters of a brand manual of interchangeable in-store elements. For example, every store would require a mural by a local artist. This may aid in managing brand consistency. These local, hand-made, crafted, and designed elements contribute local authenticity to the retail design.

In other cases, the brand can view a consumer as a producer of retail design. Whether this is through creativity engaged in design process, or in the act of inhabiting the design (through experiences requiring product personalisation and interactivity), the creativity of local consumers is a direct way to enhance connection with consumers and to reflect local taste in retail design. The framework for creativity may remain consistent throughout all retail expressions, with consumers providing unique expressions within these. The designer must be instrumental in the framework for creative input from consumers through facilitating participatory design processes.

The strategy of local creative collaboration supports openness to creativity in design through inclusion of creative acts through collaboration between brand designers and local designers, local designers and teams of creative designer-makers (artists, artisans, craftspeople and furniture and product designers), and collaboration between designers and consumers. The aim is to incorporate multiple perspectives and voices on the 'local' in a way that is also cohesive.

Local creative collaboration entails the following techniques:

- Appoint local designers
- Curate local creativity
- Engage local consumer creativity

These are discussed below.

## 5.3.1 Technique 1: Appoint local designers

In order to localise retail design, global brands may opt to appoint local designers. The presence of local designers in the creative process of design can assist the global brand to localise retail design in an authentic way. This is because local designers possess the cultural knowledge required in order to design for local consumption, indicating shared meaning between the producer and consumer of space (Kent, 2007:735).

#### 5.3.1.1 Designer types working on localised retail design

Global brands appoint designer types according to the strategic purpose of their retail design. In localised retail design, brands can work with in-house designers that involve local representation, local design agencies, small to medium-sized regional design firms, and/or high profile designers).

The ways in which these designers work for global brands are described below:

1. In house brand design with local representation

Global brands may have internal design teams who work on retail design. They are employed directly by the brand. The team could be a global design team, tasked with generating and implementing concepts across the globe (for example, Nike), or may be split into regional teams tasked with retail design and implementation in different parts of the world (for example, Starbucks has a dedicated team that designs stores in the Europe, Middle East, and Africa [EMEA] regions). Some brands assemble teams of locals to oversee the design implementation as projects roll out in specific locations.

These considerations can assist mediation between brands, designers, and locations. In-house brand designers may be preferred as they can uphold brand consistency due to their intimate knowledge and understanding of that brand. For localised retail design, global brands may appoint an external team to generate a new concept for the brand in a particular location. Thereafter, the in-house team proceed with roll-out in the region.

The global brand may take a collaborative approach to design, using both in-house design teams and local designers. Aesop, for example, appoints external designers to collaborate on the design of retail stores. External designers work with the in-house team to generate creative ideas for the retail design.

2. Design agencies

This is a commercial design firm that employs many designers to conduct work for large commercial clients. For example, Dalziel & Pow is a design agency based in the United Kingdom doing work for Twining, VW, Primark and more. These design agencies may be global, with regional based design teams in different locations (for example, global design agency, Gensler, has offices across the globe, conducting work in various regions of the world. These design agencies contribute a strategic approach to design, grounded in research. At times, the brand may appoint a global design agency that has the proven infrastructure and resources to manage a global brand client.

3. Small to medium-sized regional design firms

These are small to medium sized practices conducting work for brands in the region in which retail stores are implemented. At times, these firms are appointed to adapt existing global store designs according to local legislation, the availability of materials, and the competence of construction in the region. The creative scope offered may be reduced. These designers may work alongside the global brand's in-house designers for the 'implementation' phase of the project. These designers contribute brand management and implementation of retail stores for the global brand. In order to localise retail design, these firms should be appointed to provide creative and conceptual input into retail design processes.

4. High-profile local designers

High-profile designers are designers who are globally acclaimed and are sought after for their particular point of view by brands. An example is *Estudio Campana* who have been appointed to work with brands, Louis Vuitton, Aesop and Fendi. These designers contribute a creative approach to design, informed by their personal style and perspectives, while adding value through their name and association with the global brand. Global brands see the appointment of high profile designers as a strategy to express differentiation, value and exclusivity through retail design. The media attention associated with the high profile designer is paired with the brand, supporting its expression of exclusivity and prestige (Quartier, 2011:54). The appointment of high profile designers on retail design projects occurs in the luxury fashion industry (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]; Sharma, 2017:206).

Star architects, celebrity designers, or high-profile designers are compatible with localising retail design, should the designer have a local connection and draw from their local heritage for design inspiration.

5. Appointment of differing designers

Global brands can also work with different designers for different store designs. By changing the choice of designer, the brand ensures renewed creative perspectives and variety in their store design, avoiding a formulaic or standardised tendency of retail design. In the cases of Dolce & Gabbana and Aesop, both brands worked with a few designers on multiple stores. Dolce & Gabbana have worked with Gwenael Nicolas of Curiosity on stores in Aoyama, Miami, and London and with Carbondale in Milan and Rome (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a*. [c]). The brand benefits from the variety of perspectives offered by their designers while also benefitting from the designer's experience and familiarity with working with the brand. This ensures a consistent standard of design across multiple stores.

#### 5.3.1.2 Localised retail design and global designer positionalities

The global brand can be instrumental in posing threats of cultural dilution through their presence in non-global centres (Sharma, 2017:201-202). Global brands possess agency that stems from a globalised value system that is accepted as a universal norm (Sharma, 2017:201). Localisation requires counteraction and challenge of these values in order to open access to the global brand. This is while ensuring that the brand does not perpetuate the cultural harms that can occur with globalisation (cultural dilution, homogenisation, and dominance) (Sharma, 2017:202).

While globalisation may imply universal values, the globalised system leans towards Western and Eurocentric values, which tend to decentre local perspectives in non-Western and non-European cultural and geographic contexts (Grand, 2013:69). Global brands originating from Western and European cultural contexts uphold these values in the conception of their identities and risk perpetuating cultural dominance, homogenisation and dilution when spreading throughout the world (Sharma, 2017:202). Retail design for global brands becomes a channel through which brands can communicate through the lens of local culture and take an approach that facilitates cultural exchange (Sharma, 2017:208). The author or designer of the retail design is instrumental in the process of translating global and local capital for the local consumer. Designers' positionality plays an important role.

A designer's positionality can be understood as the norms, views, ideals, and perspectives of the designer(s) as an integral informant to how they design and what they design. Fox *et al.* (2020:6) explain that designers' positionality can affect the design product: "…the relations that enter into the formation of design interventions and the ways that a designer's situation affects the matter of the designs" (Fox *et al*., 2020:6). They advocate that working with positionality "entails a reflexive analysis of personal history, cultural status and power differentials—aspects of our identities that mark relational positions rather than essential qualities" (Fox *et al*., 2020:6).

They see that positionality can be addressed through awareness of the social frameworks within which designers operate. They believe that reflexivity over positionality can enable a form of design activism, in which designers can operate from activist perspectives (such as feminism) (Fox *et al.*, 2020:6-8). They recognise that designers possess agency in processes of cultural production and that this production occurs "within systems of power and capital that in many ways shape its culture and practices" (Fox *et al*., 2020:9).

The designer's own identity and intersection of identities play a role in their ability to understand and design for the lived experience of others. The perception of designer and user as one and 'Other' contribute to the problems associated with designer positionality (Fox *et al*., 2020). The overlap between the designer's own identity and that of the consumer is favourable as it indicates a compatibility in values that can transcend into design.

Königk (2015:280-281) describes this overlap in cultural capital as “circumstantial selection” where an intersection between the identities of the designer and inhabitant of interior spaces can enable a compatibility between the intended and understood meaning of space. In the case of localised retail design, an alignment between the identities of designers and consumers are an indicator of positionality, and a precursor to the making of appropriate meaning through retail design. A local retail designer is more able to draw on local cultural capital and translate this in ways that can resonate closely with local consumers than a non-local designer.

Designer positionality is linked to the selection, prioritisation, and omission of cultural capital. A local designer in non-global, non-Western and non-European cultural contexts is of importance in mitigating the risks for cultural harm. Since design is a cultural product, and designers are cultural intermediaries, local designers offer the brand a unique ability to translate global brand identities in localised ways that are appropriate to the local consumer (Khan, 2021:182).

If the designer bears distant relation to the local context, they may not be able to draw from and translate local capital in an appropriate way. Their access to local cultural capital may be limited to tourist-orientated perceptions of a region or naive perceptions of local cultural systems resulting in superficial design expressions. Fox *et al.*’s (2020) suggested practices of reflection on positionality is needed. This is reliant on the designer’s ability to exert critical thinking, non-judgment of the local consumer and discretion in considering localising retail design. Non-local positionality can mean misunderstanding, misinterpretation and appropriation of local cultural capital in the process of localising retail design (Khan, 2021:182-183).

The risks are to perpetuate misconceptions of the location on a global stage and to offend local consumers through appropriation and/or misappropriation of local meaning (Khan, 2021:182). The global designer may be reflective in order to move towards further strategies or techniques of localising of retail design whether this is through authorship, and/or informants, and/or inhabitation processes. For example, a designer may diffuse their positionality by employing the techniques of curation of local creativity and/or engaging consumers in creativity to ensure local authorship of the localised retail design in an effort to enhance its authenticity.

Starbucks, for example, is a global brand originating from the United States of America. While the brand produces design from an in-house design team, they have regional-dedicated in-house design teams and employ techniques of curating local creativity in their retail design. This ensures that retail design authorship is collaborative and includes local representation (Alaali & Vines, 2020). *Starbucks Indiranagar* (Figure 5.3) is an example of localised retail design authored by the Starbucks regional design team that includes local representation.


Figure 5.3 Starbucks Indiranagar, Bangalore, India designed by the Starbucks regional design team (stories.starbucks.com, 2014a)

A non-local perspective can imbue the design with layered meaning. An example of the appointment of a non-local designer for localised retail design is Aesop's appointment of Frida Escobedo, a Mexican designer. Escobedo is valued by the brand for her unique "ability to construct, interrogate and reimagine a story from the built environment" (Down & Paphitis, 2019:250). Although Escobedo is Mexican, she has designed multiple retail stores for the brand. Particularly of interest was Escobedo's design of *Aesop Park Slope*[7] in Brooklyn, New York, in which she used a red Oxacan earth brick that was sourced from Mexico and fired by an artisan in that region (Cogley, 2019a).

Escobedo intended to raise dialogue on the idea of a material that fits in so well with the local context of Brooklyn (as the brick tiles resembled the iconic historic brownstone houses of this district), yet came from so far away (Escobedo in Cogley, 2019a). The meaning within the design is reflective of designer's deliberate awareness of their positionality. The alternative (non-local) positionality of a designer can lead to design expressions that offer alternative design prospects.

Figure 5.4 Aesop Park Slope uses red Oxacan earth bricks that reference the brownstone houses in the region. The bricks are sourced from the designer's home country, Mexico (Cogley, 2019a).

Due to their unique cultural framework, the non-local designer may be able to select mismatched meaning (following Königk, 2015:280-281) that can be deliberately ambiguous, multi-faceted, and thought provoking for consumers in globally-dominant contexts. Design may take on a role of social and political commentary. While this can offer refreshing perspectives through retail design, in globally dominant contexts, it can also reflect on a global brand's efforts towards representation in their selection of designers from various locations.

A condition for localising retail design through local creative collaboration is in affording creative scope to local designers. This means that the local designers should be appointed from the onset of the project for the concept generation of the retail design. This creative scope allows the designers the opportunity to mediate local capital and translate this to retail design. While global brands may work in-house on the global store concept and appoint local designers for project implementation (the preparation of drawings, adaptation of design for local legislation and overseeing construction) in the local context, this role does not offer creative scope for the local designer to significantly offer a local perspective through the retail design.

The extent to which local designers can add value in localising retail design is therefore related to the extent of creative freedom offered. At times, global brands may limit creative scope. The local retail designer may experience a limited opportunity to enhance a local impact through retail design. For example, Respondent 2 identified an opportunity to carve out some creative scope in the detailing process and incomplete brand documentation in their retail design project for a global brand. However, this did not significantly localise retail design as the look and feel of the retail store remained similar to the global store concept.

[7] See Artefact A5 in Appendix D

The respondent approached the scope as an opportunity for innovation within the constraints of local materials and shopfitting technology. Respondent 12 spoke about their appointment to work with an American fast food brand that would be entering Australia. When asked about the scope, they responded that it would be "copy-paste" and that adaptation was limited to the opposite flow of vehicular traffic in Australia. This would necessitate mirroring floor layouts for retail design. They foresee this as the extent of adaptation to the retail design in the local context. Both cases offered limited scope for the mediation of local cultural capital and their translation to a localised retail design. Collaborating optimally with local designers in localising retail design is therefore dependent on the creative scope assigned to the local designer.

A global brand that addresses this balance between in-house design and local authorship is Aesop. The brand works with both their in-house design team and external designers to imbue local creativity in the design project. The brand's design approach is collaborative, allowing a continued process of consensus building between design-collaborator and the in-house design department (Down & Paphitis, 2019:171). This ensures that the creative input is sought from a local designer while the in-house design team ensures brand expertise is represented. This approach ensures a mediation between global brand and local authenticity.

Although Aesop does not always collaborate with local designers, their strategies for localising retail design include locally responsive design (see 5.4) as a measure that ensures a continued localised retail design portfolio (see Appendix D). In instances where designers contribute to the initiative of localising retail design without creative scope, this may be more aligned with the signature style of the designer than the brand strategy itself. The brand sees a strategy of collaborating with high profile designers as an act of differentiation rather than localised retail design itself (Quartier, 2011:54).

For example, global brand Camper presents differing store designs across different locations. Although the brand does promote brand interest due to variety of their retail design, the brand's strategy is not necessarily to localise nor is the creative scope defined according to location. Instead, the brand's emphasis on creativity and diversity in retail design provides scope for their high profile designers to act within their discretion and individual perspectives on reflecting the spirit of creativity on which the brand is founded (Koivu, 2015:260).

This results in a collection of stores that may have more or less connection to location, but do not reflect an overall brand initiative to localise its retail design. These allow the designer to take an individual approach to design using their creative discretion.

### 5.3.2 Technique 2: Curate local creativity

> *"…how can you be truly authentic instead of designing and kind of generating an aesthetic just as one designer, you call on all voices. So, and that means that you are curating."* – Respondent 16

The technique of curating local creativity involves the selection, appointment, and curation of local creative partners, goods, and programmes in retail design. As described by Teufel & Zimmermann (2015:42-44), authenticity is determined by how unique and scalable an object is. If it is less reproducible, it is more authentic. Within the context of retail design for global brands, roll-outs are a threat to the authenticity of retail design (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:42) since stores are mass-produced, diminishing their unique value. By including non-mass-produced, local creative goods in a retail design, authenticity of the retail store may be enhanced in both originality and scalability. Within the brand's broader network of retail stores across the globe, the local versions signify 'limited edition' retail stores that communicate increased value (following Koivu, 2015).

The process of layering retail spaces with objects produced by local creatives contributes to the authenticity of the design through the object; the making of the object; the grouping of objects (into an ensemble); and multiple creatives involved in the making of the objects. Figure 5.5 depicts the ways in which authenticity can be enhanced through curation of local goods for retail design. The photographs in the image illustrate these four principles of authenticity through the journey of product designer Thabisa Mjo.

- **OBJECT:** Tutu 2.0 light by Nando's Young Hot Designer winner, Thabisa Mjo;
- **MAKING OF THE OBJECT**: Thabisa Mjo's pendant being made by hand;
- **VARIETY OF OBJECTS:** Nando's interior composed of various elements sourced from various creative collaborators; and
- **MULTIPLE CREATIVES**: The Hlabisa bench, a collaborative project conducted between designer Thabisa Mjo, furniture designer, Houtlander, and weaver, Beauty Ngxongo.

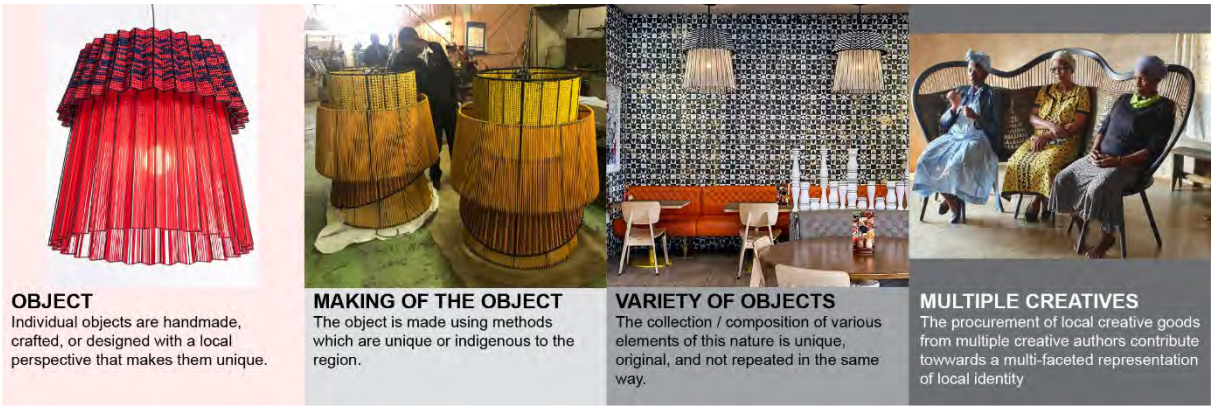



Figure 5.5 Ways in which authenticity can be conveyed through curation. Image credits: 1. Russell Scott (Tutu 2.0) (Mashtdesignstudio.com, s.a.). 2. Mash.t – Deconstructed (Mashtdesignstudio.com, s.a.). 3. Nando's casa design by Studio Leelynch, pattern by Agrippa Hlophe Afro Ink designs and the Tutu.02 light by Thabisa Mjo. Photograph by Elsa Young. 4. Brett Rubin (Hlabisa bench) (Mashtdesignstudio.com, s.a.)

Depending on the global brand's intention with the inclusion of local creativity in retail design, the creative elements may work with the retail programme. This involves obtaining creative elements that possess utility and aesthetic characteristics that make up a retail space within the framework of its primary function (for example wall cladding, lighting elements, and furniture pieces). Retail design can be enhanced by a curation of locally produced creative goods (craft, materials, furnishing, *etc.*).

The process of making also plays a role in the understanding of the completed product. For example, South African originating global hospitality brand Nando's (known for its flame-grilled chicken) practices the technique of curation of local creativity in order to enhance the authenticity of local identity in retail design (Campus Party, 2020). They manage brand consistency by ensuring exchanges of locally procured goods each time. This includes furniture, light fittings, materials, patterns and artworks in the space. The spaces always reflect the craft-inspired, patterned, and textural atmosphere that reinforces the brand's consistency (Campus Party, 2020).

Figure 5.6 Nando's Rosettenville. 2020 (designed by Studio Lee Lynch) showcases a variety of locally designed elements procured from local creatives using materials that have distinctive local identity (Leelynch.co.za, s.a.)

The brand maintains consistency through an online portal of goods, which may be specified by retail designers for further Nando's stores (Campus Party, 2020). The curation of these identified elements result in a uniquely composed retail design. *Nando's Rosetenville* is an example of retail design showcasing a curation of locally designed products (see Figure 5.6).

Nando's design is a curation of locally produced elements that may be changed on a store-by-store basis. This means that localised retail design exhibits both local identity and brand consistency through the measure of curation of local creative goods. Königk (2015:91), describes these goods as "taste goods" which imbue spaces with unique identity while conveying cultural messages and meaning. The meaning conveyed through the curation of local taste goods is one of local identity, which reinforce and re-inform local taste (following Königk, 2015:91).

Including local creativity through curation can occur as an additional aspect to the retail design. This involves procuring creative elements that offer additional experiential value within a space and can offer an independent programme or attraction within the retail design. This means that retail design can become a space that deliberately associates with local creativity through showcase by offering a stand-alone experience of locally curated creative artefacts that are independent of the retail programme. This is a direct association between brand and local creativity. *Vans Covent Garden* (see Figure 5.7) demonstrates this measure.


Figure 5.7 Vans Covent Garden, 2019 (designed by Vans in collaboration with KesselsKramer) includes an exhibition programme for local emerging artists in addition to the retail programme (Lindsay, 2019)

In *Van's Covent Garden*, the retail designers allocated a second programme to the retail design: a space for temporary exhibitions of art and sculpture by emerging local artists. As the "first Vans boutique store in Europe" (Lindsay, 2019), the retail design offers a broader brand statement than product alone. The offering of local creativity is a constant process of curation of local art, and artists, creating temporal experiences for the local consumer, encouraging return visits and continuous activation of the space.

This measure of applying the strategy of local creative collaboration in the store design has an explicit aesthetic outcome in the store design. It may engage consumers in experiential ways that draw direct attention to the creativity or it may be integral to the primary spatial function of retail design. The global brand finds benefit in collaboration with local creatives. The inclusion of curated elements from local creative parties contribute to the local identity of a retail store. Curation affords authenticity to the retail design. The following examples demonstrate different ways in which curation can be used to enhance authenticity of retail design.

Gentle Monster is a South Korean originating global eyewear brand that approaches retail design as a space of exhibition. Gentle Monster's stores are a display of unique and whimsical installations that draw visitors in as a stand-alone attraction. The *Gentle Monster Shanghai Flagship Store* (see Figure 5.8) features installations of various sculptures, celebrating the textural qualities of materials. Each store is unique, offering a new experience of creativity through art (Angelopoulou, 2019).

This form of curation sees the balance of spatial programme afforded to exhibition over retail design. The inclusion of sculpture and unique installation pieces communicate a limited edition value for the brand, where merchandise becomes associated with the originality of art and sculpture, lending authenticity to the brand's identity.


Figure 5.8 Gentle Monster Shanghai, 2019 (designed in-house under Hanook Kim) demonstrates an integration of retail and sculpture without deliberate spatial distinctions (Angelopoulou, 2019)

Collaboration with local creatives can also occur through the integration of local traditional and cultural practices in the making of the retail design. Traditional, vernacular and indigenous methods of making may be preserved as cultural heritage that adds local meaning to spaces. In *Starbucks Reserve Milan*[8], local artisans were appointed for the creation of a traditional hand-laid terrazzo floor using local marble (see Figure 5.9). Starbucks celebrated the flooring through videos about the artisans and their installation practices on their *YouTube* channel. The global brand invested in a local tradition, while documenting the process helps spotlight, and document the cultural practice. Respondent 10 talked about the design:

> *"… they very much utilise their existing traditions and existing craftsmen that; crafts people I should say, and crafts women as well you know; crafts people that exist to execute these things.."* – Respondent 10

Figure 5.9 Starbucks Reserve Milan, 2018 (designed by Liz Muller of Starbucks Global) has a Palladiana terrazzo floor, constructed by local artisans using traditional techniques (stories.starbucks.com, 2018a.)

In order to be eligible for inclusion in retail design, curated pieces must uphold the quality and standards associated with the global brand. The retail designer bears the responsibility of sourcing and verifying the quality and performance of these unique curated products. This requires more effort than conventional catalogue specification practices.

[8] See Artefact S5 in Appendix D.

These collaborations require:

- Designer vision – identifying the potential of craft or design ideas to evolve into a retail design element that fits with the brand;
- Collaboration skills – communicating design vision in effective, respectful and collaborative ways;
- "Patient procurement" – taking time to work through prototypes before the final product is ready; and
- Technical knowledge – prediction of the performance of elements that have not been previously prototyped and/or used in commercial applications.

Designers may face challenges with guaranteeing the performance of these products due to their one of a kind and custom-made nature or due to the degree of formality of the collaborator's setup.

#### 5.3.2.1 Relationships between global brands and local creatives

Local creative parties may also benefit from contributing to localised retail design for the global brand. The act of curation of goods from local artists, craftspeople, designer-makers, and more, offers an opportunity and platform to local collaborators through association with the global brand. This can, in turn, benefit the local economy and spotlight local creativity on a global stage.

It is important for relationships between global brands, retail designers, and creative collaborators to be professional, respectful, and nurturing. As consumers hold brands accountable for their social and environmental impact, socially responsible practices are necessary to retain a favourable brand reputation. Fair practices in collaboration with local creatives pertain to respect for intellectual property, credit for authorship, working conditions, and fair compensation.

Global brands can act above this to become advocates for local design, by supporting the development of local creativity through initiatives such as competitions, mentorship programmes, and providing publicity for creative collaborators.

Respondents 18a and 18b, for example, are a high-profile design team that generate their own design products with a distinctive point of view that is expressed from the perspective of their local heritage. The team take a stance on ethical collaboration:

> *"We are strong supporters of small businesses and communities of artisans that keep these local cultures alive. Beyond that, we always put the spotlight on the people behind our projects. Cultural appropriation is a very unfair way of treating the guardians of what makes a place or an object special. It's part of this sustainable design production chain that needs to be inclusive to work. Denying the roots of a project of this nature is like removing a piece of a puzzle. It leaves a void, a gap. People need to be credited and compensated for their talent, regardless of how tiny they are. It's our responsibility to open new avenues of work for them and help them live from their craft."* – Respondents 18a & 18b

Nando's, for example, hosts an annual design competition to elicit new design responses for their stores (Brown, 2018). The competition provides opportunities for aspiring designers to take a shot at proposing a design (Brown, 2018). Competition winners gain an opportunity to cultivate their careers in the product design industry with mentorship to develop and prototype their design entries alongside Nando's designers (Brown, 2018). The brand does not own copyrights of collaborators' work and view collaboration as an opportunity to showcase South African design (Lee Lynch in Bailey & Scott-Clarke 2019).

The brand's competition winners have succeeded to further their careers beyond their initial gains with Nando's. For example, Thabisa Mjo, a previous winner of the Nando's Young Hot Designer competition has seen the growth of her career beyond the competition. Her design of the Tutu 2.0 light, which won the Young Hot Designer competition, went on to win Design Indaba's most beautiful object (Campus Party South Africa, 2020). Thabisa Mjo also collaborated with Nando's to design 'sacrosanct' (see Figure 5.10). This was a dwelling that was exhibited at Milan design fair. The piece contained a curation of multiple works from South African designers, showcasing South African emerging talent including Mjo's Tutu 2.0 light (Campus Party South Africa, 2020).

Figure 5.10 Sacrosanct at Milan Design Fair, 2019 (designed by Nando's). Image on the right includes Mjo's Tutu2.0 light design (Fisher, 2019).

Tulsha Booysen, who was also a finalist in the Young Hot Designer competition, had the opportunity to install her CanBeam lighting design in Nando's Chicago (see Figure 5.11). The designer publicly stated her appreciation for the opportunity and the doors that her collaboration with Nando's opened for her (Booysen in McCann, 2018).

Figure 5.11 Tulsha Booysens' Canbeam installation, 2018 in Nando's Chicago (McCann, 2018).

Global brands have the potential to make a social contribution to collaborators by offering a global platform and channels for growth in their craft. The global brand simultaneously benefits from an authentic local identity in retail design.

### 5.3.3 Technique 3: Engage local consumers in creativity

Engaging local consumers in creativity involves consumers in acts of creative contribution to the retail store design, whether this in the design or in the inhabitation of the store. Engaging consumers in creativity may or may not include principles of co-creation. Co-creation is the process whereby consumers are contributors to design processes for objects they will consume (Trischler *et al.*, 2018:75). Co-creation is conventionally limited to the early stages of a design process. Co-design, on the other hand, involves consumers throughout the design process (Trischler *et al.*, 2018:75).

Consumer creativity therefore includes processes of co-creation and co-design but is not limited to these practices. Consumer creativity may be sought during the design process, and/or during inhabitation of the space. Engaging consumers in creativity requires the designer to assume a role as a facilitator and to act as a designer of frameworks and systems that enable and catalyse creative acts from consumers. This may or may not involve the presence of the designer when creative acts are exerted. It may require the facilitation of other stakeholders (for example in store staff may need to guide creative acts that occur during store use, or consumers interact with each other when the creative act is social, or consumer scientists work with consumers when consumers research occurs).

Following Vargo and Lusch's (2006) concept of the "service-dominant logic" and Pine and Gilmore's (2011 [1999]) concept of the "experience economy", the consumer's motivation to shop favours experience over utility. This is an established argument in the retail design discourse. Experiential value can be activated by eliciting consumer's creative participation in the retail store. Since consumers align with brands as acts of self-expression, the flexibility of the global brand in encompassing consumer creative input represents an act of "open design" (Cruickshank, 2014:13) assigning ownership and authority over the retail design to local consumers (Khan, 2021:187). Consumer acts of creativity may be provided once off, in stages, or on a continuous basis. These may be permanent or temporary.

Consumer creativity may be engaged in the design process and/or inhabitation of the retail store. These two instances are elaborated on below.

#### 5.3.3.1 Local consumer creativity in the design process

Consumers can be engaged in decision-making processes during the design process prior to use. According to Binder *et al.* (2008) this process is known as "participatory design".

The success of engaging consumers in creative design decision-making during the design process is dependent on the design and facilitation of the process, as well as the discretion and experience of the facilitator of the process. The creative scope offered to consumers in this process may be limited and the outcome may be open to interpretation by the facilitator or designer. Respondent 7 reinforced the idea of discretion and discussed the ideal attributes of the designer/researcher in processes of involving consumers in the design process:

> *"I've seen, there was the kind of spread of design thinking and everyone saying that they could do it, and, actually not everyone can do it. It needs to be facilitated by a design thinker and what I mean by that is, they are analytical and insightful, empathetic towards consumers, towards the customer. But they also know how to design. They know how to create something out of the insight. A lot of people can be great at the research, but they can't create anything out of it and that's not what design thinking is. You have to create something out of the insight. So, that's another thing which can be a success or failure. The other thing is if you listen too much to customers, you're going to be dead in the market, because they don't know what they want really. So, it's really getting that balance between what's useful and what's limiting."* – Respondent 7

#### 5.3.3.2 Local consumer creativity during inhabitation

Consumer creativity can be encouraged during the inhabitation stage of the design's lifecycle. Kent (2007:742) advocates for this practice as a source of "sensory engagement, social and interactive spaces" that are a form of "co-creativity between retailer and consumer".

The visibility of consumer creativity and a continued spatial transformation as a result of this creativity invokes a dynamic experiential loop in the retail design. Active participation requires consumers' direct creative engagement in the retail store. Several examples of consumer creativity are described below.

The sneaker customisation area (called *Nike By You*) in *Nike House of Innovation 001*[9] Shanghai demonstrates consumers in acts of creativity. Consumers are able to select sneakers and personalise these in the do-it-yourself area in the store (News.nike.com, 2018b). The participation of consumers in this act of creativity is exposed. The visibility of creative participation can inspire other consumers to engage in these acts.

Figure 5.12 Nike House of Innovation 001 Shanghai, 2018 (designed by Nike Global) (News.nike.com, 2018b)

Martí Guixé's design of the Camper *Walk in Progr*ess concept (see Figure 5.13) is an example of creativity sought by consumers in the inhabitation of the retail store. Consumers fill in the walls in a graffiti style using red markers in store. As a form of participatory design, the store design allows a visible progressive experience of consumer creativity (Koivu, 2015:240-1). This assigns originality to the store in aesthetics (as no two stores will have the same markings) and experience (the consumer experiences a different version of the same store, due to the addition of new markings, each time they return). In this case, the *Walk in Progress* concept can be reproduced with original results each time being filled by different consumers, making unique marks. Allowing this appropriation by consumers shifts the consumer into a state of "prosumption" (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015:224).The act of imbuing creativity into store design reinforces a consumer connection specific to the store and consumers in the location.

Figure 5.13 Camper Walk in Progress Concept, 2001 (designed by Martí Guixé). Photographs by: Tatiana Roza (2009) and Albyantoniazzi (2008)

Estudio Campana's *Torn Leftovers* concept for Camper invites consumers to interact with the walls by tearing off pieces of recycled billboard wall material assembled by the Campanas (Koivu, 2015:274; Fairs, 2007a).

[9] See Artefact N2 in Appendix D.

As new layers are pulled away, the walls reveal unique, three-dimensional textures guided by the consumer's interactions (Koivu, 2015:274-5). This results in an installation that is authentic in its static state and authentic in the experience it provides as the forms, shapes, and layers evolve each time the paper is pulled away (see Figure 5.14).

Figure 5.14 Camper Torn Leftovers Berlin, 2006 (by Estudio Campanas). Photograph by Lamhkczbb (2009)

Consumer creativity can also be demonstrated in ways that are more passive. This could mean that consumer creativity is curated and reflected in the retail design (for example, demonstrating consumers' social media posts demonstrating the brand's product use in retail stores).

Key to employing the technique of enabling consumer creativity is the designer's framework to guide the process of eliciting, managing, interpreting and reflecting the outcome. This should be done in ways that enhance the retail experience, are accessible (legibly communicated) and work within a cohesive whole.

By engaging consumers in acts of creativity that contribute to retail design, consumers become direct informants to retail design. Since processes of inhabitation are synonymous with identity construction, the expression of consumers in creative acts supports a loop of self-definition and identification within the brand's domain. This indicates a shift in roles: consumers become "prosumers" (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015) in retail design, contributing local authenticity to the brand. This process empowers consumers as they are represented in the retail design process and product, both as consumers and producers of space. Inhabitation communicates local consumer identity and reflects creativity while enhancing the local authenticity of the design.

### 5.3.4 Summarising the strategy of local creative collaboration

This section described the strategy of local creative collaboration. This strategy for localising retail design requires that authorship of retail design have local representation, particularly for creative aspects of the retail design. This enhances local authenticity of retail design, since the positionality of local retail designers, creatives, and consumers can enable authentic local representation in the retail design. The techniques for applying the strategy of local creative collaboration were discussed. These were appoint local designers, curate local creativity, and engage local consumers in creativity. The application of these techniques were demonstrated. The following section describes the strategy of locally responsive design.

## 5.4 STRATEGY 2: LOCALLY RESPONSIVE DESIGN

This section describes the strategy of locally responsive design and its associated techniques.

The strategy of locally responsive design is defined. The ways in which this strategy contributes to the local authenticity of retail design is discussed. The techniques for applying the strategy of locally responsive design are elaborated on. These are: Respond to broad context (5.4.1), Respond to neighbourhood or precinct (5.4.2), respond to building (5.4.3), and Respond to local consumer (5.4.4).

The second strategy for localising retail design for global brands is locally responsive design and pertains to the informant category that emerged from the data analysis. Location plays an important role in informing localised retail design for global brands. It directly informs the expression of location, and in turn, consumers' inhabitation experiences of localised retail design. During the informants process, designers identify sources that will inform the design, gather information, process this information (through synthesis, analysis); and conceptualise design expressions on this basis. The process of working with informants can range from the pragmatic and analytical to the intuitive and creative, involving subjective and objective decision-making (Lu & Liu, 2011:161).

As all design projects present unique parameters (including the designer), no specific approach is advocated for as design is a subjective response in which multiple expressions are possible and viable. This approach is explained by a hermeneutic perspective on localised retail design.

Settembre-Blundo *et al.* (2018) assert that brand management entails the creation of a brand identity that conveys meaning, which consumers internalise and express as "self-concepts" (their own definition of identity). The authors view this creation of brand identity as a "hermeneutic" practice. Hermeneutic practice is the creation of meaning based on the interpretation of the shared experiences of a society (Settembre-Blundo *et al.*, 2018). In the design discourse, hermeneutics is well established in the field of place-making.

Hermeneutics sees three main categories: "'authorial intention', 'horizon of expectations', and 'reader response and reception'" (Hatch & Rubin, 2006:41). The authorial intention is the intended meaning, horizon of expectation is the field in which the meaning is based and derived from, and reader response and reception is the interpretation of this meaning (Hatch & Rubin, 2006:41). In the case of retail design, the retail space becomes a device with which to communicate meaning to consumers. The principles of hermeneutics can be applied to retail design and is a useful device with which to localise retail design. Designers can work in the informants phase to derive meaning from the horizon of expectation (the location), establish the intended meaning through retail design and translate this through expressions in the retail design.

Consumers' perceptions and interpretation of this local meaning and its alignment to the designer's intended meaning closes a hermeneutic cycle in the retail design project. Settembre-Blundo *et al.* (2018) recommend an additional step after "reader response and reception" which they call "new understanding". They advocate that the design be adapted and revised according to the changing of meaning over time in building of the brand (Settembre-Blundo, 2018).

Localised retail design for global brands bear an automatic compatibility to this additional step. Since changes in location may signify changes in culture, values, identities and ideals, the hermeneutic cycle requires new intended inputs of meaning that are derived from the "horizon of expectation" that signify shared meaning in a particular region. This motivates not only an adaptation of retail design from location to location, but also within individual retail design expressions.

*Nike Live*[10] for example, accommodates this sense of adaptation according to changing context of meaning. The retail concept allows the adaptation of layout, services, and product according to purchase data and feedback derived from the brand's loyalty app (see Figure 5.15). Data is derived from consumers in the store's region (News.nike.com, 2019). This indicates a continued opportunity for design modifications according to the changing tastes of local consumers.

[10] See Artefact N1 in Appendix D.

Figure 5.15 Nike Live, conceived in 2018 (by Nike Global) is an example of a retail concept that accommodates adapted horizon of expectation through meta design informed by consumer taste (News.nike.com, 2019)

In retail design, the concept of hermeneutics is relevant to the informant stage. Designers observe the field of horizon to identify appropriate sources of meaning. They then process these informants through analysis and interpretation. Finally, they express these through design measures intended to resonate with the local consumer on shared platforms of meaning. As a condition for this process of meaning making, Königk (2015) advocates for circumstantial selection: an overlap in the designer and occupants' identities. This is to align the intended and interpreted meanings in interior design. When applied to localised retail design, this circumstantial selection can be considered as the appointment of local designers with a shared identity with target consumers.

This is discussed within the strategy of local creative collaboration. The role of observing the field of horizon, interpreting this, and translating this into design points to the importance of informants in the retail design process. of location as an informant require.

The mediation between both local and brand capital is necessary in order to ensure that retail design is authentic (as discussed in Chapter 4). Respondent 15a referred to their approach to mediating brand and local capital:

> *"... these ideas, they don't exist anywhere within the core [BRAND 1] brand. So that then became the interesting challenge is, are these compatible with the core of [BRAND 1's] brand. Some might be more compatible than others and what happens when you blend the two different influences. The influences coming from the location with the global influences coming from the brand itself"* – Respondent 15a

Local authenticity is reliant on a designer's discretion to mediate between the brand and location. This discretion plays a role in the sourcing of informants, their processing and their expression through retail design. Designer discretion is a consistent precondition for all design projects, regardless of the programme or function.

While design occurs on a spectrum of subjective to objective decision-making (Lu & Liu, 2011:161-164), the process of deriving "informants" requires a grounding of subjective expression of design in data on the local context. This is in order to generate a contemporary design outcome rooted in the study of informants, rigour in processing, and the creativity of design expression.

However, localised retail design may provide more risk areas for subjective interpretation due to the sensitive meaning of 'local' in local contexts. Designer discretion can influence the authenticity of working with local informants. The selection of informants can contribute towards a constructive or destructive approach to localising retail design. When selecting informants, designers should question what the informing artefact, resource or entity could mean in the context of the region and the globe. In a conventional visit to the region, the global designer may view the local context through the perspective of a tourist over a local. The tourist perspective of location and the local perspective of location may be different.

Further, since localised retail design is an artefact for the global brand, and displayed on the global stage, the portrayal of location should be considered. A tourist's representation may lack authenticity and contribute to inauthentic perceptions of place, which may contribute to a negative reputation for the brand.

Respondent 3 spoke about the impact of stereotyping local culture through retail design:

> *"…if you are actually in the country and you then say well, here's an African store and we give you that and we're saying that is African… It might be insulting you know; I think you might lose customers during that..."* – Respondent 3

Designers should be able to distinguish between their own preconceptions and that of local consumers. This requires mindfulness of tourist and local perceptions of location when sourcing informants and expressing these in localised retail design. Informants may be selected based on their beauty, frequency, landmark qualities or photogenic character in the local context. Positioning the informant in the broader context of the location and in the context of designer positionality is important.

> *"…we put a page in like what not to do, this is what to avoid. So it was like, you know, avoid the cliché, don't put, you know, just because it's Amsterdam it's not about clogs, you know. And let's not be overly literal"* – Respondent 15b

Some local sources of inspiration may hold contention. For example, in pre-colonised contexts, colonial artefacts are intertwined with local place. While these may appear prominently in the local context, they may have negative connotations associated with displacement and exploitation (Kiewit, 2020). They also originate from Western contexts, distancing them from authentic local associations. The symbolism of these artefacts may trigger negative social responses deeming these an unsuitable informant to localising retail design.

Processing informants requires design discernment: what does the designer decide is worth emulating, creating or integrating through design expression? Respondent 15b referred to this act of discretion exercised by the designer:

> *"…you apply a filter of sort of design, judgement and taste I suppose, to go, you know, this is cool and that's probably not cool."* – Respondent 15b

The informant and the positionality of the designer are crucial. If the designer is drawing from local heritage and culture for design interpretation, the designer's own link to the informing culture influences authenticity. Respondent 13 discussed that the theming of place is a risk when designing using local informants. They noted that this can be avoided through a rigorous process of researching place and translating this through a "unique architectural vocabulary".

> *"..that's really important that things don't become a theme and this was not a theme. This was you know, it's a legitimate, authentic way and you can't lose sight of you know, the authenticity of a place. You know, what we're searching for are the idiosyncrasies of a place, and decoding you know, is a really important methodology, but includes not only just the kind of physical things, but climate conditions. What's the heritage of the host city? …*

> *We're searching for, really the DNA of the place in an authentic way and you know, we use that provisionally, but the recoding is a very rigorous translation progress of that. So comprehensive research stays and it yields and it should yield a unique architectural, an architectural vocabulary and a narrative for the project."* – Respondent 13

Respondents 15a, 15b, and 13 also spoke about the boundary between stereotypical or superficial design and contemporary, authentic design. Respondents 15a and 15b mentioned that localised retail design could use stereotypes as informants if the designer intends to be satirical through localised retail design.

> *"You can sort of nod to them in the right way if it's done with like the right sort of humour and knowingness …"* – Respondent 15a

> *"How do you use it in a way where people are going to get that it's tongue-in-cheek. So you know, it's quite a tight rope to sort of walk I suppose."* – Respondent 15b

Should a designer be forging a representation of an identity that is not linked to their own identity or signifies a power imbalance between the designer and local consumer (this is also possible with local designers working in contexts of socio-economic or socio-cultural inequality or multicultural contexts), the designer is appropriating local culture. Authenticity can be enhanced through the technique of curation of local creativity described in the strategy of local creative collaboration in this chapter. A further condition for the selection and translation of local informants to local expressions in retail design is the connection between the informant and expression in order to facilitate recognition while maintaining a contemporary expression of location through retail desiögn.

Königk (2015:48) describes the degree of direct and indirect references as the concepts of denotation and connotation. Denotation involves a literal and direct representation of the design informant or source of inspiration. Denotation can aid authenticity through curation of authentic cultural taste goods (see Figure 5.16). Connotation takes a more abstract approach, in which the resultant expression requires interpretation. The balance between denotation and connotation should be mediated according to the significance of the local informant. The designer must understand the significance of an informant within the broad context and evaluate how the informant should be interpreted and the extent of interpretation (denote or connote?) that the informant may be subjected to.

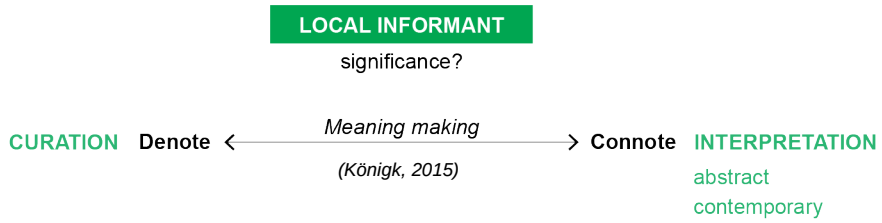



Figure 5.16 Balance between denoting and connoting local meaning in relation to the significance of the informant

Authenticity to location means responsibility and responsiveness to location (Khan, 2021:185). While elements in the interior may be replicated in their original forms (such as artworks or materials), the resulting retail design should be contemporary and still reflect the brand. The extent of connotation should also be mediated to ensure that local expression is recognisable to local consumers. In some cases, adapting local technologies, mixing global and local symbols or distorting indigenous artefacts through connotation can lead to practices of appropriation causing cultural offence (Khan, 2021:183).

Consequences of poor discretion can affect brand reputation. 'Cancel culture' is a consumer tendency to withdraw support from products and services that alienate them (Bouvier, 2020:1). These can arise from the brand's inability to reflect the values possessed by consumers, both globally and locally. Consumer values, beliefs and ideals can play a role in the vitality of retailers. Through localising retail design, it is of importance that brands express inclusivity of and sensitivity towards culture and identity. The techniques for locally responsive design is the processing and expression of local informants through retail design. Four informants have been identified: broad context; neighbourhood or precinct; building; and consumer.

These four informants provide parameters for a distinctive design response based on location. I have structured these factors according to: "**Informant**"; "**Process**", and "**Expression**" (see Figure 5.17). It is of importance to note that design is a creative field and that although this phase is based on informants, which may undergo processes of research (through analysis), the expression is interpretive and creative. This means that locally responsive design can range from pragmatic to intuitive-based measures that are dependent on the designer/s. The technique for applying the strategy of locally responsive design is the processing and expression of local informants. **INFORMANT** (information pertaining to location) + **PROCESS** (analysis and interpretation of informants) + **EXPRESSION** (design propositions) = **RESPONSE (locally responsive design).** In order to localise retail design, designers must first 'read the location'. This means that designers first gain an understanding of the existing features and characteristics of the location.

Respondent 11 spoke about this process of understanding location for design:

> *"...you really have to find the strength and the identity within your own region and your own town and your home country and that is your design character and that's what gives you an identity that you have a language that you can speak to the world about..."* – Respondent 11

This investigation can be conducted on multiple levels: from broad context, to neighbourhood or precinct in which the store is located, to the building and site in which the store is located, to the local consumer. During this process, designers capture and document their investigation through a repository of materials that ground approaches to localising retail design. These can include photographs, sketches, moodboards, and materials. Designers then process informants into tentative design expressions that draw from the location.

In expressing localised retail design, designers may choose to:

- Emulate the location (imitate aspects observed about place);
- Enhance or generate location (catalyse or regenerate place); and/or;
- Integrate with the location (plugging into the existing activity);

The strategy of locally responsive design includes the following techniques:

- Respond to broad context (this is the social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and historic context of the region)
- Respond to neighbourhood or precinct (this is the immediate district in which the retail store is located)
- Respond to building (this is the building and site in which the retail store is located)
- Respond to local consumer (this is the local consumer - the target consumer/s of this region)

The informants, process, and expression of each of these techniques are illustrated in Figure 5.17 below:

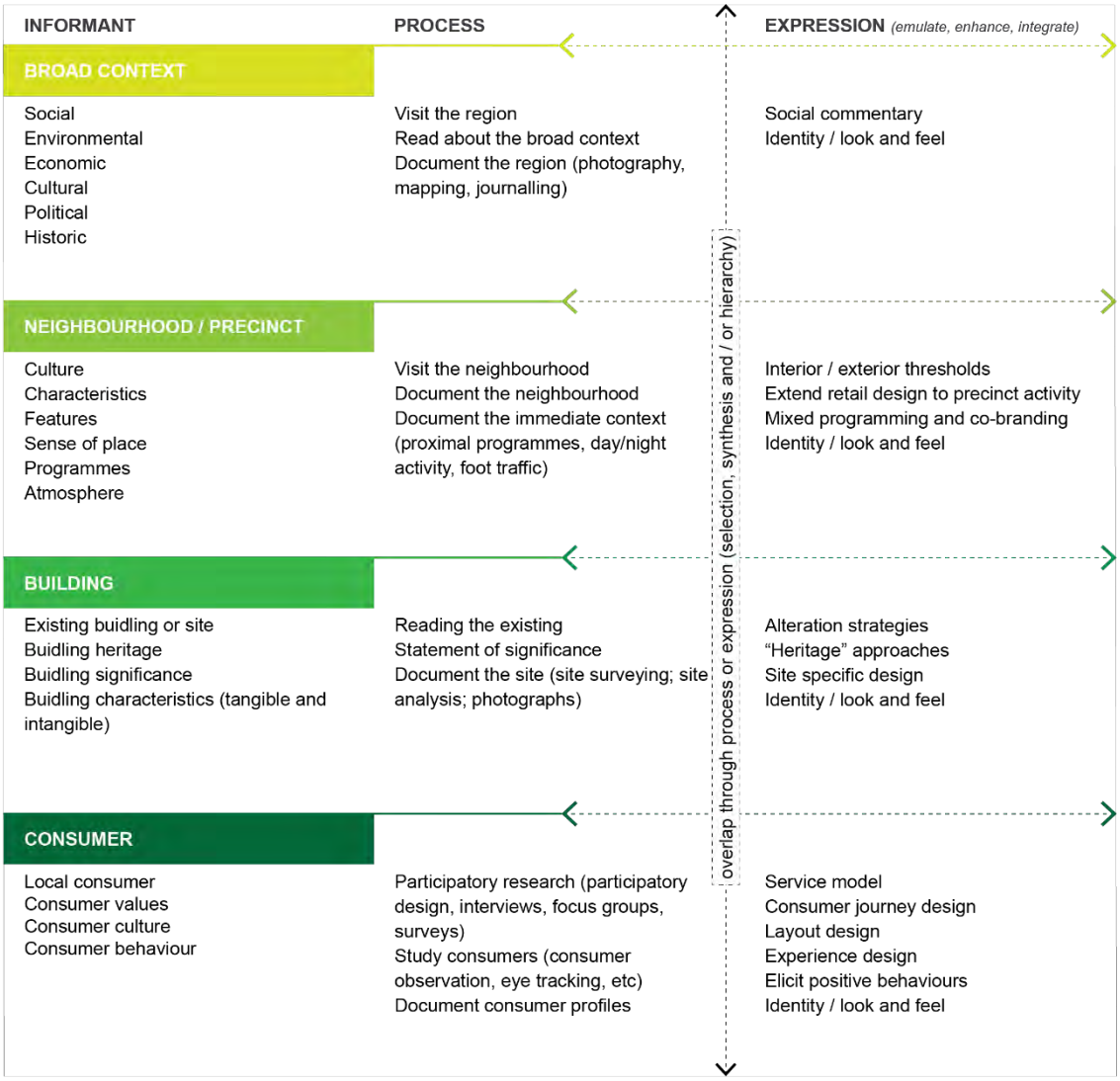



Figure 5.17 Informants, processes, and expression leading to locally responsive design

## 5.4.1 Technique 1: Respond to broad context

In the technique of 'Respond to broad context', designers draw informants from the social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and historic context of the region. All informants can be considered through the framework of the broader context for an understanding of their meaning to local consumers.

Designers can undergo research into the location's broader context through:

- Visits to the region;
- Reading about the broad context of the region; and
- Documenting the region (through capturing of colours, sounds, textures, archetypes, landscapes, atmospheres, activities, customs, traditions, and more)

Documentation becomes a process of moving between design informants to design expression, where the designer equips themselves with an understanding of location in a broad sense. The process of representation through documentation can provide clues, openings and visual tools with which to construct a local language. Respondent 11 spoke about the inspiration they drew from steel sheds – a recognisable feature in the city in which they were designing.

> *"There's a lot of these everywhere, so these are normally not designed, but if a designer can input into a steel shed design, how incredible …"* – Respondent 11

The archetype of the steel shed became an informant to a design language that was rooted in the broad context. The expression of broad context through localised retail design can take on many forms depending on the designer's interpretation. These may also be embedded within other informants as a lens through which to view 'neighbourhood or precinct'; 'building' or 'consumer'.

Respondent 12 spoke about the economic context of Australia as a precursor to the expected quality of design in the region:

> *"...the Big 2 is Food Cost and Labour, but because those things are so incredibly high over here and because the product you pay for is so incredibly expensive over here you need to up the ante on experience."* – Respondent 12

In this case, the broad economic context and value for quality demands a consideration for the quality of design that may exceed the standards of retail design expression for the global brand. Respondent 11 spoke about a converse value for design in Asia. Their perception is that the local context demands design that is "fast and cheap". Through their own design practice, they interrogate how speed and cost can be expressed with quality and value.

The characteristics of a location may be interpreted and expressed through satire. For example, in *Camper Los Angeles*, Martí Guixé took creative license in the interpretation of local culture through a satirical design response. The designer approached the retail design as a series of 'sets' (Guixe.com, *s.a.*). The store (see Figure 5.18) is populated with miniature Camper shops in the shop.

The design comments on the artificial worlds created in movie-sets in Los Angeles (Guixe.com, *s.a.*). The existing broad socio-cultural context is emulated through design and expressed through aesthetics. The boundaries for interrogating location through social commentary are dependent on the location, the brand's identity, and the propensity for local consumers to laugh at themselves. Further, the designer's power relation to the local context is important in navigating a line between social commentary and bigotry.


Figure 5.18 Camper L.A, 1998 (by Martí Guixé). The design responds to the cultural context of Los Angeles through social commentary (Guixe.com, s.a.). Photo copyright Inga Knölke (used with permission of designer and photographer)

## 5.4.2 Technique 2: Respond to neighbourhood or precinct

The neighbourhood or precinct in which the retail store is (or will be) located is an informant to localising retail design. The inhabitants' affinities for these districts may enhance the localisation of retail design for global brands. The historic association between retail and urban regeneration sees a long-standing transformative influence on neighbourhoods (Brunetta & Caladrice, 2014; Emery, 2006; Guimarães, 2017; Kim & Jang, 2017; Lowe, 2005). Retail can act as a catalyst to enhance interest and activity in an area, upgrade existing facilities and increase real estate value (Lowe, 2005:451).

However, retailers should be cognisant of the potential for commercial activity to lead to gentrification. This process may displace the sense of authenticity that drew the brand to this location. Place attachment describes the affinities people hold to places, particularly, neighbourhoods (Giuliani, 2016). This sense of attachment signifies a shared sense of community and belonging lodged to specific locations (Giuliani, 2016) and implies a community's value for the authentic nature of that place. By threatening the authenticity of a place, the global brand can negatively affect the community and neighbourhood in which it is positioned.

The Bo-Kaap in Cape Town, South Africa is an example of a neighbourhood with a strong sense of community and identity (see Figure 5.19). With the rise of tourism, the neighbourhood has become a consumption site, leading to the rise of commercial activity that caters towards tourists over neighbourhood residents. This gentrification has seen the loss of generational communities in favour of commercial activity and high-priced housing (Spencer & Bassadien, 2016).

Figure 5.19 The Bo-Kaap district is under threat of gentrification. Image by Paul Mannix (2007)

Although urban regeneration and gentrification are conceived on urban design and town planning levels, the global brand does have some scope to perpetuate or mitigate these local threats.

In localising retail design, global brands and designers may identify these places as districts that demonstrate a sense of community and local identity. Through retail design, global brands should mediate their approach in ways that support local businesses and residents by responsiveness to the community and its inhabitants. Should the brand's target market fall outside of the neighbourhood's inhabitants, the incompatibility signifies a plausible concern for urban shifts, as the brand's vitality will rely on the infiltration of new markets to the district. This may not be problematic if the urban condition is in decay and the communities' perception to the neighbourhood is negative. Therefore, the value of the existing urban condition and the state of place attachment to place should be informants to a brand's decision to select a site in a specific neighbourhood.

Global brand, Nike, sees the *Nike Unite* concept[11] as addressing the local community by employing staff from the community and incorporating local athletic programmes as central to the store's purpose (News.nike.com, 2020c). Local consumers can come into the store and be networked to neighbourhood sporting communities (News.nike.com, 2020c). The store features images of athletes and persons from the neighbourhood (News.nike.com, 2020c). This implies an innate compatibility between the interests of the brand (sports) and the community (sporting communities) that lead to a responsive approach to neighbourhoods. The community atmosphere of *Nike Unite* is shown in Figure 5.20 below.

[11] See Artefact N4 in Appendix D.


Figure 5.20 Nike Unite Concept, conceived in 2020 (by Nike Global) (News.nike.com, 2020c)

Once the global brand identifies a district in which to position a store, site selection follows. In the case of localised retail design, designers work with the parameters in which a project is situated. While some respondents indicated that they did provide input in site selection, this was usually managed by the real estate specialists appointed by the global brand. Since the imperative to localise retail design is a strategic decision made on a brand management level, site selection follows in strategy.

Therefore, a site and neighbourhood with unique characteristics are usually present in localised retail design projects and have been strategically selected for these characteristics by the brand. Respondent 15a describes the process of site selection to assign a distinctive location to the project:

> *So it was very collaborative, that stage and we had quite a lot of input in helping them define which site would be best from the kind of experiential point of view for the customer along with the kind of the footfall of the local area and what other events could take place that might help raise the profile of that site.* – Respondent 15a

Neighbourhood visits play a role in deriving informants for localised retail design for the global brand. During these visits, designers and the brand may conduct specific investigations in order to gain an understanding of the place in which the retail store will be located. The research conducted by designers can range from rigorous analytical procedures (such as tenant mix, climatic, and human activity mapping) to interpretive documentation (such as sketching, poetry, and photography of observed features of the location). Informants from the neighbourhood may include idiosyncratic, iconic, and recognisable elements to the district, such as:

- Architectural expressions or styles (such as the Paulista architectural style that informed the design of *Aesop Vila Madalena*[12] in Sao Paulo, Brazil);
- Prolific textures and materials in the area (such as the red brick in brownstone houses that informed the design of *Aesop Park Slope*[13]);
- Activities occurring in the neighbourhood (is it a district known for emerging art or street foods or nightlife?);
- Climatic conditions of the district (what the experience of the neighbourhood may be in different times of the day and at different seasons);
- Mix of programmes in buildings surrounding the site;
- History of the neighbourhood;
- Natural features of the district (such as the cherry blossom trees and river alongside *Starbucks Reserve Tokyo*[14]);

[12] See Artefact A4 in Appendix D
[13] See Artefact A5 in Appendix D
[14] See Artefact S7 in Appendix D

- Activities within the neighbourhood (such as sporting community programmes);
- Character of the retail context (whether this is in the high street, arcade or mall); and
- Further idiosyncratic features designers may deem as informants derived from the neighbourhood or precinct.

These informants are processed and expressed through localised retail design. As indicated in Figure 5.17, the informants may be selected, synthesised, or arranged in a hierarchy for expression.

Various modes of expression are possible. Designers make judgment and taste-based decisions in order to enhance the impact of localised retail design based on the unique characteristics of the neighbourhood. Following the significance of the informant, neighbourhoods and districts may demonstrate social, cultural, or historic significance to the location. Sites of significance require careful mediation that do not detract from the 'spirit of place' (see section 2.8.1.1). The neighbourhood culture, identity, and activity overtake the expression of the corporate gloss of the global brand. An example of localised retail design that responds to the neighbourhood is Apple Milan. Located in Milan's Piazza Liberty, *Apple Milan* takes on a "town square" retail design approach (Stevens, 2018) (see Figure 5.21).

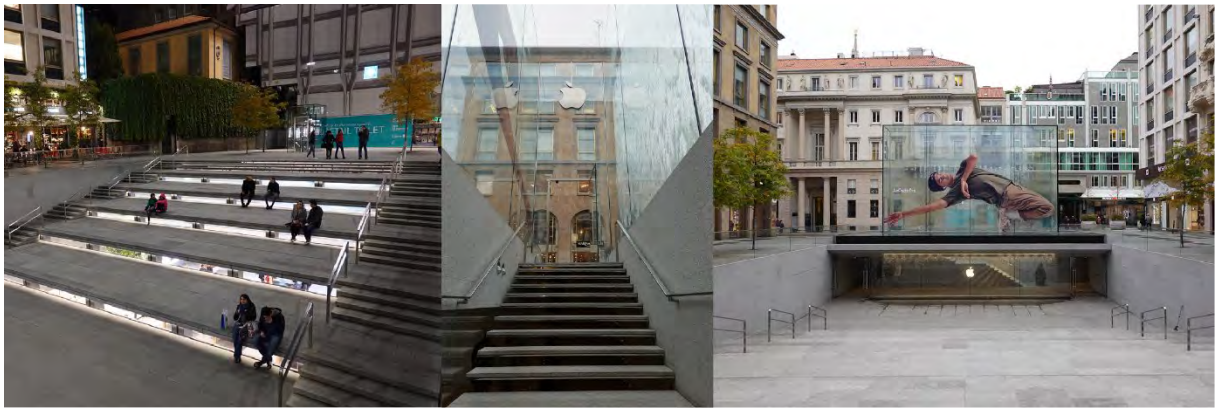


Figure 5.21 Apple Milan, 2019 (by Foster + Partners). Images by Guilhem Vellut (2019a); (2019b); (2019c)

The store is underground consumers and are able to enter through a waterfall feature that is a landscape-like element in the square that forms the roof of the store. The design expression does not attempt to overshadow the historic character of Milan, channelling consumers into underground multi-story retail space (Stevens, 2018).

Examples of response to the neighbourhood include designing thresholds between the shop interior and exterior, extending a retail design activity to the precinct, mixed programming and co-branding, adding value to the neighbourhood, and the use of local aesthetics. These are discussed below.

#### 5.4.2.1 Designing thresholds between the shop interior and exterior

This entails the consideration of the immediate relationships between the store envelope and its surroundings. Designers may have investigated existing circulation activity and features around the retail store which they may want to encompass as part of the retail design.

Kengo Kuma and Associates designed the façade of *Starbucks Reserve in Tokyo*[15] as a terraced seating area that allowed the building to overlook the river and cherry blossom trees alongside the building. The cherry blossom is represented through copper flower cut-outs in the building interior, reinforcing a connection between building and landscape (Archello.com, 2019).

[15] See Artefact S7 in Appendix D.

Figure 5.22 Starbucks Reserve Tokyo, 2019 (designed by Liz Muller, Starbucks Global and Kengo Kuma and Associates) façade and interior (stories.starbucks.com, 2019a; stories.starbucks.com, 2019b)

#### 5.4.2.2 Extending a retail design activity to the precinct

The retail design extends beyond the shop interior into the neighbourhood context. Expression such as kiosks, events, outdoor sales, campaigns, cues and more extend the threshold of the brand in ways that integrate with the neighbourhood. Expression can range from subtle to apparent. This technique is evident in *Commes des Garçons' Guerrilla Stores* (see Figure 5.23). The retail stores can be discovered in unexpected urban locations. Consumers may discover these stores through cues that integrate with the urban environment (Fairs, 2007b). The stores demonstrate a 'make-shift' design language that corresponds with the absence of loud branding and the 'guerrilla' spirit of the store format (Fairs, 2007b).

Figure 5.23 Commes des Garçons guerrilla store Los Angeles, 2008 (concept by Rei Kawakubo, designed by Tak Kato and Brett Westfall)

*Aesop Vila Madalena*[16] in Sao Paulo is a further example. The store demonstrates an integration with the Vila Madalena neighbourhood. The designers created an outdoor courtyard at the store entrance as a space of repose in the midst of the busy arts district (Frearson, 2016).


Figure 5.24 Aesop Vila Madalena, 2016 (by Estudio Campana). The courtyard extends into the neighbourhood (Frearson, 2016)

[16] See Artefact A4 in Appendix D.

#### 5.4.2.3 Mixed programming and co-branding

In order to enhance localised retail design, the retail design may take on a hybrid function that extends community activity into retail design. This can be through mixed programming between retail and another activity that is compatible with the interests of the neighbourhood (for example a café). Alternatively, this can include co-branding strategies in which the global brand can host another in-store programme that is occupied by a local brand. These brand partnerships can enhance localisation through positioning the brand alongside an identified overlapping consumer base and easing associations and familiarity for the global brand.

This form of mixed programming is described by Respondent 4:

> *…"it's a place that you can do, like many things in, or what we call multi- modal. And, if you think of" … " public spaces, that is what they need to be" … "More than just, like one activity."* – Respondent 4

#### 5.4.2.4 Adding value to the neighbourhood

Retail design can act to add value to existing neighbourhoods through measures that draw from the local neighbourhood context and enhance these.

*Vans Covent Garden* (see 5.3.2) is an example of a retail store that both responds to the culture of the neighbourhood while extending its accessibility within this urban culture. The retail design saw the synthesis of an exhibition space for emerging artists (Lindsay, 2019). While the art scene in this area is known to be difficult for new artists to break into, the brand saw an opportunity to introduce a space for new voices to be introduced into the local art scene (Lindsay, 2019). This breaks the conventions of place while tapping into its preconditions, signifying both a catalytic and integrative approach to the neighbourhood location. This retail design demonstrates both benefits to the neighbourhood and brand through mixed programming.

#### 5.4.2.5 Aesthetics

The attributes of the neighbourhood, its heritage, and physical features can inform aesthetic expressions of localised retail design. In *Starbucks Reserve New York*[17], the store design takes aesthetic cues from the industrial heritage of the Meatpacking district in which the store is located (see Figure 5.25). The use of copper, steel, and concrete as well as an exposed production line communicate a continuation of the industrial identity of the neighbourhood (Cogley, 2019b).

Figure 5.25 Starbucks Reserve New York, 2018 (by Liz Muller, Starbucks Global) takes cues from the industrial heritage of the Meatpacking district (stories.starbucks.com, 2018a); (stories.starbucks.com, 2018b)

[17] See Artefact S6 in Appendix D.

### 5.4.3 Technique 3: Respond to building

The significance of the informant elicits an appropriate processing and expression of that informant. Locally responsive design therefore requires that retail designers evaluate the existing building to determine appropriate ways to respond to the building in a way that expresses localisation.

Historic buildings are an example of significant built spaces that provide distinctive characteristics that brands may wish to leverage to differentiate themselves among competitors. The choice of historic buildings as a retail site is a value-adding technique for retailers (Plevoets & van Cleempoel 2011). Through association with the unique and long-standing qualities of the historic building, brands benefit from an authenticity associated with the building's identity. These sites of heritage significance require the appointment of designers of appropriate expertise to undertake the complexity of reading historic architecture and employing alteration strategies. Legislation may also govern the extent of adaptation to the building and the prerequisite qualifications and expertise designers need to attain before working on these sensitive sites.

Designer considerations towards heritage architecture should extend to the connection between the building and location. For example, colonial architecture may have negative associations in a country such as South Africa (following Kiewit, 2020). The designer must therefore interrogate the response to the building in ways that are sensitive to the local consumers. While this is a concept that is not exclusive to retail design, the awareness of retail designers to the broader socio-political context of heritage architecture and their ability to employ alteration strategies according to the objective of localising retail design presents a specific design problem that requires expertise beyond conventional practice in retail design.

These insights can be raised through viewing the informant through the lens of the broad context. This, in turn, can inform building (site) selection for the retail store. The value of the building and context in relation to local meaning should be assessed. For instance, when working with a shop in a mall, retail designers may seek to draw from the mall as informant to retail design. The symbolism of malls as ubiquitous and artificial urban spaces of consumption that lack the character and spontaneity of urban environments can inhibit their local authenticity.

Similarly, buildings that appear to have historic value but are based on international styles of architecture may have less association with local meaning. Designers should work critically in evaluating the building that houses the retail store, this building's connection to the broader context, and its meaning in relation to location. A shopping arcade, for example, may provide more identity-carrying markers that can elicit a localised expression through retail design than a passage in a mall.

It is worth noting that brands may strategically select buildings of significance for retail design as a value-adding strategy. The existing building becomes a precursor to localising retail design, and is a given informant in the retail design process. It is rare that a retail store for a global brand may occupy a building of heritage significance coincidentally.

Investigation into the building is done through visits to the site, documentation of the site (through measurements, photography, sketching), and obtaining any documentation from council, previous designers, proprietors, books etc. Where obtainable, the history of the building, its alterations over time and any information pertaining to its prior occupation and use can be useful informants.

Plevoets and van Cleempoel (2011) also describe capturing intangible characteristics of a building as design informants. The temporal qualities of a building can be a viable informant to retail design. The designer's creativity in identifying the idiosyncrasies can reveal innate qualities of a building. This can be the key to a unique expression of design. Aesop's retail designers conduct multiple site visits to familiarise themselves with these characteristics of a space, documenting the existing through sketches, while experiencing sensory dimensions that the space has to offer (Down & Paphitis, 2019:172).

Design expressions of the building as informant include revealing features of the existing building; reflecting prior occupancy; emulating the building's style and using building fabric that signifies locality. All of these measures allude to a form of 'site-specific' design: design that is tailored for the specific relation to the host building. These are discussed below.

#### 5.4.3.1 Revealing features of the existing building

This involves the exposure of unique characteristics of the building. These may be the materials, textures, joinery structure and forms. Retaining and revealing the existing as part of the retail design is a way to localise retail design. See *Aesop Aoyama* in Figure 5.26.

#### 5.4.3.2 Reflecting prior occupancy

This involves a reflection of the prior programme or function of the building as a lens through which to communicate retail design. The style of furnishing and shop-fitted elements, the choice of materials, and the use of graphics can express prior use.

Should the building have remnants of prior elements, these may be reused in the design (in familiar or new ways). *Aesop Aoyama*, designed by Schemata Architects (see Figure 5.26), is in a space that was the residence of a woman who had recently passed away. She had left behind personal items, remnants of her history and rituals within the space. The designers reused materials from the furniture she left behind (with permission from her family), integrating the memory of the prior use of the space in the retail design (Down & Paphitis, 2019:179). The existing building fabric is exposed: the concrete floors, soffit and wall panels have been left intact (Aesop.com, *s.a.* [e]).

Figure 5.26 Aesop Aoyama, 2010 (by Schemata Architects). Timber panels reflect the prior use of the space and reveals features of the existing building (Aesop.com, s.a. [e])

#### 5.4.3.3 Responding to the building's style

Cues may be taken from the existing building if it falls within a particular historic style. The retail design may emulate, enhance or integrate with the features and style of the building.

*Aesop Mayfair* designed by StudioIlse, for example, (see Figure 5.27) sees the design of the interior as a continuation of the building's Victorian heritage. Furniture and fixtures are designed in a style that emulates the Victorian aesthetic. The designers emulated this Victorian style through the curation of pieces that reflected Victorian domesticity through retail design. British-Victorian domestic heritage is evoked through design that is both familiar and nostalgic since it refers to a historic period (Taxonomyofdesign.com, *s.a.* [a]).

Figure 5.27 Aesop Mayfair, 2008 (by Studioilse. The building's Victorian heritage through furniture and fixtures (Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a.[a])

#### 5.4.3.4 Using building fabric that signifies locality

Structural elements and materials that are derived from local places can be used to translate local meaning in different locations. The significance of the material and form, its relationship to the location and the identifiable characteristics that associate it with local context can be interrogated and expressed as a form of localised retail design in new contexts, since it reflects a local identity.

The New Balance (an American global footwear brand) *T-House* (in Japan) is an example of localised retail design that sees the use of structural elements from an iconic Japanese building warehouse, the *kura* into a new space that is intended to emulate this iconic architectural form (Schemata.jp, 2020) (see Figure 5.28). The designers grappled with the authenticity of this project: how to represent a traditional *kura* without leaning towards a fake representation of the design. The designers, Schemata Architects, opted for contemporary forms and contrast as a way to mediate between the heritage of the material, the local source of inspiration and a contemporary design expression.

They accomplished this by emphasising the utility of the *kura* structure through functional joinery details that speak to the craftsmanship of Japan and the New Balance brand. These formed functional design elements such as clothing rails (Schemata.jp, 2020).

Figure 5.28 New Balance T-House in Japan, 2020 (Schemata Architects) reuses structural material from a 'kura' (A traditional warehouse in Japan) in a new site. Photographs by Kento Hasegawa. (Schemata.jp, 2020)

### 5.4.4 Technique 4: Respond to local consumer

The local consumer can also be a viable informant to localising retail design for global brands. The investigation of the consumer is conducted early on in the retail design process. Claes *et al*. (2016:516) mention the consumer market in two phases of the retail design process:

- First, the consumers are defined as a 'market: target group'. They form a component of the design brief. This means that investigation into the local consumer is conducted through marketing initiatives of the brand before the retail designer is involved in the retail design process.
- Second, the 'market: target group' is mentioned in the Analysis, Task and Concept Design phase. Claes *et al.* (2016) see the interrogation of the consumer as 'customer journey mapping'. The designer observes consumer journeys in existing stores and records this through mapping processes.

In conducting localised retail design that is informed by the local consumer, the designer is applying a consumer-centric design approach. Consumer-centric design is founded on building consumer connections and providing relevant and optimal experiences according to the needs of the consumer (Lowenstein, 2014:35-36).Consumer-centric design may be based on research of an existing consumer base. This involves engaging with existing consumers and mapping their experiences and their perceptions to discover potential areas for improving the retail design.

In the case of generating the first iteration of a localised retail design concept, the absence of a 'prototype' (the retail design expression will be original), and the absence of an existing consumer base (the retail presence is introductory); consumer-centric design may take a more exploratory and speculative (as opposed to responsive) approach to inhabitation.

Designers will work with consumer data that is provided by the brand and/or data that they generate for direct retail design insights. Global brands conduct studies in the local market, capturing aspects that are relevant about the local consumer. This documentation is accessible to the designer, who can work with these insights. These are later expressed through retail design that represent and address the local consumer in various ways. This informant stage focuses on defining the local consumer/s and their journeys in the retail store.

Designers conduct research activities using either or both extant and elicited data to define consumers. These are discussed below.

#### 5.4.4.1 Extant consumer data

The global brand conducts market research as a precursor to introducing a retail concept to a region. Whether the brand has new or existing presence in this region, they will have collated statistics and reports pertaining to local consumers, such as consumer purchase behaviour, consumer demographics, and more. The utility of this data extends beyond retail design and influences decisions made on products, models and operations of the brand in each location. Designers will therefore engage in a filtration process to derive useful information and may do additional research that has direct implications on retail design.

#### 5.4.4.2 Elicited consumer data

Designers may engage in their own research procedures, engaging directly and/or indirectly with local consumers. This may be over and above the data received from the brand. Consumers may be engaged in creative input through co-design, co-creation, and participatory design activities. Designers may conduct consumer research through consumer observations, interviews, surveys and focus groups. Respondent 15b discussed their approach:

> *"On some projects we would conduct primary research with individual customer groups and we would speak to those customers ourselves." … "… what we ended up doing is having the conversations with the individual country leads, joining those conversations together with a lot of customer research that [BRAND 1] were able to provide us with …"* – Respondent 15b

As discussed, designers must evaluate their position and power dynamics in consumer engagement processes to alleviate normative preconditions. Local representation and collaboration can aid to alleviate imbalances in local representation in the authorship of design (which involves the informant phase) as per the strategy of local creative collaboration. In the same way that working with historic architecture requires specialised skill and knowledge for appropriate analysis and expression, consumer research warrants the appointment of designers who are experienced in these research practices. Expertise is required in facilitating engagement, conducting rigorous research, taking ethical measures and applying creative discretion.

Where store presence exists, designers can tap into existing consumer markets to derive insights and experiences of the retail design as an informant for a new concept or iteration of localised retail design. Should a brand not have store presence in the local context, the designers may opt to find synergies between local values and brand values and use this as a guide to identify potential sites for the localised retail design. Respondent 15a explained he role of the consumer in their process of site selection:

> *"So, we actually did a whole stage of work which probably went over a period of a couple of months where we just analysed the customer for those cities. The actual ... We went to the cities themselves" …. "So it's not just about which city do you go in or which area, even down to the individual street it was on and whereabouts within that street would be successful and get the right kind of customer that they were looking for."* – Respondent 15a

This consumer research can be translated into consumer profiles and personas as a target definition of who will be occupying the retail store. The designer creates these profiles on the basis of research of the local consumer. The consumer profile is a summary of the various consumer personas that would occupy the retail store. Königk (2015:272) defines this targeted occupant as a "model inhabitant" – the ideal user for which the interior designer tailors the design.

The consumer profile may be vaguely defined or it may be specific. This is informed by the retail category (for example, a supermarket brand may have a broader target market than a frozen yoghurt brand). Respondent 15b described the consumer profiles for the localised retail design for a global brand they worked on in Europe:

> *"And then we formed our own profiles and picture of the target customer and then we used those target customer profiles to influence our strategy, our creative strategy for localisation and then the scope of the project continued." … "…Brand Loyalists and Aspiring Activists as we called them, a future activist," … "And then you have the other types which were Fun Seekers and Tourists…"* – Respondent 15b

These personas are grounded in the research conducted on local consumers. As a form of meta-data (data generated from data), the consumer profile becomes an informant to creative expressions of design. It is worth noting that in new markets and regions, these profiles are founded on a degree of speculation, as a consumer base may not already exist for the brand.

Using the local consumer as informant involves an explicit expression of consumers through design. These are evident in:

- Consumer journeys (the routes and activities different consumers engage in a sequence in a single store visit);
- Touchpoints (the points of interaction and interface, such as pay points, information, service interfaces *etc.*);
- Experiences (participation in relevant activities that are elicited in the retail store);

- Aesthetics (a familiar look and feel of the store); and
- Programming (a mixture of retail and programmes or brands that resonate with the local consumer).

An example of local consumer expression in localised retail design is in Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) *Mitte Garten* in Berlin (see Figure 5.29). H&M is a Swedish originating global fast fashion brand. The intention of the store was to create a hyper-local curated experience for consumers in the Mitte Berlin region. As a shopping destination, Berlin is known for its local labels, unique merchandise and culture. The store design intends to create an experience specifically for the Mitte consumer while reinforcing H&M's shift in values towards sustainability and connections to the local market (about.hm.com, 2019).

Figure 5.29 H&M Mitte Garten, 2019 (by H&M in-house design) addresses local consumer values through a second hand clothing offering that speaks to both sustainability and Berlin's street fashion culture (About.hm.com, s.a.)

Selected product from H&M is displayed along with second hand clothing and local labels. By using minimalistic visual merchandising, greenery, and subtle palettes, the brand indicates a shift from its high-gloss, fast fashion roots to a toned-down, 'slow' luxury-associated experience that is compatible with local taste. The use of second hand goods in store, the possibility for consumers to rent product over buying product is in alignment with local values. The integration of a local branded vegetarian café in the store's courtyard and seasonal events contribute to mixed-programming that is familiar to local consumers.

Using the consumer as informant means addressing their explicit taste, likes, dislikes and needs through retail design. To Respondent 5, this meant mediating the brand and consumer to represent the interests of both parties through retail design:

> *"It might not be their sanctuary, but it is the client's sanctuary and that's what we're trying to create for the client. And I think that comes with getting to know them, understanding their personality – you know – designing around their needs. Their experiences that they understand to be quite valuable for them, and special. So, I think that's important to know, that I'm not creating a space for everyone to like. I'm creating it specifically for that brand and for the people of that brand."* – Respondent 5

As is the case with localised retail design acting as a catalyst to enhance neighbourhoods, localised retail design also has the potential to influence consumer values and behaviours.

Both informed by a movement in healthy eating, and acting as a catalyst for promoting widespread normalisation of healthy and affordable eating, studioilse's design of the *IKEA canteen* exhibits the potential to affect society at broad, given the brand's store presence across the globe (Abstract. The Art of Design, 2017). The reach of a global brand supports its potential to enact shifts in broad societal values.

Should the brand embody and promote behaviours that have a positive influence on the environment and society, the reception and collective performance of these behaviours can make a significant impact. Designers can harness the social imperatives of a location and escalate this as an elicitation of positive behaviours through retail design measures such as the rent-over-buy fashion model in *H&M Mitte Garten*.

The success of expressing local consumers as informants in localised retail design is reliant on the quality of the investigation and understanding of local consumers. This is because inhabitation processes relate to consumers' construction of identity. This is discussed in further detail in strategy 3: local consumer relevant experience.

### 5.4.5 Summarising the strategy of locally responsive design

This section described the strategy of locally responsive design. This strategy for locally responsive design requires that retail designers consult varying degrees of local informants to guide localised retail design. By taking a responsive approach to the local context, retail designers may enhance the local authenticity of retail design. The strategy of locally responsive design can be applied through the techniques of response to the broad context, response to the neighbourhood or precinct, response to the building, and response to the local consumer. These areas are subjected to the process of interpretation and translation. Local authenticity is reliant on designer discretion in this process. The application of these techniques were demonstrated. The following section describes the strategy of local consumer relevant experience.

## 5.5 STRATEGY 3: LOCAL CONSUMER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

This section describes local consumer relevant experience and the techniques associated with this strategy.

The strategy of local consumer relevant experience is defined. The ways in which this strategy contributes to the local authenticity of retail design is discussed. The techniques for applying the strategy of local consumer relevant experience are elaborated on. These are: Evoke local familiarity (5.5.1), Reflect local consumers' values (5.5.2), Elicit experiences for self-expression (5.5.3), and Build in responsiveness to brand and local image (5.5.4).

The final strategy for localising retail design for global brands is in creating relevant experiences for local consumers. This strategy takes effect during processes of inhabitation of the retail store. Inhabitation entails the occupation of space. The final strategy impacts consumers on an experiential level: it intends to reinforce localised retail design during the use of the retail store.

As an act of conspicuous consumption, the inhabitation of retail spaces follow on the process of identity construction (as an indicator of the consumer's interaction with the brand) (following Veblen, 1899). Consumers align themselves with brands as a form of identity construction (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:871). The concept of conspicuous consumption (consumption as an indicator of identity) has moved from an indication of status and wealth to other areas of identity expression, such as values, social affiliations, culture and style (Chernev *et al.*, 2011:67).

Consumers opt to select and associate with brands that relate to who they are and what they stand for. Brands act as lenses through which the consumer can develop their individual identity projects (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:871). Alignment with brands indicate an expression of self. Brands also signify community. By aligning with a particular brand, a consumer says something about who they are and about a community of people of shared interests and causes (Chernev *et al.*, 2011:67). In this process of identity construction, consumers are in search of authenticity in their consumption experiences (Plevoets & van Cleempoel, 2011:4).

The retail store acts as a space that facilitates this process of identity construction. By inhabiting brand spaces, consumers display their affiliation (or an aspiration towards this) to the brand and its community. Those who occupy brand spaces further the perceptions and understanding of the brand.

Following the process of 'respond to local consumer' as a technique of employing the strategy of locally responsive design, retail design that is informed by consumer personas can result in a space that demonstrates a synergy between the inhabitant and the brand, harnessing specific characteristics that contribute towards both brand and consumer.

In the marketing discipline, the concepts of brand identity and brand image reveal the importance of this synergy. Brand identity is brand determined: it is the expression of what the brand stands for as portrayed by the brand itself. Brand image is defined as the consumers' interpretation and perceptions of the brand (Faircloth *et al.*, 2001:62). Brand image may or may not correlate with brand identity. Brand image is important as the perceptions of consumers are indicative of a brand's success in the market and influence other consumers' perceptions of the same brand (Faircloth *et al.*, 2001:62). In the case of global brands, the brand may not have an existing image in the new market. Global brands work proactively to define a local identity that makes statements about what the brand and local consumers stand for.

Localised retail design is a way for brands to express this synergy with local consumers. The global brand can accomplish this synergy through expressing what is familiar and known to the local consumer through retail design. Consideration of the local identity and expression of this identity is explored in the strategies of local creative collaboration and locally responsive design. Through inhabitation, consumers can associate with a space that they recognise and that is representative of who they are.

The retail store can be adorned with taste goods, materials, and finishes that reflect this familiarity through aesthetics. It can also be evoked through other techniques of locally responsive design. By responding to the local consumer, localised retail design can be informed by and re-inform the identity of local consumers. Inhabitation processes are about identity construction for the brand and consumers. Through inhabitation, consumers should learn about the brand and forge connections with the brand, while furthering their own identities through the brand's worlds.

Localised retail design places importance on consumer connection, a quality that can be attained through the authenticity of the retail design (Plevoets & van Cleempoel, 2011). This sense of authenticity arrives from the brand's authenticity to itself and to location in retail design. It entails the application of the strategies for localising retail design for global brands as a way to enhance local authenticity. These are supported by processes of authorship (brand and location representative), and informants (locally and brand informed design). To support authenticity in inhabitation, localised retail design can be founded on pre-existing local consumer interests (mediated with brand interests). This can be escalated into further avenues revealed by the brand. This is an area for caution, as global brands do have the agency to mediate culture. Should brands misuse this agency, they may have a detrimental impact on both brand and local culture (Sharma, 2017:201).

As discussed in Strategy 2 (5.4 Locally Responsive Design), consumer culture can be impacted by retail design (Arnould & Thompson, 2005:871). This means that global brands can work with nascent consumer interests and build on prospects of these (but must do these in ways that reflect respect for the local context: the people and the objects that hold meaning to them) (Sharma, 2017:201). Retail design for the global brand should not require the local consumer to compromise on local values in favour of global normativity. As Sharma (2017:201) indicates, this subversive practice holds deep cultural threat and may alter local culture through acts of displacement.

Therefore, the local consumer should inform the practice of the strategy of locally relevant consumer experience. This is a starting point for brands to identify shared areas with between brand and consumer identities. The strategy of local consumer relevant experiences is therefore synergetic with the strategy of locally responsive design. It requires employing the technique of responding to local consumers in localised retail design in order to facilitate local consumer relevant experiences.

As brand identity and brand image converge and diverge, local identity and “local image” (an introductory term referring to the consumers’ perceptions and understanding of local identity) in localised retail design may be more or less aligned. The degree of alignment is dependent on the authenticity with which the strategies for localising retail design have been employed, an innate responsiveness to the local consumer and consumers’ authentic identity construction processes that support and enhance their predispositions. The inhabitation process is impacted by factors within and beyond the control of the brand and designer. Within the brand and/or retail designer’s control is the application of the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. These may enhance the local authenticity of the retail design, which can assist in the reception of local identity by local consumers.

At times, contextual factors beyond the designers’ control can affect brand image. For example, the consumers’ pre-existing emotions or other consumers’ in store behaviour can contextualise their brand experience and influence brand image. This is on an individual level.

On a more widespread level, the broad context can also affect brand and local image for entire local communities. For example, the emergence of Covid-19 led to an economic decline that raised social awareness of the value of local suppliers and goods. This, in turn, reduced interest in global retailers. The pandemic further highlighted the importance of health and safety in retail design in light of contagion. These factors have an impact on shopping culture, the consumers’ confidence in inhabiting retail stores as well as their affiliation to local versus global brands (Glover, 2020; Rueda & O’ Sullivan, 2020).

The dynamic nature of the broad context demonstrates a reality that brand and local image are also dynamic. Brands should be in the position to adapt retail design according to shifting perceptions of the brand and its portrayal of local identity. The key to the strategy of local consumer relevant experience is to reflect, respond to and help further the identity projects of local consumers in the inhabitation of the retail store. It is also to allow opportunities for local consumers to express themselves in the retail store as a form of expressing identity. It should also be adaptable in order to respond to changes in the broad context that may affect the ways in order to remain relevant to the communities the brand serves.

The strategy of local consumer relevant experience includes the following techniques:

- Evoke local familiarity
- Reflect local consumers’ values
- Elicit experiences for self-expression
- Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

These are discussed below.

### 5.5.1 Technique 1: Evoke local familiarity

The process of inhabitation is interrelated with the process of identity construction. Inhabitation can act to reinforce the identities of consumers. This can be accomplished by using the retail design to evoke familiarity to local consumers. Familiarity in localised retail design is the presence of design elements that are recognisable to the location. The process of evoking familiarity is intrinsic to the strategy of locally responsive design (the processing and expression of local informants in retail design).

By drawing on local informants from the broad context, neighbourhood or precinct, the building and the local consumer, the retail designer can evoke a sense of familiarity for local consumers. The sources of inspiration and the modes of representation can denote (direct references) and connote (abstract references) (Königk, 2015:48) familiarity through retail design.

While many sources of inspiration may be drawn upon for evoking familiarity when localising retail design (see strategy 2: locally responsive design), the concepts of domesticity and nostalgia were frequently emerging concepts in the interview data. These are discussed below.

#### 5.5.1.1 Evoking familiarity through domesticity

The home as a place of familiarity can be evoked through localising retail design. Respondent 5 raised the idea of home as a source of inspiration as it evokes a sense of security and "sanctuary" for consumers.

> *"…we want to create like a home-like environment. But now the home is not home anymore, it's more of a sanctuary. Like you want to try and escape the hustle. It mustn't be so noisy. It must be quiet. So, I think that's something that will stay around."* – Respondent 5

Designers can draw on the consumer and the broad context as informants and express these through the retail design in ways that reflect the idea of home to consumers. This can be accomplished through the technique of decoration. The assembly of home interiors involves a curation of items of furniture, decoration, lighting, etc. These elements convey personal meaning. The assembly of a 'curated' retail store that evokes the familiarity of home can support local familiarity when there are shared local perceptions of home and these curated objects are rooted in a local understanding of domesticity (see *Aesop Mayfair* in 5.4.3.3).

Domestic interiors are also subject to the impacts of globalisation and trend. 'Pinterest' home interiors denote a ubiquitous design language that sees trends come and go. In localising retail design, retail designers must discern between trend and location as a source of inspiration. This requires the designer to exercise discretion in identifying the idiosyncrasies of the local domestic environment as a source of inspiration. This may require moving beyond the look and feel of the local domestic interior (which may be trend-informed), and into intangible sources, such as shared rituals, greetings, smells, *etc*.

In this case, the familiarity of home can be evoked through the creation of atmospheres that are comfortable and relaxing. This can be enhanced using sensory engagement in retail design. By replicating the textures, smells, and sounds as well as rituals of domesticity, the retail designer can act to evoke familiarity for local consumers.

#### 5.5.1.2 Evoking familiarity through local pride

Familiarity can also be evoked by harnessing and eliciting moments of connection with the store's community. As a form of reinforcing local identity, designers can evoke a sense of local pride to elicit familiarity. Local pride connects to consumers on an emotional level. A sense of representation, belonging and national pride expressed in branded environments can see consumers aligning themselves to re-imagined, yet familiar local expressions.

These are seen as authentic as they are special to the location and cannot be scaled or repeated in other nations – the emotional trigger for moments of local pride in retail design is also exclusive to the place and people for which the retail store is designed.

*Primark Birmingham* (see Figure 5.30), for example, draws on local familiarity through shared expressions and dialects of the local community. These phrases have been used as graphics in store, reflecting an idiosyncratic aspect of the local community in the retail design. The strategy of local consumer relevant experience is applied here: the use of local dialect and phrases in graphics in the store evoke familiarity for the local consumer. This is accomplished by tapping into a sense of local pride.


Figure 5.30 Primark Birmingham designed by Dalziel & Pow. Images courtesy of Dalziel & Pow (Dalziel-pow.com, 2019)

Ethical boundaries should be considered in the process of mixing brand and local identity to elicit local pride. The designer must identify the line between what can and cannot be merged with brand capital. For example, the alteration of national, cultural, religious, or traditional symbols to reflect brand elements can alienate local consumers as it reflects inauthenticity to the location and may cause offence as these symbols may be held as sacred to the location. Designers must exercise discretion and reflexivity in these circumstances.

#### 5.5.1.3 Evoking familiarity through nostalgia

The idea of drawing from the past and working with nostalgia is another area in which consumers can find connection to the localised retail design. Respondent 5 and 6 both referred to nostalgia as a quality that is of consistent relevance in design. Respondents 5 and 6 spoke about the value of nostalgia in retail design.

> *"I have a personal approach to say that people do tend to go back to nostalgia. So they do like to know that, you know, something will always remain consistent."* – Respondent 5

> *"So, I think that's really important, I think it's very important to work from the history and iconic historical designers, so that's kind of what we do and I also think that kind of allows you to bring in a consistent nostalgic aspect. Which I think is very, very important because I think that nostalgic creates so much warmth and intrigue and wonder."* – Respondent 6

Nostalgia in retail design can evoke an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. This is because nostalgia is linked to the shared memory of positive times and can act as a universal grounding device that appeals to all. Nostalgia is not a new characteristic in retail design. However, nostalgia may be used to guide deriving local informants for localising retail design. This can be accomplished by:

- Drawing inspiration from past events special to the location. Nations may have consensus on these high points in a shared past. These may be political, sporting, economic, or other events that may have given a nation a sense of unity and celebration.
- Draw from cultural materials in the past (fashion, music, culture, sports; etc.). Local cultural heritage provides iconic resources from which to investigate and refer.
- Refer to shared memories (television programmes; foods; experiences; childhood references).

Familiarity is a subjective and intangible quality that retail designers may evoke through the complex layering of spaces with multiple points in which local consumers can find representation.

While design transmits meaning on different levels, an overriding message (that finds connection and resonance with the global brand), must be recognisable to the local consumer. This means that local familiarity can be communicated throughout the retail design through denotation and connotation (Königk, 2015:48).

As discussed in the strategy of locally responsive design, the identification of the informant, their processing and expression requires the designer exercising discretion. The choice of informants also matter since there may not be shared consensus on what is worthy of celebrating and what should not be celebrated (the informant may be contentious). In some contexts, the global brand harnessing aspects of a region's heritage and capital may come across as inauthentic as the brand is seen as a foreigner telling locals how to be local. The ways in which these informants are expressed in relation to the consumer's ownership of constructing identity can either enhance or depreciate the authenticity of familiar references in localised retail design.

### 5.5.2 Technique 2: Reflect local consumers' values

Consumer social awareness and values have become a substantial role player in the domain of consumption. The consumer's ability to scrutinise and synthesise moral evaluations of brands have been supported by the widespread access to social media (Gabl *et al.*, 2016:148).

These public perceptions have led to a movement of brand accountability: brands becoming answerable based on consumers' shared understanding of a moral good (Gabl *et al*., 2016:148). This sense of public responsibility has direct implications on the brands' reputation (Gabl *et al*., 2016:148), incentivising brands to act according to the parameters of consumer values.

As a new age of activists, consumers see their consumption of brands as choices that deliberately portray their value systems. Brand accountability is reinforced by consumers' drives to support brands and businesses that resonate with their moral values (Hilton, 2009:1). Consumers make consumption choices or withhold consumption from brands based on these shared understandings of what is good and what is worthy (Gabl *et al*., 2016:148). Gabl *et al.* (2016:148) assert that the brands are accountable to common and discrete judgments of values and morals. They assert that the diversity in consumers see that consumer values differ according to different contexts (Gabl *et al.*, 2016:148).

This diversity means that global brands may need to evaluate global versus local systems of what is deemed worthy and good when working across international markets. As a response to potential impacts of globalisation on culture, localised retail design, in itself, is a measure global brands take as an expression of corporate social responsibility. Respondent 4 described localised retail design as such an opportunity:

> *"…as a big global brand have the power and the ability to" … "I mean, manipulate is a strong word but, to … 'manipulate'" … "when I say local markets, like local production, you know? You have the buying power" … "You can choose..."... "Two routes, I guess. You can choose the route where you have" … "sweatshop factories and you deliver the product at the lowest possible price, for the highest possible margin. Or, you" … "take a social responsibility perspective where you make a reasonable profit but, in doing that, you also build and uplift" … "communities and local markets."* – Respondent 4

Localised retail design, while motivated by brand accountability, is not enough to signify a retail design contribution towards corporate social responsibility. This is because the decision to localise retail design is a strategic one made by the brand. The retail designer and global brand can act further than the expression of a local identity in the retail store to enhance the portrayal of social values in retail design.

Respondent 10 reinforced this by stating the importance of localising retail design beyond the surface:

> *"… I think they do good; a good job of localising the stores usually by commissioning some local artist to do something, but you know sometimes, I think it comes almost, it comes across almost like as not enough. It comes almost across as a; the company is doing something just to say that you were localising the store and I guess you know, sometimes I wonder is a mural enough to localise a store."* – Respondent 10

The dangers of failing to holistically reflect social responsibility can imply a brand's agenda to profit from movements arising in popular culture by aligning their identities with popular causes (such as gay pride and black lives matter). Global brands are subject to particular scrutiny in alignment with these values if their expression of support contradicts their internal practices, implying a form of cause washing[18]. Respondent 10 discussed the negative impacts a brand's contradictions in their social responsibility practices can have on consumer trust.

> *"And their whole idea has been really radical transparency and what that means is that they let you see the shirt that I'm about to buy. Why is it priced $100? So then you click on it and you can get information: this shirt was made in such and such factory and you know, intentionally it's a transparency that gives you a sense that okay, workers are being treated properly, they are being taken care of, the factories run well, all those things. …*
>
> *But it turns out that it's very inconsistent and I think probably one of the biggest problems with [BRAND 5] is that the culture within the company is not very inclusive. People have complained about discrimination, unfair treatment and stuff like that. So, it's one of the things that, especially now with Social Media, it's very important for brands to walk the talk."* – Respondent 10

Brands must take care to express values in meaningful and sustained ways. Through localised retail design global brands can enhance their compatibility with social values in several ways.

- From the perspective of localising retail design, meaningful application of the strategies discussed in this chapter is a viable way to approach enhancing the social profile of the global brand through retail design.
- The expression of values that are important to local consumers through retail design can further augment local consumers' identity projects. This can be accomplished by drawing on societal values as an informant and providing operational, experiential, and other elements that elicit the enactment of these values in retail design.
- By introducing a value system of universal importance (such as environmentally sustainable practices), global brands can influence broad social transformation in values through cultural production. This measure should be addressed with caution as it has the possibility to perpetuate global normativity depending on the choice of social focus.

Localised retail design can resonate with local consumers' values by reinforcing their ability to enact these values in retail experiences. An example of this measure is the *H&M Hammersmith* retail store opened in 2019. The store design marks a shift in approach for the fashion retailer (Hopkinson, 2019) and fast fashion retail design as a whole (Design4retail.co.uk, 2019). Prior to the concept store design, H&M was represented with high gloss store designs across the globe.

[18] Cause washing is the superficial demonstration of aligning with a moral cause.

Figure 5.31 H&M Hammersmith, 2019 (by H&M in-house design), United Kingdom (about.hm.com, s.a.)

The fast-fashion store format conventionally emphasises high product volumes at affordable prices. The global store concept is usually bright, white and glossy and product-focused (Hopkinson, 2019). The *H&M 2019 Hammersmith* store design concept is a rethink of this format. It tackles the issue of "disposable fast-fashion culture" by addressing the wasteful nature of this type of fashion through a consumer-centric approach to design that slows the consumer down in space through softer, toned-down and more exclusive experiences that speak of quality and sustainability (Hopkinson, 2019).

Sustainable-conscious behaviour is supported by a repair and remake station that encourages consumers to re-use garments instead of replacing them. There is also a sustainable H&M laundry liquid encouraging consumers to wash clothing with a more environmentally friendly choice. The consumer is also reminded of the importance of recycling through graphic signage at the tills (Hopkinson, 2019).

Aesthetically, natural materials such as stone, warmer hues, greenery, and soft lighting reinforce the idea of quality and sustainability over the glossy and fluorescent lighting conventionally used in fast fashion stores (Hopkinson, 2019). These signify a value system of sustainability imparted into retail design through aesthetics and in-store programmes that promote sustainable-conscious behaviour. The H&M concept is new to the market with stores in Hammersmith (United Kingdom), Stockholm (Sweden), and Berlin (Germany). While concept stores provide a brand with the opportunity to test and refine new concepts, a global-scale roll-out of H&M's new store concepts, with a focus on sustainability, can both reflect global consumer interests in sustainable-values while positively inspire mainstream sustainable consumer behaviours on the local level.

Local values can extend to cultural values. These include customary and traditional norms that may influence inhabitation. Local authorship facilitates identification of these values and processing these in ways that may be incorporated in retail design. *Aesop Kyoto*[19], for example, draws on the local ritual of handwashing prior to engaging in the traditional tea ceremony (see Figure 5.32). This ritual is reinforced by hand washing in the store and the presence of a well that refers to the importance of water in this local context (Taxonomyofdesign.com, *s.a.* [c]).

[19] See Artefact A1 in Appendix D.

Figure 5.32 Aesop Kyoto, 2014 (by Shinichiro Ogata, Simplicity). The store refers to the cultural significance of water through the display of a well and an in-store hand washing ritual (Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

By reflecting values in retail design, the global brand has the potential to support existing social values; further the enactment of these values; and/or introduce the value system as a prospective cultural catalyst. As a form of identity construction, consumers may internalise values that enhance society and the environment.

### 5.5.3 Technique 3: Elicit experiences for self-expression

The concept of 'experience' in retail design was pioneered by Pine and Gilmore (1999) in their identification of the Experience Economy. The authors saw the value for retail shift from utility to experience. Consumers were no longer satisfied with buying products out of need but tended to favour retailers who provided better experiences. This emerged with the concept of a service dominant logic in which consumers sought experience over product (Vargo & Lusch, 2006).

In their paper, 'Retail Design and the Experience Economy: Where Are We (Going)?' Ann Petermans and Koenraad van Cleempoel (2009:171-181) develop the concept of the experience economy in light of retail design. They discuss the advent of the first and the second generation of the experience economy.

- The first generation experience economy takes a retailer-centred approach: the retailer subscribes the values and ideals into retail design (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2009:171-181);
- In the second generation of the experience economy, retailers and consumers co-create experiences (Petermans & van Cleempoel, 2009:171-181);

Petermans, Plevoets and van Cleempoel (2015:30) extend these to a third generation of the experience economy:

- In the third generation of the experience economy consumers take a lead in determining their experiences and what they gain from these.

In the case of third generation experience economy, a distinction must be noted between retailers that are global brands, once-off brands (the retailer has one shop only), non-branded, and local brands. When compared to once-off brands, local brands, and no-name retailers, the global brand holds a greater interest in brand consistency.

This is so that the brand can be recognisable across multiple contexts and trusted across the globe. The global brand requires room for self-identification in retail design. Once-off brands may be in a greater position to respond explicitly to context as there is no replication of the brand, and therefore the brand's identity is negotiable.

The same holds true for non-branded retailers (although these retailers may have emphasis on utility over experiential retail). Local brands may have already embedded a local identity in retail design that is inherent to the brand itself as its authenticity is linked to its origin. The global brand sees more alignment with the second generation of the experience economy (a co-creation of experience between consumer and retailer).

This is in order to ensure an authenticity to both brand and location. The experience of consumer self-expression must therefore be mediated with the brand's expression. The generations of the Experience Economy and the assignment of global brand to the second generation is depicted in Figure 5.33 below.

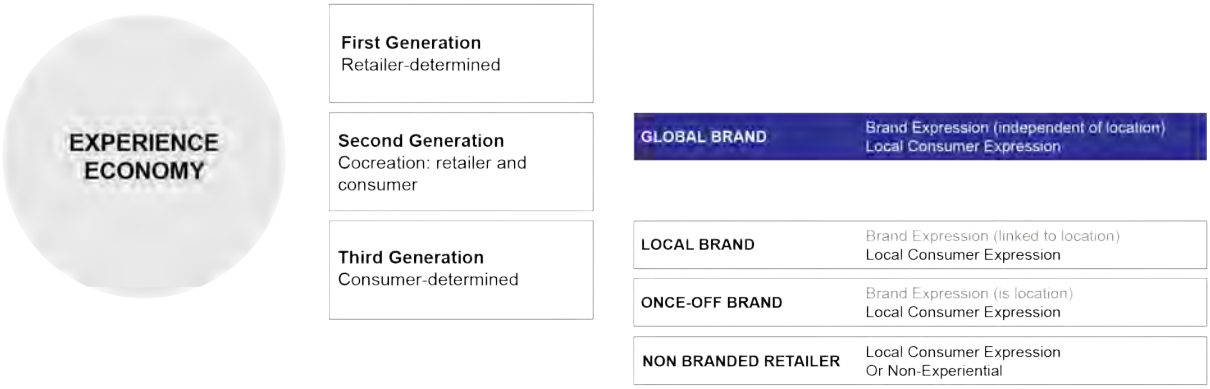



Figure 5.33 The three generations of the Experience Economy and the positioning of experience creation for localised retail design for global brands (Adapted from Petermans et al., 2015).

Consumers may express their identities through association with related lifestyle associated brands and programmes sharing within the retail space. These agile spaces can be accomplished through 'multi-modal' formats: spatial formats that allow a number of activities to occur within the retail space.

These spaces are attractive to consumers due to a unique mix of activities that resonate with multiple areas of the consumer's lifestyle and identity project. Examples of mixed programming includes provision for social experiences and a mixture of local and global brands within the same space.

For example, *Bikini Berlin's* retail destination is continually revised based on the seasonal changes in tenant mix, ensuring a continually relevant and new experience for consumers (see Figure 5.34).

Figure 5.34 Bikini Berlin, 2013 (by SAQ Architects). Images by Ben Walxton (2019) and Gertrud K. (2014)

Socialising enables consumers to further their identities and express themselves through affiliation with others demonstrating similar consumption objectives. This facilitates a social form of identity expression.

The objective of the technique of eliciting experiences for self-expression also entails the participation of consumers in acts of self-expression in the retail design. As consumers enact these experiences, a greater connection between consumer and brand can be forged. This is because experiences impact our memories and leave a lasting impression on us over the products that we buy.

Respondent 13 emphasises the importance of memorable experiences in retail design:

> *"…a great memory is in my mind iconic right? It's something that is so strong in your head that you remember it. It's a strong memory. Those memories are things that you did more than things that you saw…"* – Respondent 13

Through experiences of expressing their own identities, consumers are empowered to enact the process of identity construction in the retail design. These experiences of self-expression can be through behavioural acts, such as product customisation and spatial manipulation. By expressing creativity, participating in social experiences, and multi-modal activities, consumers are both expressing their own identities and contributing to the making of the retail design.

Self-expression in retail design can also be accommodated through the creation of spaces in which overlapping worlds relevant to the target consumer can find expression in the retail design. This includes the dedication of spaces to programmes of local consumer relevance, such as event spaces for talks by entrepreneurs in *Starbucks Reserve Tokyo*[20], or training events in *Nike House of Innovation 001*[21], Shanghai.

All experiences support and enhance the expression of the consumers' identities. The consumer's engagement in these processes of self-expression supports the strategy of local creative collaboration, by facilitating experiences or the local consumer during inhabitation.

An example of this technique is in Martí Guixé's design of *Camper's Speaking Shop* in Istanbul. The design allows consumers to move letters along the store's internal walls and form their own phrases and expressions (see Figure 5.35).


Figure 5.35 Camper's Speaking Shop Istanbul, 2012 (by Martí Guixé) allows consumers to move letters along the store's internal walls and form their own phrases and expressions. Photo copyright Inga Knölke (used with permission of designer and photographer)

This means that the retail design is continually re-informed by consumer input. Designers should address the legibility of experiences to enable ease of use. They should also be aware of the willingness of consumers to participate in interactive experiences, the relevance of these experiences in relation to local culture, and the way in which the spaces appear when experiences are engaged and disengaged.

[20] See Artefact S7 in Appendix D.
[21] See artefact N2 in Appendix D.

### 5.5.4 Technique 4: Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

Local image, the changing perception of the local identity in localised retail design, may be anticipated as a role-player in the brand's ongoing development of retail design in the local context. An approach of meta design can address a built in flexibility for the dynamic perceptions of consumers. Meta design implies a continuous cycle of informant and inhabitation stages of retail design (Binder *et al.*, 2011:158).

Kent (2007:738) asserts the value of meta design in retail environments as assisting the brand to adapt to "commercial and social needs". This built-in flexibility can be attained through the design of agile environments that can adapt according to the local consumers' and retailer's needs.

Respondent 4 describes these adaptable spaces:

> *" So, agility is about" … "planning for the future. That you will be able to…" "… plug-in and plug-out, like different functions."* – Respondent 4

By applying meta design, the retail designer leaves a degree of openness in the design to adjust according to the consumers' changing perceptions based on location. This loop is built into the design product itself. Meta design opens up areas for redesign after the store is inhabited and occupied *(Binder* et al*., 2011:158)*.The opportunity for brands to adapt their local identity on the basis of local image is depicted in Figure 5.36 below.


Figure 5.36 Built-in responsiveness through meta design principles ensures continued correlation between local identity and local image

In retail design, the digital and physical experiences of the brand can be leveraged to re-inform each other using the principle of meta design. For example, *Nike Live*[22] sees the adaptation of services and product based on local consumer purchase behaviour drawn from the brand's loyalty app. These meta design measures are responsive. They allow the local image to sway and direct the evolution of the design outcome.

The application of the principle of meta design to allow localised retail design is evident in *Pantaloons' retail concept* designed by Dalziel & Pow in 2020. Pantaloons is an Indian fashion brand. The store design features changing visual merchandising displays and a "digital wrap" facilitating a continued adjustment in the spatial atmosphere (Dalziel-pow.com, 2021). See Figure 5.37 below.


Figure 5.37 Pantaloons retail design, 2021 (by Dalziel & Pow) features flexible display and a digital wrap. Images courtesy of Dalziel & Pow (Dalziel-pow.com, 2021)

[22] See Artefact N1 in Appendix D.

Meta design can be facilitated in retail design by allowing multiple configurations, multiple programmes, adaptability to retail elements, temporality, flexible layouts, modular systems, and the integration of digital technology in retail design. This is while retail design communicates the brand in a distinctive manner without a loss of brand identity.

### 5.5.5 Summarising the strategy of local consumer relevant experience

This section described the strategy of local consumer relevant experience. This strategy for localising retail design requires that inhabitation of retail design enable local consumers to fulfil their identity construction processes through association with the global brand. In order to enhance local authenticity, this strategy sees the reference to aspects of local familiarity to local consumers. It also enables local consumers to construct their own experiences of the global brand through inhabitation of the retail store. The techniques for applying the strategy of local consumer relevant experience were discussed. These were evoke local familiarity, reflect local consumers' values, elicit experiences for self-expression, and build in responsiveness to brand and local image. The application of these techniques were demonstrated. The following section concludes the discussion of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

## 5.6 SECTION SUMMARY

This section discussed the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. Each strategy was defined and its contribution to attaining local authenticity in localised retail design was explained. The techniques for applying each strategy for localising retail design for global brands were supported by a synthesis of interview data excerpts the discourse, and illustrative examples of localised retail design. Finally, the positioning of the strategies for localising retail design for global brands in relation to mediating global brand and local authenticity was provided in a conceptual model. The following section, Section 3, demonstrates the application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for four global brands (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks). This section consolidates the artefactual analysis presented in Appendix D of the thesis.

# SECTION 3: APPLIED STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

This section demonstrates the application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. This is compiled as a synthesis of the artefactual analysis (Appendix D) of localised retail design for four global brands (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks). The purpose is to demonstrate how global brands employ a variety of strategies and techniques for localising retail design across a portfolio of retail stores while retaining brand consistency. The following brands were selected: Aesop (5.7), Dolce & Gabbana (5.8), Nike (5.9), and Starbucks (5.10).

Each global brand's identity, approach to localising retail design, the applied strategies and techniques for localising retail design, and their efforts to retain brand consistency are summarised below. These summaries occur as a synthesis of the artefactual analysis in Appendix D of the study. The role of the artefactual analysis is reinforced in Chapter 3, Method (see section 3.4.4). The analysis is descriptive as opposed to critical. The study of artefacts acted to test the initial findings or the emerging theory (strategies for localising retail design for global brands) by demonstrating their holistic application in a sample of 20 artefacts (for four global brands).

# 5.7 AESOP

## 5.7.1 Brand origin

Aesop was founded in 1987 in Australia. The brand's head office is in Melbourne, with satellite offices and stores positioned in multiple locations across the globe. The brand specialises in quality "skin, body and hair-care" products formulated with an "attention to detail". The products are intended to evoke a pleasant sensory experience. The brand prioritises quality of product made with plant-based and laboratory formulated ingredients. (Aesop.com, *s.a.*[a]).

## 5.7.2 Retail design approach

Aesop evolved from a Melbourne-based salon experience under the name "Emeis" into a global skincare brand (Down & Paphitis, 2019:10). The brand's origin in salon care informed the atmospheric quality of its retail stores across the globe. The brand prioritises quality of acoustics, visual subtraction and pleasant lighting in stores (Down & Paphitis, 2019:125; Teufel & Zimmermann, 2017:344). Attention to ergonomics, sensory experience, material and texture contribute to Aesop's calm interiors (Down & Paphitis. 2019:125; Teufel & Zimmermann, 2017:344). The brand also declares an interest in "sustainable and intelligent" design (Aesop.com, *s.a.* [a]).

The brand's approach to retail design is an emphasis on grounded design principles that govern both consistency and distinction (Down & Paphitis, 2019:79). To achieve consistency, the brand employs principles of "removal of visual excess" in the store designs (Down & Paphitis, 2019:79).

This involves the reduction of visual clutter to enhance coherence and "definition" to the spaces (Down & Paphitis, 2019:79). The brand also employs a principle of "visual abundance" through visual merchandising (Down & Paphitis, 2019:79). The repetition and pattern of continuity characterised by "rows upon rows of amber glass bottles with monochrome labels, laid out in odd-numbered arrangements" communicate a consistent aesthetic present in all Aesop stores (Down & Paphitis, 2019:79). Aesop finds distinction in every store design. The sense of distinction is informed by the context in which stores are positioned. The brand aims to "add something of lasting value to the streetscape" (Down & Paphitis, 2019:175). Through research of the site, people, and neighbourhood, the brand equips itself to arrive at distinct store designs that are contextually responsive (Down & Paphitis, 2019:175). Aesop sees this as "the marrying of deeply held design principles with what is most beautiful, significant and real in the community and streetscape" (Down & Paphitis, 2019:175). The brand collaborates with variety of designers to imbue stores with renewed creative perspectives (Down & Paphitis, 2019:151). Although the brand does not have "criteria" for the selection of their designers, they seek individuals who are "able to bring a unique architectural vision to store design" (Down & Paphitis, 2019:171).

## 5.7.3 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Aesop

**A1 Aesop Kyoto.** Kyoto, Japan.
Shinichiro Ogata (Simplicity)
2014

*(Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c])*

**A2 Aesop Flinders Lane.** Melbourne, Australia.
Aesop Design Department
2015

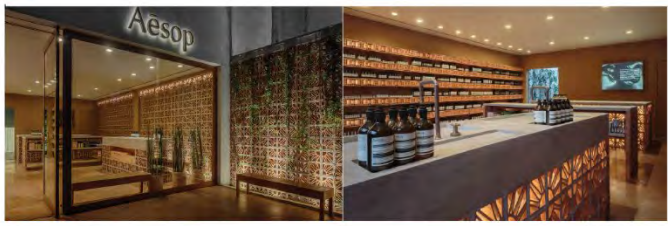
*(Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]); (Aesop.com, s.a.[b])*

**A3 Aesop Brera.** Milan, Italy.
Vincenzo de Cotiis Architects
2015

*(Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [e])*

**A4 Aesop Vila Madalena.** São Paulo, Brazil.
Estudio Campana
2016

*(Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [f])*




**A5 Aesop Park Slope.** New York, United States.
Frida Escobedo
2019

*(Cogley, 2019a)*

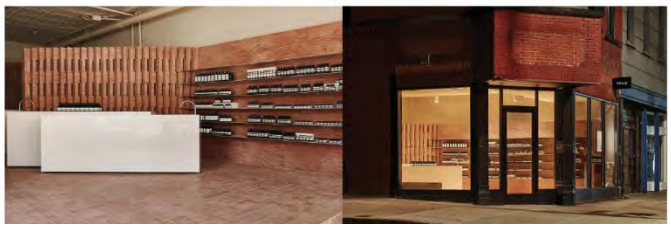


Figure 5.38 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Aesop

## 5.7.4 Summary of strategies for localising retail design for Aesop

### 5.7.4.1 Local creative collaboration

Aesop's collaborative approach with local designers (a joint process between designer and the brand's in-house design team), ensures that both local knowledge and brand consistency are mediated throughout their projects. The brand does intermittently see exception in the appointment of selected designers for multiple projects across various regions. The brand has collaborated with Frida Escobedo, Cïgue, March Studio, and Studioilse on a range of retail stores that are not always connected to the nationality of designers.

### 5.7.4.2 Locally responsive design

The brand's strategy towards localising retail design also occurs through the reflection of local references in design. The selected artefacts (with the exception of Flinders Lane) refer to local aspects, whether this is tangible (the use of local materials) or intangible (the symbolism of washing hands in *Aesop Kyoto*). The stores also demonstrate contextual response on varying scales.

*Aesop Vila Madalena* taps into the local creative district through a courtyard that weaves into the busy street life. *Aesop Brera* retains the existing building facade and existing materials are exposed. Design cues are taken from the context through referencing architectural styles prevalent in the region, such as through the use of brick in *Aesop Park Slope* (which refers to masonry construction in the district). This strategy is consistent with Aesop's drive to tap into the local neighbourhood and respond to its unique qualities (Down & Paphitis, 2019).

#### 5.7.4.3 Local consumer relevant experience

Evoking local familiarity in design is of importance in Aesop's approach to localising retail design. This is accomplished through aesthetics. Every store takes cues from the local context. This is reflected through material use (for example, through the use of cobogó brick in *Aesop Vila Madalena*). This is also evident in reference to prior functions of spaces (for example, *Aesop Brera* makes reference to the space's prior use as a *salumeria*). Further reference is made to prior material use (for example, *Aesop Flinders Lane* replicates cardboard use as reference to a previous design iteration of the store). Local familiarity is also evoked through experiences (for example, the significance of water to Kyoto is emphasised through the antique well in the store's shopfront and in the experience of hand washing).

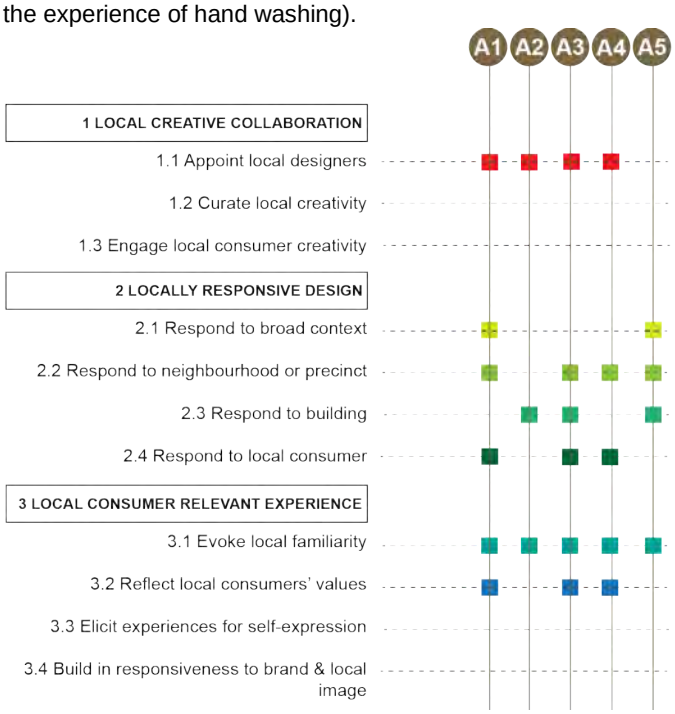



Figure 5.39 Summary of applied techniques for localising retail design for Aesop

## 5.7.5 Retaining brand consistency

Aesop has taken an approach of localising retail design by creating unique stores informed by their individual locations, resulting in the use of local references and contextually responsive design. The brand ensures consistency in retail design through:

- A collaborative design process (between designers and their own in-house design department that mediates consistency);
- Visual merchandising principles (removing visual excess, displaying product in abundance using odd-numbers and displaying product in rows);
- Drawing on the location as a source of inspiration for design;
- Emphasis on environmental comfort (acoustics and lighting design); and
- Consistent in-store rituals (product testing and handwashing in the iconic in-store basins).

# 5.8 DOLCE & GABBANA

## 5.8.1 Brand origin

Dolce & Gabbana is a luxury fashion brand founded by fashion designers, Stefano Gabbana and Domenico Dolce in 1982 in Milan (businessoffashion.com, *s.a.*). The pair originate from Sicily. This origin plays a significant role in the brand's fashion inspiration. The pair launched their first runway collection in 1985 at Milan fashion week, now producing womenswear, menswear, knitwear and accessories (businessoffashion.com, *s.a.*). The brand recently collaborated with SMEG (for the design of Sicilian-inspired graphics for their appliances, and with *Fiasconaro* (an Italian confectionary brand) for their *panettone* packaging design inspired by Sicilian roots of the brand and product flavour (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [b]). The brand's fashion aesthetic is known for its bold colours, patterns, a "sensuous" style (businessoffashion.com, *s.a.*) and its Sicilian and Italian inspiration and associations (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [b]). The brand has over four hundred monobrand boutiques across the world (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [b]).

## 5.8.2 Retail design approach

In 2016, Dolce & Gabbana announced their new retail design campaign, DG Evolution in the effort to move away from the 'concept' store and into localised retail design (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [a]). The intention of DG Evolution was to revamp boutiques with newly designed spaces that reflected the local culture for selected boutiques (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]). "Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's idea is to take customers on a Grand Tour, embarking on a journey where aesthetics and brand values are combined with unique features, and elements of excellence of each city" (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]). The newly designed boutiques were to draw on aspects of the local culture and Dolce & Gabbana's brand as informants to the retail design (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]).

To carry through the vision of these unique spaces, Dolce & Gabbana appointed who they refer to as "star architects" for the design of their boutiques (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [d]). These designers include Eric Carlson of Carbondale, Steven Harris, Gwenael Nicolas of Curiosity and Julien Rousseau of Fresh Architectures. The designers, with portfolios covering work for other luxury brands, were tasked with designing different stores each time that combine the values and aesthetics of Dolce & Gabbana with the unique characteristics of the store location in a form of "cultural exchange" (Hoang, 2016). The brand identifies both local and international consumers as visiting their boutiques (Hoang, 2016). The idea is that the store designs are compatible with the local consumer while providing brand interest and a different "point of view" for the international consumer (Hoang, 2016).

The brand's founders Stefano Gabbana and Domenico Dolce, see experience and these creative perspectives being of importance to the consumers of their brand, who would find the repetition of store concepts monotonous (Hoang, 2016). The strategy to localise retail design is rooted in the brand's interest to tell a local story through the Dolce & Gabbana lens that promotes brand interest and demonstrates brand evolution (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]).

## 5.8.3 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Dolce & Gabbana

D1 **Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama.** Tokyo, Japan.
Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity),
2016

*(Winston, 2016)*

D2 **Dolce & Gabbana London.**
London, England.
Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity),
2017

*(Hawkins, 2017a)*

D3 **Dolce & Gabbana Saint Barthélemy.**
Saint-Barthélemy.
Steven Harris
2017

*(Hawkins, 2017b)*

D4 **Dolce & Gabbana Rome.** Rome, Italy.
Eric Carlson (Carbondale)
2019

*(Levy, 2019a)*

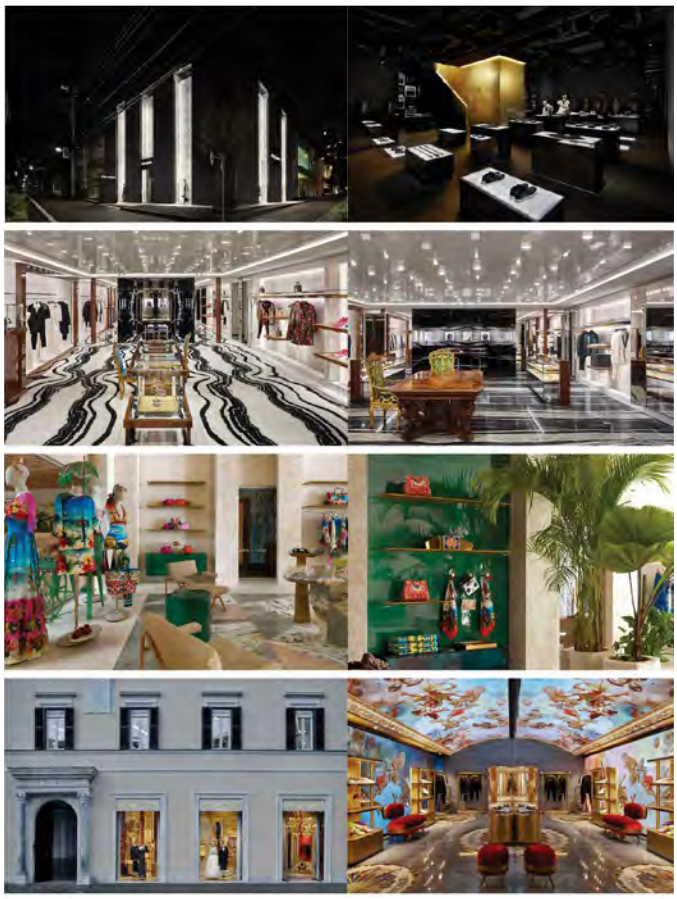


Figure 5.40 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Dolce & Gabbana

## 5.8.4 Summary of strategies for localising retail design for Dolce & Gabbana

### 5.8.4.1 Local creative collaboration

Dolce & Gabbana appoint “star architects” for the design of their boutiques within the DG Evolution concept launched in 2016. The brand partnered with several designers for the design of multiple boutiques each. In some cases, designers did have a local and /or continental connection. In the case of Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama, designer Gwenael Nicolas’s career history in Japan afforded him the knowledge of designing in this region. As a European based design firm, Carbondale was able to design for Dolce & Gabbana across Europe. Steven Harris, as an American designer, designed a boutique in St Barthélemy in the Caribbean. Although the designers may not have national connections with the countries in which they were designing, their connection on a continental level allowed them to work with some local knowledge. These design partnerships form part of the brand’s broader strategy to create exclusive retail design that speaks to the luxury of its products. The designers are well known and have experience working with other luxury brands (for example, Gwenael Nicolas worked with Fendi).

### 5.8.4.2 Locally responsive design

The *Aoyama* and *Rome* stores displayed broad contextual responsiveness on a symbolic level. In *Aoyama*, the Japanese tradition of light and shadow in architecture was expressed in the design, drawing from a context of local tradition. In Rome, the historic baroque context of the city provided inspiration to the fresco and other elements in the store.

#### 5.8.4.3 Local consumer relevant experience

Embedding local familiarity in design was accomplished through aesthetics and experience in some store cases. Aesthetically, the stores always took a direction inspired by what the brand refers to as the "cultural excellence of the city" (world.dolcegabbana.com, *s.a.* [a]). In the cases of *Aoyama, St Barthélemy* and *Rome,* the aesthetic was explict in its links to location. London, however, this was inspired by the classic nature of the city and interpreted in a black and white palette. Here, the sense of familiarity is difficult to decode without further information. As Dolce & Gabbana state that the *DG Evolution* drive was both for local consumers and global consumers, the store designs provide a reflection of the places in which they are located, at times enhancing the atmosphere of the location as a place of leisure (as in *St Barthélemy*). In some instances, local cultural values are expressed (such as through the use of light and shadow in *Aoyama*).

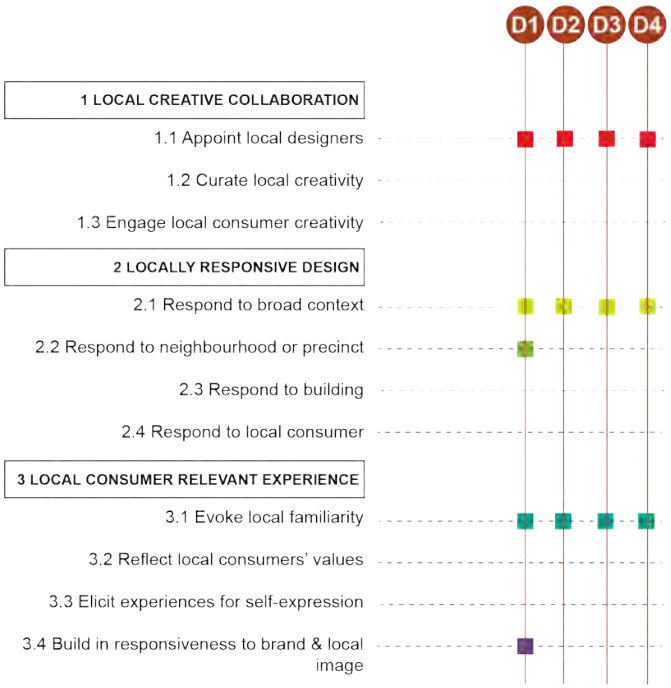



*Figure 5.41 Summary of applied techniques for localising retail design for Dolce & Gabbana*

## 5.8.5 Retaining brand consistency

The DG Evolution boutiques are unique in aesthetics, and reflect cues from the cities in which they are located. This has contributed to a unique consumer experience, with a focus on reflecting local identity through aesthetics.

The brand ensures consistency in retail design through:

- Appointment of the same designers to work on multiple store designs;
- A reflection of brand's Italian roots in all store designs (in material choice, textiles, stylistic references and symbolism);
- The use of a feature staircase that is a highlight in every store design; and;
- The use of a variety of marble in every store design.

# 5.9 NIKE

## 5.9.1 Brand origin

The Nike brand was co-founded by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman in 1964 in Oregon, United States under the name “Blue Ribbon” (news.nike.com, 2015). Sparked by his disappointment with running spikes of the time, Bowerman (who was a coach and athlete) innovated footwear that became the brand’s initiating product. His commitment to innovation through material experimentation, study of athletic movement and the human anatomy led Bowerman to the design of Nike’s first product, the Cortez shoe in the 1970’s (news.nike.com, 2015).

Following the launch of the successful shoe design, the company was renamed as “Nike” in 1978 (news.nike.com, 2015). “Nike’s footwear ideal has evolved, but Bowerman’s preoccupation with creating products that enable athletes to perform at their highest potential continues to fuel Nike’s culture of innovation” (news.nike.com, 2015). Nike identifies its mission is to “bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world” (About.nike.com, *s.a.*). The brand defines athletes as anyone with a body (About.nike.com, *s.a.*). The brand specialises in active wear, retailing footwear, apparel and accessories for adults and children.

## 5.9.2 Retail design approach

Nike has a longstanding reputation for agile and dynamic retail concepts that keep the brand at the forefront of innovation (Klanten & Kouznetsova, 2018:223). Nike’s drive to provide increasing variety in experiences is born from the desire to keep consumers engaged with the brand. Whether it is through the brand’s special projects (temporary brand statements) or permanent retail stores, the brand’s intention is to provide “innovation, speed and direct consumer interaction” (Klanten & Kouznetsova, 2018:223).

Nike is well known for its consumer co-creation initiatives in which product customisation and personalisation are possibilities in store (Klanten & Kouznetsov, 2018:224). A measure that places the brand ahead of its competitors is its initiative to integrate digital technology into retail experiences (Klanten & Kouznetsva, 2018:224). Nike takes a consumer-centric approach to retail design. By leveraging consumer insights, Nike continually processes and translates consumer inputs into tailored and responsive retail environments (Klanten & Kouznetsova, 2018:226). This innovation is apparent in the brand’s retail concepts, *Nike House of Innovation* and *Nike Live*, both launched in 2018. The aim of the brand is to create retail experiences that are “more personal, more mobile, more distinctive” (Parker in Klanten & Kouznetsova, 2018:226).

Nike has an in-house global retail design department that focuses on the innovation and roll out of its concepts. With a broad portfolio of retail stores, the brand experiments with various concepts, scales and strategies simultaneously (Trotter in Baird, 2019).

## 5.9.3 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Nike

N1 **Nike Live Melrose.** Los Angeles, United States of America.
Nike Global
2018

*(news.nike.com, 2018a)*

N2 **Nike House of Innovation 001.** Shanghai, China.
Nike Global
2018

*(news.nike.com, 2018b)*

N3 **Nike Rise Guangzhou.** Guangzhou, China.
Nike Global
2020

*(news.nike.com, 2020)*

N4 **Nike Unite Concept.** Asia, United States, United Kingdom.
Nike Global
2020

*(news.nike.com, 2020c)*

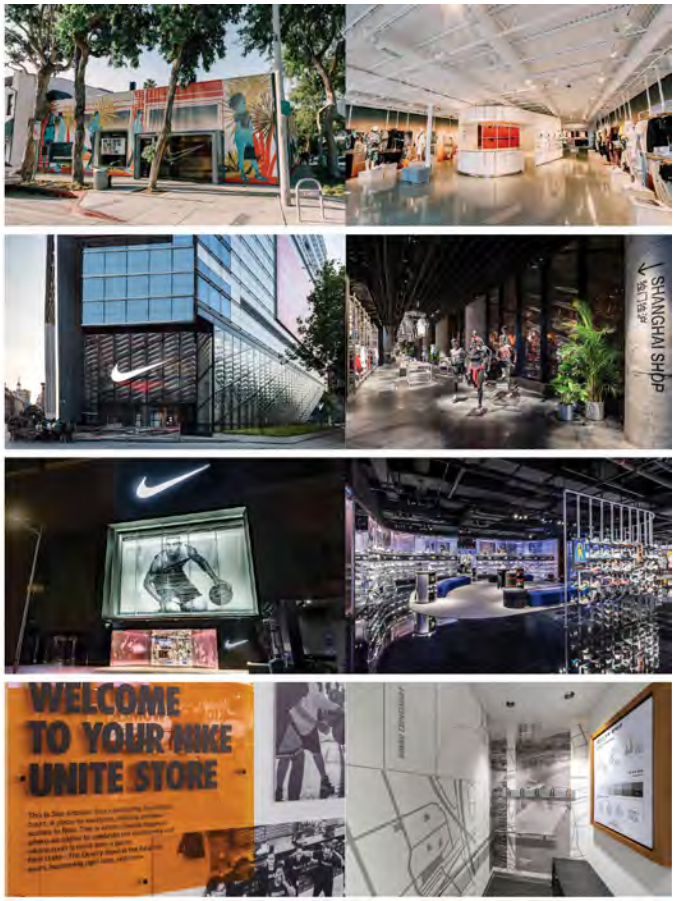



Figure 5.42 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Nike

## 5.9.4 Summary of strategies for localising retail design for Nike

### 5.9.4.1 Local creative collaboration

Nike has an in-house retail design team who work on global store concepts. The team is based in the United States. In the case of store designs across the retail artefacts studied, the brand does not state strategies of collaborating with local designers. Instead, the brand employs principles of consumer-centric design through co-design. In the cases of *Nike Live Melrose*, *Nike Rise* and *Nike House of Innovation*, Nike uses consumer data derived from the brand's digital consumer platforms to inform design decisions.

This includes the store location, lifestyle focus (for example, later Nike Live concepts in *Shibuya Scramble* and *Long Beach* see the evolution of the Nike Live concept to encompass a pointed lifestyle focus), in-store services and experiences, and a defined sporting focus (for example, football, basketball and running in *Nike Rise* Guangzhou). Nike Live Melrose entailed collaborating with local artists for the design of its shop facade's mural.

### 5.9.4.2 Locally responsive design

The artefacts demonstrate references to the local by telling stories about the location through graphics and through referencing local sport. Local references are accomplished through the dedication of shop space to exclusive shop space that contains merchandise inspired by the city. Contextually, the *Nike Live Melrose* store stands out to be responsive to the neighbourhood context. In *Nike Unite*, wall graphics are inspired by local community.

#### 5.9.4.3 Local consumer relevant experience

Although aesthetics evoke local familiarity (*Nike Live Melrose's* facade mural and *Nike Unite's* community wall graphics), this is subservient to the localised experience. Local familiarity is accomplished through continued adaptation of the retail spaces based on consumer inputs in the brand's digital platforms (see Nike Live and Nike House of Innovation).

Notable to Nike's portfolio of localised retail design concepts is the consumer-centric approach to store design that seamlessly integrates the digital and physical experience of Nike in dynamic environments (Rueda & O'Sullivan, 2020). The brand reflects local values in design from the perspective of sport preferences.

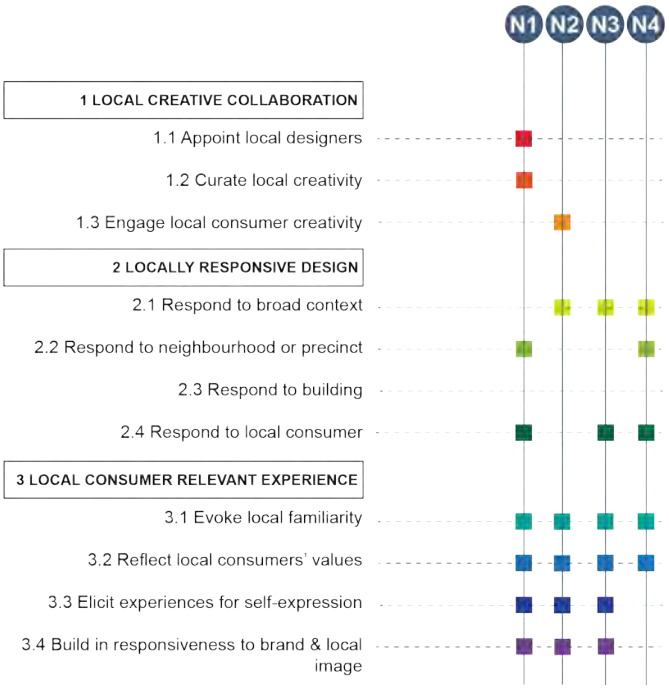



Figure 5.43 Summary of applied techniques for localising retail design for Nike

## 5.9.5 Retaining brand consistency

Using differing concepts, Nike reaches different target consumer groups. The concepts address the specific needs of a neighbourhood (*Nike Live Melrose*); showcase the city (*Nike House of Innovation 001*); connect members to a city-scale community of sport (*Nike Unite*) or celebrate local sports (*Nike Rise Guangzhou*).

The brand ensures consistency in retail design through:

- Using sport as a starting point from which to generate a retail concept;
- Using consumer connection as an objective for retail design concepts;
- Integrating physical and digital experiences of retail; and;
- Remaining true to the concept under which each store design falls with every store iteration (Nike Live, Nike House of Innovation, Nike Rise or Nike Unite).

# 5.10 STARBUCKS

## 5.10.1 Brand origin

Starbucks is a coffee brand that celebrates the experience of coffee and connection. Starbucks originated in 1971 in Seattle, United States. The company opened its first store in Pike Place Market, a historic district in Seattle (Starbucks.com, *s.a.*). The brand was inspired by the sea-faring culture associated with early coffee trade, drawing references from the novel Moby Dick. In 1982, Howard Schulz (CEO of Starbucks) joined the company. Schulz was inspired by the communal culture that surrounded coffee during his visits to Milan, bringing with him the concept of "third place", a place that was neither work nor home, but an in-between space that was about community and connection (Starbucks.com, *s.a.*).

In the 2000's Starbucks faced store closures that threatened the brand's survival due to high product costs in comparison with local competitors (Husain et al., 2014). Through introspection of the brand's retail approach, Schulz (who re-joined the company during the 2008 decline) saw that that a reconnection with consumers was necessary to revive the brand (Husain et al., 2014). Schulz prompted the "My Starbucks Idea" campaign in which consumers were invited to give input on everything to do with Starbucks (Husain et al., 2014). Starbucks has grown to reach regions across the globe with store presence in Asia, Africa, America, Middle East, Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom (Starbucks.com, *s.a.*).

## 5.10.2 Retail design approach

Starbucks' retail design began in Pike Place, Seattle with the opening of its first store in the 1970's. When Howard Schulz joined the company, he brought with him the idea of a coffee house, the sense that the coffee shop would no longer merely be an outlet for coffee, but a place of community and gathering. This led to a series of retail stores that saw the experience of coffee and community coming together in what Schulz defined as "third place", a place between work and home (Starbucks.com, *s.a.*).

The brand embarked on a campaign of localised retail design, "to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighbourhood at a time" (Starbucks.com, *s.a.)*. Stores were designed with the 'local' in mind, through murals, materials, artworks and product that related to the neighbourhood in which the stores were located (Starbucks.com, *s.a*). This brought the brand closer to its concept of third place by defining unique, place-specific stores that had independent characteristics. This intended to foster a sense of belonging in the neighbourhoods in which the stores were located (Retailinasia.com, 2018). Notable stores that gained media attention have been the *Starbucks Tenman-gu* store in Tokyo by Kengo Kuma and Associates and *Starbucks The Bank* in Amsterdam by Liz Muller.

In 2014, Starbucks brand introduced Starbucks Reserve Roastery, a large scale, experiential retail model that focuses on the production of coffee, from bean to roast to cup in a production-inspired interior that serves to educate consumers and immerse them in the world of coffee (urdesignmag.com, 2014). The Reserve Roastery saw introductions in the cities of Seattle, Shanghai, Milan, New York, Tokyo and Chicago. Each store draws on its location for design inspiration, offering consumers unique, location-specific experiences and environments (Wilson, 2014).

## 5.10.3 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Starbucks

**S1** **Starbucks The Bank.** Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Liz Muller (Starbucks Global)
2012

*(Meinhold, 2012)*

**S2** **Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu.** Tokyo, Japan.
Kengo Kuma and Associates
2012

*(Frearson, 2012b)*

**S3** **Starbucks Mall of Africa.** Johannesburg, South Africa.
Starbucks EMEA
2016

*(retaildesignblog.net, 2016)*

**S4** **Starbucks Reserve Seattle.** Seattle, United States.
Liz Muller (Starbucks Global)
2014

*(urdesignmag.com, 2014)*

**S5** **Starbucks Reserve Milan.** Milan, Italy.
Liz Muller (Starbucks Global)
2018

*(Archello.com, 2018)*

**S6** **Starbucks Reserve New York.** New York, United States.
Liz Muller (Starbucks Global)
2018

*(Cogley, 2019b)*

**S7** **Starbucks Reserve Tokyo.** Tokyo, Japan.
Liz Muller (Starbucks Global)
2019

*(Levy, 2019b)*

Figure 5.44 Studied artefacts of localised retail design for Starbucks

## 5.10.4 Summary of strategies for localising retail design for Starbucks

### 5.10.4.1 Local creative collaboration

While the brand has an in-house global design team, their distribution of sub-teams indicate efforts towards addressing specialised regional design for Starbucks across the globe. The brand has collaborated with Kengo Kuma and Associates multiple times.

Here, working with a local designer marks an exception in Starbucks' conventional retail design approach of using in-house designers. The brand consistently imbues its retail stores with local elements through the process of curation. In the case of *Starbucks Reserve Milan*, the brand took this strategy to further levels, showcasing local craft traditions through traditional *terrazzo* flooring and *murano* glass light fittings.

#### 5.10.4.2 Locally responsive design

The stores are also tailored to evoke familiarity through material use and forming (for example cedar use to resemble shrine temple landscapes in *Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu*). Unique experiences are supported in the Reserve Roastery stores which individually address aspects of local taste. In Starbucks Reserve Milan, the partnership with an Italian brand (*Princi Bakery*) saw the introduction of Italian pastries and pizzas within the Starbucks' Reserve Roastery's global offering, shaping a localised experience. The introduction of a tea bar in the *Tokyo Reserve* addresses local taste through a unique experience to the store. Provision for events also allow spaces to adapt according to the local community's needs, contributing to a third place.

#### 5.10.4.3 Local consumer relevant experience

The stores are also tailored to evoke familiarity through material use and forming (for example cedar use to resemble shrine temple landscapes in *Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-g*u). Unique experiences are supported in the Reserve Roastery stores which individually address aspects of local taste. In Starbucks Reserve Milan, the partnership with an Italian brand (*Princi Bakery*) saw the introduction of Italian pastries and pizzas within the Starbucks' Reserve Roastery's global offering, shaping a localised experience. The introduction of a tea bar in the Tokyo Reserve addresses local taste through a unique experience to the store. Provision for events also allow spaces to adapt according to the local community's needs, contributing to a third place.

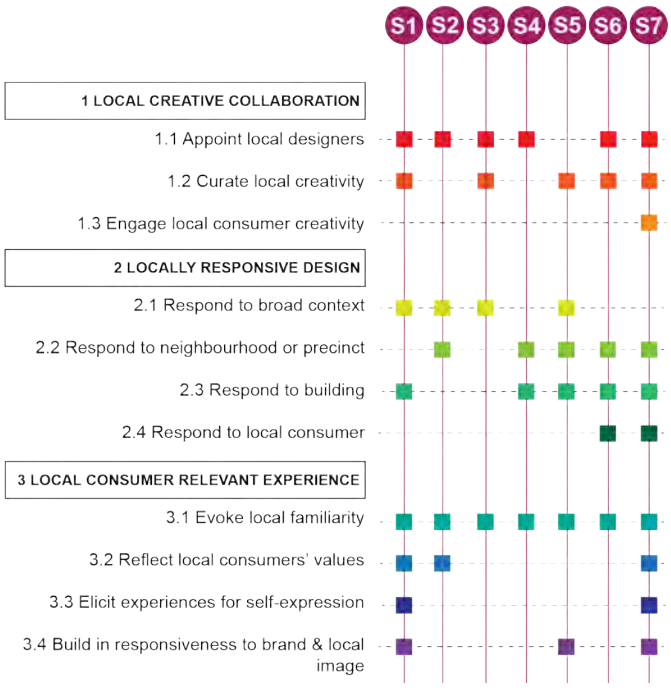



Figure 5.45 Summary of applied techniques for localising retail design for Starbucks

## 5.10.5 Retaining brand consistency

Starbucks' concept of third place has evolved from the application of aesthetics as a form of local identity to experiential localised retail design in the Reserve Roastery concept.

The brand ensures consistency in retail design through:

- Founding the principles of localised retail design on the spirit of 'third place';

- Creating comfortable and inviting interiors (through materiality, acoustic control and lighting)
- The presence of the brand's icon, the Siren, in the store designs;
- Using coffee as a medium to catalyse connection between consumers; and;
- Emphasising the production of coffee through consistent design elements in the Reserve Roasteries (cask, pneumatic tubes, production line and an industrial aesthetic).

## 5.11 SECTION SUMMARY

This section demonstrated the application of strategies and techniques for localising retail design for the global brands Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks. The discussion included an overview of each brand, their approaches to localising retail design, a list of selected artefacts studied (see Appendix D), the applied strategies and techniques for localising retail design and the ways each global brand retained consistency.

The summary of the artefactual analysis verifies that strategies and techniques for localising retail design do occur in practice; however there are limitations to the depth of the artefactual analysis due to the research design. In depth, brand-focused studies would be required to critically question and engage with the success of the strategies and techniques as well as to reflect on the brands' perspectives. In-person site visits, consumer input, and brand inputs would all be required to study the success of the application of strategies for localising retail design for specific global brands with more rigour. This is suggested as a recommendation for further research.

The following section consolidates the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

## 5.12 CONSOLIDATING CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

As discussed in Chapter 4, the conditions for localising retail design for global brands are in retaining global brand consistency, and in mediating global brand and local authenticity. The implications of these conditions in applying strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands are discussed.

As apparent in the artefactual analysis (Appendix D), and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, global brands may retain brand consistency through the communication of a coherent application of strategies and techniques for localising retail design while mediating areas of global brand and local authenticity. The condition of mediating global brand and local authenticity has implications for positioning the strategies for localising retail design for global brands. The identification of the areas of Authorship, Informants, and Inhabitation structure the mediation of global brand and local authenticity.

Using these areas, the conceptual model below (Figure 5.42) illustrates the positioning of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands within the framework of mediating brand and local authenticity. This consolidates the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands.

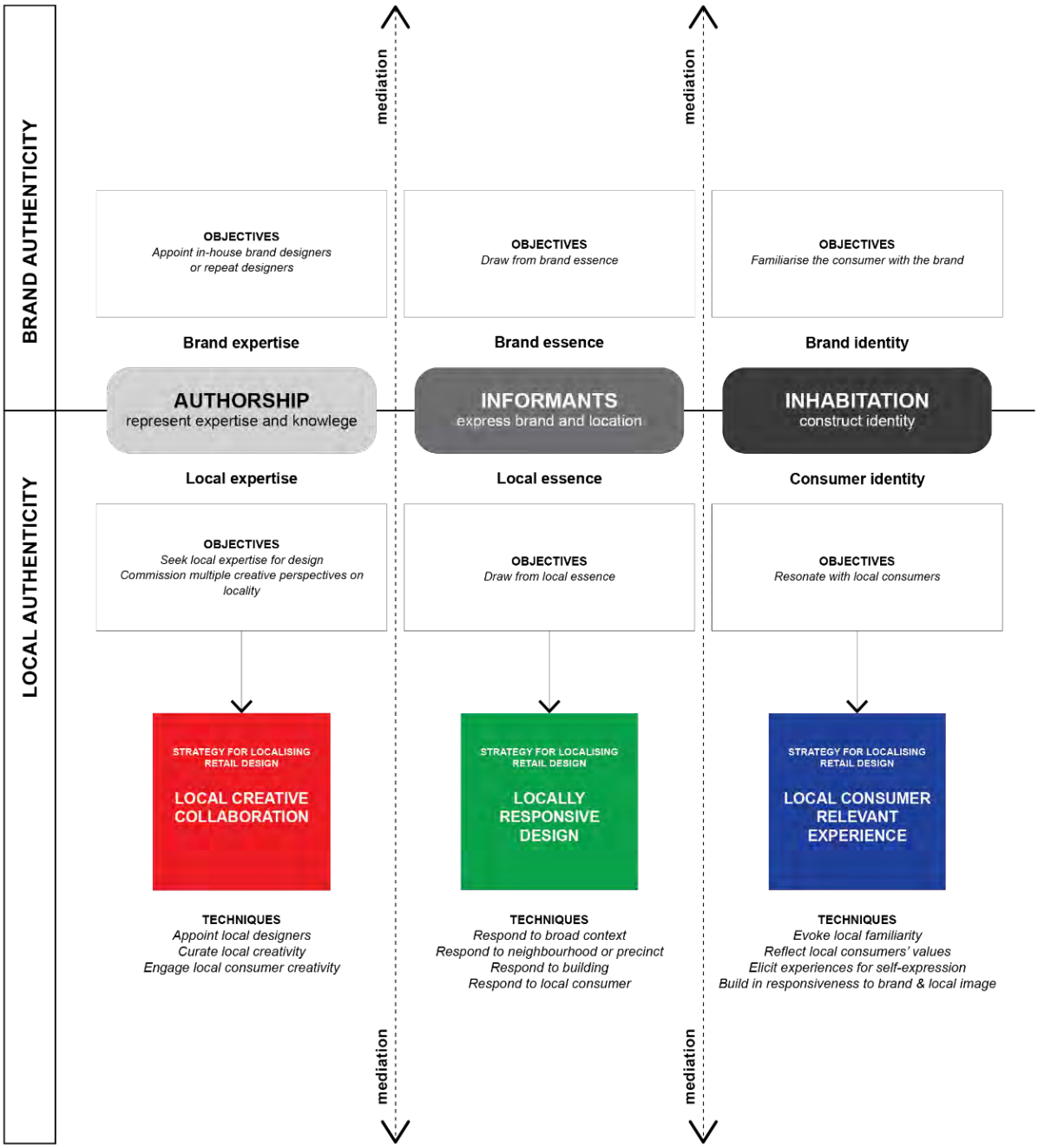



Figure 5.46 Consolidated conditions, strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands

## 5.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to identify, describe and demonstrate the application of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

Research question 3 asked: What are the strategies for localising retail design for global brands?

The study found the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands are:

**Strategy 1 Local creative collaboration** can be applied through the following techniques:

- Appoint local designers
- Curate local creativity
- Engage local consumer creativity

**Strategy 2 Locally responsive design** can be applied through the following techniques:

- Respond to broad context
- Respond to neighbourhood or precinct
- Respond to building
- Respond to local consumer

**Strategy 3 Local consumer relevant experience** can be applied through the following techniques:

- Evoke local familiarity
- Reflect local consumers' values
- Elicit experiences for self-expression
- Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

These were established through the analysis of interviews with retail designers who possessed knowledge and expertise in localised retail design for global brands and through the study of 20 artefacts of localised retail design for four global brands.

The chapter presented:

- Findings (the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands),
- Discussion of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands (in narrative form with illustrative practice-based examples, excerpts from the interview data, and examples from the discourse), and
- Application of strategies and techniques for localising retail design for four global brands (Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks).

The conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands were consolidated in a conceptual model (see 5.12).

The following chapter concludes the thesis. A summary of findings, limitations of the study, contributions, reflections, and recommendations for future research are provided.

# Chapter 6 **CONCLUSION**

# 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Localised retail design currently occurs as an unconventional mode of retail design practice where a small number of prominent and influential global brands (some of which were studied in this thesis) repeatedly opt to localise their retail design portfolios by expressing, responding to, and celebrating the locations in which their stores are based. Localised retail design has received practice-based interest as a valued, authentic, and socially-responsive form of design, motivating this topic as a deserving area of study. Due to a clear shortage of research in this area, I initiated the study to expand an understanding of the design principles and practices in localising retail design for global brands.

The study took a constructivist grounded theory approach. Interviews were conducted and analysed iteratively. Semi structured verbal and written interviews were conducted with eighteen retail designers knowledgeable in the area of localised retail design. The interview data was analysed using an iterative procedure of coding, categorising, memo-writing and constant comparison between data, codes and memos. An artefactual analysis of twenty retail stores of four global brands was conducted to support and develop the emergent conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands. The artefactual documentation was generated using secondary sources captured in Appendix D of the document.

The study aims emerged from the research process. These were to develop the conditions for localising retail design for global brands and to determine the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

The research questions were:

1. What are the ways global brands can retain brand consistency while localising retail design?
2. What are the areas in which global brands can mediate brand and local authenticity when localising retail design? and
3. What are the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands?

The research objectives were to make explicit the ways in which global brand consistency can be retained when localising retail design; to identify the areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design; and to develop detailed strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands.

This chapter serves to recapitulate the main aspects of the study. This begins with a summary of the findings of the project. Thereafter, the contributions of this study are noted. The limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research are provided.

# 6.2 FINDINGS

The study developed the conditions for localising retail design for global brands. These were in identifying ways to retain global brand consistency when localising retail design and areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity. The study further identified strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. The findings are summarised below.

## 6.2.1 Conditions for localising retail design for global brands

### 6.2.1.1 Ways to retain global brand consistency when localising retail design

It is recognised that in order for global brands to localise retail design, it is necessary to do so while retaining brand consistency. The research indicates that global brand consistency can be retained when localising retail design. The ways in which global brand consistency may be retained are summarised in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Ways to retain global brand consistency when localising retail design

| | |
|---|---|
| **Consistencies in designer choice** | Global brands may appoint repeat designers who are familiar with designing retail stores for the global brand. Repeat designers will possess brand knowledge that enables brand identity to be expressed consistently in localised retail design, even if each retail store is unique. Global brands may work collaboratively between in-house and external designers when localising retail design. This collaboration can ensure that both brand knowledge and local knowledge are represented in retail design. |
| **Consistencies in approaches to localising retail design** | Global brands may demonstrate brand consistency by being consistent about their approach to localising retail design. |
| **Creating global brand manuals with scope to localise retail design** | Brand manuals should be formulated with the strategic intention to localise retail design. These should define the consistent elements in retail design while identifying creative scope afforded to localising retail design. These standards should be applied to all retail stores. |

#### 6.2.1.2 Areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity in localised retail design

The study found that localised retail design is a mediation between brand and local identity and that retail design should demonstrate authenticity to both areas while mediating their interests. The areas for mediating brand and local authenticity are authorship, informants, and inhabitation. These are summarised in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design

| | |
|---|---|
| **Authorship** | by mediating between brand and local designers) |
| **Informants** | by mediating between brand and local essence) |
| **Inhabitation** | by expressing the identity of the brand and facilitating identity construction for consumers) |

### 6.2.2 Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands

The study found three strategies and eleven techniques for localising retail design for global brands. These are summarised in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands

| **Strategy 1: Local creative collaboration** | |
|---|---|
| Local creative collaboration influences the authorship of localised retail design for global brands. Both the brand and local authorship should be represented in the design. | |
| **Techniques for applying the strategy of local creative collaboration** | |
| **Appoint local designers** | Collaborate between brand designers (repeat designers or in-house designers) and local designers. |
| **Curate local creativity** | Curate the interior with goods and products made by a variety of local creative persons. |
| **Engage local consumer creativity** | Involve local consumer participation in creative exercises during the design or inhabitation of the retail store. |

| Strategy 2: Locally responsive design | |
|---|---|
| Locally responsive design grounds the retail design in the local context. This occurs in the stage of informing the retail design (informants). Both the brand and local essence should inform retail design. | |
| **Techniques for applying the strategy of locally responsive design** | |
| **Respond to broad context** | Respond to the social, political, economic, environmental, cultural, and historic context of the region can inform the localised retail design. |
| **Respond to neighbourhood or precinct** | Respond to the immediate district in which the retail store is located. |
| **Respond to building** | Respond to the building and site in which the retail store is located. |
| **Respond to local consumer** | Respond to the local consumer as informant to the localised retail design. |

| Strategy 3: Local consumer relevant experience | |
|---|---|
| Local consumer relevant experience entails designing spaces to acutely represent the local market while communicating the brand itself through localised retail design. This facilitates identity construction for consumer and brand. | |
| **Techniques for applying the strategy of local consumer relevant experience** | |
| **Evoke local familiarity** | Refer to locally familiarity through design elements |
| **Reflect local consumers' values** | Allow consumers to re-enact their social values and represent these through design. |
| **Elicit experiences for self-expression** | Elicit opportunities for consumers to express themselves through creativity in the retail store. |
| **Build in responsiveness to brand and local image** | Build in responsiveness to the perceptions of the brand and local context to ensure an on-going demonstration of local consumer relevance. |

The study overview and findings were summarised above. The contributions of the study are provided in the following section.

# 6.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

The study contributes new knowledge to the retail design discourse and more specifically, to the knowledge area of localised retail design for global brands. The study makes the following original and significant contributions:

1. The ways in which brand consistency may be retained when localising retail design were identified.
2. The areas for mediating global brand and local authenticity when localising retail design were identified.
3. The strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands were identified and discussed.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications.

## 6.3.1 Theoretical implications

Theoretically, the study bridges a gap in the discourse on localised retail design for global brands by uniting practical knowledge with theory.

- The study proposes strategies and techniques for localising retail design that have not been previously identified in the discourse. These build on previous studies (Dinçay, 2015; Sharma, 2017; Alaali & Vines, 2020) by considering localised retail design for global brands as a phenomenon that is not limited to specific store formats, designer types, geographic regions, or global brands. This broader perspective on strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands can framework the studies based on these parameters.
- The conditions, strategies, and techniques for localising retail design for global brands have further implications on the retail design process. This can be developed to generate a localised retail design outcome (that is not a standardised roll-out, nor a complete re-design of the retail store for the global brand).
- Further, the artefactual analysis tool (Appendix D) can assist retail design researchers to document further artefacts of localised retail design as an instrument for data collection and analysis.
- On a broader level, the thesis contributes to developing retail design knowledge from the interior design perspective. While localisation of global brands is well explored in the marketing and branding discourses and consumer-study perspectives on the subject exist (such as consumer culture positioning), the role of interior design in localisation for a global brand required development. This promotes the rigour of interior design as a culturally conscious practice in the context of globalisation, while bridging towards other disciplines (such as branding and marketing) that have a stake in retail design research and practice.

### 6.3.2 Practical implications

Practically, the study supports the vocation of retail design.

- The identified conditions, strategies, and techniques for localising retail design for global brands may be carried forward by global brands as an informant to their retail design strategy (to localise as opposed to standardise) and appointment processes (of local retail designers and creative partners).
- Retail designers (in-house or external) may benefit from employing the conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands in their design process and practices. The strategies and techniques are comprehensive and can be implemented in designing localised retail design for global brands.

The study aimed to develop the conditions and to determine the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. These were accomplished as original contributions to knowledge. Although this is of theoretical and practical importance, the study does present limitations.

## 6.4 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations of the study are identified:

1. The study was not delimited to specific designer types, geographic locations, retail categories, retail formats, or global brands. This may influence the applicability of the study findings to specific brands, contexts, categories, store formats, and designers. Studies that are delimited to these conditions may be conducted to more accurately inform insights pertaining to these context,
2. The study of consumers may have an influence on the research outcomes. This may enhance research findings. These consumer studies can occur through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and/or observation,
3. The study was delimited to retail designers' inputs in the interview process. The perspectives of global brand managers may influence the study findings,

4. The study includes a theoretical sample of retail stores for four global brands (Appendix D). These were studied with the intention to enhance the study findings and to saturate the study categories. Secondary sources were used to generate these findings. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown and travel restrictions, it was not viable to visit the retail stores for these global brands. In-person documentation and physical retail store visits could influence the study findings,
5. The theoretical sample of artefacts depict high involvement brands only. This limits the understanding of the extent to which the strategies and techniques for localising retail design are applicable to low involvement brands, and
6. Due to the shift into digital communication necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic, respondents demonstrated an unexpected openness and technical initiative in the interview process. In two interviews, the respondents took the opportunity to share visual presentations that enhanced their explanation of their approaches to design. These provide an anomaly in the consistency of the data, however, these were considered as a natural part of the interview process and visual content was viewed as supplementary information supporting the interview discussion.

The limitations of the study open areas for future research that can assist the development of knowledge in the area of localised retail design for global brands. These are detailed below.

## 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study makes the following recommendations for further research:

1. To study the conditions and strategies for localising retail design with focus on specific global brands, geographic locations, designer-types, store formats, and/or retail categories,
2. To conduct direct research of consumers' perspectives and inhabitation of localised retail design for global brands,
3. To study the global brand management and design management implications of localising retail design for global brands,
4. To study conditions and strategies for localising retail design in physical artefacts through visits to retail stores,
5. To conduct in-person interviews with retail designers to regulate the consistency of data collected,
6. To develop the retail design process model to accommodate localised retail design as an outcome that differs from standardised retail design roll-out but must retain brand consistency,
7. To expand the areas of mediating global brand and local authenticity through studies in the areas of authorship, informants, and inhabitation,
8. To develop and test each strategy and technique for localising retail design for global brands through practice-based research, and
9. To test the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in low-involvement product brands.

## 6.6 CONCLUSION

The thesis, 'Conditions and Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands' consolidates new knowledge to support the theoretical development of the area of localised retail design, and practice-based knowledge by making explicit the implicit practices of localising retail design conducted by global brands and their designers.

This study contributes to retail design theory by supplementing the importance of the practice of localised retail design for global brands with conditions, strategies, and techniques that enhance an understanding of the practice of this field.

This has direct practical implications on global brands and retail designers, by providing detailed knowledge on these conditions, strategies, and techniques which they my employ in their practices. The study developed the conditions for localising retail design for global brands by identifying the ways that global brand consistency can be retained and the areas in which global brand and local authenticity are to be mediated when localising retail design. The study further identified three strategies and eleven techniques for localising retail design for global brands. These are argued as significant to the theory and practice of retail design.

As retail design practice evolves, its social responsiveness is increasingly important to brands, consumers, and retail designers. As this consciousness grows, so will an interest in retail design studies that address brands' responsibilities towards society within the dynamic processes of production and consumption in the context of globalisation.

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# APPENDICES

# **Appendix A –** Semi-structured interview instrument

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW: Retail designers' considerations towards localising global brands in the design process

**The PhD study is titled: The localisation of global brands through retail design.**

The objective of the interview is to identify the considerations that retail designers make towards the localisation of global brands during the retail design process. Below are sample questions which may be adjusted according to the pilot interviews.

## A. Informed Consent

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.1 Provide the respondent with the form prior to interview.** | |
| **1.2 Verbally verify that the respondent understands risks, voluntary participation and withdrawal from study.** | |

## B. Definitions

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.1 Explain localised retail design** | |

In this study, **localised retail design** is defined as the design of unique retail stores for global brands across international locations.

The study focuses on localised retail design on the international scale. Specifically, the study considers localised retail design to be adaptations in retail store designs between one nation and another.

Localised retail design can include hyper-localisation, that is, changes in store-design between locations (cities) within a country.

## C. Interview

### 1. Designer

| |
|---|
| **1.1. How many years have you been working in retail design practice for?** |
| **1.2. What connection do you (as a designer) have to the location/s you design stores in for global brands?** |
| **1.3. Does / do the global brand/s you have worked with consist of an in-house retail store design team?** |

| |
|---|
| **1.4. Are you employed by the global brand as part of the in-house retail store design team?** |
| **1.5 What are the store types you have worked on for global brands?** |
| **1.6 What is the most appropriate store type for localised retail design for global brands?** |
| **1.7 What are the conventional store types used for pilot (introductory) stores?** |

---

## 2. THE RETAIL DESIGN PROCESS

### Establishing a need / problem

| |
|---|
| **2.1 What do you believe are the competencies a global brand seeks out in a retail designer for localised store designs?** |
| **2.2 Identify the stakeholder/s who have appointed you to work on global brand retail design projects in the past 10 years.** |
| **2.3 Do the global brand/s you work with identify localisation strategies for retail store design? Please describe these strategies.** |

### Analysis task and concept design

| |
|---|
| **2.4 What does the brief for global brand retail design projects cover?** |
| **2.5 What considerations do you make towards localised retail design for global brands in respect of the following?** |
| **2.5.1 Global brand identity** |
| **2.5.2 Global brand's competitors** |
| **2.5.3 Local consumers** |
| **2.5.4 Location of store** |
| **2.5.5 Budget** |
| **2.6 What further informants do you use to guide the retail design process for global brands?** |

### Embodiment design

| |
|---|
| **2.7 Using an example of a localised store design you worked on, describe the way you translate these informants into a design concept.** |

**Detailed design, Implementation, Use**

| |
|---|
| **2.8 Does localisation of retail design play a role in the following phases of the design process:** |
| **2.8.1 Detailed design?** |
| **2.8.2 Implementation? (construction, delivery, roll outs)** |
| **2.8.2 Use? (operational)** |
| **2.9 Describe activities you conduct to evaluate store design success once the localised retail store (designed for the global brand) is operational and in use.** |
| **2.10 How do these activities inform your future practice?** |

---

**3. COMPLETION**

| |
|---|
| **3.1 Which designers (local or international) do you believe to be good at localised retail design for global brands?** |
| **3.2 Recommend examples of localised retail stores (local or international) that you believe should be included in this study.** |
| **3.3 Recommend global brands, with localised retail store designs, that you believe should be included this study.** |
| **3.4 We value your participation in the study so far. The researcher may need to clarify aspects to enhance the quality of the research. Are you willing to be contacted?** |
| **3.5 Describe any further observations you have made with respect to localising retail design for global brands.** |

---

| | |
|---|---|
| **Thank participant.** | |
| **Ask the participant if they would like a copy of the complete PhD study to be sent to them.** | |

**---------- End of Interview ----------**

## **Appendix B –** Informed consent letter

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology
Department of Architecture

To whom it may concern

**RE: Informed consent to participate in interview for PhD Interior Architecture study**

This letter seeks to obtain your permission for participation in the researcher's PhD Interior Architecture study. The project details and participation requirements are outlined below.

## Research Project Title

The Localisation of Global Brands through Retail Design (PhD in Interior Architecture)

## Researcher Contact Details

Ms Zakkiya Khan | M Interior Architecture (Professional)
PhD Student / Researcher | Department of Architecture, University of Pretoria | Zakkiya.khan@up.ac.za

## Project Information

### Study Description

The study forms a part of the PhD Interior Architecture study conducted by the researcher at The University of Pretoria, South Africa. The study is concerned with the localisation of global brands through retail design. In the project, the researcher considers localised retail design as an opportunity for global brands and retail designers to respond to local culture as an informant to the design process and to reflect this in the retail store design.

The PhD study is divided into **two phases:**

- **Phase 1** seeks to answer: what are the considerations taken by retail designers in the design process in order to facilitate the localisation of global brands?
- **Phase 2** seeks to answer: how is localisation reflected in retail store designs for selected global brands?

The PhD study **objectives** are as follows:

- The objective of phase 1 of the research is to determine the considerations retail designers make regarding localisation of global brands during the retail design process. This in order to inform retail designers of ways in which localisation can be approached through retail design.
- The objective of phase 2 of the study is to provide a database of store designs for global brands that reflect localisation through retail design. This in order to inform retail designers of current practice.

## Project Participation

The participants' involvement in the research project is in **Phase 1** of the study, which informs the considerations retail designers should make regarding global brand localisation during the retail design process.

### Requirements of Participant

The participants' involvement requires **responses in an interview**. The face-to-face (digital or in-person) interview should take approximately **sixty minutes** to complete. The researcher may contact the participant after the interview for clarifications should there be follow-up questions. The researcher will process the participants' transcribed responses as data using qualitative analysis. The analysis will be supported by computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (QSR Nvivo 10) using the code and retrieve technique as part of the constructivist grounded theory method.

### Research Ethics

- The researcher has gained ethics approval prior to making contact with participants. The University of Pretoria's Engineering Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) faculty upholds standards of ethics when interacting with research participants. Guidelines may be found here: https://www.up.ac.za/faculty-of-engineering-built-environment-it/article/15815/faculty-committee-for-research-ethics-integrity
- Should any of the conditions in this informed consent form change, the researcher will seek informed consent from participants again.
- Should the research participant prefer, the research participants' identities will be anonymous in the study (PhD study and publications).
- Should the research participant prefer, the research participants' identification of project details, including global brands and design agencies, will be anonymous in the study.

### Anonymous Participation

- Participants' identities will not be revealed in the research study if the participant prefers (PhD study and publications).
- Names of the brand/s, design agencies, project teams, store names, locations, project names discussed in the interview, will be regarded as anonymous in the research study if the respondent prefers (PhD study and publications).

The researcher has created measures to ensure anonymity is retained:

- The researcher will be the only person to have access to the recorded interviews.
- Interview recordings and transcriptions will be saved digitally as password-protected files.
- Transcriptions will be edited to ensure the participant is anonymous if the participant prefers(for example, the substitution of the respondent's name with "Respondent 1").
- Interview recordings and transcriptions (data) will be stored on the researcher's password protected laptop and the researcher's password protected google drive account.
- Participants will grant permission for whether or not they prefer to remain anonymous.

### Risks to Participant

There have been no risks identified on behalf of the participant.

### Voluntary Participation

The participants' involvement in the study is voluntary. The participant may withdraw from participation in the study at any time without consequences.

## Informed consent

(to be signed by the participant, the researcher and witnesses)

I, _____(*name and surname of participant)* hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by the researcher, Zakkiya Khan.

I understand and agree with the following:

- The nature, objective, possible safety and health implications have been explained to me and I understand them.
- I understand my right to choose whether to participate in the project and that the information furnished will be handled confidentially.
- I am aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.
- Please select appropriately:

| **I wish to remain anonymous in the study.** | | **Yes** | or | | **No** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

……

**Participant**

Date:

---

……

**Zakkiya Khan (Researcher, University of Pretoria)**

Date:

**Appendix C –** Ethics approval letter from the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology at University of Pretoria


Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Fakulteit Ingenieurswese, Bou-omgewing en Inligtingtegnologie / Lefapha la Boetšenere, Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

Reference number: EBIT/99/2019

Ms Z Khan
Department: Architecture
University of Pretoria
Pretoria
0083

Dear Ms Z Khan

**FACULTY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY**

Your recent application to the EBIT Research Ethics Committee refers.

Approval is granted for the application with reference number that appears above.

1. This means that the research project entitled "The Localisation of Global Brands through Retail Design" has been approved as submitted. It is important to note what approval implies. This is expanded on in the points that follow.

2. This approval does not imply that the researcher, student or lecturer is relieved of any accountability in terms of the Code of Ethics for Scholarly Activities of the University of Pretoria, or the Policy and Procedures for Responsible Research of the University of Pretoria. These documents are available on the website of the EBIT Research Ethics Committee.

3. If action is taken beyond the approved application, approval is withdrawn automatically.

4. According to the regulations, any relevant problem arising from the study or research methodology as well as any amendments or changes, must be brought to the attention of the EBIT Research Ethics Office.

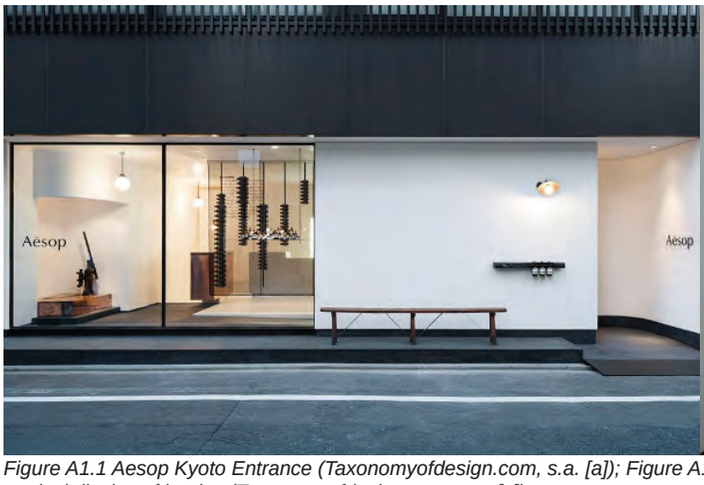
5. The Committee must be notified on completion of the project.

The Committee wishes you every success with the research project.

**Prof JJ Hanekom**
Chair: Faculty Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Appendix D –** Documented strategies of localised retail design for global brands Aesop, Dolce & Gabbana, Nike, and Starbucks

**A1 Aesop Kyoto.** Shinichiro Ogata (Simplicity), 2014
97 Aburayacho Sanjo, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604-8103, Japan



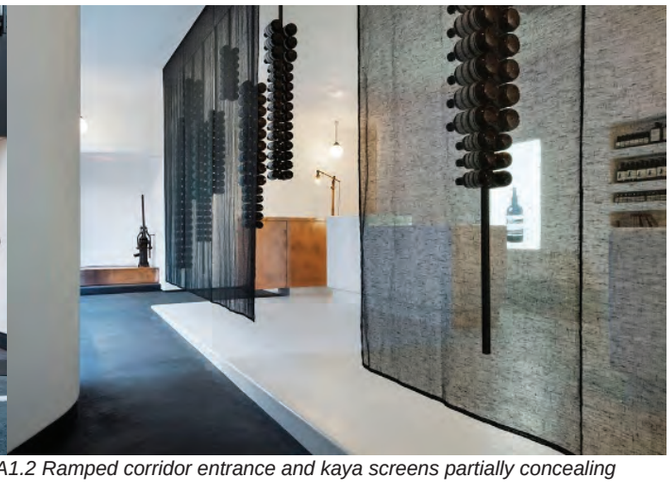



*Figure A1.1 Aesop Kyoto Entrance (Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]); Figure A1.2 Ramped corridor entrance and kaya screens partially concealing vertical display of bottles.(Taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

In Aesop Kyoto, Shinichiro Ogata's design intention was to create a space that reflects the history and culture of Kyoto, Japan (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]).

Inspired by Japanese heritage, literature and craft of calligraphy, Ogata designed a store that is layered with symbolism communicated through the sensory experience of movement, light, shadow and the sound and feeling of water (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]).

The store entrance is visible from the street with a modest entrance ramping into a corridor off the pavement edge and into the store. The corridor entrance to the store is bordered by translucent swaying *kaya* screens, evoking a sense of mystery as to what lies within the store (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]).

Water plays a symbolic role in the store design: on entrance, the dripping water is heard and seen in the antique water pump displayed in the store's shopfront. This represents the water that flows beneath Kyoto city and the well that once drew this water out (Ogata in taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]).

The idea of washing is a cleansing ritual in Japanese culture: hands are washed before entry to a tea ceremony (taxonomyofdesig.com, s.a.). The compatibility of this traditional ritual with Aesop's convention of hand washing using products in store find harmony through Ogata's copper trough design.

Ogata chose to display the Aesop bottles vertically, a symbolic device referring to the beauty of Japanese calligraphy, in which text is vertically arranged. According to Ogata, the bottles symbolise the prominent imperial history of Kyoto as Japan's prior capital city. Shinichiro emphasised a contrast between light and shadow through the predominantly monochromatic palette of the store (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]), reinforcing the idea of graphic black calligraphy on white paper.

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

In Aesop Kyoto, Ogata demonstrates a continuation of his design approach of drawing on his Japanese heritage. Ogata references the tradition and history of Kyoto through a poetic translation of an atmosphere that speaks symbolically to his own cultural roots. The store design is an expression of Ogata's own creativity as it is a representation of local heritage.

"The culture of Japan is indispensable in a world seeking balance between mankind and nature. I continually strive to express this in my own way, through food, tableware and space. It is also what lies at the core of Simplicity and its activities today" (Ogata in Simplicity.co.jp.s.a.).

Aesop's identity is retained with the design of a space that shows the visual control and the quality of lighting and acoustics that is consistent with all Aesop stores. Sensory experience through the sound and feeling of water, the visual translucency of *kaya* screens, the rituals of entering the store and washing of hands extend on Aesop's sensibility to ritual and evoking the senses through design (Down & Pahphitis, 2019). The brand's aim to respect local culture and context are inherent to the localised retail design approach in Aesop Kyoto. Authenticity is upheld by collaborating with Shinichiro Ogata, a Japanese designer who draws inspiration from local heritage for design.

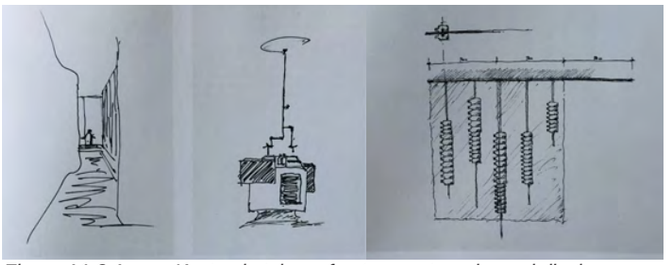


*Figure A1.3 Aesop Kyoto sketches of entrance, troughs and display (Down & Paphitis, 2019:293)*

*Figure A1.4 Aesop Kyoto interior: monochromatic palette indicating visual control consistent with all Aesop stores (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Shinichiro Ogata is a Japanese designer. In his design philosophy, Ogata describes his exploration of his heritage as a source for design inspiration. He believes in sharing Japan with the world through his design, through craftsmanship, bold or controlled design and design that finds unity with nature (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]). Ogata has designed multiple stores for Aesop (Fukuoka, Tokyo, Shinsaibashi and Osaka).

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Ogata uses a number of local references in design. These include the vertical japanese calligraphy translated to vertical bottle display; the use of the water pump symbolising Kyoto's relationship with water in the landscape, and the use of *kaya* screens in store. Symbolically, the water pump talks to the past and present of Kyoto as a city built on water (Ogata in taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a]).By drawing inspiration from local sources, Ogata translates these into symbolic design devices that speak to local context.

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Although not discussed in sources, Aesop Kyoto responds to its physical context through the design of street front and entrance. The store design includes a shopfront installation to the building exterior that extends the brand experience to the pavement. The entry into the store is a route off the street pavement with a continued floor material. A timber bench and Aesop product along the facade reach out to the neighbourhood beyond the store interior.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

The ritual of hand washing refers to a familiar local tradition that consumers will resonate with.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Creating unique consumer-relevant experiences (see 3.3 in graph). The sound of water and the gentle flapping of *kaya* screens can evoke a unique local experience for consumers, although these are subtle references to local elements.

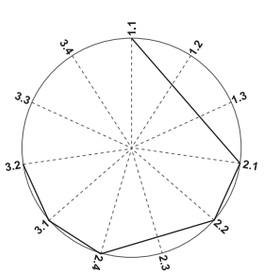
***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

The ritual of hand washing is a familiar practice in Japanese culture. According to Ogata, the cleansing ritual is inspired by the washing of hands before partaking in Japanese tea ceremonies (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])

*Figure A1.5 Kaya screens and vertical product display referring to Japanese calligraphy (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])*

*Figure A1.6 Antique water pump referring to the water beneath Kyoto city (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])*

*Figure A1.7 Monohromatic interior and copper water trough (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [a])*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
1.1 Appoint local designers
1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*A1 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Aesop Kyoto*

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**A2 Aesop Flinders Lane.** Kian Yam of Aesop Design Department, 2015
Shop 1C, 268 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000, Australia

*Figure A2.1 Aesop Flinders Lane 2015 interior cardboard wall treatment (t axonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]); Figure A2.2 Aesop Flinders Lane 2015 industrial cardboard wall treatment and display (Aesop.com, s.a. [b])*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

The first iteration of Aesop Flinders Lane was designed by March Studio in 2007. The temporary store featured recycled cardboard boxes in a staggered, modular arrangement and on edge, forming a tactile and dynamic temporal installation that softened the spatial acoustics (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]).

In 2015, Aesop Flinders Lane was redesigned, this time as a permanent store, with a new interpretation of its previous design. Designed by Aesop's in-house Design Department, Aesop Flinders Lane references both the past and present design of the store, through the use of cardboard (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]). The conceptual message of temporality symbolise the "cycles of regeneration found both in nature and our urban environments" – an analogy the brand found to be relevant to this neighbourhood within the city of Melbourne (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]).

The 2015 store features a cave-like structure of layered industrial grade cardboard sheets forming a curvilinear element to one side of the store. The remaining store is treated in dark hues of browns, evoking a sense of mystery and calmness. Product is displayed on black powder-coated steel shelves protruding from the walls. The soft lighting highlights the textured grain of the cardboard edges. (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]) Freestanding timber water sinks divide the two sides of the store.

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Aesop Flinders Lane continues Aesop's design legacy through the references of the past and embracing the qualities of a neighbourhood and place. In the case of Flinders Lane, the original design for a temporary store saw a geometric and temporal use of recycled cardboard packaging as store display elements. Here, cardboard was used in two ways: firstly as boxes in a rythmic staggered arrangement forming different sized and heighted display points, and secondly, used layered on edge, exposing the textured grain of the cardboard sheet profile.

Aesop's in-house design department re-imagined the use of this material for a store design upgrade as a permanent installation. The use of cardboard draws a distinct parallel between the prior spatial treatment and the current spatial treatment. Symbolically, localised retail design is specific to the temporal nature of this store: the temporality of materials, the city and the space.

While reference is made to the temporality of cities and nature as being the symbolic message behind the redesign of Flinders Lane, no explicit connection to the location of Melbourne is made.

Here, localised retail design is attributed to reflecting prior design language in store, a temporary language, made permanent through a common material use, reinterpreted in form and spatial experience. As Aesop is a brand originating from Australia, the unity between brand and location may be more implicit. With Flinders Lane being a re-designed store with a strong connection to the prior design, it is plausible that this prior presence of the brand created a local place in itself.

*Figure A2.3 Aesop Flinders Lane, 2007 by March Studio. The temporary store made use of Aesop product packaging boxes for display and wall finishing (March.studio, s.a. [b])*

*Figure A2.4 Cardboard used in both design iterations refer to the changing of nature and urban environments over time. (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b])*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Aesop Flinders Lane's first store was designed in 2007 by Rodney Eggleston of March Studio. March Studio is an Australian based design firm. Their store design approach for Flinders Lane began with the Aesop box, an idea to reuse Aesop packaging to create a temporary and quick-to-install store. At this time, March Studio also designed a Aesop Stores in Adelaide (2008) and Singapore (2009). March Studio continues their creative relationship with Aesop, having completed stores in Asia, Europe and Australia. Aesop's in-house design department, responsible for the re-design of Flinders Lane, find basis in Australia. As an Australian brand, Aesop in itself may be linked to location, motivating a sense of automatic synergy between the brand and its Melbourne location. Authenticity in designer choice is implied by designer location and brand origin.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.3 Respond to building***

Reflection of local references in design (see 2.1 in graph). In the case of Flinder's Lane, Aesop's in-house design department sought to reference a prior design intent for the space. Platforming on March Studio's design, they provide new meaning to the space with a strong connection to its temporal identity. This is a more abstract connection to location. A temporary store becomes informant to a permanent store design, with reinterpretation finding basis in reflecting the evolution of the city and nature over time (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b]). Aesop's in-house design team sought to follow cues from what was before: a consistency in approach to localising retail design for the brand. Although local architecture, the local neighbourhood and its inhabitants are not primary design informants, the inherent prior occupation of the Aesop Flinder's Lane temporary store provides an existing familiarity of place with the brand for visitors.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The re-design of Aesop Flinder's Lane plays with the notion of familiarity and change in design. Through the common use of cardboard, a reference to the prior design communicates a recognisable space to visitors who have occupied this Aesop store before.

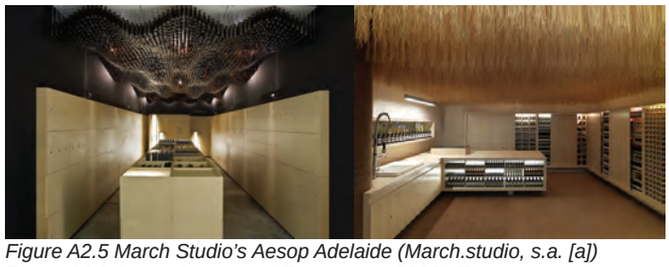
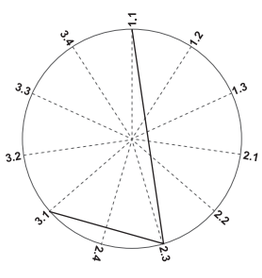


*Figure A2.5 March Studio's Aesop Adelaide (March.studio, s.a. [a])*
*Figure A2.6 Aesop Singapore (Etherington, 2009). The designers drew inspiration from Aesop's packaging*

*Figure A2.7 Aesop Flinders Lane 2007 (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b])*
*Figure A2.8 Aesop Flinders Lane 2015 (march.studio, s.a. [b])*

*Figure A2.9 Aesop Flinders Lane 2015 (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [b])*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
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1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*A2 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Aesop Flinders Lane*

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**A3 Aesop Brera.** Vincenzo de Cotiis Architects, 2015
Piazza del Carmine 1, 20121 Milano, Italy

*Figure A3.1 Aesop Brera Interior (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]); Figure A3.2 Aesop Brera Facade and Context (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c])*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Aesop Brera finds itself in a historic centre of Milan. The store, once a *salumeria* (a traditional Italian *charcuterie*), is located in a nineteenth century building, within proximity to the *Chiesa Santa Maria del Carmine*, a fifteenth century church. The district of Brera is known for its occupants of artists, and is the location for the annual *Salone del Mobile*, Milan's famed furniture design fair. (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c])

The design approach to Aesop Brera sought to retain aspects of the *salumeria* in both preservation of the façade signage and in the references to past use through the design element of a marble topped table in the second area of the store (referring to the display tables of the traditional *salumeria*). The store is divided into two spaces, both similar in palette. The first space, towards the front of the shop, takes on a clean and contemporary aesthetic. Fibreglass counters and wall mounted display complement the simple act of product purchase, a quality Vincenzo De Cotiis attributes to the straight –forward way in which Italians like to shop for essentials. The second space is designed as a curation of unique pieces, creating a personalised experience. De Cotiis intended for the space to contrast the contemporary entry area with a domestic design approach. Plants, vintage furniture and an antique lighting element contribute to the personality of this space. (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Aesop Brera is a space that is designed to be innately responsive to the local neighbourhood of Brera, Milan. Well integrated into the urban context, and in a site of historic significance, Aesop Brera is similar to other Aesop store locations, in that it is located in a vibrant cultural centre. Aesop Brera, itself, presents heightened significance due to the history, culture and design-orientation of the district.

Here, local identity and Aesop's identity are mediated in two ways: firstly, through the contemporary space in the front of the store reduced to visual essentials (a consistent principle in Aesop's store design) and secondly, through the back space that celebrates a mixture of heritage, design and time that is of importance to the location. Vincenzo De Cotiis architects sees their design language explored through material experimentation, a principle important to the design firm.

De Cotiis values the practice of collecting materials and giving them a second life, the material here is reimagined in feature floor surfaces in the store. De Cotiis works with fibreglass in many of his projects for its malleable properties, and sees the material as a signature for his work (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

Aesop Brera follows in consistency with Aesop's ongoing efforts to respond to the neighbourhoods in which the brand locates itself. The principles of visual control, acoustics and lighting quality are maintained. Aesop Brera may differ in the distribution of store space into two contrasting spaces, however the grounding of the design in a site-specific approach that is sensitive to context is an approach that is consistent to the brand.

*Figure A3.3 Aesop Brera: "Contemporary Space" (Aesop.com, s.a. [c])*

*Figure A3.4 Aesop Brera "Domestic Space". The table refers to the roots of the store as a salumeria (Aesop.com, s.a. [c])*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Vincenzo De Cotiis is an Italian architectural firm. Vincenzo De Cotiis shows an innate understanding of Milanese culture through his explanation of the Aesop Brera design (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]). This local connection allowed De Cotiis to draw authentically on culture and place as informants to the design.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Vincenzo De Cortiis used the rich context and culture of Brera Milan to inspire the design of Aesop Brera. The pink tone of the walls are derived from the red colour of stone used in the construction of the fifteenth century church alongside the store.

***2.3 Respond to building***

Aesop Brera demonstrates a site-sensitive approach to the design. The prior function of the space as a *salumeria* is celebrated through preserving the facade signage. The designer retains the spatial arrangement of two spaces interlinked by a short corridor and uses this to guide the spatial organisation of the store. Some internal walls have been stripped and the raw texture of existing material. These have been exposed and revealed within the store (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

The idea of the domestic kitchen is familiar to the function of a *salumeria*. This is the inspiration for the second space in the store, which is curated as a series of antique furniture, plants and lighting pieces. The marble table in this domestic space speaks to the *salumeria* display table (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

Local consumer behaviour is addressed through emulating local shopping habits.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is evoked for store visitors in the references to the prior use of space as *salumeria*, the use of pink walls reflective of the buildings in the context and through the reference to the domestic kitchen in the second store space, that De Cortiis notes is familiar to the Milanese people (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]).

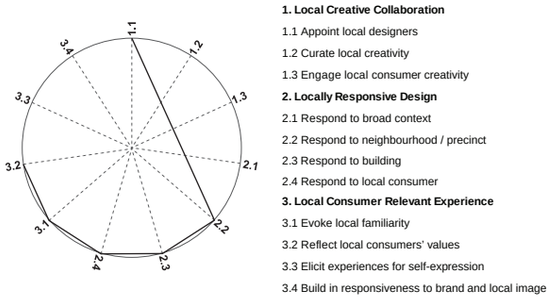
***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

References to local behaviour are made through the imitation of the experience that the visitor would have encountered in the *salumeria*: the act of making simple and direct purchases, and in the experience of small in-store spaces (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [c]). By creating a unique store identity, unlike other Aesop stores, the consumer enjoys a unique experience, specific to the location.

*Figure A3.5 The contemporary space reflects the act of simple purchases made by Italians in the store's prior function as a salumeria (Aesop.com, s.a. [c])*

*Figure A3.6 The domestic space references the kitchen in subtle ways (Aesop.com, s.a. [c])*

*Figure A3.7 Second "domestic" space designed to evoke familiarity (Aesop.com, s.a.); Figure A3.8 "Shopping in small spaces" is familiar to Italians (Aesop.com, s.a. [c])*

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**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*A3 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Aesop Brera*

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**A4 Aesop Vila Madalena.** Estudio Campana, 2016
Rua Harmonia, 343 - Sumarezinho, São Paulo - SP, 01426-000, Brazil


*Figure A4.1 Aesop Villa Madalena Entrance (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]); Figure A4.2 Cobogó tile use in Aesop Store. Consistent features of visual control, lighting quality and water can be seen (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d])*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

In Aesop Vila Madalena, Fernando and Humberto Campana drew inspiration from local Brazilian culture and "territoriality" (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]) for their design approach. The designers reflected this local identity through the interpretation of local materials.

The *cobogó* brick is a terracotta breeze brick used typically in Brazil to promote natural lighting and ventilation into building interiors. The duo reinvented the role of the brick, using it in unconventional ways: they used the wall material as an inlay for flooring and the floor brick as wall display and lighting elements in the store. The brick used on the façade allows natural sunlight into areas of the shop (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]). The display walls were backed using a local sisal agave fibre to enhance spatial acoustics and evoke a sense of Brazil. (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]). The designers also used landscaping as a material: jasmine creepers along the store entrance and seasonal flowering *thunbergia* in the rear courtyard. The Campanas intended for the scent of the flowers to evoke curiosity in the passers-by and invite their interaction with the architecture (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]).

When the store is open, the store entrance gate (made with aluminium and *cobogó* bricks) transforms into a pergola structure, with jasmine overhead, inviting passers-by to the courtyard social space at the store entrance (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]). As Vila Madalena is populated with art galleries, bars and restaurants, the Aesop store coincides with the creative and cultural spirit of the people who are drawn to this vibrant centre. The courtyard provides a small meeting space in the busy neighbourhood (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]).

Informed by the Paulista school of design, Aesop Vila Madalena communicates cues from this 1950's style of Brazilian architecture. Modularity, repeated linear forms and stark textured materials such as terracotta and concrete reference this regional style (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d]).

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Through the design of Aesop Vila Madalena, Estudio Campana demonstrates a continuity of their design approach. By drawing on their heritage as Brazilian designers, they use local materials and architecture as informants to store design.

This sense of re-purposing a building material for new use is true to the designers' approach to be resourceful and innovative with materials (campanas.com.br, s.a. [a]). The *cobogó* brick, used in the Campanas' "*cobogó* furniture range" also draw links with the works of the Campanas' own product design.

*Figure A4.3 Cobogó Tile Table & Shelf (Campanas.com.br, s.a. [b])*

This practice of linking retail design with their own work is not new. The Campanas did the same with the *Transplastic* chair concept which they translated into a unique spatial installation for the Camper store in New York (campanas.com.br, s.a [a]).

By drawing links between their own works and retail design, the Campanas add value to the retail design for Aesop through brand association. The Campanas's pieces, as unique hand-crafted design are valuable and sought after pieces of high artistic value. The team have also collaborated with brands such as Louis Vuitton and Fendi. Their association with exclusive, luxury brands speaks to their own exclusivity and value as designers.

Apart from the *cobogó* brick use, the Campanas used the *Estrela* sofa and side table, of their own product range, in the rear courtyard (Shenda, 2015). The connection between Aesop to the Campanas, and the Campanas to Brazil, lend authenticity to the localisation of the retail design.

Aesop's brand consistency is upheld. Down & Paphitis (2019) detail Aesop's stringent processes in maintaining consistency in store design. In Aesop Villa Madalena, visual merchandising, consistency in the use of water in store, quality of lighting and acoustics all retain the standard consistent with the brand experience. Aesop Vila Madalena emphasises its connection to the local neighbourhood through the creation of a public courtyard space, and an interior exterior spatial relationship that connects urban with interior through planting, materials, local references and facade design. This strikes a balance between brand, designer and location.

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The Campanas are a Brazilian multi-disciplinary design team who have completed product design and interiors that have rewarded them with international acclaim. Their work is characterised by sourcing inspiration in their Brazilian heritage, their experimentation with materials and the craftsmanship that goes into the production of their work (campanas.com.br, s.a. [a]).

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

The Campanas saw the role of the store being prominent social space in the neighbourhood of Vila Madalena. The articulation of the entrance courtyard with a pergola overhead emphasises a relationship between the building and the urban context, acknowledging the passers-by and providing a seating area within the district. The design of social spaces take the form of a seating area outside the store and in the back courtyard. This creates a connection to the physical context of Vila Madalena. The store design draws on Paulista architectural heritage for design cues, resulting in a contextual architectural language.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

Social spaces are created that resonate with the local consumers' reasons for visiting the art district. This plug-in courtyard spaces responds to the needs of local consumers.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The local material, a *cobogó* brick is recognisable in the use of local Brazilian architecture. The Campanas used this material in different ways for store display, construction material and lighting elements in store.

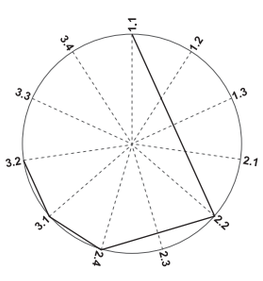
***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

By inviting local visitors to the social space, Aesop Vila Madalena offers a unique experience that is special to this store and appropriate to the location.

*Figure A4.4 Cobogó brick used for display and lighting, sisal is applied to the back wall (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d])*

*Figure A4.5 Cobogó brick used in multiple surfaces - floor inlays; counter and facade (taxonomyofdesign.com, s.a. [d])*

*Figure A4.6 Courtyard social space at Aesop Vila Madalena (Kwok 2016); Figure A4.7 Bench at entrance of Vila Madalena, exterior building materials reference the urban context inside and outside the building (Kwok, 2016)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
1.1 Appoint local designers
1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*A4 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Aesop Vila Madalena*

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**A5 Aesop Park Slope.** Frida Escobedo, 2019
225 5th Ave, Brooklyn, New York 11215, United States



*Figure A5.1 Aesop Park Slope interior constructed using Oxacan red earth bricks (Cogley, 2019a); Figure A5.2 Aesop Park Slope entrance with orginal masonry and angled shopfront entrance (Cogley, 2019a)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Aesop Park Slope, in Brooklyn, New York was designed in 2019 by Frida Escobedo, known for having completed the 2018 Serpentine Pavilion. For Aesop Park Slope, Escobedo drew on her Mexican heritage, the Brooklyn context and her love for pattern as informants to the store design.

The primary material used is earth tile, crafted out of an Oxacan red earth material by an artisan who works close to Escobedo's studio in Mexico City. The brick is arranged in modular patterns, stacked in different ways to create different arrangements in the store. The diagonal layout of the brick elements create positive and negative spaces that demarcate spatial zones, such as circulation, display and staff areas (Cogley, 2019a).

Escobedo explains that the use of brick in Aesop Park Slope connects the store design to the mid-nineteenth century brownstone masonry buildings found in the local neighbourhood of Park Slope (Cogley, 2019a). Brick arrangements are subtle references to meandering the streetscapes of Brooklyn (Aesop.com, s.a. [d]). Escobedo says that the material is deliberately sourced elsewhere: she intends that the material provoke a dialogue about this element originating from elsewhere, telling different stories, while still relating to the context (Cogley, 2019a). Escobedo explains that the store facade and the shopfront windows and angled entrance were retained. The interior brick was painted white while the pressed tin ceiling was left exposed. Aesop's signature in-store water troughs are integrated as powder-coated white steel elements within the diagonal layout. (Cogley, 2019a)

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Through the design of Aesop Park Slope, Frida Escobedo merges a language between her Mexican origin and the context of Brooklyn (Aesop.com, s.a. [d]). Escobedo's comment about striking dialogue over a material originating afar yet being contextually relevant is intriguing from the perspective of localised retail design.Here, a "non-local" local perspective on the design is implied by Escobedo. The red earth masonry tiles are familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, it gives a space for alternative identity expression in an American context. Escobedo's design approach is "driven by the conviction that architecture and design represent, above all, a crucial means to interrogate and comment on social, economic, and political phenomena" (fridaescobedo.com, s.a.).

The red earth masonry tiles are familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, it gives a space for alternative identity expression in an American context. The designer's love for pattern is evident in the store through the alternative arrangements made with the brick tiles through both assembly and in the angular layout that refers to Park Slope's streetscape and the shop's existing angular entrance.  Aesop Park Slope retains the brand's consistency in visual control, merchandising, lighting and acoustic qualities and sensitivity to the existing building and neighbourhood. Frida Escobedo has worked with Aesop on a temporary store at the Invisible Dog Art Centre, Brooklyn; Coconut Grove, Miami; Wynwood, Miami and West Loop Chicago (Down & Paphitis, 2019: 249-250).

*Figure A5.3 The Park Slope is characterised by the historic brownstone buildings that inform Aesop's design (Albrecht, 2012)*

*Figure A5.4, Figure A5.5 Red earth refers to Escobedo's Mexican heritage and to the masonry in Brooklyn's architecture (Cogley, 2019a)*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Frida Escobedo as a Mexican designer finds connection to the Americas. The brand has worked with Escobedo on six stores, during which time she was appointed to design the Serpentine Pavilion in 2018 in which she drew from Mexican and British idenities as design informants. The Serpentine Pavilion design approach bares similarity to that of the design of Aesop Park Slope (Cogley, 2019a). Aesop notes that they are drawn to Escobedo's ability to "construct, interrogate and reimagine a story from the built environment" (Down & Paphitis, 2019:250).

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

By appointing a designer that is not of New York origin, Aesop may be making a statement on the sense of belonging of migrants in a globally-dominant region (USA).

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Escobedo refers to the local neighbourhood of Brooklyn through the use of the red earth tiles that resemble masonry use in the area. The brick is used in dynamic "woven" patterns that remark on both Escobedo's design language and the angles of the shop's entrance. The angular circulation references the experience of walking through the streets of Brooklyn.

***2.3 Respond to building***

Aesop Park Slope's design shows a respect for the existing building, the buidling facade and angled glass entrance were retained. The buildings internal tin ceilings were left exposed within the store, while the brick walls were painted white, still revealing the brick texture. Consistent with all Aesop store designs, Park Slope reveals a respect for both building heritage and neighbourhood through design features that reference these elements, namely use of angles in design and the reference to local brownstone masonry.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

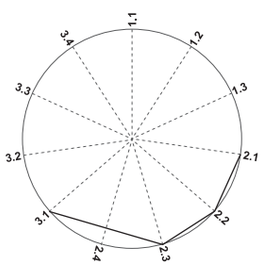
***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Aesop Park Slope evokes a sense of familiarity through both the retaining of the existing architecture as well as through reference to the contextual use of brick through the earth tile use. A sense of unfamiliarity and displacement are also implied through the Oxacan red earth tiles, as noted by Escobedo, these are intended to spark discussion around the origin of material and the idea that it arrives from elsewhere.

*Figure A5.6 Existing pressed steel ceilings, masonry use and the diagonal layout reflect cues from the existing building and context (Cogley, 2019a)*

*Figure A5.7 Existing brick interior walls were painted white. Aesop's convention of visual control is evident in the visual merchandising approach. (Stevens, 2019.)*

*Figure A5.8 Aesop's water trough element is interwoven in the diagonal layout of the brick tiles (Stevens, 2019)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
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**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
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2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*A5 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Aesop Park Slope*

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**D1 Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama.** Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2016
5-5-8 Minami Aoyama, Minato-Ku, Tokyo, 107-0062, Japan

*Figure D1.1 Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama, Tokyo (Winston, 2016); Figure D1.2 The store design is anchored by a central gold staircase evoking the experience of a sunny day in Sicily (Winston, 2016)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama was desinged by Gwenael Nicolas of Curiosity, a Tokyo-based studio. Nicolas saw inspiration in the Sicilian roots of the Dolce & Gabbana brand (Winston, 2016). The store design uses lighting and materiality to reinforce this connection to the brand. The golden staircase, central to the store, anchors the store on one end, and houses museum-like plinth display of merchandise on the other. This golden element is intended to evoke the experience of a sunny day in Sicily, the region in Italy from which the brand originates. Italian marbles of *Arabescato* and black *Carnico* are used within the store reinforcing the brand's Italian heritage (archello.com, 2016).

Nicolas wanted to take the idea of digital retail experiences further in the store design. He accomplished this through the introduction of an innovative choreographed lighting system that enhances the revealing and disappearance of merchandise using sequenced spotlights with projection (frameweb.com, 2017). This theatric experience is intended to engage consumers with the brand, merchandise and retail store design (Winston, 2016).

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Having worked with Curiosity before, Dolce & Gabbana appointed Gwenael Nicolas, founder of the firm, to design several Dolce & Gabbana site-specific stores (frameweb.com, 2017). The designer, Parisian by heritage, moved to Japan in his early career (curiosity.jp, s.a). Having designed for Louis Vuitton and Fendi, Nicolas is experienced in designing for luxury brands. His design philosophy entails evoking a gradual progression of surprise for the user through design. Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama demonstrates this philosophy through the innovative lighting effect within the store, which creates an unexpected temporality in a physically static display.

Light and shadow play a defining role in Japanese architecture. Japanese architecture demonstrates a distinctive emphasis on the lines cast by shadows in interiors due to the large eaves in its architecture. As a form of local vernacular, the absence of light and the prominence of shadow form a consistent identity in Japanese architecture (Tanazaki, 1933). In Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama, Gwenael Nicolas demonstrates a play of light and shadow to create a unique consumer experience. The theatrical lighting effects (using digital projection) cause the appearance and disappearance of merchandise in the store.

This lighting system creates strong rectilinear forms in both light and shadows. This feature strongly enhances a visual merchandising experience for consumers, while evoking a familiar Japanese architectural language.

Aoyama is a design example of the brand's campaign for site specific retail design that connects its boutiques to local culture while retaining brand consistency (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a.). Nicolas wanted to reflect the Sicilian roots of the brand: the use of the golden straircase is reminiscent of the Sicilian sunlight (archello.com, 2016). The italian origin of the brand is reinforced through the use of Arabescato and black Carnico marble on the interior and exterior of the store (archello.com, 2016).

*Figure D1.3 The facade replicates the reference to the vernacular Japanese architectural play of shadow and light (Winston, 2016); Figure D1.4 Projected lighting spotlights merchandise, creating a dynamic experience (Winston, 2016)*

*Figure D1.5 The gold box demonstrates museum like display through plinths and niches (Winston, 2016)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The brand partnered with Gwenael Nicolas for the design of Dolce & Gabbana, Aoyama. Nicolas launched his design career in Japan and founded his practice, Curiosity in Tokyo (curiosity.jp, s.a), providing him a strong connection to the store location, Aoyama.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

References are made to both the emphasis on shadow in Japanese architecture and the linear geometries known to this style of architecture in the Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama retail design. This is a broad cultural reference to Japanese design.

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Aoyama is a well-known luxury retail desitination with a considerable concentration of high fashion retail stores in this district. The Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama store is contextually responsive in this regard by providing the seasoned consumers in this district with a high-quality, unique experience of the brand through a once-off retail design and theatric lighting display elements.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

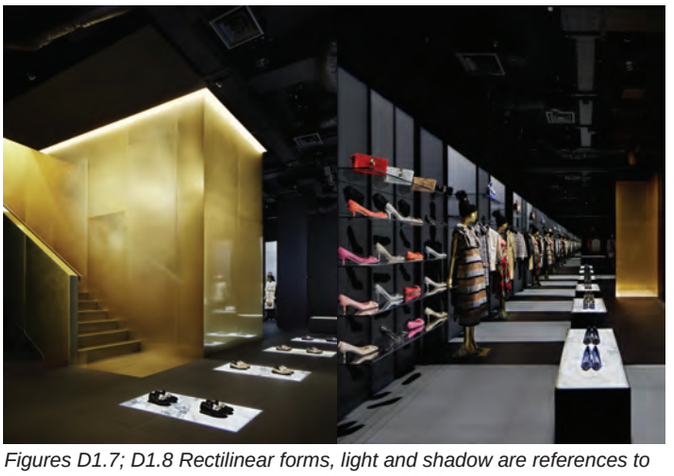
***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is evoked through the use of light and shadow in the design. These provide a familiar link to Japanese vernacular architecture, in which shadows play a distinctive feature in Japanese architecture, both historically and in the contemporary sense. This is demonstrated through the choreographed lighting feature in which merchandise is concealed and revealed through digital projection in rectilinear forms.

***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

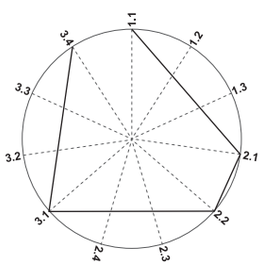
A temporal experience is offered in the space: the lighting technology is an unprecendented occurence in other retail stores, providing the seasoned consumer of high fashion brands in this district with a differentiated experience to competitors. The use of a gold stair-case, museum like display using plinths and niches and a transformative spatial atmosphere all contribute towards a one-of-a-kind retail experience for consumers.

*Figure D1.6 The golden “box” is intended to evoke the experience of a sunny day in Sicily, referring to the brand’s roots (Winston, 2016)*



*Figures D1.7; D1.8 Rectilinear forms, light and shadow are references to Japanese vernacular architecture (Winston, 2016)*

*Figures D1.9; D1.10 The lighting is choreographed to spotlight different merchandise throughout the store, promoting an element of surprise (frameweb.com, 2017)*

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2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers’ values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*D1 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Dolce & Gabbana Aoyama*

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**D2 Dolce & Gabbana London.** Gwenael Nicolas (Curiosity), 2017
6-8 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PH, England

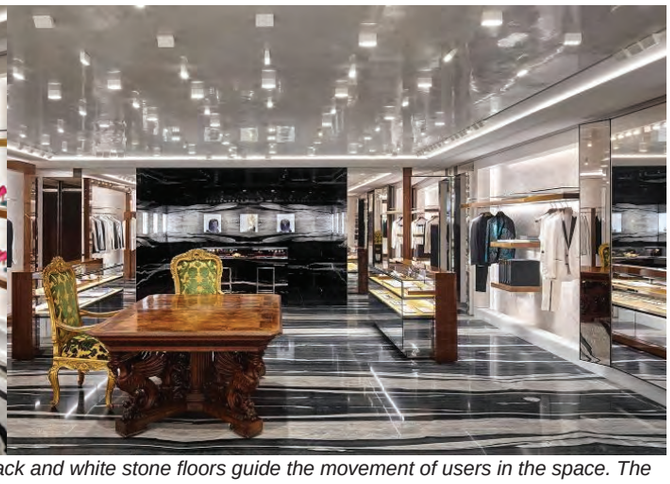



*Figure D2.1 Dolce & Gabbana London (Hawkins, 2017a); Figure D2.2 The black and white stone floors guide the movement of users in the space. The fluidity of the material is intented to evoke an optical illusion (Hawkins, 2017a)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Dolce & Gabbana London, designed by Gwenael Nicolas of Curiosity opened in 2017. As a boutique in the brand's portfolio of unique site-specific store designs, Dolce & Gabbana London offers a unique experience that combines characteristics of the brand's heritage with those of the city of London (Foges, 2018).

The store design comprises of a black and white colour palette accomplished through a composition of over twelve types of stones sourced from four continents in the world (Hawkins, 2018). The black and white interior is intended to evoke an experience of an "optical illusion" within the space. Movement was an important consideration (Hawkins, 2018). The stone is used to create a floor finish pattern that guides users through the space with fluidity that resembles "meandering tributaries of rivers, molten lava or streaming calligraphy ink" (Nicolas in Hawkins, 2017a), while the staircase detailing appears to embody movement itself, allowing the entire shop to disappear when one is circulating through it (Hawkins, 2018).

The upper retail spaces utilise mirrored ceiling surfaces, enhancing the optical illusion that is commenced through floor , staircase and wall stone finishes. Glass tables with steel and walnut furnishing is used (Hawkins, 2018). The store features careful lighting design without shadows (Hawkins, 2017a). This is to evoke the experience of "floating in the space" and to highlight product.

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Gwenael Nicolas, Parisian originating and Tokyo-based designer, sees his design philosophy as eliciting surprise through the unexpected in design (curiosity.jp, s.a). Having designed numerous stores for Dolce & Gabbana, the designer has sought to initiate an element of surprise in each store design. Between Aoyama and London, the stores utilise meticulous lighting design and material application to create a sense of curiosity in the spaces. In the case of the London store, this is through the "optical illusion" from the stone detailing in black and white that is applied in striations on flooring, walls and the spiral staircase. According to Dolce & Gabbana, the London store follows the brand's intention to create design inspired by the culture and excellence of the city in which the store is located (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [a]). This local identity is attributed to the monochromatic palette, which is reflective of London's classic character (Hawkins, 2017a).

"...'For Dolce & Gabbana, London is black and white,' Nicolas says of the Old Bond Street store's monochromatic sweep. 'They wanted dignity, and for the store to be very classic and strong'..." (Nicolas in Hawkins, 2017a). The brand's Italian heritage is retained through the baroque character of the space, the use of marble, a common feature between its store designs and the sourcing of furniture and textile from Venice (Hawkins, 2017a).

The store design sees a mediation between Nicolas's design philosophy, through the element of surprise, the classic character of London (through the monochromatic palette) and the Italian roots of Dolce & Gabbana through marble use, baroque features and Italian sourced furniture and textiles.

*Figure D2.3 Mirrored surfaces, the reflective ceiling and lighting effects create a sense of "floating in the space" (Hawkins, 2017a)*

*Figure D2.4 The black and white stone spiralling staircase embodies the illusion of movement, a striking feature in the store (Hawkins, 2018)*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The brand partnered with Gwenael Nicolas for the design of Dolce & Gabbana, London. Although Nicolas is based in Tokyo, his French roots provide access and familiarity with European taste and culture, allowing him to mediate between British, European and Asian design, affording the designer some credibility with a local connection.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Reference is made to the classic and elegant character of London through the monochromatic palette. This is interpreted through the use of textured black and white stone (marble and granite) used throughout the store.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity embedded in design (see 3.1 in graph). Local familiarity is evoked through the use of the monochromatic palette that evokes the classic character of London.

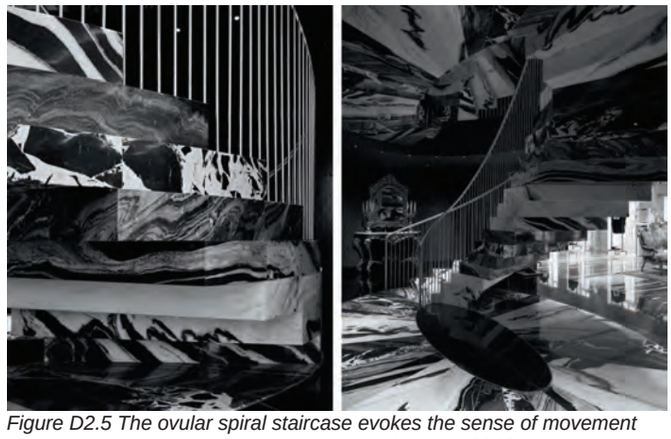


*Figure D2.5 The ovular spiral staircase evokes the sense of movement and is an element of surprise in the store (Hawkins, 2018)*

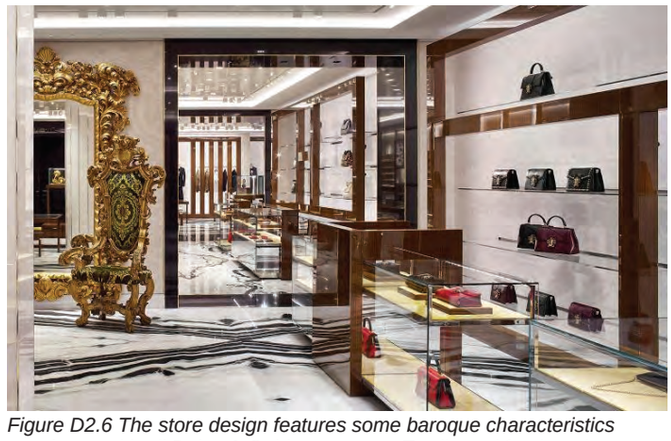
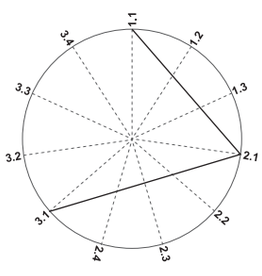


*Figure D2.6 The store design features some baroque characteristics consistent with all Dolce & Gabbana stores. Textile and furniture is sourced from Venice, while the black and white floor finish references the elegance of London (Hawkins. 2017a)*

*Figure D2.7 & D2.8 The lighting is designed to eliminate shadows completely, providing the illusion of "floating" in store (Hawkins, 2018)*

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2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*D2 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Dolce & Gabbana London*

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**D3 Dolce & Gabbana Saint Barthélemey.** Steven Harris, 2017
19 Rue de la republique, Saint-Barthélemy, 97133, St. Barthélemy

*Figure D3.1 Dolce & Gabbana, St Barthélemy (Hawkins, 2017b); Figure D3.2 Green onyx, azure blues and planted palms contribute to an atmosphere that resembles the Carribean context of St Barthélemy (Hawkins, 2017b)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Dolce & Gabbana St Barthélemy was designed by Steven Harris, American architect. Harris found inspiration in the Carribean context of Barthélemy for the boutique's design. Inspired by life on the boats on the city's shoreline, Harris intended to evoke the atmosphere of this lifestyle in the design.

This reference is reflected through the coastal tone palette of the store, pale neutral browns, whites and greens contribute to the "Carribean" atmosphere of the boutique (Hawkins, 2017b). Glass sculptures throughout the store resemble "pebbles" on a shoreline while rope-wound chairs and palm trees in the store speak to the sailing context (Hawkins, 2017b). The pink and green onyx walls reinforce the coastal palette while picking up the shadows of palm leaves on their reflective surfaces (Hawkins, 2017b)

The store also draws inspiration from mid-century Italian interior design (Hawkins, 2017), reflecting this through the use of white marble in the floor and display tops, glass sculptures positioned in areas of the store and antique brass shelves (Hawkins, 2017b).

The store features a Martini bar on the ground floor, a feature exclusive to the Barthélemy location. The store's upper level can be accessed using the staircase, finished with a "blue vellum handrail" that is reminiscent of the speedboats belonging to Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's (Hawkins, 2017b).

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Having grown up on the Florida shore, Harris sought inspiration from his personal memories of boating lifestyle. "The world of marinas and docks, dinghies and tenders was a part of the everyday landscape and laidback culture" (Harris in world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [d]).Although the designer conventionally aims for anonymity in design, drawing on his childhood creates a personal connection between his own design identity and the brand and location.

Seen as both a point of connection between his own past and the Carribean context, Harris drew inspiration from sailing lifestyle (Hawkins, 2017) and translated this into aspects of the store design, such as the use of tropical planting, rope, green onyx surfaces and palm silhouettes. The curvilinear forms within the store are meant to reinforce this tropical environment (boutique.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [c])

The Dolce & Gabbana brand identity is established through reference to 1950's Italian interiors through the use of marble flooring (boutique.dolcegabbana.com, s.a.). The use of marble connects the store to the brand's Italian roots and is a consistent material in Dolce & Gabbana stores. Further connection is made to Dolce & Gabbana through referral to the founders' love for speedboats. The blue vellum handrail on the staircase reference the fashions designers' much-loved speed-boats (Hawkins, 2017b).

Dolce & Gabbana St Barthélemy sees a mediation and connection between the designer, Steven Harris (who drew inspiration from familiar childhood memories), the Carribean context of St Barthelemy (associated with its coastal lifestyle) and Dolce & Gabbana (through mid-century Italian design references in marble use, sculpture and through referring the brand's founders' own speedboats).

*Figure D3.3 The St Barthes shoreline is populated with speedboats. The region is characteristic for its blue seas and coastal lifestyle (Stbarth.com, s.a.)*


*Figure D3.4 The store houses a Martini bar, exclusive to the St Barthélemy boutique (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [c])*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The brand partnered with Steven Harris for the design of the St Barthes store. Having grown up in Florida coast, with a familiarity with sailing lifestyle, Harris formulated a point of connection between his own memories and the leisurely lifestyle associated with the Carribean.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

References are made to the landscape and atmosphere of the Carribean through the coastal palette used in the store. Blues, greens and pale sand tones speak to the sand and sea. The use of palms in the space refer to the tropical landscape of the Carribean. Rope and hemp are associations with the sailing lifestyle of the St Barthélemy shoreline.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

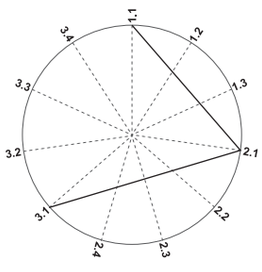
***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local references to the Carribean are made through pale sand colors, azure blues, and rope textures. The inclusion of a Martini bar transports the consumer to the Carribean leisure lifestyle and narrative being evoked in the store. As an exclusive offering in Dolce & Gabbana St Barthélemy, the Martini bar contributes towards a unique experience for consumers.

*Figure D3.5 Dolce & Gabbana St Barthélemy is inspired by both the Carribean coastal context and mid-century Italian interiors (boutique.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [c])*

*Figure D3.6 Green onyx refers to the coastal palette and reflects shadows of the Carribean palms in store (Hawkins, 2017b)*

*Fig. D3.7 The blue vellum handrail is reminsicent of Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's speedboats (Hawkins, 2017b)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
1.1 Appoint local designers
1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*D3 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Dolce & Gabbana Saint-Barthélemy*

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**D4 Dolce & Gabbana Rome.** Eric Carlson (Carbondale), 2019
Piazza di Spagna 94-96, 00187 Rome RM, Italy


*Figure D4.1 Dolce & Gabbana Rome (Levy, 2019a); Figure D4.2 The store features a digital fresco, projected onto the ceiling (Levy, 2019a)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Dolce & Gabbana Rome was designed in 2019 by French and Brazilian based architectural studio, Carbondale. Eric Carlson, of Carbondale, intended to recall the classic influences on Italian architecture through the design of the Dolce & Gabbana Rome boutique.

The design accomplishes this through the reflection of the Baroque style of interior design inspired by works of Borromini and Bernin, Rome's historic artists known for this style of design and architecture. These artists' proccupation with a "hyper-reality" in their works (Levy, 2019a) have been characterised through the boutique's exaggerated interior. Detailed mosaiced domes, materials such as brass and fifteen types of marble, mirrors to emphasise the store's features, a fresco and the decorated domed elements all contribute towards the baroque-inspired impression communicated by the store design. Red velvet chairs, *murano* glass chandeliers and walnut furnishing also contribute towards the spatial opulence.

A digital fresco forms a surprise element of the design. The fresco was intended to evoke a contemporary experience of baroque Italian craftsmanship (Levy, 2019a). The fresco was created by Paris-based Pastor/Placzek who digitally scanned an original painted work by Paul Troger, a painter of the eighteenth century (Levy, 2019a). The fresco "features billowing pastel clouds, cherubs and Ancient Greek deities Hercules and Athena" (Levy, 2019a). Projected onto the wall and arched ceiling of the first floor, with a mirrored wall, the fresco appears to engulf users in the dome-like space (Levy, 2019a), exhibiting illusionist characteristics of baroque design in a contemporary way.

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Having worked with Carbondale before, Dolce & Gabbana appointed Eric Carlson to design its boutique in Rome. As a Paris and Brazil based firm, Carbondale holds knowledge of the European design context. In an interview with Dolce & Gabbana, Eric Carlson notes that Carbondale's approach to design is more about client and location than their own stylistic preferences. They aim to create exceptional spaces through quality of ideas, details and materials (World.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [e]). Their approach to brand consistency for Dolce & Gabbana is that they see the brand as having pluralistic characteristics that offer "bountiful" scope for reinvention and reinterpretation (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [e]).

For all of their Dolce & Gabbana projects, they seek a unique point of connection between the brand and the location and use this as a point of departure for the design identity (world.dolcegabbana.com, s.a. [e]).

In the case of Rome, the brand's Italian origin provides an automatic cultural connection. Rome's heritage in baroque design provides a differentiated approach for the boutique in this city. Carbondale's attention to detail through material use, and the baroque inspiration for the design reveal a compatibility between brand, designer and location.

*Figure D4.3 The Sistene chapel designed by Michaelangelo is located in Rome and is an example of the origin of the baroque style (museivaticani.va, s.a.)*

*Figure D4.4 Walnut, marble, brass and velvet are used with decorative detail throughout the boutique (Levy, 2019a)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The brand partnered with Carbondale, who have presence in France and Brazil. The French base of this architectural practice allow access to European cultural capital that forms inspiration in this design.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

References are made to Italian baroque style, a strong artistic heritage that is prominent part of Roman history. The opulence of the interior, through the use of marbles, brass, walnut and velvet contribute to the sense of exaggeration in decoration. The digital fresco is a direct reference to a baroque design element, with the image originating from a baroque artist of the 18th century. Mosaics and domes are prominent elements in baroque interior design. These form characteristic components in the store design.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

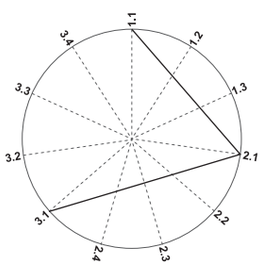
***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is evoked through the use of materials and detailing reminiscent of the baroque era of design. The abundant use of luxury material such as marble and brass, opulent mosaiced domes, walnut furnishing and wall panels, and brass touches contribute to the familiarity of Rome's baroque history, an attraction to the city. This is achieved through decorative detail that recall the design principles of this style.

*Figure D4.5 The digital fresco's image is a scan of original art piece by 18th century artist, Paul Troger. The mirror creates the illusion of a domed space, a reinterpretation of baroque design principle of tricking the eye (Levy, 2019a)*

*Figures D4.6; D4.7 Detailed mosaiced domes, velvet and walnut furniture and the variety of marbles used in the interior emulate the baroque age (Levy, 2019a)*

*Figures D4.8; D4.9 The store's chandeliers are made from Murano glass. Walnut, marble and brass are used through out the store, reinforcing the exaggerated nature of baroque interiors (Levy, 2019a)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
1.1 Appoint local designers
1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*D4 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Dolce & Gabbana Rome*

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**N1 Nike Live Melrose.** Nike Global, 2018
8552 Melrose Ave. West Hollywood, Los Angeles, 90069, United States of America


*Figure N1.1 The facade of Nike Live Melrose is finished with a colourful mural by local artist, Bijou Karman (news.nike.com, 2018a); Figure N1.2 The interior of Nike Live Melrose is continually adapted according to consumer inputs (news.nike.com, 2018a)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Nike Live Melrose is a store designed for the specific tastes of the Nike Plus loyalty club members in the Melrose neighbourhood in Los Angeles. The store is located on a street corner, in a prominent area of the neighbourhood. In order to captivate passers by, the brand commissioned Angeleno artist, Bijou Karman, to design the graphic facade (Rebholz, 2012). Karman drew local inspiration and the mural, titled “Sunsets on Melrose”, tells the story of locals walking in Melrose (news.nike.com, 2018a).

Central to the store is Nike’s white sneaker bar, a shoe customisation space. The remaining experiences of the store wrap around the sneaker bar (Rebholz, 2018). The physical store experiences are activated through the use of several in-app features on the Nike app, encouraging a strong integration of physical and digital retail that cooperate to create a tailored experience for the store’s consumers. These include:
- the Dynamic Fit Zone, in which consumers are able to book sessions with consultants through the app for styling advice and product trials;
- the convenient service of curbside collection or return of product that the consumer communicates through the app;
- reserving product through the app which are stored in lockers ready to be fitted or purchased, and;
- unlocking loyalty rewards from the Nike Plus vending machine activated by the app.

The store finds a regular rotation of curated product towards the entrance of the store (Gibson, 2018a). The product selection is based on consumer purchase behaviour and preferences traced digitally from the app (news.nike.com, 2018a).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

The Nike Live store concept was pioneered in 2018 through the release of the Melrose Store. Nike Live stores are intended for Nike Plus members within the store’s neighbourhood.

Nike Live stores present in-store services that integrate digital and physical shopping experiences. The experiences are shaped by consumer data obtained through the Nike Plus app in each store. Consumer purchase habits, lifestyles and feedback are used to determine the store location, product rotation in store and special services needed by consumers in the area (Gibson, 2018a; Rebholz, 2018).

As the first Nike Live store, Melrose set the tone for roll out of the Nike Live concept to the locations, Shibuya Scramble, Tokyo and Long Beach ,California. In Nike Live Shibuya Scramble, the subway location of the store inspired a material palette of ceramic tiles, steel cage and flourescent lighting. The store caters for the quick movement of consumers in this location, integrating digital technology to enhance speed and convenience of service. The Nike Live Long Beach store is a female targeted store. The store sees unique experiences offered to its market, focused on both training and lifestyle events. The store hosts a unique sneaker bar, with curated product from consumer data and local staff picks. The facade mural was commissioned by local artist Xoana Herrera. (news.nike.com, 2019).

Consistent to all stores remain the intention to provide a relevant, tailored experience to the local members. The stores follow cues from the local context while retaining consistent features of digital-physical integration of experiences and product curation (news.nike.com, 2019).

*Figure N1.3 Nike Live Long Beach, California (news.nike.com, 2019)*

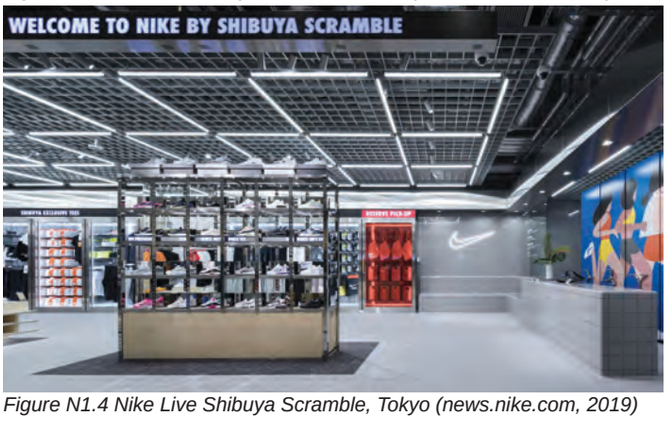



*Figure N1.4 Nike Live Shibuya Scramble, Tokyo (news.nike.com, 2019)*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Nike's retail design is conceptualised and managed in-house in the United States. This affords the design team with a local connection when working in the American context.

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

Nike commissioned local artist, Bijou Karman to design the facade mural for the Nike Live Melrose store. The mural takes inspiration from the neighbourhood, and the behaviour of its inhabitants.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

The Nike Live Melrose store provides a prominent landmark on the street corner in which it is located. The colourful mural and textured facade communicate interest to passers by. A glass box with Nike branding articulates the store entrance on the street edge, inviting access.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

The local consumer data is used to inform store design, services, and merchandise.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The store facade contributes to local familarity for consumers by reflecting a local behaviour - taking walks in the Melrose precinct. This familiarity is enhanced through the use of a local artist, Bijou Karman, who draws on local knowledge to communicate a local identity.

***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

The Nike Live Melrose store communicates a significant consumer-centric experience relevant to the local consumer. This is through the integration of digital app with in store experiences determined through local Nike Plus consumer data. These experiences centre convenience, and lifestyle.

***3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression***

Consumers can personalise product at the sneaker bar. Personalised services allow members to feel unique in the retail store.

***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

The store design is continually adapted according to consumer feedback in the Nike App.

*Figure N1.5 Consumers book consultations for styling and product try-outs in the Dynamic Fit Zone through the app (news.nike.com, 2018a)*


*Figure N1.6 Convenient curb-side service for product order collection or returns booked through the app (news.nike.com, 2018a); Figure N1.7 The Nike Plus rewards vending machine allows consumers to redeem rewards in store using the app.(news.nike.com, 2018a)*

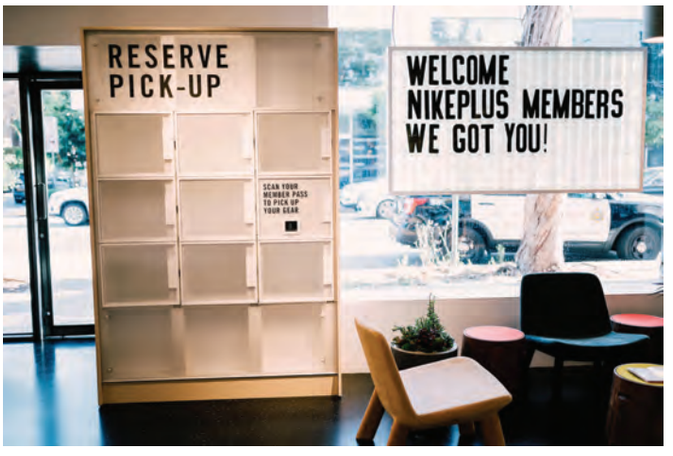
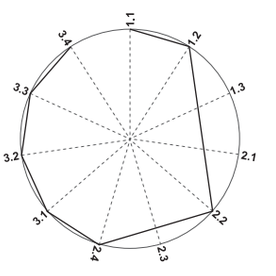



*Figure N1.8 Consumers reserve products on the app. These are stored in lockers ready to be fitted or purchased (news.nike.com, 2018a)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
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**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
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2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*N1 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Nike Live Melrose*

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**N2 Nike House of Innovation 001.** Nike Global, 2018
Nanjing E Rd, Nan Jing Lu, Huangpu, Shanghai, China

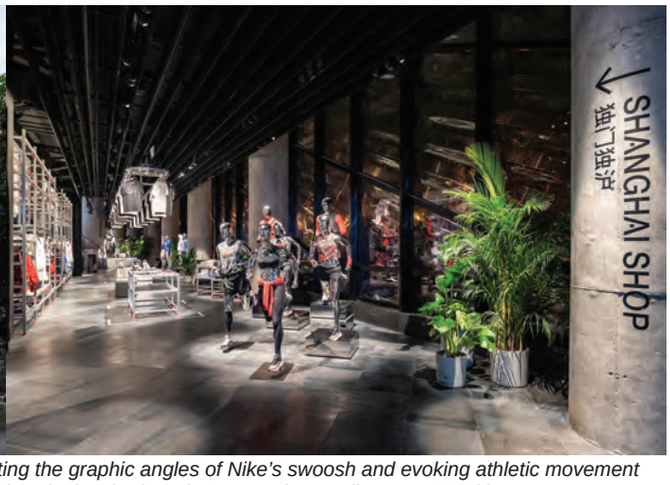



*Figure N2.1 The glazed facade comprises of an innovative glass panel emulating the graphic angles of Nike's swoosh and evoking athletic movement (news.nike.com, 2018b); Figure N2.2 The "Shanghai Shop" features an exclusive city-inspired product range (news.nike.com, 2018b)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Nike House of Innovation 001, Shanghai is the first of the brand's stores of the House of Innovation concept. Nike House of Innovation strives to provide a multi-story, experiential, consumer-centred experience of the Nike brand (Gibson, 2018b; news.nike.com, 2018b).

The Shanghai store features a customised facade showcasing material innovation speaking to the angles of the brand's graphic symbol, the swoosh, and the dynamic nature of athletiscm: the bubbled texture evokes a sense of movement (news.nike.com, 2018b).

The Shangai store features a range of experiences for consumers. Central to the store is the centre-court, a digitally integrated event space for workshops, speaker and training sessions (news.nike.com, 2018b). The store features regular rotation of product ensuring renewed consumer interest. The Shanghai shop holds exclusive product to the location, a draw card to the store. Consumers can personalise sneakers in the sneakerlab in store. Nike Plus members are able to access the exclusive service of styling and fitting looks at the Nike Expert Area.

At four levels, Nike House of Innovation 001, Shanghai is one of Nike's larger store expressions.

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Nike's intention with its House of Innovation concept was to introduce consumers to a heightened, personalised, and consumer-centric retail experience of the brand that integrates digital and physical experiences (nike.news.com, 2018b). All Nike House of Innovation stores feature a multi-story, large scale brand experience, sneakerlabs, specialised services and stock dedicated to, curated from or limited to the local market (nike.news.com, 2018b). With three concept stores to date, Nike House of Innovation has opened in Shanghai (in 2018), New York (in 2018) and Paris (in 2020).

Nike House of Innovation 000 New York follows the Shanghai flagship design with enhanced localised retail design features such as, app-data informed product and spatial layouts that can be continually adapted according to consumer preferences (Gibson, 2018b).

The House of Innovation 002, Paris features an intervention to a historic building in the Champs Elysses. The Paris store follows in intention to integrate a digital brand experience with physical retail. Nike notes that Paris store builds on findings from Shanghai and New York, by expanding focus on key consumer groups (women and children) (news.nike.com, 2020a). The store features a mission control wall at the entrance, connecting consumers to the local and global network of sport, a feature that connects to Shanghai and New York stores (news.nike.com, 2020a). The Paris store takes sustainabilitiy measures further than its predecessors and is powered through wind energy (news.nike.com, 2020a).

All three examples relate to the brand's intention to enable a consumer-centric, digitally enhanced, physical flagship brand experience. Localised retail design is less about aesthetics and more about unique, digital-physically integrated consumer experiences through exclusive product curation that have a connection to the location, personalisation of product in store, dynamic spatial layouts, event spaces and personalised services.

*Figure N2.3 Nike House of Innovation 000, New York (news.nike.com, 2018c) Figure N2.4 The interior is customisable and re-arrangable, changes are based on consumer data (news.nike.com, 2018c)*

*Figure N2.5 Nike House of Innovation 002, Paris in Champs Elysses (news.nike.com, 2020a) Figure N2.6 The Mission Control wall connects consumers to sporting events in Paris (news.nike.com, 2020a)*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.3 Engage consumer creativity***

The sneakerlab provides opportunity for consumers to express their creativity through product customisation in a dedicated “do-it-yourself” space. Although they are not contributing to the active creation of space, their participation in creative experiences in store are visible. This can inspire other consumers to participate in this experience. demonstrating the experiential potential of the space.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

The Shanghai shop provides exclusive products that are inspired by the city of Shanghai, referring to locality. The spatial design itself finds local reference through graphic use throughout the store continually reinforcing the city of Shanghai as integral to the store experience.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The store design evokes local familiarity through regional-specific graphic messaging in store. The allocation of a “Shanghai Shop” populated with locally-inspired product contributes to local familiarity.

***3.2 Reflect local consumers’ values***

The store design considers sustainability as a guiding principle. More integral to the brand than a particular local social value, the value of sustainability is a global concern echoed in the store design.

***3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression***

The store offers numerous personal and participatory experiences for consumers unique to the store: sneaker customisation, training events , talks and workshops, a fitting and styling service, exclusive product in the Shanghai Shop and rotating product displays contribute to a unique experience.

***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

Events and activities in areas of the store ensure a dynamic and temporal pop up of relevant activities that change the nature of the retail space.


*Figure N2.7 The digitally integrated centre-court is a multi-volume atrium space that visible from each level (news.nike.com, 2018b)*

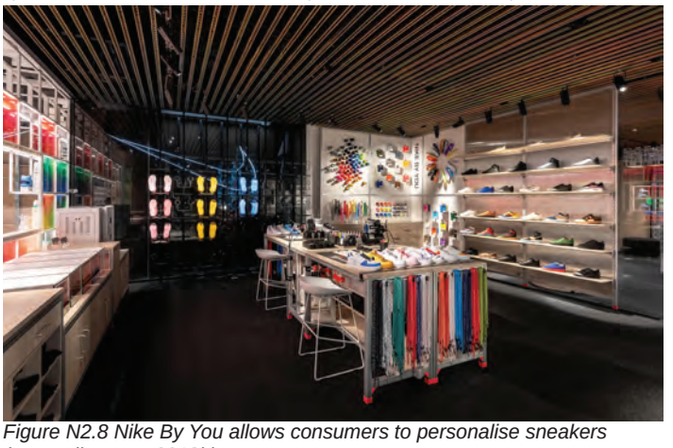
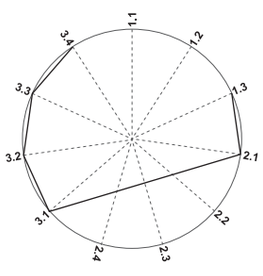


*Figure N2.8 Nike By You allows consumers to personalise sneakers (news.nike.com, 2018b)*

*Figure N2.9 The Nike Expert area is an exclusive fitting service for Nike Plus members (news.nike.com, 2018b)*

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2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers’ values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*N2 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Nike House of Innovation 001*

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News.nike.com, 2020a. Paris Welcomes Nike House of Innovation. Internet: https://news.nike.com/news/nike-house-of-innovation-paris (Accessed 7 January 2021).

**N3 Nike Rise Guangzhou.** Nike Global, 2020
Guangzhou, China.

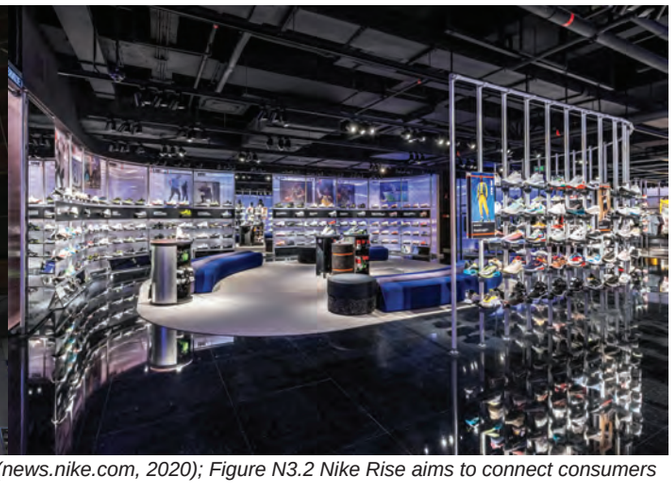


*Figure N3.1 Nike Rise Guangzhou is the pilot store of the Nike Rise concept (news.nike.com, 2020); Figure N3.2 Nike Rise aims to connect consumers to the local "pulse of sport in the city" (news.nike.com, 2020)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Nike Rise is a 2020 Nike store concept that sees the brand connecting to the "pulse of sport in the city" (news.nike.com, 2020).

The first Nike Rise store in Guangzhou, China introduces consumers to a fully digitally integrated experience in store. Nike aims to provide an experience that is directly between consumer and shop in a personalised journey. The aim is to connect the consumers to their local sporting communities (news.nike.com, 2020).

As a digitally integrated store, Guangzhou's Nike Rise is responsive to consumer data feedback. Along with sporting events in the city, this data is used to direct the ways in which the Nike App and Nike Members engage with the store, the aesthetics of the store, consumer touchpoints and the consumer journey (news.nike.com, 2020).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

The brand selected Guangzhou as a site for its first Nike Rise location out of recognition for the city's love for and obsession with sport (Sparks in news.nike.com, 2020). These sports, identified as basketball, football and running, form the basis for connecting members to sporting events, and communities within these categories using the Nike Experience section of the Nike app (news.nike.com, 2020). These connect back to the store, in which workshops and events are hosted along the lines of local sport preferences by local athletes and sporting influencers (news.nike.com, 2020).

According to Nike, store design is determined and adapted according to consumer data and local sporting events, making the store relevant to its local consumer. These adaptations are evident in the store's look and feel, "flow" and touchpoints (news.nike.com, 2020).

Nike Rise allows consumers unique, personalised experiences through the integration of the Nike app with in-store elements. Consumers are able to find the price of items, find the correct fit of footwear (technology pioneered in Nike Rise Guangzhou), and more.

Consumers are able to personalise gear inspired by the city with a location-specific product range and local sports-team memorobilia.

Nike retains consistency through a focus on sport using this as a lens through which to localise its retail design in the Nike Rise concept. This is accomplished through personalised experiences, connecting the consumer to a local community of sport, offering location-specific product and hosting local sport-based in-store events.


*Figure N3.3 The aim of Nike Plus store concepts is to connect Nike Members to the "pulse of sport in their city" (designretailonline.com, 2020)*

*Figure N3.4 The store integrates with the Nike App, contributing value-adding interactive experiences for consumers (news.nike.com, 2020)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

The strategy of local creative collaboration is not evident in the design.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Local references are made through the connection to local favourite sports. The sport identity is carried into aspects of the space, such as graphics resembling the markings on a basketball, curvilinear spaces that emulate a football stadium, illuminated graphics that resemble the digital screens in stadiums and materials that are similar to running track flooring.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

Nike uses the Nike Experience aspect of its app to connect members to in-store events as well as to locally popular sports events and local sporting communities in Guangzhou.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is embedded through the retail design approach of using local sporting preferences as an informant. This contributes to familiarity on digital and physical levels. Digitally, the app connects members to local sports communities and events, both in store and in the city of Guangzhou. Physically, the retail design look and feel, flow and consumer journey are all informed by consumer data and sporting preferences (news.nike.com, 2020)

***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

Nike Rise addresses the local consumers' lifestyle by focusing on key sporting activities that are local favourites, both in participation and spectatorship.

***3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression***

Consumers are connected to a local network of sports that are prevalent in Guangzhou: basketball, football and running through the Nike Experience feature in the Nike app. This feature also informs consumers of events and workshops in store that stem from the local sporting interests. The consumers also benefit from personalised experiences such as product customisation, locally inspired product ranges and sports memorobilia (news.nike.com, 2020).

***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

Consumer app data and local sporting events and preferences are used to inform the store design in aesthetics, touchpoints and consumer journey flow (news.nike.com, 2020). These are adapted as data changes.

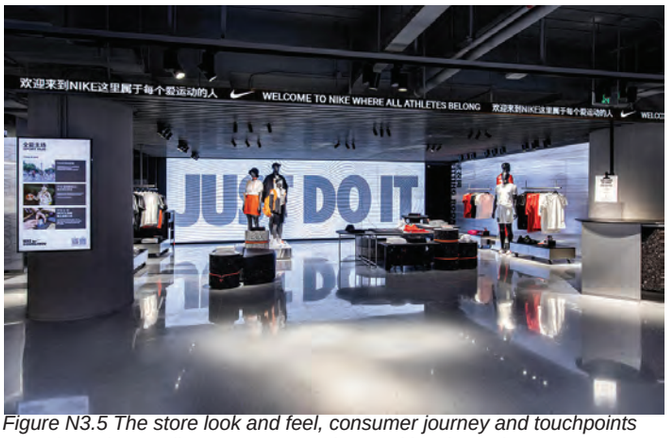
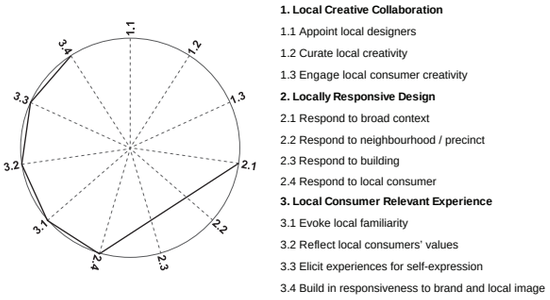



*Figure N3.5 The store look and feel, consumer journey and touchpoints are adapted according to consumer data and local sporting events (designretailonline.com, 2020)*

*Figure N3.6 The first Nike Rise store is in Guangzhou, China (designretailonline.com, 2020)*

*Figure N3.7 Digitally integrated features enhance the interactivity and value of the Nike Rise store (news.nike.com, 2020)*

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3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*N3 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Nike Rise Guangzhou*

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**N4 Nike Unite Concept.** Nike Global, 2020
Asia, United States, United Kingdom (individual stores undocumented)



*Figure N4.1 Nike Unite's community walls tell the story of the local community, its athletes and local personalities in order to cultivate belonging (news.nike.com, 2020c); Figure N4.2 The fitting rooms contain graphics of local maps with sporting landmarks highlighted (news.nike.com, 2020c)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Nike Unite is a 2020 Nike store concept added to the brand's portfolio, complementing the brand's concepts Nike Live, Nike House of Innovation and Nike Rise. Nike Unite aims to connect a the local community with sports (news.nike.com, 2020c). There are currently nine Nike Unite store locations worldwide, in Asia, the United States and the United Kingdom (news.nike.com, 2020c).

Local connection is accomplished through local references in the design: a community wall at each store entrance which tells the story of local personalities, atheletes and the community itself. This story is interspered across each store with design elements (Santiago, 2020).

The stores hold locally relevant product at affordable prices, curated for the local market and season. All Nike Unite stores are connected to a number of local upliftment initatives, including employment opportunities for locals, supporting school intiatives, supporting local athletes and connecting sports to communities (news.nike.com, 2020c). The stores also offer consumers the option to return old sneakers in the Nike Re-use initiative and the store uses re-usable shopping bags (news.nike.com, 2020c), demonstrating efforts towards waste reduction.

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Nike Unite retains consistency in delivering this concept across various locations. With the concept rooted in fostering a local community rooted in sports, the brand follows both its own objectives as a sports brand and that of the local community through local references in the design.

The store design carries local characteristics. With the intention to reflect its local community, every Nike Unite store contains a community wall at the entrance that celebrates local people and the local spirit. This local connection is sustained in key design elements which continue a narrative about local landmarks, atheletes, and personalities. The intention is to foster a sense of belonging through local representation (news.nike.com, 2020c). By employing locals in store, Nike Unite creates a holistic, local experience of the brand that is more authentic and compatible with local taste. Nike Unite's broader initiatives to partner with local initiatives broadens the local-relevance and reach of the brand and enhances the social contribution the brand makes to the local community.

Having been launched during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Nike Unite concept confronts a time when consumer interaction with physical retail is viewed as a threat (Rueda & O' Sullivan, 2020). The stores accommodate contactless payments and digitally enhanced features such as order online and pick up in store. Additionally, the broader initiatives of Nike Unite connect local communities to sport. The mediation between brand identity and local identity is well-controlled through consistent in-store elements that tell the local story for each community, using sport as grounds for connection.


*Figure N4.3 Nike Unite staff are hired from the local community. The stores all use reusable shopping bags (news.nike.com, 2020c)*


*Figure N4.4 The Portland store highlights local parks through graphic text (news.nike.com, 2020c)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

Although the strategy of local creative collaboration is not evident in the Nike Unite store concept, the appointment of staff from the local community contribute to the creation of a localised in-store experience.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Nike Unite connects consumers to a broader community of sports within their city. The community wall graphics and in-store narrative connect to this broader context of local sport.

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Sports particular to the neighbourhood, its landmarks and the culture of the neighbourhood are reflected in wall graphics.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

Local references are made through the celebration of sport in the local communities. These are showcased on the community wall at the store entrances. These walls depict local sport, communities, personalities and athletes. Local touches are evident as graphics throughout different areas of the stores, reinforcing local references.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Familiarity is evoked through the graphic elements in store. The community wall is a representation of the local community, sports and athletes. Continued graphic reinforcement of local knowlege through maps, signage and landmark identification contibute to familiarity.

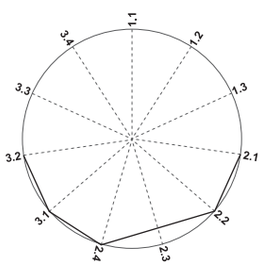
***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

The value for community and belonging is supported through Nike Unite's intention. The concept intends to unite local communities through sport by connecting them to initiatives in the area. The concept, released during the covid-19 pandemic, addresses concerns about social safety while fostering connection through the brand's focus on sport. This addresses the consumer's value for a space that enhances their well-being without posing health threats. Social initatives that uplift the local community through sport also enhance the brand's connection to its local consumers. The integration of digitally enhanced features into the store experience is evident through the order online and collect in-store service.


*Figure N4.5 The community wall highlights local athletes, community values and ideals, fostering a sense of belonging through representation (Santiago, 2020)*

*Figure N4.6 The local community story is told throughout the store through graphic design elements (news.nike.com, 2020c)*


*Figure N4.7 The stores facilitate self-service and digitally enhanced features that accommodate social distancing (news.nike.com, 2020c)*

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**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*N4 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Nike Unite*

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**S1 Starbucks The Bank.** Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2012
Utrechtsestraat 9, 1017 CV Amsterdam, Netherlands

*Figure S1.1 Starbucks The Bank, Netherlands is inspired by the role Dutch Tradesman played in the distribution of coffee to the world (Meinhold, 2012); Figure S1.2 The store design features a multi-level coffee experience with local references and social events (Meinhold, 2012)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Starbucks The Bank, Amsterdam is housed in a 1920 buidling with prior use as a historic bank vault (Meinhold, 2012). The Dutch designer, Liz Muller (Starbucks' global chief design officer), sought to restore the building's marble and concrete floors. Existing trusses and columns were left raw in the store interior (Meinhold, 2012). The store features a striking Dutch oak block ceiling and split levels.

The design references a number of local elements. Walls clad in bicycle tyres refer to the city's cycling culture. Ceiling, tabletop and furniture elements are made of reclaimed Dutch oak. Antique blue and white Delft tiles are used in touches across the store to refer to the Dutch trade history (Meinhold, 2012). Local touches were installed with the help of thirty five local artists and craftspeople.

Environmental sustainability was a design consideration: the design follows Leadership in Environmental Energy and Design (LEED) principles, such as sustainable material use, repurposed materials and light emitting diode (LED) lighting (Parafianowicz, 2012; Meinhold, 2012).

The store is enlivened by experiences: the slow coffee counter exposes visitors to the coffee process and prolongs the enjoyment of product (Parafianowicz, 2012). Starbucks' principle of third place is brought to life through communal, furnished spaces that promote social behavior. The store hosts poetry and music events to sustain local interest and to create a cultural centre for the neighbourhood's residents (Frearson, 2012a).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Starbucks The Bank was intended as a laboratory space for Starbucks to test a future direction for its brand. Embodying new ways of localising the design at that point, Starbucks The Bank featured a heightened experiential space for the brand.

The designer, Liz Muller, derived inspiration from the role of Dutch tradesmen in the introduction of coffee to the world (Frearson, 2012a). This narrative forms a relevant meeting point between the Starbucks brand story rooted in the Dutch heritage in coffee trade. This contributes towards a mediated starting point between the brand and the localised retail design.

Liz Muller (the Dutch designer) has cultural roots in the context. Her design approach was two fold: one, she worked with the heritage of the existing building to mediate between architecture and brand space; and two, as a curator of local creativity, imbued the store with furniture and finishes that have local connection. She accomplished this through collaboration with thirty five artists and craftspeople.

The adaptive re-use approach sees the existing floors of concrete and marble being restored. The building's existing structural system, columns and beams are exposed in their raw material form demonstrating a distinction between the existing structure and the new fit-out.


*Figure S1.3 Distinction between the existing structure and new fit-out is visible (Meinhold, 2012)*

*Figure S1.4 Communal seating doubles up as event space for local music and poetry events (Meinhold, 2012)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Liz Muller is a Dutch designer. Muller's national connection to the Netherlands imply an authentic representation of Dutch identity in the design.

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

Muller appointed thirty five local artists and craftspeople to imbue the store with creativity that reflected Dutch culture (Meinhold, 2012). This collaboration reflects a collection of voices layering the store with various interpretations of local culture, contributing to the authenticity of local identity in the space.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

The store design celebrates the story of Dutch traders introducing coffee to the globe. The narrative is explored through several local references: through the use of antique Delft tiles in store, bicycle tire clad walls, a Dutch cookie-mould wall (Parafianowicz, 2012) and the use of repurposed Dutch oak in the ceiling installation, benches and tables (Frearson, 2012a).

***2.3 Respond to building***

As "The Bank" is a 1920 building, the designers worked with the existing building's historic characteristics in the design. Existing floor materials of concrete and marble were restored for use in the store design. The structure was left raw and exposed.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is elicited through local references through the bicycle clad walls and the use of antique Delft tiles.

***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

Starbucks The Bank reflects values of environmental sustainability. This is achieved through the use of reclaimed materials in the store design. The designers used LEED principles to guide the store design (Meinhold, 2012).

***3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression***

Starbucks The Bank offers social spaces in which consumers may express themselves through conversations.

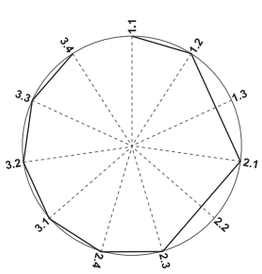
***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

The store accommodates local poetry and music events ensuring both relevance to the local consumer, as well as continued interest in returning to The Bank.


*Figure S1.5 Reclaimed Dutch oak is used for flooring and furniture. Antique Dutch Delft tiles clad walls in store (Meinhold, 2012).*

*Figure S1.6 A wall made with "speculaas" moulds (Meinhold, 2012)*

*Figure S1.7 Split level spaces. The timber ceiling is made from reclaimed Dutch oak. School chairs are repurposed (Meinhold, 2012)*

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*S1 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks The Bank*

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**S2 Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu.** Kengo Kuma and Associates, 2012
3 Chome-2-43 Saifu, Dazaifu, Fukuoka 818-0117, Japan


*Figure S2.1 Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu, Japan (Frearson, 2012b); Figure S2.2 The store is located in the lead-up to a prominent shrine in Japan (Frearson, 2012); Figure S2.3 The interwoven cedar sticks are a reference to the cedar forests surrounding shrines (Frearson, 2012b)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Starbucks Dazaifu Japan was designed in 2012 by Japanese architectural firm, Kengo Kuma and Associates.

Taking inspiration from the context, Kuma's design proposal aims to emulate and complement the single-story scale of the traditional shops and houses in the street (Gerfen, 2012). The region draws many visitors due to its historic and cultural significance. The store is located in the route to to the prominent Dazaifu Tenman-gu shrine which Kuma describes as "one of the most prestigious and popular shrines in Japan" (Kuma iin Gerfen, 2012).

The design draws cues from the significance of the shrine, through the use of cedar as a material. Japanese shrines are conventionally surrounded by forests, some containing cedar trees. These forests form part of the sacred rituals associated with shrines (Omura, 2004).

Kuma used cedar in a contemporary way. The store is designed as an enclosure made from sheet steel. The interior is clad with cedar "sticks" woven to form a "forest-like" space (Gerfen, 2012).

*Figure S2.4 The Kamado Shrine in Dazaifu is surrounded by forest trees, in the tradition of shrine architecture. Visitors walk through a tunnel of trees to access the shrine. Starbucks Dazaifu sees the use of cedar as finding contextual synergy with this traditional context (dazaifutenmangu.org.jp, s.a.).*

**MEDIATING BRAND, DESIGNER, AND LOCATION**

Starbucks Dazaifu Japan forms an anomale for the brand's conventional designer-use. The brand usually works with its own in-house design team to conceptualise and resolve store designs.

Kuma has since worked with the brand on the design of a drive-through Starbucks in Taiwan made from shipping containers as well as collaborated on the Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Tokyo through the design of the facade which sought to integrate the building's interior and exterior in a terraced format. In Starbucks Dazaifu, association with Kuma brings the brand a local sensibility that takes priority over the brand's conventional spatial identity. Site, context and local culture are crucial informants to the design. Kuma is known for innovative timber detailing in his architectural work (Delaqua, 2020). The timber lattice-like structure in Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu lends the architect's signature to the design.

The Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu store is sympathetic to its surroundings, reflects Kuma's architectural signature and speaks to the brand's drive to create a third place by being contextually responsive.

*Figure S2.5 The store is constructed as a steel sheet, the interior is clad with an interwoven cedar stick structure that resembles a cedar forest (Frearson, 2012b)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Kengo Kuma and Associates were appointed for the design of Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu. This partnership resulted in a design grounded in the knowledge of local culture and tradition.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

The use of cedar in the Starbucks Dazaifu store is a reference to the cedar forests that traditionally surround shrines in Japan. The forest forms a cultural link with the context, since Dazaifu draws visitors to the Kado shrine located close to the Starbucks store.

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

The store design respondes to the context in two ways: as a new built structure, Starbucks Dazaifu is constructed to emulate the human scaled context of the street in which the store is located in an effort to find harmony with the street scape, alongside traditional shops and houses (Kuma in Gerfen, 2012). Conceptually, the store emulates the cedar forests found with shrines. In a way that honours the nearby shrine, the store emulates the tunnel-like expereince of being in a forest. Cedar is used as a direct reference to the trees that surround shrines.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is evoked through the material use of cedar, which references cedar forsts alongside shrines, the scent of cedar, which can be smelled when approaching the Kamado Shrine in Dazaifu (dazaifutenmangu.org.jp, s.a.) and the tunnel like experience of being in a forest.

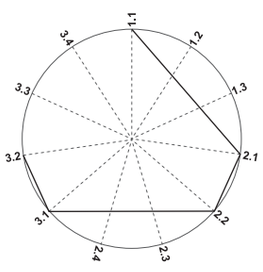
***3.2 Reflect local consumers' values***

As a unique Starbucks store design, rooted in local cultural references, the Starbucks Dazifu Tenmangu store evokes a unique experience for consumers that is relevant to the traditional context.


*Figure S2.6 Cedar sticks refer to cedar forests surrounding shrines (Frearson, 2012b); Figure S2.7 The woven form resembles tree branches (Frearson, 2012b)*

*Figure S2.8 The store finds synergy in scale with surroundings (Frearson, 2012b)*


*Figure S2.9 The store is of a humble-scale to respond to surroundings. Frearson, 2012); Figure S2.10 The tunnel like experience resembles the lead up to the shrine Frearson, 2012b)*

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*S2 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks Dazaifu Tenman-gu*

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**S3 Starbucks Mall of Africa.** Starbucks EMEA, 2016
2077, Magwa Cres &, Lone Creek Cres, Waterval City, Midrand, 1686, South Africa


*Figure S3.1 Starbucks Mall of Africa, Midrand, South Africa (retaildesignblog.net, 2016); Figure S3.2 The store design features brand elements communcated through local product, materials and craft (retaildesignblog.net, 2016)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Following the brand's idea of third place, Starbucks Mall of Africa provides a space for the South African community to get together and feel at home (retaildesignblog.net, 2016).

The store features a range of Reserve Roastery coffees, an exclusive range of products that can only be enjoyed at this Starbucks location. The store design is focused on comfort and community (retaildesignblog.net, 2016). Soft leather furniture, an relaxed seating contribute to the comfortable atmosphere. The store features a felt ceiling installation contributing to acoustic comfort. The form of the installation resembles the raked coffee beans in coffee fields (retaildesignblog.net, 2016). This curvilinear form is emulated on the store facade. Lighting is soft and warm. Low scale pendants aid in creating intimate spaces in the mall setting.

The interior is characterised by the use of timber cladding that evokes a sense of craft. The furniture is locally sourced (retaildesignblog.net,2016). The Starbucks Siren is reinterpreted through a textured timber feature wall towards the back of the store. The store features a handpainted siren hair mural created by Kurt Pio, a South African artist (retaildesignblog.net, 2016).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

The brand's efforts to localise retail design are apparent in the Mall of Africa store. The store makes reference to the region's associations with hand crafted timber through carved and layered timber elements on the furniture and wall cladding. Local identity is layered into the space through the artwork commissioned to Kurt Pio, a South African artist (retaildesigblog, 2016).

The store draws connection to the Starbucks brand through the repeated icon of the Siren, reinterpreted through a local material and craft application as well as in Pio's artwork. The reference to raked coffee through the ceiling installation further reinforce the brand's association with coffee.

The brand identity is also reinforced through the unique experience of the pour-over station in which consumers can enjoy learning about this alternative coffee brewing method. The idea of third place is expressed through a store that speaks of comfort through furnishing, warm materials and environmental quality (acoustics and lighting), reinforcing Starbucks' identity.

Starbucks Mall of Africa is the second Starbucks retail store in South Africa. Following the design of the Rosebank store (which is inspired by basket weaving) (Starbucksstories.com, 2016), Starbucks Mall of Africa takes on a more visually reduced look and feel to its Rosebank counterpart. Starbucks Menlyn Maine, also in South Africa, communicates local idenity through a painted mural featuring local flora (coffeemagazine.com, 2020). Starbucks Mall of Africa establishes a South African Starbucks language that sees local collaboration, local material use, furniture specification and craftsmanship as means to express local idenitity.

*Figure S3.3 Starbucks Rosebank Johannesburg features woven leather ceiling panels that refer to African weaving traditions. The copper wall mural depicts the atmosphere of Starbucks' first store in Seattle using a recognisable African wood carving style (Starbucks.stories.com, 2016)*


*Figure S3.4 Starbucks Menlyn Maine, Pretoria features a mural that depicts the brand's history with local flora (coffeemagazine.co.za, 2020)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Starbucks EMEA is a Starbucks in-house design team tasked with design for region of Europe, Middle East and Africa. The brand's commitment to segment its design teams based on regional design responsibilities demonstrates an effort to focus on local nuances of retail design, however designers within Starbucks' regional teams are not always connected to the local context (Alaali & Vines, 2020:1602).

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

Kurt Pio was appointed to collaborate on the Siren hair mural in the Starbucks store. The store design is made up of furniture curated from local furniture suppliers.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Local references are made through the repeated display of timber craft in the retail design. This is evident in the timber siren wall cladding installation and the finishing details on the communal furnishing as well as through the use of local timber.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is evoked through the use of crafted timber in the store design. Timber crafting is a recognisable and familiar aesthetic to South Africans. It represents a unique hand-made element of quality and locality.

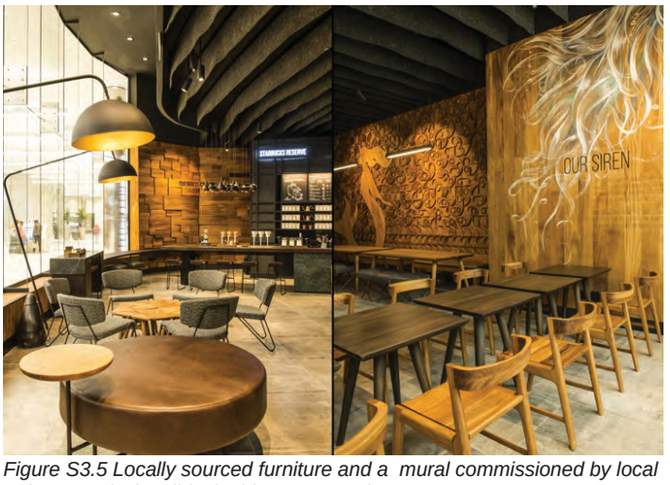
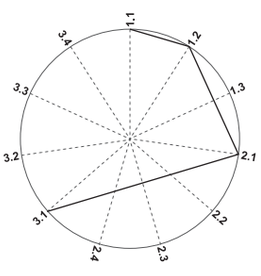



*Figure S3.5 Locally sourced furniture and a mural commissioned by local artist Kurt Pio (retaildesignblog.net, 2016)*

*Figure S3.6 The store features wood carved elements reflecting the African tradition of craft (retaildesignblog.net, 2016)*


*Figure S3.7 The curvilinear entrance imitates the ceiling installation, reflecting the raked coffee fields (retaildesignblog.net, 2016)*

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1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
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2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*S3 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks Mall of Africa*

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**S4 Starbucks Reserve Seattle.** Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2014
1124 Pike St, Seattle, WA 98101, United States of America

*Figure S4.1 Starbucks Reserve Roastery Seattle (urdesignmag.com, 2014); Figure S4.2 Starbucks Reserve Roastery Seattle (urdesignmag.com, 2014)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Starbucks Reserve in Seattle was opened just several blocks from the brand's first store. Starbucks and Seattle hold a historic connection as the brand originated from Seattle.

Located nine blocks from Starbucks first store (opened in 1912), in the neighbourhood of Capitol Hill, Starbucks Reserve Roastery Seattle plays a role in introducing a new and large-scale Starbucks experience to consumers (stories.starbucks.com, 2014).

The design approach to Starbucks Reserve Roastery was to create an experience around the sourcing, production, roasting and making of coffee for visitors. The store material palette is of warm tones, including "copper hand stitched leather details and moulded wood" (starbucks.com, 2014).

The process of making coffee is emphasised in the store design: the roasting, grinding and brewing of coffee from green bean to complete cup is displayed in an "industrial assembly line" that is central to the experience of the visitor (starbucks.com, 2014). The store includes social seating areas, an experience bar to witness the process of making coffee, and a coffee library of books accessible to visitors (starbucks.com, 2014).

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**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Seattle is the location for Starbucks's first Reserve Roastery.This signifies the brand's return to its roots in which the first Starbucks Store opened in the Pike Street region a few blocks away. This connects the brand with the location of Seattle as the place of origin for the Starbucks brand.

Here, Starbucks is a destination of its own, a place visitors seek out as part of Starbucks' history, a history that is intertwined with its location in Seattle (stories.starbucks.com, 2015).

"...people don't come to 1912 Pike for just for a cup of coffee. They come to experience the place where it all began." (stories.starbucks.com, 2015).


*Figure S4.3 Starbucks' first store in Pike Place, Seattle, bult in 1912 (stories.starbucks.com, 2015)*

The opening of the Starbucks Researve Roastery, Seattle, the first Reserve Roastery store concept, just some blocks from the original Starbucks store, brings the brand home in a new way. The connection between Starbucks and Seattle is integral. The brand identity and location assumes an established connection. Localised retail design took focus on adaptation of the existing historic building through preservation of the facade and the reclamation of building materials, as well as the use of local materials in the design.

*Figure S4.4 Existing terrazzo floor and reclaimed timber ceiling (urdesign-mag.com, 2014)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Although the strategy of local creative collaboration is not evident in the design of Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Seattle, the brand's in-house design team's expert knowledge of the Starbucks brand values and origin lends a strong connection to Seattle, the city from which the brand originated.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Local reference is inherent to the Seattle brand. Although Pike Place's 1912 store design and the Starbucks Seattle Reserve Roastery do not have an explicit aesthetic connection, the sites are linked by each being a first expression of Starbucks (as its first store, and then its first Reserve Roastery) and by location (the stores are within nine blocks of each other).

***2.3 Respond to building***

Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Seattle is contextually responsive in design through the response to existing architecture. The historic value of the existing building is addressed through the preservation of the building's facade and floor materials of terrazzo and concrete. Further, the designers sought to reclaim and re-use existing timber within the building (urdesignmag.com, 2014).

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

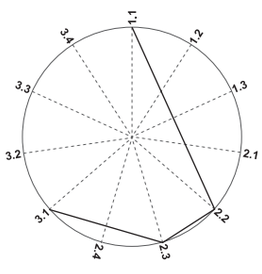
***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Starbucks, as a place originating from Seattle, implies a relationship between the brand and place. Consumers flock to the original Starbucks store in Pike Place as a novel attraction (Marshall, 2015), providing the brand with a historic association with the city of Seattle. The existing familiarity with Starbucks with a persisting historic base in Seattle, establishes an existing familiarity between the brand, place and people, ensuring that a Starbucks experience is already familiar to the locals.


*Figure S4.5 The first Starbucks Store in Pike Place, opened in 1912 (Marshall, 2015)*

*Figure S4.6 The original facade of the 1920's building was restored (urdesignmag.com, 2014)*

*Figure S4.7 The process of making coffee is central to the experience of Starbucks Reserve Roastery (urdesignmag.com, 2014)*

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3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image



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**S5 Starbucks Reserve Milan.** Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
Via Cordusio, 1, 20123 Milano MI, Italy


*Figure S5.1 Starbucks Reserve Roastery Milan (Archello.com, 2018); Figure S5.2 An exposed process of journey of coffee from bean to cup (Archello.com, 2018)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Having found inspiration in Milan's coffee culture at the start of his tenure with Starbucks (Starbucks Coffee, 2018), Howard Schulz sought to open a Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Milan as a way to pay respect to the tradition and culture surrounding coffee in this city. Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Milan is situated in the Historic Postal building in the Piazza Cordusio. Surrounded by iconic landmarks such as the *Duomo di Milano* and *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II,* Milan's Reserve Roastery signifies the first Starbucks location in Italy (Archello.com, 2018). The store is a multi-level experience of coffee, Starbucks and Italian heritage. Liz Muller drew inspiration from the local traditions of Milan.

The intention was to evoke a sensory experience for consumers using local craftsmanship: Palladiana (terrazzo) floors made using traditional construction techniques by local artisans; clackerboards constructed by local craftsman, Solari; glass wall sconces blown by Venetian artisans; a brass Starbucks history wall engraved by local craftspeople; and, a *carraran* marble Siren statue carved by Tuscan sculptor Giovanni Balderi (Archello.com, 2018).

The store hosts a range of experiences for consumers: an interactive wall that is activated through the digital Starbucks app; educational experiences; a showcase of the journey of coffee; a Princi bakery (in partnership with local baker Rocco Princi); and an Arriviamo cocktail bar. The store features a side-walk seating area reflecting a European tradition of consuming coffee (Stories.starbucks.com, 2018).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

The Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Milan signifies the introduction of Starbucks to Italy through a physical store experience. Howard Schulz, previous CEO of Starbucks publicised the inspiration he found in Milan's coffee culture, a moment that sparked his re-imagination of Starbucks as a "third place" years ago, when Starbucks began to lose consumer interest (Starbucks Coffee, 2018).

Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Milan plays an important role for Howard Schulz's history with the brand (Starbucks Coffee, 2018). In a gesture of celebrating the source of inspiration for Starbucks, Schulz's vision of Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Milan sought to appreciate this iconic city's contribution to coffee culture (Starbucks Coffee, 2018).

Consistent with Starbucks Reserve Roasteries is the emphasis on the journey of coffee (from bean to cup) and an experience that surrounds education and innovation. The copper cask forms central to the store including pneumatic tubes as a consistent element in all Reserve Roasteries (Archello.com, 2018).

Local identity is incorporated through collaborations with local artisans in the manufacture of elements that are familiar to Italy: local material such as *Palladiana* terrazzo flooring, engraving of the copper clackerboard and hand blown glass wall sconces in the Venetian tradition (Archello.com, 2018). The addition of a partnership with local baker for the incorporation of an in-store Princi bakery, as well as the side-walk style seating reinforce a local experience and connection for customers (Stories.Starbucks.com, 2018).

*Figure S5.3 Starbucks Reserve Roasstery Milan conveys similarities to all Reserve Roastery designs (Archello.com, 2018)*

*Figure S5.4 Existing Postal building facade is retained. Outdoor seating is reminiscent of side-walk cafe culture of Europe (Archello.com, 2018)*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

### 1 Local Creative Collaboration

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

Starbucks Reserve Roastery Milan includes a number of elements that reflect the creativity of local artisans. These include the wall sconces made by Venetian glass blowers, the Siren statue carved by a local artist and the *Palladiana* floors constructed by local artisans. These elements convey a local authenticity due to their connection with local producers.

### 2. Locally Responsive Design

***2.1 Respond to broad context***

Local references are evident in the materials and objects used in-store. These incude the Palladiana flooring, the blown glass lights and the engraved copper wall, all produced locally. The sidewalk seating also provides reference to local context.

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

The Siren statue outdoors provides a way for the brand to mediate between its idenity (the siren is one of Starbucks' iconic brand elements) and the local context (the siren was carved by a Tuscan suclptor and sculptures are iconic elements in Italian heritage).

***2.3 Respond to building***

The building facade was retained and unaltered. This signifies a contextually appropriate response in Milan's centre which has high historic sensitivity. The Starbucks brand is subservient in this regard.

### 3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The Starbucks Reserve Roastery provides familiarity to Italian context through the use of local materials and traditional manufacturing methods that are recognisable to the context, and through the sidewalk experience of consuming coffee.

Local partnership with the Princi Bakery reinforces a local experience that is unique to the location. The sidewalk cafe experience provides a distict European association to coffee culture.

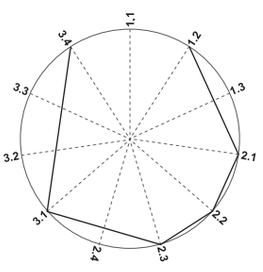
***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

The Starbucks Reserve Roastery Milan incorpartes a virtual reality experience of the brand, through the copper wall that tells the brand's history. This interactive feature provides variety and interchangeable retail experiences.

*Figure S5.5 Palladiana flooring installed by local artisans using traditional building methods (Archello.com, 2018)*

*Figure S5.6 Sidewalk style seating is a familiar experience to Europeans (Archello.com, 2018)*

*Figure S5.7 The Princi bakery incorporates wood-fired pizza oven, creating a connection to traditional food (Archello.com, 2018)*

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2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers' values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*S5 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks Reserve Milan*

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**S6** **Starbucks Reserve New York.** Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2018
61 9th Ave, New York, NY 10011, United States10 & 201

*Figure S6.1 Starbucks Reserve Roastery New York is inspired by the history of manufacturing in the Meatpacking district in which the store is located (Cogley, 2019b); Figure S6.2 The terrarium emulates the Costa Rican landscape and is inspired by the coffee beans' origin (Cogley, 2019b)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Starbucks Reserve Roastery New York was inspired by the Meatpacking District in which the store finds itself. In celebration of this industrial context, Starbucks Reserve Roastery New York references the work-in-progress that coffee beans go through with a factory-like interior. Materials such as copper and concrete support this reference. The store contains a terrarium emulating a Costa Rican plantscape, including coffee plants. The terrarium educates visitors on the lifecycle of coffee (Cogley, 2019b). The store revolves around the copper cask, an iconic element of all Reserve Roasteries. Another consistent element is the pneumatic tubes that run across the ceiling transporting beans across the space. Mezzanine levels flank the space, with access to outdoor seating areas as well (Cogley, 2019b).

The store is further enhanced by a Siren sculpture (one of Starbuck's brand elements) by local artist, Max Steiner and American style furniture as described by Liz Muller (Cogley, 2019b). Light fittings are sourced from a local product designer, Studio Snowpuppe and Marc de Groot. Experiences in store include exposure to the journey of coffee, a co-work spaces, and a Princi bakery and Arriviamo cocktail bar following the Milan Roastery (Cogley, 2019b).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Starbucks Reserve Roastery New York follows on its previous Reserve Roastery store designs through a number of consistent elements. The production line of green bean to completed coffee is celebrated in the store, with the copper cask (an element used for roasting coffee beans) forming central to the experience of the store. Experientially, the store also carries forward the Arriviamo cocktail bar and the Princi Bakery adopted in Milan's Starbucks Reserve Roastery store.

While the New York store does not contain an interactive virtual reality wall on the brand's history, the store does offer a unique co-work environment.

Inspiration was drawn from both the district in which the store is located (Meatpacking District) and from the existing building. Inspiration from the Meatpacking district draw on the area's history with maufacturing, referencing materials such as concrete, copper and dark timber. Emphasis is made on the process of source to product. The unique terrarium in this store refers to the origin of coffee back to its plant form (Cogley, 2019b).

This factory-like space also reinforces a compatability with the Reserve Roastery experience that is centred on the production of coffee. The copper Siren scuplture, (which speaks to the Starbucks brand), was created by Brooklyn-based artist, Max Steiner (Warnick & Starbucks Stories, 2019). The existing building, designed by Uruguayan architect Rafael Viñoly, inspired the geometric ceiling shapes. The designers took cues from existing building and the cityscape and reinterpreted these through playful extrusions of square and rectilinear forms in the timber ceilings (Cogley, 2019b). A curation of furniture and lighting pieces from local designers and suppliers also contribute to a local identity for the space, while demonstrating the craftsmanship common to Reserve Roastery stores.

*Figure S6.3 The interior takes cues from the industrial and factory-aesthetic inspired by the Meat Packing District in which the store is located (Cogley, 2019b)*

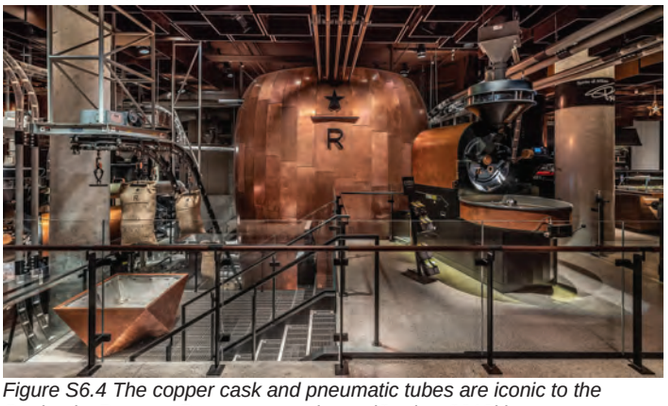


*Figure S6.4 The copper cask and pneumatic tubes are iconic to the Starbucks Reserve Roastery experience (Cogley, 2019b)*

**STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN**

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

The Starbucks global design team is based in the United States, assigning the design team with a connection to the American context.

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

The Starbucks Reserve Roastery New York contains a number of elements curated from local artists and designers. These include the copper Siren scupture, created by Brooklyn artist, Max Steiner; the walnut chairs, custom made by Bassamfellows; and lighting sourced from Studio Snowpuppe and Marc de Groot.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Local reference is made to the Meatpacking district through emulating the insustrial factory-like heritage of this region in the store design. This is achieved through the material use of copper and concrete. The terrarium reinforces the idea of raw to finished product, referring to where coffee comes from through the coffee plant itself. Further local reference is made to the New York building scape, represented by the undulating square geometries in the ceiling.

***2.3 Respond to building***

Starbucks Reserve Roastery responds to the existing building designed by achitect, Rafael Viñoly. The building facade contains a number of rigid geometric sqaures which inspired the timber square geometries of the ceiling.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

Unique to the New York Reserve are the co-work spaces that respond to the local consumer.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

The Meatpacking district is used as a point of departure for the store design of Starbucks Reserve Roastery, New York. Located in a central area of the district, close to the subway and high line, the Roastery fits into the local context by establishing a synergy between the industrial heritage of the district and the factory-like process of the coffee experience.

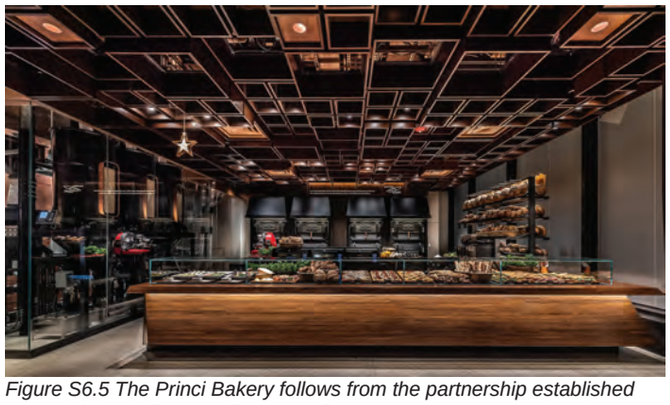
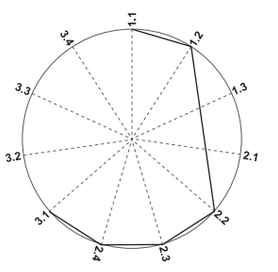


*Figure S6.5 The Princi Bakery follows from the partnership established through Milan's Reserve Roastery. Geometric elements overhead are inspired by the existing building (Cogley, 2019b)*

*Figure S6.6 Sturdy furniture with what Liz Muller describes is in an American style (Cogley, 2019b)*

*Figure S6.7 The terrarium contains plants from Costa Rica, celebrating both the location and origin of coffee (Cogley, 2019b)*

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*S6 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks Reserve New York*

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**S7 Starbucks Reserve Tokyo.** Liz Muller (Starbucks Global), 2019
2 Chome-19-23 Aobadai, Meguro City, Tokyo 153-0042, Japan

*Figure S7.1 Starbucks Reserve Roastery Tokyo (Levy, 2019b); Figure S7.2 The store design is inspired by Japanese craftsmanship and landscapes (Levy, 2019b)*

**STORE OVERVIEW**

Starbucks Reserve Roastery Tokyo was designed in 2019 by Starbucks' chief design officer, Liz Muller (interior design) and Kengo Kuma and Associated (facade design). The store design is inspired by the Japanese landscape and craftsmanship (stories.starbucks.com, 2019). The store exhibits the process of coffee from bean to roasting to cup, with provision to educate visitors on this process through in-store experiences (Levy, 2019b). The building is four storeys high. Central to the store is a large copper cask, a consistent element in all Starbucks Reserve Roasteries (stories.starbucks.com, 2019). The cask is made using a traditional beating technique called, "tsuchime" (stories.starbucks.com, 2019). The cask is clad with copper cherry blossom flowers that run up the four volumes of the store. The material palette includes copper, timber clad ceilings, and grey walls and floors (Levy, 2019b). The store contains a level dedicated to local tea experiences, an Arriviamo cocktail bar, event space and coffee roasting, Princi Bakery, merchandise and seating area on the ground floor (Levy, 2019b).

**MEDIATING BRAND AND LOCATION**

Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Tokyo follows in design from its predecessor stores through both experience and aesthetics. The Tokyo store continues the celebration of the process of coffee. Pneumatic tubes carry coffee beans across the store, while a copper cask forms central to the experience. This assembly line is supported by the factory-like materials of concrete, copper and timber.

Store design inspiration was taken from a Japanese love of craft and landscape. Craftsmanship is evident in the use of timber and copper in store. The timber geometric ceiling is crafted to resemble the forms of paper origami, referencing a local craft. Timber is sourced from local forests (Grader, 2019). Copper cherry blossom flowers surround the hand-beaten copper cask at the centre of the store. These flowers extend to a sixteen meter high volume and across areas of the store's upper levels. The cherry blossom is an iconic tree in the Japanese landscape, the trees are visible along the river that surrounds the store (Levy, 2019b).

The store provides a unique, locally relevant experience through the first floor, designed for the enjoyment of local Japanese teas. The second floor holds the Arriviamo bar, a consistent feature in the Milan and New York stores.

The fourth floor holds the unique programming of event space designed to be transformed into a coffee training space in future (Levy, 2019b).

Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma was appointed to design the facade of Starbucks Reserve Roastery, Tokyo. The Tokyo store is the only Starbucks Reserve Roastery in which a local architect collaborated in design. The collaboration with Kengo Kuma lends a degree of authenticity to the local identity of the building providing a balance with Starbucks' identity given Kuma's prior experience designing for the brand (Levy, 2019b).

*Figure S7.3 Kuma's facade design allowed for terraced seating areas overlooking the river and cherry blossom trees (Levy, 2019b)*

*Figure S7.4 The process of making coffee is exposed in all Starbucks Reserve Roasteries (Levy, 2019b).*

## STRATEGIES FOR LOCALISING RETAIL DESIGN

**1 Local Creative Collaboration**

***1.1 Appoint local designers***

Starbucks collaborated with Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma to translate local identity to the Tokyo Reserve Roastery facade.

***1.2 Curate local creativity***

Locally produced copper flowers and timber origami elements contribute local authenticity to the retail store.

***1.3 Engage consumer creativity***

Consumers are engaged in creative discussion in the AMU Inspiration Lounge.

**2. Locally Responsive Design**

***2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct***

Starbucks Reserve Roastery Tokyo makes use of several local references. Informed by the craftsmanship and landscape of Japan, the timber origami wall elements and the copper cherry blossom flowers both refer to these local elements.

The terraced seating areas overlook the Meguro River that is flanked with cherry blossom trees (Grader, 2019). This connects the location to the experience of Starbucks Reserve Roastery.

***2.3 Respond to building***

The Starbucks Reserve Roastery responds contextually through a new facade which signifies an enhanced relationship between the building interior and exterior, through the provision of terraces.

***2.4 Respond to local consumer***

The local tea experience is unique to the Starbucks Reserve Roastery in Tokyo. This caters to the taste and traditions of the local market.

**3. Local Consumer-Relevant Experience**

***3.1 Evoke local familiarity***

Local familiarity is elicited through the traditional method of copper forming called “tsuchime”. This technique was applied to the copper cask, resulting in a distinctive finish on a key element of the store. This evokes local familiarity. The ceiling and wall elements are constructed using a triangular timber forms reminiscent of the local craft of origami. This timber is sourced from Japanese forests, contributing to local familiarity (Grader, 2019).

***3.2 Reflect local consumers’ values***

The taste of local consumers is catered for through the provision of a tea bar which is unique to Stratbucks Reserve Tokyo.

***3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression***

The store also includes a space for local get-togethers over a cup of coffee. Named the AMU Inspiration Lounge, this space welcomes creatives of Tokyo to discuss ideas (Grader, 2019).

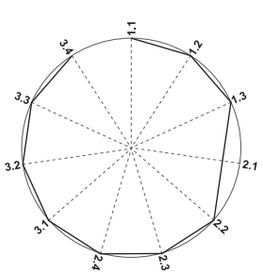
***3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image***

The AMU Inspiration Lounge is continually adapting according to local interest while drawing traffic into the store.

*Figure S7.5 The terraced facade was designed in collaboration with Japanese architect, Kengo Kuma (Levy, 2019b)*

*Figure S7.6 Copper flowers refer to cherry blossom flowers prolific in Japanese landscapes (Levy, 2019b)*

*Figure S7.7 The process of making coffee is central to the experience of Starbucks Reserve Roastery, origami ceiling is visible (Levy, 2019b)*




**1. Local Creative Collaboration**
1.1 Appoint local designers
1.2 Curate local creativity
1.3 Engage local consumer creativity
**2. Locally Responsive Design**
2.1 Respond to broad context
2.2 Respond to neighbourhood / precinct
2.3 Respond to building
2.4 Respond to local consumer
**3. Local Consumer Relevant Experience**
3.1 Evoke local familiarity
3.2 Reflect local consumers’ values
3.3 Elicit experiences for self-expression
3.4 Build in responsiveness to brand and local image

*S7 Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands: Starbucks Reserve Tokyo*

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# **Appendix E –** Responses to Reports from Examiners

## Response to Feedback from Examiner 1

| | Comments | Response | Page | Changes: Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1** | I am curious about the (possible) difference between the researcher's intended meaning of 'authentic' and 'unique' in terms of retail space. While there are obvious overlaps, it is not clear from the text if they are considered to be different enough to not be synonyms, or similar enough to be synonymous.<br>Depending on the response of the researcher I propose that 'unique' be considered as a possible addition to the list of definitions in Chapter 1 with terms like 'glocalisation' as these catchwords need explanation for the sake of clarity and perpetuity. Other such suggestions were marked up in the digital document attached hereto. | The term 'unique' and 'authentic' were not considered as interchangeable terms during the study. I am in agreement that a distinction is needed in defining these for the clarity of the reader and that further suggested defintions can enhance clarity, particularly since the audience of the thesis (designers, retailers, brand managers, etc) may have different understanding and awareness of these terms as they come from different disciplinary backgrounds. I have embedded the distinction between 'unique' and 'authentic' retail design in the definition of authentic retail design. 'Glocalisation' and 'Inhabitatation' have also been subsequently added to the list of definitions. | Page 13 - 14 | **Authentic retail design** is defined as retail design that is original or unique and non-repeatable (or repeatable in limited quantities) (Teufel & Zimmermann, 2015). Authentic retail design for a brand is also identified as being true to the brand itself (Pine & Gilmore, 2008). Unique retail design (once-off or non-reproduced) may improve the authenticity of retail design. **Glocalisation** is a term that refers to the mediation between local and global culture in the context of globalisation. Glocalisation is viewed as a power-neutral form of cultural co-existence across the globe (Dinçay, 2015:173). Tinson and Nuttal (2007) argue that glocalisation further differentiates the global brand from competitors. Retail design finds compatibility with glocalisation when it takes on local cultural cues as opposed to a standardised expression (Thompson & Arsel, 2004:632; Dinçay, 2015:173).<br>**Inhabitation** is the act of occupation and use of the interior by the intended users or inhabitants. Inhabitation occurs when the space is operational. In retail design, this phase occurs once stores are open and accessible to consumers. |
| **1.2** | For curiosity's sake, and without breaching the ethical requirements related to the respondents who were interviewed: were any of the interviewees responsible for, or associated with, any of the case<br>studies you documented? | Some of the interview respondents designed stores for the studied brands. Some of these stores were captured in this study (where pertinent in demonstrating sttrategies and techniques for localising retail design). Some stores designed by some respondents were excluded to prioritse the variety of artefacts (in location) and to ensure that the selected artefacts wererecently built. As an aside, some interview respondents were not involved in the design of the selected artefacts however they discussed some of the selected artefacts in the interviews. This assisted with the theoretical sampling of the artefacts and the identification of respondents for the study (as the designers of these artefacts). | N/A | N/A |
| **1.3** | As a follow-up it should be stated that the twenty case studies were exceptionally well chosen and, like the graphics throughout the study, visually enticing. | Thank you for the comment on relevance of the choice of artefacts and their graphic presentation. I viewed my thesis as an opportunity to investigate and present information using my skills as a designer to visually unravel and construct ideas using the constructivist grounded theory philosophy. The final graphic presentation of data and analysis is the result of a continued iterative mindmapping, constant comparison between data, codes, categories, and write up, and the use of detailed memos through which the emergent grounded theory can be traced. | N/A | N/A |
| **1.4** | Enthused by the future value of the study I suggested corrections, some of which may be pedantic, in the digital document attached hereto. Especially the use of single versus double quotation marks (or the absence of quotation marks) and distinguishing fractured quotations from the once-off highlighting of unfamiliar phrases require the researcher's attention. | Thank you for the detailed review of the document and suggested stylistic changes that can go a long way to enhance readability.These changes were editorial and suggested throughout the document. I have made changes accordingly. | Various - throughout document (editorial) | I have corrected all as per suggestions. As these were largely editorial and throughout the document. Where a change was suggested in principle, I have applied it to all instances where the change was required in the entire document. |
| **1.5** | The repetition of the same in-text citation over the span of limited lines of text deserve to be rationalised so as not to frustrate the reader and interrupt the flow of the argument. | Thank you for this comment. I have tried to address this**by balancing the need for academic rigour with the need for legibility.** Where possible, I addressed this through sentence restructuring in order minimise repeated citations. In instances where this was not possible, I left the paragraph as initially written. | Various - throughout document (editorial) | The suggestion to amend citing the same author over consecutive sentences was changed in instances where ideas could be consolidated in one sentence with a single citation at the end. I have opted to retain repeated end of sentence citations in other places as the rigour of academic convention outweighs the repetition of a citated author where I have discussed their works or authored concepts in single paragraphs. |
| **1.6** | The study succeeds in making the implicit explicit through disciplined research that speaks of the author's passion and expertise. I wish to congratulate the researcher on a job well done! | Thank you! My thesis is indeed a personal full circle moment that reconciles my practice interests with a research contribution that I am proud to have formulated. Not only did I fuel my passion for retail design, I developed expertise using research skills to consolidate and interpret the knowledge of a variety of leading practitioners (whom I view as true experts of retail design). | N/A | N/A |

## Response to Examiner 2

| | Comments | Response | Page | Changes: Text |
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| 2.1 | The introduction of the thesis is very clear and consists of a logical reasoning. What is missing, though, is a clear 'why'? Why should a brand comply with localised retail design? The PhD candidate does take a position (too) cautiously, but in the field, calling brands to social<br>engagement is not enough. An important aspect that now perhaps comes out a little too far in the thesis (p. 22) is "Brands benefit from consumer-centric design through attaining consumer loyalty, and consumers benefit through valued experiences that are specific to their needs (Niienen et al., 2007:266). These are very important aspects, loyalty and value. Although it is interwoven in the thesis - value is found on 100 pages of the thesis ,- it never gets the necessary, explicit attention.<br>To substantiate the story from the point of view of the consumer and the value he or she derives from relevant experiences, it would have been an added value to consult the literature coming from the marketing field as well, though with nuances.<br>Concern: In short, I follow the story and I fully agree with you that in today's society, we need to be less capitalistic and more committed to diversity, in all areas. The hard truth is that we are not there yet. It might be an idea, if this story is to get to brands, to help them understand why they should invest in this, including from a management/financial story. | I agree that the argument for localising retail design can be strengthened and I have added a few paragraphs to motivate localising retail design on the basis of 'value' in the introduction chapter. As per suggestion, I have consulted and woven sources comparing marketing and retail design literature to motivate this. | Page 6 (Introduction) | 1.2.5 The value of localised retail design.<br>Global brands may localise retail design in order to provide valued experiences to consumers. As the retail industry becomes increasingly saturated, the competition between retailers to gain the interests of consumers necessitates that retailers differentiate themselves through providing valued experiences for consumers (Servais et al., 2018:42). Value becomes a means through which consumers may discern between retailers and express their loyalty to one brand over another.<br>Value is perceived differently in the marketing and retail design fields. From a marketing perspective, Servais et al. (2018:43) assert that value is derived from brands applying a consumer-centric approach to their retail offering. Value is said to be determined by consumers as opposed to retailers or designers (Servais et al., 2018: 43) and value may be perceived differently by consumers depending on time and location (Leroi-Werelds et al., 2014).<br>From a retail design perspective, value is determined from a designer's perspective and perceptions of consumer needs due to the absence of concrete standards that benchmark the promotion of value in retail design (Servais et al., 2018:45).<br>As brands seek to differentiate themselves from competitors, they may use retail design to express value across various dimensions. Servais et al. (2018:46) compared the marketing and retail design perspectives of value and identified five key dimensions in which value can be perceived. These value dimensions are functional, cost-related, emotional, social, and altruistic (Servais et al. 2018, 46). Localised retail design is a way for global brands to speak to emotional, social, and altruistic dimensions of value to consumers.<br>• From an emotional perspective, the aesthetics of the retail store can be enhanced through portrayal of a local identity and through the provision of experiences compatible with local consumers' interests. For example, Starbucks connects with consumers through retail stores that communicate a local identity and address local interests.<br>• From a social perspective, localised retail design can become a space that responds to and extends on the contextual social activities as an enhanced public space, particularly expressed in localised flagship retail stores (Sharma, 2017).<br>• From an altruistic perspective, localised retail design can express the global brand's commitment to culturally responsible and inclusive practices reflecting the ethical priorities of the brand and retail design (Dincay, 2015).<br>Localised retail design is therefore a way for global brands to provide more value to consumers through retail design, thus attaining their interest and loyalty as factors that support the brand's survival. |
| | | | Page 6 -7 (Introduction) | This is further supported by demonstrating the ways in which localised retail design contributes value for consumers and the brand |
| | | | List of References | Leroi Werelds, S., Streukens, S., Brady, M. K. & Swinnen, G., 2014. Assessing the value of commonly used methods for measuring customer value: A multi-setting empirical study. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 42(4), pp. 430-451. Servais, E., Leroi-Werelds, S., Quartier, K. & Vanrie, J., 2018. Conceptualizing the value of physical retailers: comparing marketing and retail design perspectives. Hasselt, Belgium, International Colloquium for Design, Branding, and Marketing (ICDBM). Pp.41-48. |
| 2.2 | An overall remark is that a little more nuance from time to time would be beneficial to the build up argumentation.<br>• For example, on page 4, in the cycle of production and consumption, all brands are lumped together. But is this really the case? Would a distinction between brands and products with 'high involvement' and 'low involvement' make a difference? It is no coincidence that the brands chosen for the study are 'high involvement' brands with high involvement products. How important is it for a supermarket, to take an example, to have a locally oriented design? Is it not enough to offer local products? | While the selected brands satisfy a specific criteria of high involvement product, their selection was not purposefully aligned to this criteria. Retrospectively, I agree that it has aligned to high-involvement product brands and that this is non-coincidental given that the criteria for brand selection were narrowed. Although low involvement brands do differ from high involvement brands, the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands do have relevance to both types of brands. In the interview process, I engaged with respondents who spoke about the design of spaces for low involvement brands. For example, Respondent 7 spoke about their development of hyperlocalised experiences for an Australian supermarket brand. They designed a series of hyperlocal grocery stores using co-design exercises with consumers. This respondent also noted that the localisation was less about the product and aesthetics and rather about understanding what consumers valued and how to work with consumers in the design process. Their interview informed Strategy 2 - locally responsive design (the technique of respond to local consumer) and Strategy 3 - local consumer relevant experience. Respondents 15a and 15b spoke about localised retail design for a global ice-cream brand, a store which incorporated one or more techniques from each strategy for localising retail design. Ice cream is a low involvement product, yet the retail design was explicitly localised. While the captured artefacts do not represent low involvement brands, the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands do encompass these brands and would be applicable (perhaps | Page 20-21 (Literature Review) | Brands hold varying levels of influence on consumer behaviour depending on product type (Niosi, 2018). Brands with high involvement product (for example apparel and accessories stores) may respond to shopping behaviour by prioritising retail design over brands with low involvement product (for example supermarket brands). In low-impact product retail stores, the importance of design may be de-prioritised, as consumers may inhabit these stores out of necessity and utility and value convenience over opportunities to express status (Niosi, 2018). Conversely, high fashion brands may invest much effort into retail design in order to capture the attention of consumers and express the creativity and cutting-edge taste they possess that is associated with high fashion, an association with which consumers express their status. (Niosi, 2018)<br>While the attention to the quality of retail design may differ according to the degree of product involvement and its influence on shopping behaviour, consumption across all product involvement levels persists to influence consumer culture. From Douglas's (1996) seminal statement of the significance of everyday shopping to identity construction to the relationship between conspicuous consumption and high fashion (Barnett, 2005), the reciproca influence between shopping and identity construction remains across the spectrum of product-types acquired (whether high or low involvement). Retail design holds a key with which brands of varying levels of product involvement can establish and maintain a connection with consumers. |

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| | | selectively or partially) to their retail design. I agree that the nuance in high and low involvement product brands and their influence on retail design is needed in the **literature review** of the study and that a **limitation be noted** and **recommendation be made in the conclusion** that the extent to which the strategies and techniques for localising retail design on low involvement brands would require further testing and research. | Page 170 (Conclusion) | The theoretical sample of artefacts depict high involvement brands only. This limits the understanding of the extent to which the strategies and techniques for localising retail design are applicable to low involvement brands, (added as a limitation) |
| | | | Page 170 (Conclusion) | To test the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands in low-involvement product brands. (added as a recommendation for further research) |
| | | | List of References | Barnett, J. M., 2005. Shopping for Gucci on Canal Street: Reflections on Status Consumption, Intellectual Propoerty and the Incentive Thesis. Virginia Law Review, 91(6), pp. 1381-1423.<br>Niosi, A., 2018. Introduction to consumer behaviour. s.l.:Creative Commons. |
| **2.3** | Thought: I also make the link with the first consideration. Is it worth it in the eyes of the brand to<br>invest in this? Does it bring in (enough) revenue? | Yes, global brand Aesop discussed that the localisation of retail design need not be exclusive to the commercial viability of the retailer and that in their case, it is a source of interest and revenue for the brand. Similarly, respondent 3 noted that if a brand addresses local consumers through retail design, this leads to the creation of relevant experiences which attract consumers to the retail store and support profitability. In a broader sense, brands may commercially fail for many reasons and retail design is one aspect of profit-generation for the brand. The links between value and localised retail design motivate that there is commercial viability in this practice.<br>Interestingly, the backlash of consumers towards brands who do not demonstrate social responsibility or who are not sincere about their efforts towards social and environmental responsibility can have a negative commercial impact on the brands. Therefore, I argue back, as some respondents also asserted, that social responsibility is linked to the commercial vitality of a brand and by evading accountability, the brand is at risk of being rejected by consumers. | N/A | See 2.1 above. |
| **2.4** | On p.25, the approach to chains in the global world is discussed via the roll-out typology. The last paragraph clearly refers to this type. Why is there no mention of a boutique chain? Later, you do cite examples, such as Camper and Aesop, but to be correct, you should have already<br>included them in your theoretical argumentation. The boutique chain phenomenon is not new; it has already found its way into literature. There also seems to be a statement made that standardized retail design is the same as identical stores. Again, later on, this is nuanced, but this should have been a part of the argumentation. | Thank you for this comment, the boutique chain as a unique and bespoke retail store is mentioned in page 20. Given its brevity, I have expanded the definition of the boutique chain. | Page 19 (Literature Review) | The boutique (as a unique, stand-alone retail store) was an exception, in that it combined aesthetic and consumer considerations in design. These one of a kind retail stores were bespoke and reflected the designer's style or conceptual perspectives, offering consumers an exclusive and intimate experience (Quartier, 2017:31). This was followed by the design of department stores with multi-level, service-oriented, innovative shopping experiences that was also multi-sensorial (Quartier, 2017:31-32). |
| | | The mention of boutique and department stores and their link to localised retail design has been added to the definition of retail design. | Page 34 (Literature Review) | Localised retail design can be expressed in various store scales and formats. It may follow a boutique format of retail design by representing unique, experiential stores that feel exclusive to consumers (Quartier, 2017:31) as seen with Aesop's small scale localised retail stores. Alternatively, it may follow a department store format as multi-level, service oriented and sensorial experiences, as seen with Nike's House of Innovation concept. |
| **2.5** | Be careful with statements like 'this is what consumers want' on p. 30 and then refer to an 'old' source from 2007. Consumer behaviour changes too quickly… | I agree with this suggestion to be more careful. I have rewritten the sentence. | Page 30 (Literature Review) | Gilmore and Pine (2007) support this notion of unique retail design as authentic and deem this as compatible with consumers' needs |
| **2.6** | On p. 42 it is said that the retail design process model is made for roll-outs. This is not quite right: 'roll-out' is literally between brackets in the model. Indeed, the model is intended to apply to all types of shops. Apart from that, the attempt to include localised retail design in the model is very good. This could perhaps have been made a little stronger visually (e.g. an update of the model?). | The retail design process model may not be purposefully geared towards roll-out, however it does not differentiate in its application to varying store formats or designer types.This is emphasised in Page 28 of the literature review (see alongside). Later in tghe chapter, I have generalised my statement to be more clear about the limitations when aligned to localising retail design. I agree that there needs to be interrogation of localised retail design into the retail design process, however, due to the different types of designers employed to work on localised retail design, this would require a study on its own and the literature and interviews of this study might not be sufficient to capture this, nor may the outcome be one model. I have suggested this as an area for further research in the conclusions chapter. | Page 28 Literature Review | Although not presented as a model for a particular store type, recently published retail design process models (Claes et al., 2016; Servais et al., 2019; Servais et al., 2021) support Kent's assertion of retail design as a continued iteration of the prototype. The retail design process is geared towards roll-outs.<br>This supports standardised retail design as a conventional practice. The model sees the process outcomes as developing a "prototype" concept store, that is subjected to "evaluation" and that is finally "rolled-out" (Claes et al., 2016; Servais et al., 2019, Servais et al., 2021). The cyclic nature of the retail design process is illustrated in Figure 2.4. |
| | | | Page 41 (Literature Review) | The retail design outcome is a spatial prototype, which may be designed for roll-out. This indicates that it requires a specialised design process. |
| | | | Page 43 (Literature Review) | Although the model tends towards new design with the option for roll-out design (which is conventionally standardised), these variables provide scope for creative adjustments in the retail design process. |
| **2.7** | The first section seeks to contextualise the discipline of retail design. Three key areas are posited (p.19): brand, consumer, and technology. Where do these three areas come from though? On what is this selection based? | The areas of brand, consumer, and technology come from the sources listed Kent and Petermans, 2017. The content has been arranged in this way for the clarity of the reader and to introduce them to key concepts pertaining to retail design for a sufficient background on the thesis. | Page 19 (Literature Review) | In the introduction to their edited volume, *Retail Design, Theoretical Perspectives* , Kent and Petermans (2017:8) assert that retail design practice is influenced by three key areas that demonstrate its interdisciplinary interests. These areas are: |
| **2.8** | In order to be complete, in the analysis of the brand is stated 'the influence of consumption on retail design', however, the reverse could also be cited: the influence of retail design on consumption. | I agree that consumption and retail design have a reciprocal impact on each other and the consumer. The reciprocal relationship between consumption and space has been clarified. | Page 19 (Literature Review) | **Consumer** (and the reciprocal relationship between consumption and retail design) |

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| **2.9** | Figure 2.4 is quite confusing because it states that 'Omni-channel retail continues to influence the role of physical stores...' | The sentence is confusing. I have amended it as per alongside. I have deleted the figure. | Page 24 (Literature Review) | Digital technology continues to influence the role of physical stores, encouraging a growing movement towards omni-channel expressions. |
| | Isn't omni-channel all-encompassing? It now seems to be limited to the common area between a physical shop and technology? Maybe using more well-know graphs would have been better. | Omni-channel retail design is all encompassing, however, in my thesis I wanted to make a clear distinction between omni-channel and non-omnichannel physical retail design as some contemporary retail design is not omni-channel (for example the studied brand, Aesop, does not integrate digital technology in the retail design). | N/A | N/A |
| | Also, there are many definitions that define omni-channel, also from a marketing perspective, why has the choice been made for Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson? Is that the best definition? Is this the definition most often referred to? Are there no more recent definitions? | The following sources are cited in text to develop the definition and the role of omni-channel retail design. These sources range from less to more recent, and one of these is a practive-based source. See citations:Alexander & Kent, 2017:79<br>(Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014:7)<br>(Christiaans, 2017:222)<br>(Alexander & Cano, 2019)<br>(Quartier & Petermans, 2021:221)<br>(Rodríguez-Torrico et al., 2020)<br>(Hwang et al., 2020)<br>(Ogden, 2020) | N/A | N/A |
| **2.10** | From the domain of retail design, the part on regionalism comes across as a bit odd. There are many architectural movements to discuss and it is not clear why this one is cited. It seems to have many limitations too. | Regionalism is an architectural approach towards responding to location. Regionalism is raised in the literature as an approach to localising retail design by Noorwatha in 2018. As an approach to bringing local identity to design, I wanted to explore whether regionalism is applicable to localising retail design and to what extent it is relevant. I have added and clarified in the introduction to this section why I have included regionalism. | Page 45 (Literature Review) | The purpose of this exploration is to understand the extent to which regionalism is applicable to localising retail design for global brands. This is in order to demonstrate where there is scope for an original research contribution in localising retail design even when applying regionalism as a direct design approach. |
| **2.11** | The theoretical part (chapters 1, 2) is very well structured and supported with the necessary academic sources. | Thank you for this comment on the structure. The literature review was the most difficult chapter to structure and it took me the longest out of any chapter to resolve and 'control'. It was worthwhile to spend the additional time to grapple with structuring to tell a logical story and I am happy that this comes across to the reader. | N/A | N/A |
| | However, a lot of information and terms are introduced. This sometimes makes it a little hard to follow. Here and there, examples are given, but this could be done even more to enhance comprehension and readability. | Although some examples are provided in the first two chapters, the role of these chapters is to establish the research questions and problem, and to present the literature critically to demonstrate gaps and alignment to the research objectives. In the methods chapter, I clearly note a distance between practice and the literature on localised retail design and the NEED for practice-based knowledge to be used as data to supplement our understanding of the topic. I believe that Chapters 4 and 5 balance this by tying together the shortcomings of the literature using practice- based knowledge (from interviews, artefacts, and illustrative examples) and address how the theory and practice come together. Examiner 3, comment 3.3 supports this strength of the thesis being held in both theoretical perspective, and practical utility. | N/A | N/A |
| **2.12** | Along the same line, to increase readability, it would sometimes help to start with a statement, e.g. the research gap, rather than placing it at the end of a whole chapter. It is then immediately clear to the reader where the problem is and how it will be tackled. | The research gaps and opportunities are presented intemittently throughout Chapter 2 before they are consolidated and aligned to the research questions towards the end of the chapter. I have compiled instances of this below for ease of reference: | N/A | N/A |
| | | *There is scope to explore the areas in which authenticity to both brand and place may be mediated when localising retail design for global brands as an original research contribution.* | Page 40 (Literature Review) | |
| | | *The continued practice of localising retail design for global brands indicates that it is possible to mediate between brand consistency and local identity in retail design. However, these approaches have not been studied across various brands at the same time.*<br>*Further, there are isolated narratives between practice and the discourse that contemplate this. No known studies exist to consolidate the ways global brands can retain consistency when localising retail design. The concept of retaining brand consistency is seen as an important area for original research development in the thesis as this is a condition for localising retail design for global brands.* | Page 41 (Literature Review) | |
| | | *This demonstrates a research opportunity for expanding the retail design process to enable localising retail design for global brands while managing brand consistency.* | Page 45 (Literature Review) | |

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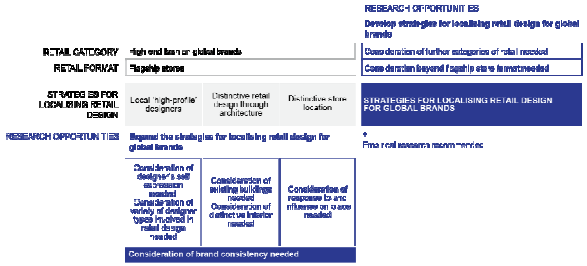
| | | *The representation of brand identity, the commercial nature of retail, and the nature of retail sites as existing built structures present a need for specialised approaches to achieving localised retail design for global brands.* | Page 47 (Literature Review) | |
| | |  <br>*Figure 2.9 Research opportunities emanating from the discourse on strategies for localising retail design for global brands.* | Page 52 (Literature Review) | |
| **2.13** | Chapter 3 and 4<br>The choice of method (chapter 3) is also very clear and well justified. When one takes a step back and looks at the results of the data collection, it seems a bit strange how the choice of designers was made. If one puts the map of the shopping locations over that of the designers, this becomes clear. It would have been an added value to be consistent in this. For example, there are no designers from Asia at all? Have you tried to contact the designers of the artifacts over there? Your argument would be much stronger if the group of designers was even more diverse. To understand the choice of designer better, you should add a list of all contacted designers in your appendix, not only the ones that responded. | I did interview a respondent from Asia. I struggled to secure respondents from this region for several reasons (busy schedules and language barriers), nor did I wish to interview respondents who may not have possssed expertise in retail design. To compensate for this, I analysed a number of artefacts in Asia and a published interview with Shinichiro Ogata in the book, Aesop (Down & Paphitis, 2018), as well as his video interview with Aesop on Taxonomyofdesign.com. I also captured two retail designs for Starbucks by architect Kengo Kuma. I did not formally include these secondary sources as interview data and they were embedded into the source list of the artefactual analysis. Although I could note the designers I did contact who declined interviews, the University of Pretoria's research ethics policy requires that they remain anonymous. | N/A | N/A |
| **2.14** | It is nice to see that the artefacts have been subjected to a thorough and systemic analysis. But what about figures like 3.13? What is the added value of this? A table is much clearer in this case. Also Figure 4.2 has no place in the story. Where does it come from? There is also a lack of explanation as to what the point is here? | Figure 3.13 quickly consolidates the alignment of strategies and techniques used in an artefact. When compared across the artefacts, one can see at a glimpse the most frequent / infrequent techniques across the sample which a table may limit. It may be a matter of personal taste in this case. | Page 77 (Methods) | These formed the basis for examining the occurrence of strategies consistently across the artefact. The diagram consolidates the alignment of strategies and techniques used in each artefact. When compared across the artefacts, the reader can identify the most frequent techniques occurring across the sample and this can be used to compare the occurrence of strategies and techniques across artefacts and brands. |
| **2.15** | Small remark: The literature cited on authenticity on p.89 could also have had a place in<br>Chapter 1. | This is presented in 1.3.3 Opportunity 2: Authenticity and localised retail design for global brands | Page 9 (Introduction) | N/A |
| **2.16** | Thought: I really enjoyed reading Results and seeing the beautiful figures on p. 100 and 101. | Thank you! Preparing these infographics was certainly a highlight of the write up process. | N/A | N/A |
| **2.17** | Section two starts with: "Each strategy for localising retail design is introduced and defined (1). Their contribution to local authenticity in localised retail design is motivated (2). The strategies for<br>localising retail design are explained through the techniques that demonstrate their application (3). These are substantiated through instances in the interview data, practice examples, and the discourse (4). The explanation is enhanced by visual examples relevant to the discussion (5)." This is quite a mouthful and it makes the following part difficult to read because so much is quoted. A better structure could have helped here. For example, subtitles that refer to these steps - which I have numbered from 1 to 5. | The section itself is structured according to each strategy and techniques as subtitles. The points numbered 3-5 cannot be dealt with individually as they are data instances and illustrative examples that substantiate the theory (Strategies and Techniques for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands), thus they are interwoven within the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. I have amended the paragraph to improve the reader's understanding of what follows. | Page 104 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands) | 1. Each strategy for localising retail design is introduced and defined. Their contribution to local authenticity in localised retail design is motivated. 2. Thereafter, the techniques that support the application of the strategies for localising retail design follow. These techniques are substantiated by the interview data, practice-based examples, and the discourse. This is illustrated through descriptions, diagrams, quotes, and visual examples. |

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| | Chapter 5<br>This would also help to discuss each strategy in the same consistent way, where now it looks rather messy and inconsistent. | The illustrative examples enhance the understanding of the application of individual techniques that fall under each strategy for localising retail design. The sample for the artefactual analysis, however, supported the development of the strategies and techniques for localising retail design for global brands. I did not want to become repetitive in Chapter 5 as the artefactual analysis is already quite dense. Instead, I broke down each strategy into techniques as 'bite-sized' pieces that tackle the nuances of each technique**as reported in the data** (using the interview respondents' perspectives and suggested examples to guide this). Although it is not consistent in the degree of information gleaned from data, the techniques that support localising retail design deserved documentation and, where possible demonstration through illustrative examples. | N/A | N/A |
| | It is also not helping that the examples given come from two sides, one the one hand the stores of the four brands under study are used, and on the other random examples are added to complete the story. It would have been nice to have these examples also scanned our audited to see if they apply more strategies. | The selection of artefacts to include in the theoretical sample were subjected to selection criteria in chapter 3. While I did find wonderful examples of retail stores that exhibited one or more strategies for localising retail design, the global brand did not employ localised retail design as a strategic type of retail design with sufficient frequency within their portfolios. This would have led to diffculties in simultaneously analysing brand consistency (as a condition for localising retail design for global brands) as there were not enough stores to compare for the same brand. It is my hope that with this study, further studies can be conducted on individual brands, retail artefacts, and techniques to further saturate the understanding of these findings. | N/A | N/A |
| **2.18** | Section three is a very nice illustration of the different strategies applied. What is missed is some critical reflection. Have you asked yourself if the strategies you found are also intended that way by the brand/designer? Have you double checked with the four brands? Are you sure you did not<br>miss a strategie just because nobody wrote about it? This part seems to lack a bit of in depth reflection and a controle mechanism. | Thank you for this comment as I grappled continually with the role of this section in the thesis. Is it documentation or is it critique? I agree that a critical reflection on each global brand's approach to localised retail design is needed. However, the purpose of this section is to report on the theroetical sample (Appendix D). **This is in order to demonstrate the application of the strategies and techniques in practice to ensure that they do indeed exist and can be verified, as I have motivated in the research methods chapter**. The role of the artefacts as a theoretical sample is also illustrated in Figure 3.14. I have reiterated the role of the artefactual analysis in Chapter 5, Section 3 (Introduction and Conclusion). | Page 149 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands) | The role of the artefactual analysis is reinforced in Chapter 3, Method (see section 3.4.4). The analysis is descriptive as opposed to critical. The study of artefacts acted to test the initial findings or the emerging theory (strategies for localising retail design for global brands) by demonstrating their holistic application in a sample of 20 artefacts (for four global brands). |
| | | | Page 162 (Strategies for localising retail design for global brands) | The summary of the artefactual analysis verifies that strategies and techniques for localising retail design do occur in practice; however there are limitations to the depth of the artefactual analysis due to the research design. In depth, brand-focused studies would be required to critically question and engage with the success of the strategies and techniques as well as to reflect on the brands' perspectives. In-person site visits, consumer input, and brand inputs would all be required to study the success of the application of strategies for localising retail design for specific global brands with more rigour. This is suggested as a recommendation for further research. |
| | | *6.4 Limitations: 1. The study was not delimited to specific designer types, geographic locations, retail categories, retail formats, or global brands. This may influence the applicability of the study findings to specific brands, contexts, categories, store formats, and designers. Studies that are delimited to these conditions may be conducted to more accurately inform insights pertaining to these context,*<br>*3. The study was delimited to retail designers' inputs in the interview process. The perspectives of global brand managers may influence the study findings,*<br>*4. The study includes a theoretical sample of retail stores for four global brands (Appendix D). These were studied with the intention to enhance the study findings and to saturate the study categories. Secondary sources were used to generate these findings. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown and travel restrictions, it was not viable to visit the retail stores for these global brands. In-person documentation and physical retail store visits could influence the study findings.* | Page 169-170 (Conclusion) | N/A |
| | | *6.5 Recommendations for future research: 1. To study the conditions and strategies for localising retail design with focus on specific global brands, geographic locations, designer-types, store formats, and/or retail categories,*<br>*4. To study conditions and strategies for localising retail design in physical artefacts through visits to retail stores, 8. To develop and test each strategy and technique for localising retail design for global brands through practice-based research.* | Page 170 (Conclusion) | N/A |

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| **2.19** | Concern: So, my biggest concern lies indeed in this last chapter where the **method is less clear, selection criteria become fuzzy and the storyline is a bit lost.** I hope it is a matter of refining this part and explain a bit more in depth the previously stated concerns rather than having a minor flow in the methodology applied here.<br>Suggestion: Very understandable that it's not there (yet) given that a PhD is such an intense process, but some broader reflection would be desirable. You get very stuck on conclusions. The description of the contribution of this research is rather poor, again limited to facts and conclusions. You will notice that when some more time has passed, you will be able to formulate your contribution more strongly. You have accomplished a lot and yes, what you have<br>accomplished is important!Your contribution also lies in the social added value, the contribution to a nuanced world and how you can act respectfully towards different cultures despite globalisation (you could write a manifesto about this yourself - after completing your PhD (wink). | Thank you for highlighting this. When writing the conclusion, I was focused on the concrete outcomes and benefits of the study and was conscious to avoid making bold claims. I have since reflected on this and improved both the introduction and conclusion section of the conclusion chapter to improve the story line and the broader reflective aspects. | Page 166 (Conclusion) | Localised retail design currently occurs as an unconventional mode of retail design practice where a small number of prominent and influential global brands (some of which were studied in this thesis) repeatedly opt to localise their retail design portfolios by expressing, responding to, and celebrating the locations in which their stores are based. Localised retail design has received practice-based interest as a valued, authentic, and socially-responsive form of design, motivating this topic as a deserving area of study. Due to a clear shortage of research in this area, I initiated the study to expand an understanding of the design principles and practices in localising retail design for global brands.<br>The study took a constructivist grounded theory approach. Interviews were conducted and analysed iteratively. Semi structured verbal and written interviews were conducted with eighteen retail designers knowledgeable in the area of localised retail design. The interview data was analysed using an iterative procedure of coding, categorising, memo-writing and constant comparison between data, codes and memos. An artefactual analysis of twenty retail stores of four global brands was conducted to support and develop the emergent conditions and strategies for localising retail design for global brands. The artefactual documentation was generated using secondary sources captured in Appendix D of the document. |
| | | | Page 170 (Conclusion) | The thesis, 'Conditions and Strategies for Localising Retail Design for Global Brands' consolidates new knowledge to support the theoretical development of the area of localised retail design, and practice-based knowledge by making explicit the implicit practices of localising retail design conducted by global brands and their designers. |
| | | | Page 171 (Conclusion) | As retail design practice evolves, its social responsiveness is increasingly important to brands, consumers, and retail designers. As this consciousness grows, so will an interest in retail design studies that address brands' responsibilities towards society within the dynamic processes of production and consumption in the context of globalisation. |
| | | The contribution of culturally conscious retail design in the context of globalisation is stated as a theoretical implication of the research contributions. I paste the relevant text below: *"This promotes the rigour of interior design as a culturally conscious practice in the context of globalisation, while bridging towards other disciplines (such as branding and marketing) that have a stake in retail design research and practice."* | Page 169 (Conclusion) | N/A |

## Response to Examiner 3

| | Comments | Response | Page | Changes: Text |
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| 3.1 | It has been my pleasure to review and evaluate the Ph.D. thesis documents for Zakkiya Khan. As someone who identifies as an interior designer and has taught interior design/architecture for many years, I find this thesis to be a well-designed and written contribution to the body knowledge of my field. I believe she is correct in recognizing a gap in the scholarship for interior design about retail design. As she has correctly noted, retail design is perceived as an interdisciplinary effort in numerous disciplines --marketing and business, human behavior, identity politics, and interior design. Using research located in direct observation and professional practice, in combination with a study of various theoretical premises, she has thoughtfully considered this complex topic and successfully created a valuable framework for re-considering retail design in a way that achieves her goal of equipping practitioners "to make this conscious leap of uniting moral responsibility with retail design." I applaud her for this. This overlay of theory into direct application in practice is a most significant contribution to the field of interiors. | Thank you for resonating with the spirit in which I approached this study as a fellow interiorist and a respected theorist in our field. | N/A | N/A |
| 3.2 | I found Ms. Khan to have skill in presenting and crafting the progression of her investigation in details that are easy to follow and understand. The substance of her study is complex and challenging but organized in a way that leads the reader methodically through her topic, demonstrating appropriate analysis of literature and precedents, clarity of goals and methods, articulate analysis, and thorough explanations of findings and interpretations. The design of the document supports this thoroughly by providing both illustrated and written versions of the analysis. | Thank you for the feedback on the quality of the study. | N/A | N/A |
| 3.3 | Is this work publishable? I can easily see this as a book of case studies for retail design that would support direct application in the field. At the same time, other parts could be published as a contribution to the theory and body of knowledge of design in general. The significance and originality of this work are certainly worthy of publication. | The suggestions for publication in both theoretical and practical domains are very helpful, thank you. | N/A | N/A |
| 3.4 | I recommend that this thesis be passed without revision, and compliment Ms. Khan and the University of Pretoria on this accomplishment. | I am grateful for the time you have taken to read my study and to provide comment and feedback. I appreciate the complementary feedback and endorsement of my study. | N/A | N/A |