

**Inexperienced adults' reliance on extrinsic product attributes
to judge the quality of major household appliances**

by

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And above all.....

“In everything we give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”

1 Thes: 5:18



ABSTRACT

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by

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When consumers with limited product related consumer socialization migrate to more affluent communities and adopt new life styles later in life, they have to deal with a *choice explosion* that manifests as the paradox of progress and creates fertile ground for exploitation in the market place. Limited evidence could be found of how inexperienced consumers judge the *quality* of products as an indication of product reliability. This research was part of a larger research project that focused on major household appliances as a desirable commodity in modern households. This part of the project specifically aimed to identify the indicators (extrinsic factors) that are used to discriminate the quality of appliances during pre purchase evaluation. It was hypothesized that limited consumer socialization may result in a dependence on hedonics/ surrogate indicators of quality to compromise for the absence of appropriate product knowledge and personal product experience.

A positivistic orientated research project that implemented a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was designed to determine the quality judgment of major household appliances of more mature, previously deprived consumers in a specific geographical area. Experience with electricity and ownership of appliances were used to identify and recruit suitable individuals for participation.

Supportive theory for this research included the theory of *consumer socialization* including *product related consumer socialization*, as well as the basic theory of consumer decision-making as it applies to *quality judgment* of major household appliances during pre-purchase evaluation.

The inexperience of consumers in this part of the project was confirmed by their *limited experience with electricity* in their own households and *limited ownership of appliances over time*. A lamentable discrepancy was found between the *anticipated* and the *reported* service life figures for a list of 13 appliances. Although replacement purchases may be influenced by socio-economic variables, product characteristics and time factors, an upsetting low average service life for major appliances was calculated. Premature replacements could signify several problems e.g. irresponsible choice behaviour; poor after sales service, ignorance in terms of maintenance and care. Inexperienced consumers may for example also have unrealistic expectations.

In terms of the criteria that are used to discriminate quality, BRAND NAME is apparently relied on strongly by all consumers, irrespective of their experience and socio economic status, which confirmed Dawar and Parker's (1994) view of the existence of criteria of so-called "universal importance". The inexperienced consumers in this part of the project revealed a significant higher reliance on surrogate indicators of quality such as PRICE, GUARANTEE and ADVERTISING.

In terms of the product knowledge test that was included, the mean score for the sample was calculated to give an indication of participants' potential to conclude *informed buyer decisions* in terms of knowledge of certain basic functional and performance attributes of appliances. Inexperienced consumers' score in terms of product knowledge was alarmingly low. This confirms the theory of product related consumer socialization that proposes limited product knowledge with limited product related experience.

Findings revealed a remarkable incongruity with respect to participants' personal rating of the importance of quality in terms of the evaluation of household appliances and their apparent ability to do so. Only 3.2% of the older inexperienced consumers indicated *quality per se* to be of LITTLE or NO IMPORTANCE. The rest regarded it as very IMPORTANT or VERY

IMPORTANT. When confronted with specific questions and tasks relating to product evaluation and quality judgment, the participants could not convince that they had the relevant product knowledge to discriminate quality in order to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions with respect to major household appliances. In terms of the larger project, reliance on surrogate indicators during quality judgment manifested stronger among the inexperienced consumer groups. Findings also support Erdem *et al* (1999) who reported that materialistic values of aspirational groups generally result in dominance of social factors during product evaluation.



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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter presents the background and motivation for the study. It introduces the research problem as well as important concepts that were used throughout the study.

INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Consumer socialization refers to the process whereby individuals acquire skills and knowledge relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace (Assael, 1992:407, 467; Rose 1999; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:277). Unfortunately interaction in poorer communities and consumer related activities can not be compared to what affluent communities have to offer in terms of exposure to consumer goods. It is highly likely then, that adults from deprived backgrounds, despite their age, would have undergone limited *consumer socialization* in their lifetime because of inadequate exposure and access to consumer goods and services. Restricted resources such as low income further limit their activity in the market place. When these adults/families migrate to more affluent communities and/or succeed in improving their living conditions and adopt new life styles, their backgrounds impose pertinent limitations on their buyer behaviour. This is typical of third world countries such as South Africa where consumers' living conditions have improved considerably in a relatively short period of time in recent years because of higher education levels and socio political changes. Relocation to larger cities has resulted in better living conditions and altered life styles that inter alia include home ownership.

In South Africa, many previously disadvantaged consumers at present find themselves in or around major cities, in built environments. A primary objective in the improvement of living standards of households has been to provide the previously disadvantaged with formal housing and electricity (Holtz, 1998; Tatietsse *et al*, 2002). The Human Development Report (2000) refers to it as the process of *enlarging people's choices* and *the raising of levels of well-being*. Eskom has for example vowed to electrify historically black residential areas in an effort to improve living standards and has set a target to electrify about five million additional connections by 2007

(Holtz, 1998). Electrification has changed the face of many South African homes: it has for example created an opportunity for ownership of household appliances. Holtz contends that electricity plays an important role in enhancing the lives of consumers and households. He states that electrification has brought about a major change/shift in terms of energy sources used by households: the use of major household appliances for example enhances the lives of consumers by saving consumers time and energy and even reduces workloads. Kitchens have also become important entertainment centers in modern homes, mainly because of technological change (new improved designs, aesthetic appeal, trendy materials) that has transformed the former very functional household appliances into impressive and even highly desirable commodities. Sales figures indicate that previously disadvantaged consumers who now reside in structured housing and who have the luxury of electricity as a household commodity have become a prominent target market for major household appliances such as refrigerators, stoves and washing machines (Holtz, 1998). This may partly be attributed to the fact that these appliances are highly visible and have become social symbols that indicate improved socio economic status and reflect newly acquired lifestyles. According to Rogers (1994:28), an increase in the disposable incomes of black consumers in recent years, rising levels of education and literacy and consequent class differentials in society have encouraged the use of *status* as a promotional vehicle to stimulate new consumption practices. Media exposure that continually stimulate consumer needs, aspirations to improve social status and altered lifestyles however create fertile conditions for exploitation of inexperienced consumers in the market place who do not have first hand experience to negotiate their own fate (Kamaruddin & Mokhlis, 2003; Moore-Shay, 1996).

Previously disadvantaged, inexperienced consumers' aspirations may thus be in conflict with their abilities and what they are accustomed to, due to a lack of, or absence of *transaction knowledge* (knowledge and skills regarding stores, products, brands, processes and pricing) (John, 1999). Referring to ownership of major household appliances for personal use, it could thus be said that black consumers from previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa have gained access to a consumer goods and services such as electricity and household appliances with hardly any first hand experience of how to deal with it. These consumers have thus acquired *symbolic knowledge* without the relevant *structural* - and *transaction knowledge* required to cope (John, 1999).

Little evidence could be found of how inexperienced consumers would judge *quality* as an indication of product reliability during product evaluation, considering their limited consumer socialization during the various developmental phases of childhood years where specific skills are developed (Rose, 1999). It has been reported that inexperienced consumers generally have unrealistic expectations during product judgment (Erasmus, 1997). It was thus hypothesized that limited consumer socialization would result in, and even necessitate dependence on surrogate indicators of quality such as price, brand name and store image to reduce risk perception and to compromise for the absence of appropriate product knowledge and personal product experience (Gerstner, 1985). Findings of previous research that tried to establish the relationship of specific indicators in terms of consumers' perception of product reliability produced mixed results across a variety of products (Agrawal *et al*, 1996; Kelly 1988).

Knowledge of the indicators that are used by inexperienced consumers to judge the quality of major household appliances to conclude buyer decisions will reveal potential problems that may arise as a result of uninformed buyer decisions. This evidence would be valuable for industry and retail in terms of the provision of augmented customer service and appropriate post purchase service delivery as well as for professionals involved in consumer education and - facilitation who have informed, responsible consumer decision-making at heart.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Evidence suggests that consumers from deprived backgrounds, who acquire a higher socio economic status and consequently reside in better, structured housing and adopt a more comfortable lifestyle later in life during adulthood, become a prominent target market for major household appliances. Irrespective of the reasons for consumers' purchase of appliances, limited product related consumer socialization, according to relevant theory, inhibits a consumers' ability to make responsible, informed buyer decisions. In the absence of relevant research and considering existing theory on consumer socialization, it was postulated that consumers with limited product related consumer socialization, would, as a consequence of limited product knowledge, probably revert to surrogate indicators during their judgment of the quality of major household appliances. In Consumer Science, it is *inter alia* suggested that, in order to facilitate consumer decisions, one needs to know which determinants are used by consumers to

differentiate the most suitable products and to distinguish quality. It would further be important to discriminate between directly relevant and surrogate indicators of quality before any recommendations are made to potential buyers because this would enable consumer facilitation that would enhance informed, responsible buyer decisions. Responsible buyer behaviour refers to an informed decision and a realization of the consequences of the purchase decision. This would for example, reflect an ability to display some form of maturity with respect to the price decision, quality indicators and service life expectancy during the final decision (Assael, 1992:647; Hornby, 2000) and the ability to motivate/explain a product decision in terms of relevant criteria.

The academic contribution of this research would be to:

- describe inexperienced consumers' decision-making behaviour, specifically regarding their judgment of the quality of major household appliances (which represent complex durable commodities) in terms of relevant and surrogate quality indicators.
- discuss potential problems that may occur when inexperienced consumers judgment of quality does not reflect informed, responsible buyer behaviour
- suggest strategies through which inexperienced consumers who have undergone limited product related consumer socialization could be facilitated in sophisticated retail environments towards informed, responsible buyer behaviour.



Chapter 2

SUPPORTING LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

This chapter provides an overview of existing literature that provided the theoretical background for the study and introduces the main concepts and the conceptual framework. The chapter concludes with the objectives for the study.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Supportive theory for this research include the theory of consumer socialization and product related consumer socialization, as well as the basic theory of product evaluation during consumer decision-making, specifically in terms of the judgment of the quality of expensive durable commodities, namely household appliances.

CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION AND PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Consumer socialization

Consumer socialization is the process whereby individuals acquire skills and knowledge relevant to their functioning as consumers in the marketplace (Assael, 1992:407; Hawkins *et al*, 2001:212; Rose, 1999; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:277). Consumer socialization is further described as a complex environmental process (Rose, 1999) that depends on a multitude of influences including *family and household influences* and *availability of resources* that enable access to products and services and determine buying power (John, 1999; Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993; Rose, 1999). These are considered fundamental in terms of an individual's eventual buyer behaviour (John, 1999). Consumer socialization is an on going process and may be *directly* related to consumption for example the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to budgeting, pricing and brand attitudes. Consumer socialization that is *indirectly* related to consumption, deals with the underlying motivations that would encourage/drive someone to purchase major household appliances. Both types of socialization are significant in terms of the potential contribution to a consumer's eventual knowledge and skills (John, 1999; Rose, 1999).

The *family* is said to be the primary source of consumer socialization. Parents convey consumption knowledge both directly and indirectly and they do so deliberately and casually through instrumental training, modeling and mediation. Instrumental training occurs when a parent or sibling specifically and directly attempts to encourage certain responses through reasoning or reinforcement (Cram *et al*, 1999:307; Gronhaug & Venkatesh, 2001, Hawkins *et al*, 2001:212-214; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000:277).

Availability of resources influences consumer socialization in the sense that children from low-income families would, as a result of inaffordability, grow up with limited directly relevant consumption orientation towards many consumer goods and services. This would result in limited skills, limited product knowledge and minimum experience - to the extent that it might be necessary to rely on familiar, extrinsic cues to evaluate products and to judge product quality.

Product related consumer socialization

Product related consumer socialization is to a large extent determined by an individual's *product experience* and *product involvement*. It would thus refer to an individual's exposure to, and involvement with, for example major household appliances over time.

Product experience will influence an individual's experience with a commodity such as major household appliances and will determine one's familiarity with a specific product (Engel *et al*, 1990:). The possessions in a household as determined by socio-economic factors would for example determine ownership or non-ownership of household appliances and consequently contribute to, or inhibit a child's learning experiences (Hawkins *et al*, 1995:201-203; Solomon, 1994:404-405).

Product involvement describes an individual's personal experience with major household appliances through personal use and/or participation in buyer decisions irrespective of whether involvement occurs in the home or working environment. This would eventually determine the perceived relevance of certain product features (Engel *et al*, 1990). Product involvement may also be affected by educational level because it would, influence one's ability to operate appliances that are technologically more advanced.

The effect of limited product related consumer socialization on the consumer decision-making of previously disadvantaged black consumers in South Africa

Consumers in the higher LSM categories 8 to 9 are characterized by higher incomes and possessions of certain products, including various household appliances (Du Plessis *et al*, 1995:56). Despite ownership of particular consumer goods that are characteristic of higher socio economic groups, these consumers might however not necessarily have extensive experience of products such as household appliances because of limited product related consumer socialization. In the RSA, in the past, black households did for example not necessarily have homes of their own, did not necessarily have electricity and consequently did not own household appliances. They thus grew without having experience of personal use of electrical appliances, which means that evaluation of household appliances may be impaired or negatively influenced. At present, after the new political dispensation that came into being in 1994, black consumers are faced with new opportunities regarding jobs, better incomes, home-ownership and having electricity in their homes. The demand for household appliances has thus soared (Holz, 1998). With the advent of the new South Africa, it appears that a black middle class is becoming increasingly more perceptible as a new social entity that seeks to define itself despite (or perhaps in response to) the ruthlessly oppressive administrators of the apartheid regime (Cambitzi, 1991:1; Sonja, 1997:120). One way of doing that is by accumulating and purchasing prestigious consumer goods that include household appliances. Significantly the black middle class seems to be marked by a newly invented consumer culture which is uninhibited by the constraints imposed on them by collective memories of the past (Rousseau & Venter, 1996:128; Sonja, 1997:120). The only limitation to individual participation in consumption and consumers' practical freedom to exercise choices or to experiment with products now, is economic status (Sonja, 1997:121). Black confidence has been rising steeply ever since the 1994 elections while white confidence has dropped (Cambitzi, 1991:4; Financial Mail, 1997:33).

Restricted incomes and living conditions in the past have unfortunately had a negative impact on black consumers' consumer socialization, their knowledge and personal experience with electrical household appliances. It is thus assumed that previously disadvantaged consumers, despite their present improved financial and social status might be dependent on surrogate indicators to discriminate quality of products during the pre purchase evaluation (Erasmus,

1997). This is done to reduce risk perception in the absence of relevant product knowledge due to limited product experience. When consumers have limited knowledge and experience they tend to rely on cues such as store image, sales persons, advertisement, warranties, price, friends and colleagues before deciding on a purchase. They might for example choose to pay higher prices instead of lower prices on the assumption that the more expensive products are of a better quality (Day & Castleberry, 1986; Erasmus, 1997; Gerstner, 1985). Lack of experience and knowledge in their present situation may cause previously disadvantaged consumers to be particularly vulnerable in terms of possible exploitation in the market place because of their very limited bargaining power.

Consumers' evaluation of products and buyer decisions are generally determined by internal and external influences.

EVALUATION OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

The importance of household appliances in modern households

Major household appliances include all cooling, cooking, baking and laundry appliances, i.e. the so called *white goods* that are viewed as long-term purchases (durables) due to their relative long expected service life (Cox *et al*, 1983). Because major household appliances are expensive compared to other household goods, technologically complex and socially significant in terms of symbolic meaning, they are also generally regarded as durables that require complex, more advanced decision-making (Erasmus, 1998). Ownership of certain appliances may for example be viewed as a luxury that requires a significant discretionary income in terms of affordability, which explains why appliance ownership may be associated with wealth and financial well being which is highly desirable in a materialistic environment.

Evaluation criteria

Consumer research has shown that buyer decisions are based on information cues. Information processing and evaluation will therefore always be central to all comprehensive consumer behaviour models. Information cues can either be *intrinsic* (e.g. product design) or *extrinsic* (e.g. brand name; price). Consumers generally use both intrinsic and extrinsic cues to evaluate

products although extrinsics are likely to be used in the absence of product knowledge and experience that is required to judge intrinsic cues (Chu & Chu, 1994; Saeed, 1994:581).

Product evaluation is mainly done through the interpretation of product characteristics within an internal frame of reference, i.e. the individual's knowledge and experience as influenced by product related consumer socialization. Product evaluation refers to the comparison of *actual product characteristics* against a set of parameters that the individual anticipates/expects. *Actual product characteristics* are those that are offered/available in the market place, while *anticipated characteristics* refer to what is expected considering a consumer's knowledge and experience of specific product/s. Anticipated characteristics may even be unrealistic because of lack of experience and irrelevancy to what may be found in the market at present (Hornby, 2000).

Product characteristics that may be considered during product evaluation, would include a combination of the following (Hornby, 2000; Peet *et al*, 1975):

- *Functional characteristics* refer to performance factors and the ability of an appliance to perform certain functions. These would for example include the various programmes of a washing machine or dishwasher and the suction power of a vacuum cleaner.
- *Financial characteristics* refer to the relative cost and affordability of appliances in the short and long-term, including purchase price, running- and maintenance cost.
- *Durability characteristics* refer to the quality of appliances and the potential service life until it needs to be replaced.
- *Status factors* refer to product characteristics that may be indicative of status or prestige, such as brand names and price (Hawkins *et al*, 2001:213).
- *Aesthetical factors* refer to the style and attractiveness of appliances and are noteworthy when an appliance would for example be installed in an open plan kitchen: Fashion trends at a specific point in time may thus be considered particularly important, e.g. stainless steel finished appliances (Assael, 1992).

Evaluation of the quality of household appliances

Quality per se

According to Day and Castleberry (1986), quality is viewed as a hypothetical construct that is instrumental in consumers' efforts to minimize perceived risk. Grosby (1979, in Day & Castleberry, 1986) defines quality as conformance to requirements. Kotler (1983) defines quality as a rated ability of the brand to perform its function and Garvin (1984) claims that quality is equated with conformation to tight manufacturing standards although there are several dimensions of quality such as performance, durability, reliability serviceability and aesthetic elements.

Apart from one's home and motorcar, household appliances may be considered some of the most expensive items that a household will ever purchase. It is safe to say that *quality*, a characteristic that would contribute to longer service life and better performance of appliances, would probably be regarded an important issue during product evaluation. Interestingly, Day & Castleberry (1986) found that quality plays an instrumental role in consumer's efforts to minimize perceived risk (i.e. financial, social, psychological and/or time risk). In other words, quality apparently becomes a greater concern in cases of conspicuous consumption.

Quality can be evaluated both *directly* and *indirectly*. Quality is evaluated directly through the inspection or examination of the product, i.e. an evaluation of physical attributes, programmes, and electrical consumption. Evaluation that is done indirectly is done through attendance to extrinsic factors such as the recommendation of significant others, brand name preference or an evaluation of the results of services rendered to others (such as after sales service) (Day & Castleberry, 1986). Indirect evaluation is thus generally done by means of *surrogate indicators* of quality, to compensate for an absence of relevant product knowledge.

The influence of extrinsic factors during product evaluation

When consumers evaluate products, certain criteria are used to determine the most suitable product alternative that would meet their wants and needs in terms of the anticipated outcome. In a study conducted by Cambitzi (1991) it was found that black consumers who came from disadvantaged communities, were significantly less experienced in the use and evaluation of common goods and services compared to their white counterparts. As a result of their

inexperience and due to the absence of relevant schemata in memory, external, much simpler key evaluative constructs seemed to be relied on to guide their buyer decisions. Consequently, alternative routes are followed to select the most suitable product alternatives (Day & Castleberry, 1986; Gerstner, 1985). Two strategies could be followed: an extensive process of evaluation because of perceived risk (e.g. financial risk; functional risk; social risk; psychological risk) (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2001:445-446). Alternatively, the decision could also be made relatively fast due to ignorance of the consequences of the purchase decision and unrealistic expectations in which case indirect evaluation may be done through the use of decision short cuts that may include the use of surrogate indicators of quality (Hawkins *et al*, 2001:574-584; Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). Consumers with limited product related knowledge and experience could for example refer to and rely extrinsics such as store image, salespeople, advertisements, price, guarantee, friends and colleagues as a surrogate for actual intrinsic product features to conclude product decisions (Agrawal *et al*, 1996; Cambitzi, 1991; Day & Castleberry, 1986; Dodds & Lewis, 1995; Erasmus, 1996; Gerstner, 1985; Saeed, 1994; Terblanche *et al*, 1999; Thorelli *et al*, 1988). It has also been reported that inexperienced consumers would avoid intricate products such as more advanced technology to avoid embarrassment (Marks *et al*, 1988).

Sales person Salespeople provide guidance at the point of purchase and sales approach has a definite influence on consumers' perception of product quality and consumers' willingness to buy (Erasmus, 1997; Sweeney *et al*, 1997:39). Knowledgeable salespeople who draw attention to product attributes that consumers are unfamiliar with or might not have noticed, seem to be quite influential in terms of consumers' perception of product quality. The expert advice of salespeople is considered even more important during the evaluation and value perceptions of high tech products (Sweeny *et al*, 1997).

Price Price is defined as a monetary measure of the amount of sacrifice a consumer has to make to purchase a product. This implies that higher prices would negatively affect product evaluations and purchase probabilities. Extensive behavioural research has however indicated that consumers use price as an extrinsic cue during the evaluation of products in the sense that a strong relationship between price and the perception of quality occurs (Mitra, 1995). Especially inexperienced consumers seem to depend on the price of a product to enhance their confidence

in a product, e.g. when they cannot tell how well it will perform, how safe it is or whether it would be socially acceptable (Thorelli *et al*, 1988). Consumers apparently use price to discriminate a set of choices, namely those that are considered acceptable and those that are not (Dodds & Lewis, 1995). A price may be acceptable if it is perceived to be too high or too low. In the case of an unacceptable price, consumers generally assume that there will little or no net perceived value. Value, in fact, means more than a customer's positive perception of some combination of quality and price, since today's consumers will only pay higher prices when they also receive greater value (Dannhauser & Roodt, 2001). Mitra (1995) has found that if a consumer's ability to process information were deterred because of a lack of experience with specific products, they would be more likely to rely on price to evaluate the product. Consumers with little knowledge or experience regarding a product or those who buy infrequently will therefore more easily use price as an indicator of quality and will probably purchase accordingly (Du Plessis *et al*, 1995:204). The findings further suggest that the lack of ability to process product related attribute information would encourage heuristic processing so that evaluations would be based on price. Higher prices seem to give the impression that goods are of higher quality while consumers have a similar reservation about cheaper products and lower quality (Agrawal *et al*, 1996; Andersen, 1984; Dodds & Lewis, 1995; Fluet & Garella, 2002). All seem to agree that even though price is used as a signal for quality, in reality it is weakly correlated with (overall) quality. Price sensitivity, price perception and price awareness are, according to Du Plessis *et al* (1995:205), influential in the final demand for a specific product as well as total spending.

Store image The image of the retail store and store reputation is said to be quite important during product evaluation. An image of quality facilitates more favourable attitudes towards products because it reduces risk perception (Thorelli *et al*, 1988). When consumers lack knowledge about a product, they apparently use store image to facilitate quality judgments.

Store loyalty Loyalty is defined as a deeply held predisposition to re-buy or patronize a preferred brand or service consistently in the future, despite (original emphasis) situational influences and marketing efforts (Burgess & Harris, 1998). Loyalty, according to Burgess and Harris (1998) can be thought of as cognition about brands and stores and an affect towards them that is characterized by a deeply held commitment that takes on motivational properties

that will encourage/drive buyer behaviour. Store loyal people seem to be less price sensitive, although price consciousness and low quality conscious. Store brand users thus apparently depend on store loyalty into saving money, even at the expense of quality (Ailawadi *et al*, 2001).

Advertising Advertising is often criticized for encouraging consumers to purchase products that they do not really need (Boshoff & Eeden, 2001). Results from a study by Fluet and Garella (2002), have shown that advertising is necessary to discriminate good and bad quality when quality differentials are relatively small. The signaling explanation for advertising therefore entails a relation between measurable advertising expenditures and quality, which is more complex than usually stated. Advertising may however be used as a positive signal of quality at the mature rather than introductory or growth stage of the product life cycle (Agrawal *et al*, 1996).

PRODUCT EVALUATION WITHIN A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

The cognitive perspective that uses the learning theory as point of departure, postulates (in the context of this study) that when people are exposed to certain objects/appliances, they would become familiar with it and would be able to recognize it. It is assumed that exposure and experience with objects result in the development of so called relevant schemata in memory that would enable one to conclude future product decisions.

The transformation of cues during product evaluation inevitably requires cognitive activity. The cognitive perspective is thus central to the transformation of stimuli (product characteristics) within established schemata in memory in terms of what is familiar (existing knowledge structures) to the consumer (Spears & Gregoire, 2003:26). Thang and Tan (2003) describe the transformation process as a superseding internal process whereby consumers translate stimuli/cues about products into meaningful information before making a judgement. A consumer thus relies on internal resources (existing knowledge), however limited, to value a situation and to conclude a decision (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2000:445). The cognitive perspective postulates that consumers prefer stability in their evaluation and interpretation of situations, which means that change of one element (e.g. price) would affect the other elements of quality (e.g. guarantee). Previous experiences (memory) determine judgment of quality (external stimuli) as positive or negative. The same conclusion (for example superior quality) might not

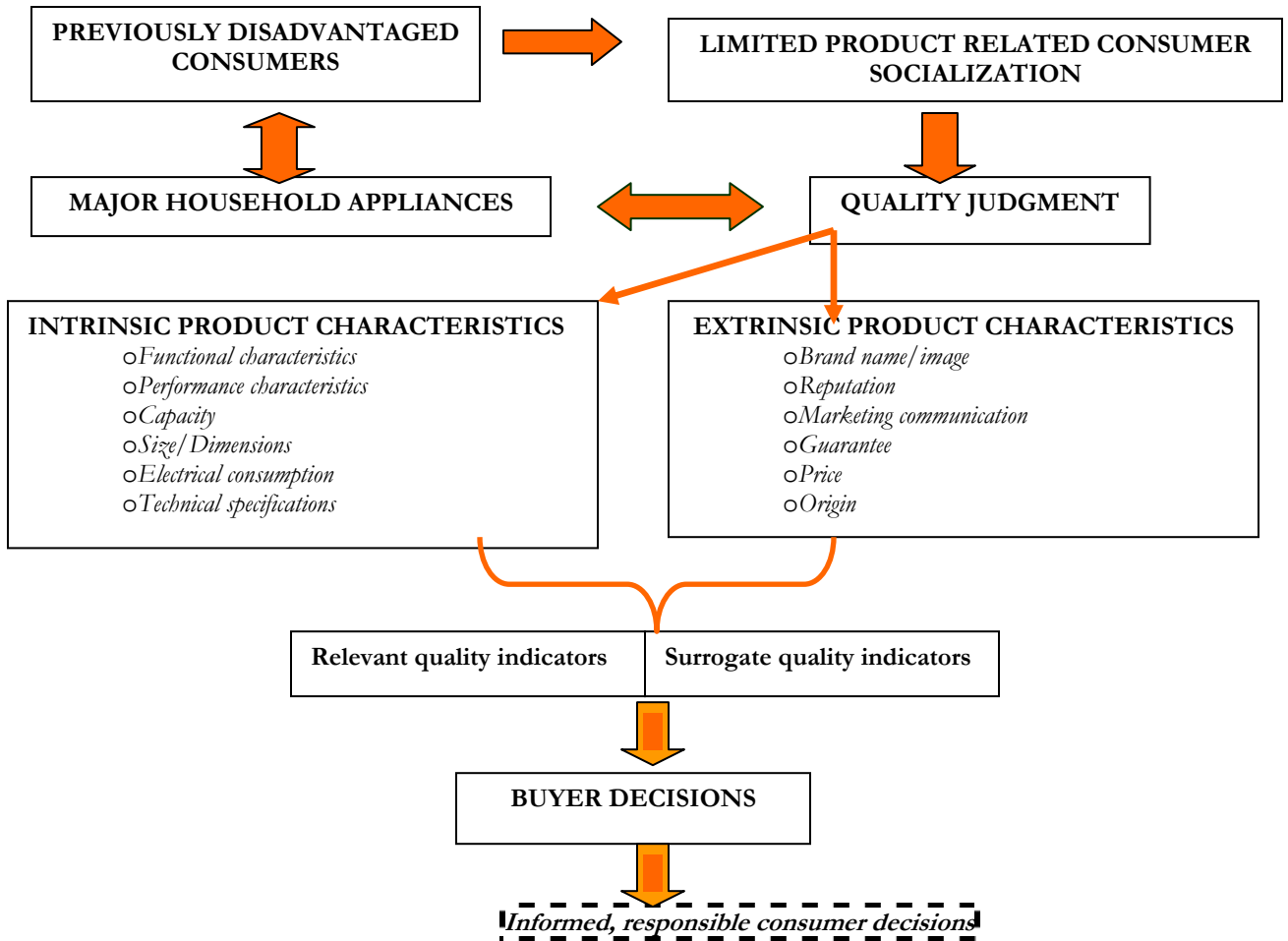
necessarily result from the judgment of a single characteristic/elements (e.g. extensive guarantee as a pre condition for quality) because the collective contribution of several characteristics is considered in terms of priority and hierarchy (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993:325). Although each characteristic would evoke response, the collective contribution of the elements would eventually conclude one's interpretation of quality.

Consumers' needs are created and stimulated and are transformed in terms of *prior knowledge* and *experience* frameworks to conclude a purchase decision that best serves a consumer's expectations, requirements and preferences at a specific point in time. Previous experience forms a very important part of product evaluation and consequent consumer decision making because it provides a frame of reference within which consumer products are judged. Previous experience acquired through consumer socialization will determine expectations, brand loyalty and attitudes towards products. In general, people tend to perceive products and product attributes according to their own expectations that are created and shaped within personal cognitive frameworks (Du Plessis *et al*, 1995:80). Personal experience through ownership of different brands of a specific product over time or rapid diffusion of information through interaction with other experienced consumers (Agrawal *et al*, 1996) represent product related consumer socialization and contributes to increased product knowledge. Lombard and Mathews (1999) as well as Khan and Ravikuma (2002) have found appliance ownership to be strongly related to income/financial status and that general consumer knowledge were highest among middle to upper income respondents with high school or tertiary education where affordability and intellectual capacity enabled consumers' opportunity for experience. Rousseau and Venter (1996:28) as well as Erasmus (1997), confirm the view that educational status has a significant influence on consumers' product knowledge. Du Plessis *et al* (1995) emphasize that lack of experience will limit a consumer's ability to evaluate products and will limit one's ability to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions. An adult's consumer knowledge and decision-making skills thus to a large extent depend on consumer socialization and will inevitably affect an individual's consumption behavior in a positive or negative way later in future.

When an adult consumer from a previously disadvantaged background is confronted with complex buyer decisions, such as for household appliances, he/she would thus be unable to rely on personal experience and would have to follow alternative routes to conclude buyer decisions.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following conceptual framework was compiled to confine the scope of the research.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives were formulated:

- 1 To identify the indicators of quality that are used by inexperienced adults during their evaluation of major household appliances.
- 2 To categorize these indicators in terms of
 - > those indicative of informed, responsible decision-making behaviour
 - > surrogate indicators of quality that may reflect uninformed decision-making behaviour and consequently, inefficient quality judgment
- 3 To interpret and discuss consumers' quality judgment in terms of
 - > consumers' post purchase evaluation of appliances
 - > activities/strategies that could be implemented to assist consumers towards informed buyer behaviour
- 4 To identify potential problems that may arise during post purchase evaluation and use of appliances due to inadequate quality judgment and/or reliance on non-relevant indicators during quality judgment.



Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research approach in terms of the research methodology that was used and the data collection procedures

RESEARCH DESIGN

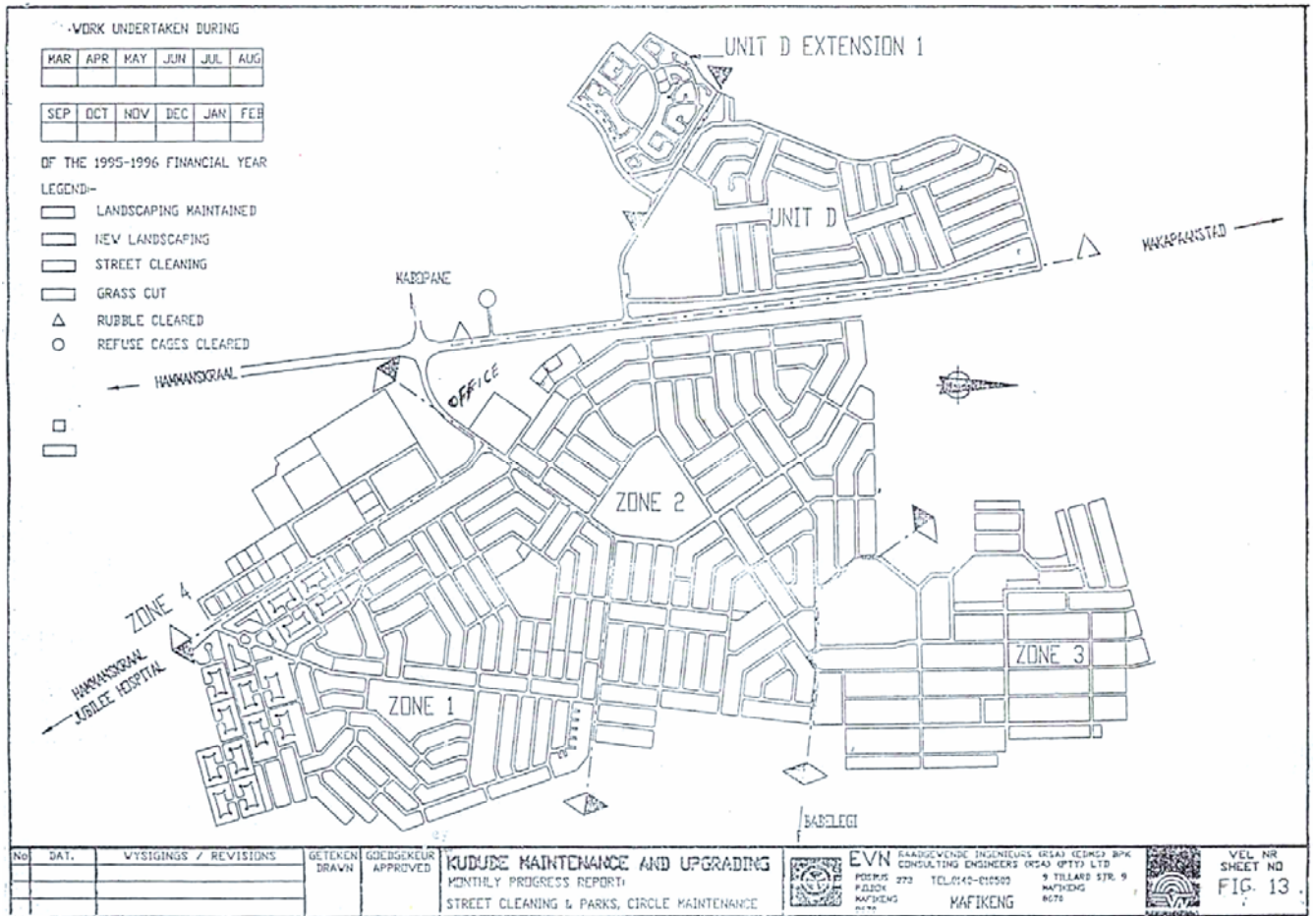
Research style

This study is empirical in nature and followed a positivistic orientation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:49-53). The research was conducted from a quantitative methodological paradigm but included both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. Qualitative techniques were used before the finalization of the questionnaire to allow for spontaneous, uninhibited responses from participants. This was used to rephrase questions in terms of everyday language (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270-271). An inclusion of multiple data sources and data collection techniques were intentional to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

Sample

Consumers in a specific geographical area (Temba Unit D, Extension 1, approx 45 km from Pretoria, near Hammanskraal, that includes approximately 1150 households) and is characterised by new housing developments that was developed after 1993, was targeted for participation. The majority of the residents are black, and acquired their houses through mortgage bonds. Visible addresses on houses made participants easily identifiable. Because of the high density of the housing in the area, it was easy to identify and to reach potential participants. .

FIGURE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF TEMBA UNIT D



Sampling

Homeowners or residents who owned at least one major appliance but who have not had electricity in their homes prior to their occupation of these houses were included in the study. The sample for the final data collection procedure was identified through systematic sampling with the intention to recruit at least ten percent of the households for the final survey (Steyn *et al*, 1994:30).

Phase 1: During phase one (qualitative technique), 30 households were approached: to limit sampling error and bias, every 40th household in the area (see Figure 2) was selected for participation. The researcher used a list of house numbers that was supplied by the Metropolitan Council and every 40th house was selected from the list to ensure that every household had an equal chance to participate in the study. Residents were given the choice of

whether the husband or wife felt confident to partake. A letter was given to them to introduce them to the purpose of the questionnaire and to assure that the identity of the participants would not be revealed. Thirty households participated, of which two were completed by male participants who confirmed that they were the decision makers in the household; three were completed jointly by both spouses as the decision makers in their households and the remaining 25 questionnaires were completed by females decision makers. The data was collected within two weeks. Unit D residents were generally very willing to participate. Where the sampled household decision makers were not available, the researcher/assistants went to the house on the left hand side of the sampled household and moved to the one on the right hand side if that household could also not participate.

Phase 2: In the second phase, every 10th house was identified in the same manner. Whenever participants did not want to participate or when they could not be reached, the house immediately to the left of the targeted address was approached: 124 households were sampled. Another letter was used to introduce the participants to the purpose of the questionnaire. Once again, confidentiality was promised: 96 Female household decision makers and 28 male household decision makers completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire took about three weeks to administer. The administration of the questionnaire required careful attention to ensure that participants were not coerced in the completion of the tasks, or that their privacy were invaded and that their right to refrain from participation was honoured if they so wished.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected in two phases namely (1) a first contact with a limited number of households where a qualitative orientated projective technique was implemented and (2) a quantitative orientated survey in the form of a structured questionnaire that was handed out and collected afterwards to allow for interaction of spouses.

Phase 1: Projective technique

In the first stage of data collection, decision makers in the identified households had a choice to be recorded or to be interviewed. Out of 30 households, only three heads of households agreed to be recorded and the remaining 27 preferred to be interviewed.

Participants were asked to write down detailed instructions in the form of a “shopping list” that could be used by a friend to buy a refrigerator or a stove from a major retailer that was closing down (see Appendix 1). The instructions had to clearly stipulate how to choose *the best quality appliance* from whatever appliances would still be available in the store! The household/participant had to indicate the *price range* they would accept as well the *method of payment* (cash, credit, etc):

Task:

Assume that your best friend has approached you to assist her to purchase a refrigerator, stove or a washing machine. She wants to make sure that she selects the best quality appliance from whatever appliances would be available in the store.

Please describe to me in as much detail as you can, how your friend would be able to identify and select the appliance that would function properly, do not give any problems and would last many years (best quality appliance in the store).

This technique provided a tool to enter into the private worlds of participants to uncover their inner perspectives in a non-threatening manner (Donoghue, 2000). While a thorough literature review was used to guide the preliminary content of the questionnaire, this technique was included to test the theoretical framework and to allow for inclusion of additional constructs in the questionnaire that might not have been taken into consideration initially (Fern, 1982).

Phase 2: Questionnaire

A questionnaire is considered a more systematic and structured way of obtaining information in a direct, undisguised manner. Results are easily quantifiable and the instruments potentially have a high degree of accuracy. The content of the questionnaire was only finalized after interpretation of the data that was gathered through the projective technique. A pretest was done with an initial questionnaire on fifteen households that complied with all preconditions for the study to ensure that the questions were clear. Closed, structured questions were used in a matrix question format in six of the seven sections to ensure faster completion of the fairly long questionnaire (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74-75; Leong *et al*, 1997; Zikmund & d’Admico, 2001).

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of seven sections and included questions pertaining to consumers ownership and experience with major household appliances. Thirteen major household appliances were specified, including, laundry appliances, kitchen appliances such as stoves/ranges, dishwashers, microwaves as well as floor cleaning appliances that are often regarded as portable appliances.

The questionnaire was organized in terms of seven sections:

- Section A: Demographic data
- Section B: Experience with appliances as an indication of product related consumer socialization
- Section C: Evaluation of appliances
- Section D: Service life of appliances
- Section E: Knowledge of product characteristics
- Section F: Open ended questions on consumers' buyer and complaint behaviour
- Section G: Buyer decisions.

The initial questionnaire was evaluated by two specialists in the field of study to assure that the wording, structure and content were acceptable and would be easily understood (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:244-245; Rose, 1999). A professional statistician assisted the researchers to make sure that the content of the questionnaire would address the objectives of the study and would favour the statistical analysis that was regarded most suitable and relevant (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:124-125; Leong *et al*, 1997; Zikmund & d'Admico, 2001). A few suggestions in terms of the structure of questions were made and after discussions certain amendments were incorporated. Questionnaires were then taken to ten households in the targeted area as a pre test to judge participants' reactions to the task in terms of the ease of completion and the clarity of wording and concepts. After discussion with a fellow student who was involved in a similar study with the same questionnaire in another area, it was decided that it would be preferable for the questionnaires to be completed under supervision of the researcher or any of the assistants and to rather implement an interview format to ensure that details were filled in correctly.

Three well-trained assistants, who were fellow students at the time of the study, offered their assistance during the second phase of the quantitative study. Participants were supplied with questionnaires and the questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher or trained assistants. Some participants preferred to write responses themselves whilst others preferred to respond verbally and requested the researcher or assistant to write down their responses. In cases where the researcher had to write down participants' responses, the researcher did a member check by reading back the captured responses for their approval. Confidentiality was promised in the sense that names, addresses and telephone details of participants were not required. It was also promised that personal information would not be disclosed for any reason.

DATA ANALYSIS

Phase 1: Projective technique

Data was typed and transferred into a format that could be used for interpretation using ATLAS/ti analysis using a direct entry method. Content analysis was done and open coding was used to organize the text in terms of relevant constructs. Codes were assigned to concepts so that they could be categorized as *relevant indicators* and *surrogate indicators* of quality. Sub categories were formed to identify more specific characteristics, e.g. functional; durability indicators (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:492) that coincided with the literature. Initial analysis of data focused on reduction of the text to categories that seemed applicable. Conceptual analysis and relational analysis were applied to organize data (see Appendix C).

Phase 2: Questionnaire

In terms of the questionnaire, statistical analysis was used to include descriptive statistics and correlations as indicated in the objectives for the study. Means and modes were calculated for certain variables (e.g. of *service life expectancy* and *years of experience*) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:421-425).

QUALITY OF THE STUDY

The following was done to limit error that might obstruct the validity and reliability of data

Theoretical validity

Concepts pertaining to quality judgement were identified through a thorough literature review. Before finalizing the structured questionnaire, a projective technique was employed to confirm the wording, concepts and the questions that were to be included in the questionnaire and to confirm the broad categories of concepts of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275-277; Neuman, 2003:137-138,167). Several denominators were included in the questionnaire to cross check responses to increase validity, for example participants were asked about prior ownership of appliances in terms of type and time, where after they were asked to indicate the service life of appliances they had owned in the past. Participants who had indicated non-ownership were thus not supposed to indicate replacement figures.

Construct validity

Construct validity refers to the extent to which a scale index measures the relevant constructs. Two specialists in the study field assessed the questionnaire to ensure that the content covered the scope of the problem. The questionnaire was thereafter pre tested by fifteen potential participants to identify problems that might be encountered during the final phase, such as clarity of constructs, time needed to complete the task (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:244-245; Neuman, 2003:243-244, 247, 261; Rose, 1999). The assistance of a professional statistician was used with the compilation of the final questionnaire, data analysis and interpretation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:124-125).

Representativeness

To ensure that the sample provided valid information and that it addressed the problem at hand, a specific geographical area was selected for the research project and participants were selected by means of pre-determined criteria. Only willing participants were included to enhance truthful responses. Consumers were approached in their homes at times that were suitable for them.

Reliability

Katzer *et al* (1982) warn that several sources of ‘noise’ can influence the collection of data, e.g. the environment in which the research/questioning takes place. All of these risks were attended to when consumers’ were approached in their own homes where they felt comfortable. Reliability was be enhanced by a combination of data collection methods. The questionnaires were completed under supervision (but without assistance) in an interview format to ensure that questionnaires were completed properly.

Inferential validity

A professional statistician assist with the final compilation of the questionnaire as well as data analysis to ensure that data was analysed correctly and that results were truthful.



Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the research in three parts: the demographic data; data pertaining to consumers' socialization and product related consumer socialization to illustrate limited consumer socialization and thirdly, the data that reflect participants' evaluation of major household appliances. Discussions based on what seems evident from the individual tables and figures in terms of the operationalization of the data, are presented.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 1150 households in Temba Unit D, Extension 1, near Hammanskraal were targeted of which every 40th household in the area (see Figure 2) was selected for participation. The intention was to recruit at least ten percent of the households for participation. When households were approached, the prominent decision-makers in the household were asked to participate. Confidentiality was promised: they were thus not asked to disclose their names or any other personal details.

TABLE 4.1: SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

	Age (years)				Gender	
	25-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Male	Female
Participants (n=124)	0	96**	19	9	28	96**

** The majority for the area

FIGURE 3: AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS (n=124)

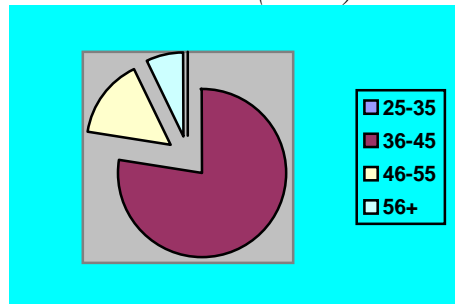
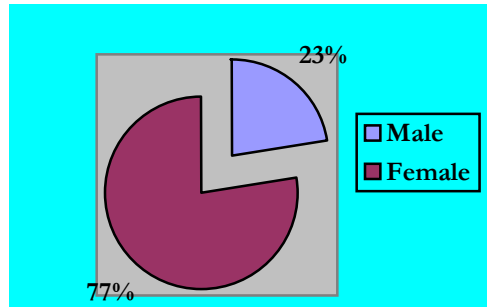


FIGURE 4: GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANTS ($n=124$)



DATA PERTAINING TO PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Prior experience with electricity; ownership of major household appliances at the time of the study as well as experience with appliances through use of appliances in their own homes over time were used to signify participants’ product related consumer socialization.

Participants’ prior experience with electricity in their homes

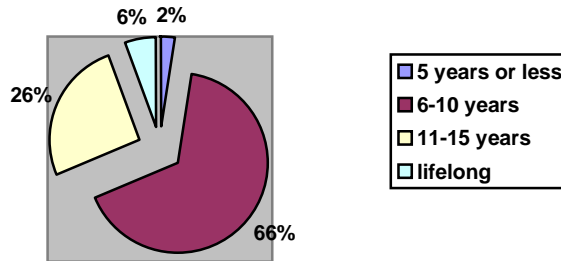
Table 2 reflects participants’ experience with electricity as a household commodity as indicated during the quantitative data collection phase

TABLE 4.2: PARTICIPANTS’ PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH ELECTRICITY IN THEIR HOMES

Experience with electricity in the home (years) ($n=124$)			
5 years or less	6-10	11-15	Lifelong
3	82	32	7
2.4%	66.1%	25.9%	5.6%

The majority of participants (68.5%) indicated experience with electricity of ten years or less. The seven participants who indicated lifelong experience with electricity, confirmed non-ownership of appliances prior to moving into their homes in Tembisa when they were approached for participation. It was then decided to allow them to participate.

FIGURE 5: PARTICIPANTS’ PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH ELECTRICITY IN THE HOME



In terms of the larger research project of which this study covered a group of inexperienced adults, it was decided to operationalize participants’ years of experience with electricity as follows:

TABLE 4.3: OPERATIONALIZATION OF PARTICIPANTS’ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH ELECTRICITY

Experience interpretation	Portion of sample	Prior experience with electricity
Good	75% and more	More than 10 years
Above average	50% and more	More than 10 years
Below average	50% and more	10 years or less
Limited	50% and more	5 years or less

When participants’ in this part of the larger project’s experience with electricity was interpreted according to Table 4.3, it revealed that their experience could be described as *below average* at the time of the study. Actual ownership of and experience with appliances in their households was then used as a further consideration to describe product related consumer socialization.

Participants’ experience with - and ownership of major household appliances

Experience with appliances in terms of present ownership

Participants’ ownership of a selected range of appliances at the time of the study, as well as previous ownership was used as an indication of experience with appliances over time.

Present ownership of appliances is reflected in Tables 4 and 5. Although anticipated acquisitions was of no particular interest for this study, the information was requested in the questionnaire for the sake of the larger research project. It was therefore decided to also disclose this information here, as an illustration of participants’ high regard for appliances and their

assessment of the usefulness of appliances. It was further assumed that the appliances that were acquired first, would be considered a greater priority or more useful than those purchased later on. Participants also indicated which appliances they would not be interested to purchase in the future (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). Reasons for preferences were not required.

TABLE 4.4: OWNERSHIP OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Appliance	n	Present ownership	Previous ownership	Have never owned one	Not interested	Would like to have
Refrigerator	124	*123	1	0	0	
Separate freezer	124	33	11	68	4	8
Stoves (all types)	*	*119			4	
• Integrated stove	124	*90	7	23	2	2
• Separate oven & hob	124	29	10	65	2	18
Cooker hood		30	9	66	3	16
Washing machines (all types)	124	*90				
• Washer: top loader	124	27	13	53	5	26
• Washer: front loader	124	7	12	86	14	5
• Washer: twin tub	124	56	5	54	6	3
Dishwasher	124	1	10	72	28	13
Tumble dryer	124	1	9	77	27	10
Microwave oven	123	*70	4	23	1	25
Vacuum cleaner	124	40	10	45	14	15

* More than 50% of the participants

TABLE 4.5: OWNERSHIP OF APPLIANCES INDICATED IN %

Appliance	n	Present ownership	Previous ownership	Have never owned one	Not interested	Would like to have
Refrigerator	124	99.2	0.8	0	0	
Separate freezer	124	26.6	8.9	54.8	3.2	6.5
Stoves (all types)	*	96.0				
• Integrated stove	124	72.6	5.7	18.6	1.6	1.6
• Separate oven & hob	124	23.4	8.1	52.4	1.6	14.5
Cooker hood		24.2	7.3	53.2	2.4	13.0
Washing machines (all types)	124	72.7				
• Washer: top loader	124	21.8	10.5	42.7	4.0	21.0
• Washer: front loader	124	5.7	9.7	69.4	11.3	4.7
• Washer: twin tub	124	45.2	4.0	43.6	4.8	2.4
Dishwasher	124	0.8	8.1	58.1	22.6	10.5
Tumble dryer	124	0.8	7.3	62.1	21.8	8.1
Microwave oven	123	56.9	3.3	18.7	0.8	20.3
Vacuum cleaner	124	32.3	8.1	36.3	11.3	12.1

Ownership data was operationalized (Table 4.6) as follows for the research project to indicate participants' experience of individual appliances on a continuum from *very low* to *very high*:

TABLE 4.6: OPERATIONALIZATION OF PRESENT OWNERSHIP FIGURES

Ownership figures for the sample	Ownership interpretation	Numeric interpretation
Figures of 85% and above	Very high	6
Figures between 71% and 85%	High	5
Figures between 56 and 70%	Above average	4
Figures between 45 and 55%	Average	3
Figures between 25 and 44%	Below average	2
Figures between 11 and 24%	Low	1
Figures of 10% and lower	Very low	0

Before interpretation, the different types of washing machines were considered as a single type of appliance and the same was done with the stoves because it was assumed that households would probably not own two washing machines and two stoves. For the *range of appliances listed*, using the numeric ownership interpretation as in Table 4.6, *present ownership* was eventually interpreted as *average*:

[Refrigerators 6; + freezers 2; +stoves (all type) 6; cooker hoods 3; washing machines (all types) 5; + dishwashers 0; + tumble dryers 0 + microwave oven 4 + vacuum cleaner 2=28/9=3.1

Of the nine different types of appliances then listed

- only *two* were owned by more than 80% of participants (refrigerators and stoves);
- five were owned by fewer than 50% of the sample (separate freezer; cooker hood; vacuum cleaner; dishwasher and tumble dryer);
- two of the listed appliances were owned by fewer than 20% of the participants (dishwasher and tumble dryer) (see Table 4.5).

In terms of appliances that were owned by more than 50% of the participants, refrigerators and stoves were on top of the list, followed by washing machines and microwave ovens (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). The only appliances presently owned by a *very high* percentage of the participants, were *refrigerators* and *stoves* (of which the integrated type seems more popular). This is understandable considering that these two appliances are generally regarded a high priority in any household. In both cases the percentage of participants that indicated *no interest* in these two appliances in a later question, was almost negligible. Ownership of the other appliances was *below average* to *very low*.

TABLE 4.7: APPLIANCES PRESENTLY OWNED BY MORE THAN 50% OF SAMPLE

Appliance	n	Present ownership %
Refrigerator	124	99.2
Stoves (all types)	124	96.0
Washing machines (all types)	124	72.7
Microwave oven	123	56.9

Ownership figures thus reveal limited experience with an assortment of household appliances. This means that consumers' knowledge of, and consequent evaluation of appliances when the opportunity to acquire appliances would arise in future, would probably be restricted.

Experience with appliances in terms of prior and anticipated ownership

When participants had to indicate whether they had owned any of the appliances that were listed before (including and allowing for replacement purchases) (Table 4.8), responses revealed that for all of the 12 appliances that were listed, following the same calculations as in Table 4.6, a *very low* percentage had indeed had any prior experience with these appliances. This suggests *very limited* product related consumer socialization with major household appliances over time for the sample.

TABLE 4.8: PRIOR AND ANTICIPATED OWNERSHIP OF APPLIANCES INDICATED IN %

Appliance	n	Previous ownership	Have never owned one	Not interested
Refrigerator	124	0.8	0	0
Separate freezer	124	8.9	54.8	3.2
Stoves (all types)	*			
• Integrated stove	124	5.7	18.6	1.6
• Separate oven & hob	124	8.1	52.4	1.6
Cooker hood		7.3	53.2	2.4
Washing machines (all types)	124			
• Washer: top loader	124	10.5	42.7	4.0
• Washer: front loader	124	9.7	69.4	11.3
• Washer: twin tub	124	4.0	43.6	4.8
Dishwasher	124	8.1	58.1	22.6
Tumble dryer	124	7.3	62.1	21.8
Microwave oven	123	3.3	18.7	0.8
Vacuum cleaner	124	8.1	36.3	11.3

Not interested in ownership When the calculations were repeated for the *not interested* figures, results confirmed the previous results: nobody indicated that they would never be interested in owning a stove or a refrigerator. A negligible percentage indicated no interest in microwave ovens. Dishwashers and tumble dryers seemed to be the least wanted appliances although figures suggest that more than 80% of the sample would like to own these appliances.

Experience with appliances in terms of ownership of individual appliances over time

Participants also had to indicate their experience with a range of appliances over time (see Tables 3.9 and 3.10).

TABLE 4.9: OWNERSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL APPLIANCES OVER TIME

	n=124 (indicated in %)				
	none	Maximum 3 years	4-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years
Refrigerator		4.1	8.1	*65.0	22.8
Separate freezer	*73.2	0.8	4.1	13.8	8.1
Stove: freestanding	23.6	1.6	4.9	*54.5	15.5
Oven & hob: separate	*79.7	0.8	9.8	7.3	2.4
Cooker hood	*75.4	0.8	9.8	10.7	3.3
Washer: top loader	*78.9	4.9	8.1	8.1	0
Washer: front loader	*92.7	0	4.1	2.4	0.8
Washer: twin tub	*55.3	8.9	16.3	17.9	1.6
Dishwasher	*99.2	0	0	0.8	0
Tumble dryer	*98.4	1.6	0	0	0
Microwave oven	40.7	17.1	30.9	9.8	1.6
Vacuum cleaner	*65.6	6.6	18.0	8.2	1.6

** More than 50% of participants.

Of the listed appliances, only refrigerators were owned by all of the participants. Ownership of individual appliances over time was operationalized as follows for the research project:

TABLE 4.10: OPERATIONALIZATION OF OWNERSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL APPLIANCES OVER TIME

Interpretation	% of sample	Period of ownership by the sample
Good	More than 50%	Owned a particular appliance for more than 10 years
Above average	More than 50%	Owned a particular appliance between 6 and 10 years
Average	More than 50%	Owned a particular appliance between 4 and 10 years
Limited	More than 50%	Owned a particular appliance less than 5 years
Very limited	More than 50%	Owned a particular appliance for 3 years or less or have had no experience at all

Ownership of individual appliances as an indication of participants' experience with these appliances over time was consequently interpreted as follows:

TABLE 4.11: INTERPRETATION OF EXPERIENCE WITH INDIVIDUAL APPLIANCES OVER TIME

Appliance	Interpretation of ownership over time
Refrigerator	Above average
Separate freezer	Very limited
Stove: freestanding	Above average
Oven & hob: separate	Very limited
Cooker hood	Very limited
Washer: top loader	Very limited
Washer: front loader	Very limited
Washer: twin tub	Very limited
Dishwasher	Very limited
Tumble dryer	Very limited
Microwave oven	Very limited
Vacuum cleaner	Very limited

It became evident that participants' experience with individual appliances could only be interpreted as *above average* for two basic appliances, namely refrigerators and stoves. For all of the other appliances, their experience was interpreted as *very limited* (Table 4.11).

Experience with appliances in terms of ownership of an assortment of appliances over time

Ownership of the array of major household appliances as indicated in Table 4.12, as an indication of experience with an assortment of appliances was operationalized as follows:

TABLE 4.12: OPERATIONALIZATION OF OWNERSHIP OF AN ASSORTMENT OF APPLIANCES

Interpretation	Ownership of appliances	% of sample
Good	4 or more appliances owned for 10 years or more	more than 50%
Above average	4 or more appliances owned for 6 years or more	More than 50%
Average	4 or more appliances owned for 4 years or more	More than 50%
Below average	Maximum 3 appliances owned for 4 years or more	More than 50%
Limited	1 or 2 appliances owned for 4 years or more	More than 50%

From Table 4.12 it could be concluded that because it was indicated that *more than 50% of the participants had owned only two appliances for more than four years*, their experience with an assortment of appliances over time could be described as *limited*. This suggests limited product related consumer socialization and a probability that the participants would find it difficult to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions for these commodities when the opportunity to do so, came by.

DATA PERTAINING TO PARTICIPANTS’ KNOWLEDGE OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Product knowledge as an indication of ability to evaluate/judge the quality of appliances

Knowledge test

Participants’ knowledge of the functional and performance attributes of appliances that are required to make an informed evaluation of the quality of appliances was tested through a knowledge test that was presented in Section E of the questionnaire. The test consisted of 21 basic questions that covered the characteristics of various appliances. Participants had to respond to statements in terms of *true; false* or *uncertain* (See Table 4.13).

TABLE 4.13: MEAN SCORE FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST (*n*=124)

Mean % obtained	Standard deviation	Maximum % obtained
29.15	10.8825	61.90

The mean % obtained (29.15%) confirms *limited product knowledge* that would probably not enable informed buyer decisions. The maximum % obtained (61.90) substantiates their alarmingly limited knowledge of product characteristics.

According to Table 4.14, product knowledge seemed to increase with years of experience, which supports the positive effect on product knowledge of product related consumer socialization over time, although the means were disturbingly low overall. The mean for the adults in this specific part of the project was lower than the mean for the participants with 6-10 years of experience in the larger group, which confirms their limited product knowledge and a probable inability to make informed buyer decisions.

TABLE 4.14: MEAN SCORE FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST PER YEARS OF EXPERIENCE (n=407)**

Years of experience with appliances irrespective of the area	Mean % correct	Standard deviation	Maximum % correct
5 years and less (n=32)	27.83	13.0331	61.90
6-10 years (n=105)	30.06	9.2994	57.14
11-15 years (n=92)	32.25	12.9422	61.90
Lifelong (n=407)	44.17	16.3686	100

** This data refers to the means that were calculated for all of the participants that were involved in the larger research project, irrespective of the targeted area

The effect of **product related consumer socialization** on consumers' knowledge of the properties of appliances was calculated using the Mann-Whitney test: the results of the inexperienced adult consumers who took part in this specific part of the research project was compared to a similar age group with extensive product related consumer socialization drawn from in the larger project (see Table 4.15).

TABLE 4.15: MEAN SCORES FOR THE PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE TEST FOR OLDER CONSUMERS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Group	Mean score (%)	Standard deviation	Max %
Inexperienced group (n=104)	28.85	11.16	61.90
Experienced group (n=191)	44.95	16.36	85.71

The experienced group performed significantly better than the inexperienced group (p=0.0000)

Reported and expected service life figures for appliances

Participants' indication of reported service life figures of various appliances refers to first hand experience that contribute to their schemata of products' performance and was thus used as an indication of participants' knowledge of what to expect of appliances in terms of service life and when to replace.

Section D of the questionnaire posed questions on service life figures to determine whether participants' report of the service life of appliances, i.e. appliances that had been replaced in the past, as well as their expected service life figures for appliances were realistic. These figures were used as an indication of participants' realization of the consequences of their buyer decisions and to indicate an ability to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions. The service life of household appliances is generally used to categorize these products as long-term purchases and

consequently durable products. The relatively long service life of major appliances would inevitably influence a consumer’s purchase criteria and the factors considered during the evaluation process. It was assumed that consumers would probably be more alert when evaluating appliances when they are expected to last for a considerable length of time. Consumers would probably also more seriously consider the capacity of appliances and design features in terms of long-term ownership.

Average reported service life figures

Table 4.16 reveals the participants’ responses relating to service life of appliances before replacement purchases were made. Because of relatively low ownership figures, it was expected that responses to this question would be low (see low ownership figures in Table 4.8). This explains low responses for most of the listed appliances.

TABLE 4.16: AVERAGE REPORTED SERVICE LIFE OF APPLIANCES

Appliances	Reported service life (years)			
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Max
Refrigerator	117	9.20	2.19	17.00
Separate freezer	33	8.93	2.42	11.00
Stove (integrated)	87	**9.26	1.90	15.00
Oven & separate hob	24	6.96	2.54	11.00
Extractor /cooker hood	29	7.03	2.27	11.00
Washer: top loader	23	5.04	1.87	9.00
Washer: front loader	7	6.86	2.67	11.00
Washer: twin tub	53	5.90	2.80	15.00
Dishwasher	0			
Tumble dryer	1	6.00		6.00
Microwave oven	70	*4.30	1.61	10.00
Vacuum cleaner	41	4.80	1.75	12.00

**Minimum mean service life reported; ** maximum mean service life reported*

The mean service life for the list of appliances ranged from 4.30 years (microwave ovens) to 9.26 years (for integrated stoves), which was low considering the average service life of 10 to 15 years and even 20 years for certain appliances (Cooper, 1994) that is generally proposed. In fact, the maximum figures that were captured reflect more realistic service life figures for the appliances. An alarming fact is that the mean reported service life for microwave ovens was so low considering a response of 70 participants. This could be ascribed to several reasons that could be investigated further, e.g. problems with maintenance and service; incorrect use and/or premature replacement because of a distorted expected service life in general.

Average expected service life of appliances

Responses to this question were disappointingly low for certain appliances (tumble dryers and dishwashers). This could possibly be ascribed to inexperience of participants, a non-interest in certain appliances (low response figures agree with previous responses where participants indicated their interest to purchase appliances in future), as well as a hesitance to guess as this was firmly discouraged by the researchers.

The results (Table 4.17) suggest a fairly realistic expected service life for the various appliances. A comparison of the low reported service life figures to the expected service life figures could project negative disconfirmation, i.e. dissatisfaction with the service life of appliances in general. Participants clearly do not receive what they expect in terms of the service life of appliances: compared on face value, participants expected almost twice as much as what was reported for most of the appliances. This confirms the results of a study conducted by Cambitzi (1991), where it was reported that black consumers who came from disadvantaged communities, were significantly less experienced in the use and evaluation of common goods and services compared to their white counterparts.

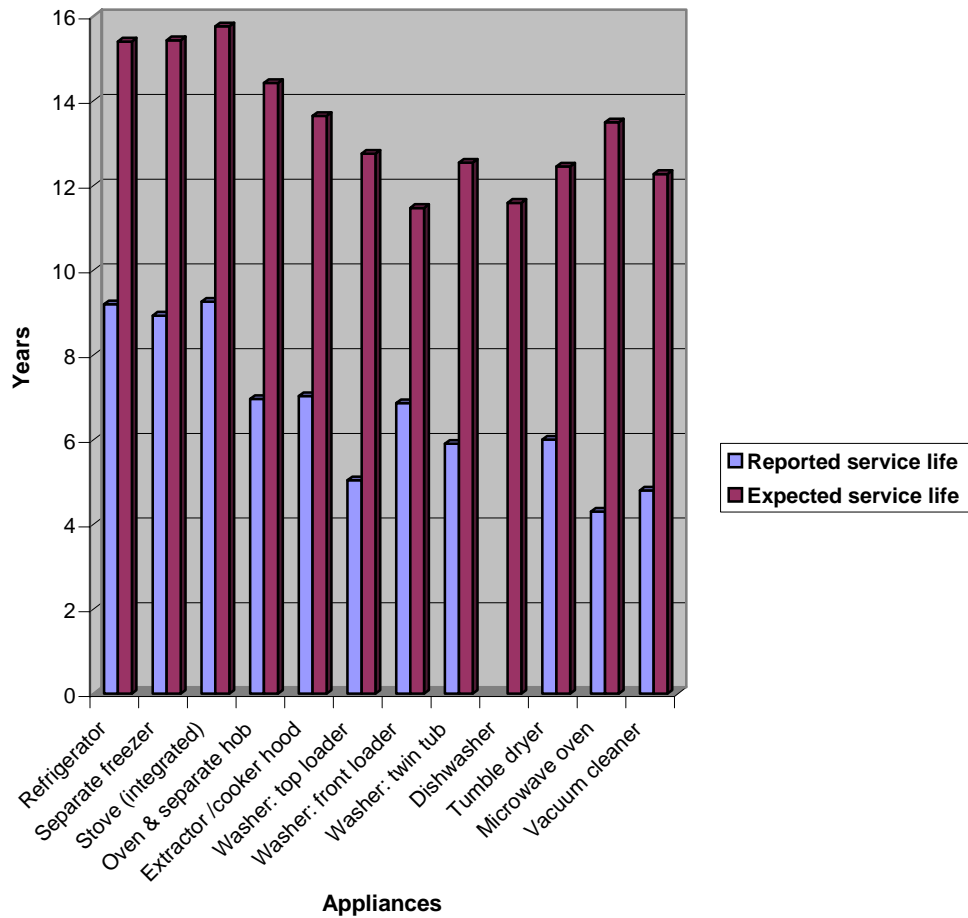
TABLE 4.17: AVERAGE EXPECTED SERVICE LIFE OF APPLIANCES

Appliances	Expected service life (years)			
	n	Mean	Std Dev	Max
Refrigerator	122	15.40	3.74	20.00
Separate freezer	69	15.43	4.10	20.00
Stove (integrated)	104	**15.76	3.92	20.00
Oven & separate hob	66	14.42	4.10	20.00
Extractor /cooker hood	65	13.64	4.50	25.00
Washer: top loader	65	12.75	4.10	20.00
Washer: front loader	49	11.47	3.78	20.00
Washer: twin tub	81	12.54	3.50	20.00
Dishwasher	41	*11.59	3.95	20.00
Tumble dryer	42	12.45	4.74	20.00
Microwave oven	105	13.49	4.22	20.00
Vacuum cleaner	78	12.27	4.56	20.00

**Minimum mean service life expected; ** maximum mean service life expected*

The reported and expected service life figures are contrasted in Figure 3.6 to reveal the discrepancy that exists.

FIGURE 6: COMPARISON OF EXPECTED AND REPORTED SERVICE LIFE FIGURES FOR SELECTED APPLIANCES



A large discrepancy in expected and reported service life figures such as the above may have several consequences: it could result in overall dissatisfaction with appliances because of non-conformance to the expected service levels; it could also affect future purchases. This should be further investigated along with reasons for the actual low service life figures.

DATA PERTAINING TO PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Participants' interpretation of quality differences

Participants were also asked whether they believed that the appliances on the market differed in quality. This was used as an indication of their awareness of quality differences in general (Table 4.18). The majority of the participants [58.9%: 24.2%(uncertain) plus 34.7% (no)] indicated that they were *uncertain* or that they were of the impression that there are *no quality differences*. This was expected because limited product related experience results in limited schemata in memory according to which relevant evaluation criteria could be formulated.

TABLE 4.18: INDICATION OF QUALITY DIFFERENCES

INDICATOR	(n=124)		
	Yes %	Uncertain %	No %
Do you believe that there is little difference in the QUALITY of appliances on the market?	41.1	24.2	34.7

Indicators required to discriminate good quality

In Section F of the questionnaire (Appendix 2), participants were given the opportunity to indicate what information they would require from a salesperson to enable them *to select the best quality washing machine*. It was expected that comments would be varied and that response frequencies would therefore be relatively low for the different factors mentioned. Responses were organized in terms of the type, e.g. *financial aspects* (Table 4.20). Responses were further organized into three columns in terms of frequencies: *those mentioned by more than 50% of the participants; those mentioned by fewer than 10% and a middle column where aspects raised by 10 to 50% were listed* (see Table 4.20). Participants' requests in terms of information required for quality judgment, appeared to have little bearing on what is suggested in literature in terms of judgment of intrinsic product characteristics.

The only factors that were mentioned by more than 60% of the participants were GUARANTEE and REPUTATION OF BRANDS, which could both be categorized as referring to DURABILITY, which reflects on quality. Both indicators may however also be categorised as *surrogate indicators* of quality because they indirectly relate to quality. PRICE was indicated by almost half of the participants as important in terms of discriminating quality, while

OPERATING PRINCIPLES; SIZE, DIMENSIONS; as well as ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT BRANDS were mentioned by between 20 and 25% of participants. Of all the indicators mentioned, only OPERATING PRINCIPLES may be directly associated with quality judgment.

TABLE 4.19: INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DISCRIMINATE QUALITY

FUNCTIONAL AND PERFORMANCE ASPECTS			
Requested by more than 50%	Requested by 20% to 50%	Requested by less than 20%	%
	Operating principles		25.0
	Size, dimensions		24.2
	Advantages & disadvantages of different brands		20.2
		Capacity	12.1
		Water and electricity Consumption	8.9
		Programmes and technical information	2.4
		Noise levels	1.6
		Recommended washing powders	0.8
FINANCIAL ASPECTS			
	Price		45.2
		Insurance cover	15.3
		Total cost plus interest	15.3
DURABILITY			
Reputation of the various brands			*74.2
Guarantee			*63.7
		Durability	10.5
		Service providers	8.1
		Life span	0.8
AESTHETICS			
		Materials used and colours	1.6

* More than 50% of participants

Table 4.19 reveals that the information that is apparently required by participants to judge the quality of appliances, predominantly represent *indirect* indicators, i.e. *surrogate indicators* of quality. In fact, some of the indicators listed in Table 4.20 have very little bearing on quality, e.g. *total cost plus interest*; *insurance cover*; *recommended washing powders*. The fact that responses were fairly low and that most of the indicators listed were mentioned by less than 10% of the participants, may also confirm the inability of participants to identify quality indicators (see Table 4.18).

Evidence associated with poor quality

In Section F of the questionnaire (Appendix 2), participants were given the task based on a projective technique, where they had to indicate *what a friend would be complaining about if her main complaint involved the poor quality of a washing machine that was recently purchased*. Washing machines were chosen because it represented a type of appliance owned by the majority of participants and provided generous opportunity for diverse comments because of the more complex functioning of washing machines compared to, e.g. refrigerators. Table 21 presents all the complaints listed.

TABLE 4.20: INDICATION OF COMPLAINTS (n=124)

More than 50% of sample	20% to 50% of the sample	Less than 20% of sample	%
PERFORMANCE RELATED COMPLAINTS			
	Inefficient cleaning		22.6
		Difficult to operate	8.9
		Leaks water	8.1
		Clothes damaged, fluff deposit on textiles	4.0
		Cycles too long	3.2
		Poor spinning	3.2
		Water temp: too hot/cold	2.4
		Not steady	2.4
QUALITY RELATED COMPLAINTS			
	Broken in guarantee period		31.4
	Regular break downs		23.4
	Poor performance		25.0
		Inferior materials that deteriorate	19.4
		Disappointing value for money	6.5
		Second hand machine: inferior	4.0
SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE RELATED COMPLAINTS			
	Poor dealer service		20.2
		Expensive repair costs	0.8
ERGONOMIC RELATED COMPLAINTS			
		Noise levels	3.2
		Heats the room	0.8
SOCIAL ASPECTS			
	Old fashioned machine		39.5
		Disapproval of others as inferior	8.1
FINANCIAL AND COST RELATED PROBLEMS			
		High electricity consumption	12.9
		High water consumption	12.1
		Uses too much washing powder	8.1

As was the case with the previous task, participants' reactions were varied. Nothing was complained about by more than 50% of the participants. The most serious complaints were those mentioned by between 20% and 50% of the participants.

Of the 23 types of complaints mentioned, 14 were indeed PERFORMANCE and QUALITY related when judged on face value. On the other hand, every one of the 23 complaints listed in Table 20 could be associated with incorrect use and ignorance. Insufficient cleaning can for example be attributed to use of incorrect types and dosages of washing powder (one of the facts apparently required according to Table 4.19). An unsteady machine could be the result of over loading or improper loading; damaged clothes could be the result of incorrect choice of washing programme, etc, etc. Even poor dealer service could be attributed to ignorance and non conformance to basic responsibilities, e.g. breakage due to overloading, the use of the wrong washing powders, incorrect installation, poor maintenance. The data in Table 4.20 thus may probably be singled out as the most important evidence that participants in this study were poorly informed and unable to make responsible buyer decisions.

The use of surrogate indicators for quality judgment

In Section C (Appendix 2) of the questionnaire, participants' had to indicate their use of /reliance on certain extrinsic factors for the purpose of the evaluation of household appliances on a three point Likert type scale (*Always; Sometimes; Never*). The listed factors were those commonly referred to in literature as surrogate indicators of quality, i.e. indicators that may be used when consumers are in doubt about actual product characteristics. The characteristics generally represent extrinsic product features. Figures are indicated in descending order of being used on an *Always* basis.

TABLE 4.21: USE OF SURROGATE INDICATORS FOR QUALITY JUDGMENT

INDICATOR	Indicated in % (n=124)		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
Guarantee/warranty	*79.0	16.9	4.1
Retailers reputation/image	*71.8	24.2	4.0
Brand names	*71.0	22.6	6.5
Price (more expensive considered better)	*64.5	35.5	0
Trendy	*50.8	33.1	16.1
Design elements	48.4	34.7	16.9
Country of origin (imported preferred)	42.7	44.4	12.9
Locally manufactured	35.5	*55.7	8.9
Friends' and family's recommendations	16.9	*75.0	8.1
Salespeople's recommendations	15.3	*63.7	21.0
Widely advertised products	14.6	*73.2	12.2

**More than 50% of the participants*

All of the 11 indicators listed, were apparently ALWAYS or SOMETIMES used by almost 80% of the participants. The five indicators used on an ALWAYS basis by the majority, were all impersonal in nature. Personal sources of information (SALESPEOPLE; FRIENDS AND FAMILY), appeared to be the least consulted on an ALWAYS basis. Preference for COUNTRY OF ORIGIN in terms of LOCALLY MANUFACTURED APPLIANCES VERSUS IMPORTED BRANDS revealed a slight preference for IMPORTED goods.



Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the results in terms of the objectives for the study. Recommendations for further research are proposed.

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter aims to review the various aspects that have been discussed in the preceding chapters relating to the indicators that are used by inexperienced adults to judge the quality of major household appliances. The intention with this research project was to categorize the indicators that are used in terms of those that are indicative of *informed, responsible decision making behavior* or as so-called *surrogate indicators of quality* that may reflect ignorance and/or uninformed decision making behavior. This chapter will attempt to identify potential problems that may arise during post purchase as a consequence of uninformed decision-making behaviour. Limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations for further study are made.

PARTICIPANTS' PRODUCT RELATED CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

The participants in this research project were adults, mostly between 36 and 55 years of age. Because of the socio political situation in South Africa in the past, Tembisa was the ideal geographical area to target for this study because the residential area was developed just after the advent of our country's new democracy. Residents of the area were chosen as an example of inexperienced adults who have undergone limited consumer socialization, especially regarding the possession and use of major household appliances. Most of the families who reside in the area at the moment, have not owned their own homes before taking ownership of those houses and have consequently not had the privilege of access to all the amenities that are associated with home ownership in modern western living before. Various calculations were however performed to confirm the assumption of these consumers' limited product related experience. It was found that, despite the participants being mature adults, and despite their present ownership of appliances, their limited *experience with electricity as a household commodity* as well as their *limited*

ownership and consequent personal use of appliances during their lifetime, contributed to limited knowledge and expertise with household appliances.

The following arguments could be used as evidence of participants' limited product related consumer socialization:

According to the data, participants, *experience with household electricity*, the first denominator, was described as *below average* when the data was interpreted.

Ownership of and *experience with household appliances* in their own households were then used as a further consideration to describe product related consumer socialization. In terms of the range of major appliances listed in the questionnaire, participants' *present ownership* figures revealed an *average* number of appliances in possession. More than 90% of participants owned refrigerators and stoves while the majority also possessed a washing machine of some kind as well as a microwave oven. Because it was indicated that *more than 50% of the participants had owned only two appliances for more than four years* (being refrigerators and stoves, the very basic appliances), their experience with an assortment of appliances over time could be described as *limited*. This suggests limited experience with i.a. replacement purchases, as a result of limited product related consumer socialization and a probability that the participants would find it difficult to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions for these commodities when the opportunity to do so, came by.

In terms of *prior experience* with appliances, a *very low* percentage indicated any prior experience with appliances, which suggests *very limited* product related consumer socialization with major household appliances over time. It became evident that participants' experience with individual appliances could only be interpreted as *above average* for *two* basic appliances, namely refrigerators and stoves. For all of the other appliances, their experience was interpreted as *very limited*.

The fact that these consumers have had electricity in recent years as well as their apparent anxiousness to acquire household appliances (based on present ownership figures and their indication of inclination to buy), confirmed the necessity to better understand their ability to conclude informed, responsible buyer decisions. The financial consequences of the purchase of

household appliances (because of the relative expensiveness of appliances and potential loss that could be experienced as a result of poor buyer decision) further support the necessity for consumer education.

PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AS AN INDICATION OF ABILITY TO JUDGE PRODUCT QUALITY

When participants were subjected to a product knowledge test that contained basic questions on the performance and durability characteristics of a variety of appliances that are important in understanding the consequence of buyer decisions, the mean % obtained by the sample was below 30%. This confirmed *limited product knowledge* that would inevitably restrict informed buyer decisions. At the start, based on the confirmed limited product related consumer socialization as discussed above, the outcome of the knowledge test was expected to confirm limited product knowledge. The 21 questions in this knowledge test were fairly basic but covered the whole spectrum of major household appliances (see Appendix 2, Section E of the questionnaire). Inclusion of questions on all appliances was considered appropriate and was confirmed relevant because of participants' general anxiousness to acquire most of the appliances on the list (see Table 4.4). The supposition was that an exceptional interest in ownership of the list of appliances would necessitate at least some basic knowledge and understanding of the appliances they were interested in. Participants' responses to 15 of the 21 questions were very disappointing however. A re appraisal of the questions were done by two product specialists to ascertain that the questions were fair and not too difficult. After careful deliberation, it was agreed that the questions were suitable and that the low performance of participants could be ascribed to very limited product knowledge and experience.

The 15 questions that were scored very low, related to ignorance concerning:

- ✓ the choice of a stainless steel drum in washing machines for durability purposes
- ✓ the (non)importance of the rotation speed of the drum of a tumble dryer
- ✓ the anticipated service life of washing machines
- ✓ the need for variable wattage when buying a vacuum cleaners
- ✓ the temperature resistance of a ceramic hob
- ✓ the temperature distribution in ovens
- ✓ top loader washing machines' withdrawal of hot water from the geyser
- ✓ the properties of stainless steel appliances versus porcelain enamel finished appliances
- ✓ the electrical consumption of refrigerators versus vacuum cleaners
- ✓ the electrical consumption of microwave ovens versus conventional ovens
- ✓ suitable baking dishes for microwave ovens.
- ✓ the fact that the capacity of refrigerators are indicated in liters
- ✓ the noise level of appliances
- ✓ the use of a special alkaline detergent in dishwashers
- ✓ the frequency of replacement of the dust bags of vacuum cleaners.

All of the questions, when scrutinized, were thus re approved in terms of relevance and importance and it was decided to use these results to highlight participants' very limited product knowledge and to use the results to appeal for focused efforts towards consumer facilitation and the availability of relevant, easily understandable product information.

In a separate section where participants were tested in terms of their expectations of the service life of appliances, it was found that without exception, their expectations were fairly realistic although the figures indicated for actual replacement, were almost half of what was expected. This discrepancy points towards several potential problems that could be investigated further:

- ✓ poor maintenance and service support to the extent that appliances are replaced rather than fixed when broken;
- ✓ more *affordable replacements* (due to availability of credit facilities while repair services have to be paid for in cash);
- ✓ replacements made deliberately to upgrade towards more *fashionable* appliances, e.g. a top loader washer in stead of a twin tub.

INDICATORS OF QUALITY USED BY INEXPERIENCED ADULTS DURING THEIR JUDGMENT OF MAJOR HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES (*Objective 1*)

As pointed out in chapter 2, inexperienced consumers apparently tend to rely more heavily on extrinsic factors during product judgment when they lack product knowledge and experience. Table 4.16 in chapter 4 revealed that out of 11 quality indicators listed in section C of the questionnaire, five surrogate indicators (GUARANTEE; RETAILERS REPUTATION; BRAND NAMES; PRICE, i.e. more expensive products) were rated *very important* by more than 50% of participants. The majority apparently ALWAYS relied on these characteristics. Four indicators out of 11 were rated by over 50% of participants as being relied on SOMETIMES (i.e. LOCALLY MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS; FRIENDS AND FAMILY'S RECOMMENDATIONS; SALES PEOPLE and WIDELY ADVERTISED PRODUCTS). Between 4% and 21% indicated that they NEVER relied on any of the 11 listed criteria/surrogate indicators. An average of 79% of participants indicated their reliance on surrogate indicators (extrinsic factors) in order to cope with their inexperience, i.e. the absence of relevant schemata to objectively judge intrinsic product attributes.

The results in Table 4.16 concur with the sought literature that highlighted the use of surrogate indicators to judge the quality of products. The literature review as well as the research results addressed the first objective of the study by identifying indicators of quality that are used by inexperienced consumers. Table 4.20 also revealed that when participants were asked to spontaneously provide the indicators that they rely on to judge quality, surrogate indicators (extrinsic factors) like: REPUTATION OF VARIOUS BRANDS and GUARANTEE were specified by over 60% of participants. PRICE was also relied on as a signal of quality by 45% of

participants. It became clear that participants possessed limited knowledge with regards to the actual product attributes (intrinsic).

Taking into consideration consumers' limited product knowledge and their apparent inability to discriminate intrinsic properties that reflect on product quality, participants' responses to the task where they had to indicate factors that would indicate quality during the selection of a washing machine were interpreted. Results indicated that 58.9% of participants were either uncertain or unaware of differences in quality of appliances on the market. The indicators mentioned by participants were thus not surprising: indicators had little bearing on quality per se.

The so-called evidence of POOR QUALITY that was provided by participants in the open-ended question could mostly be attributed to ignorance. Incorrect use of washing machines, such as over loading; incorrect use of washing powders; use of the wrong washing programmes; ignorance about washing temperatures and washing cycles could generally be used to explain the complaints that were listed. Quality appears to be a relative construct to different consumers and means different things to different consumers. According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:149), consumers may recognize quality products when they see them. In a study conducted by Chu and Chu (1994:177) however, it became evident that it is difficult for consumers to judge or identify the quality of goods readily. Quality can only be observed after *actual consumption* and will thus probably be better judged after extensive experience.

PARTICIPANTS' USE OF SURROGATE INDICATORS TO DISCRIMINATE QUALITY (*Objective 2*)

Table 4.13 revealed that to a greater extent, consumers/participants have distorted ideas of the potential service life of appliances in general. This could probably result in uninformed buyer decisions. Research findings relating to the use of surrogate indicators of quality was therefore not surprising.

Existing literature indicate that attributes such as advertising, guarantees, brand names etc are frequently deliberately used by manufacturers of products as tools to signal and to boost quality (Chu & Chu, 1994:177). Several studies have also shown that when consumers' perception of

store names, brand names and advertisements are more favourable, consumers/buyers' perception of product quality are high (Chu & Chu, 1994:177). The predicament that consumers are faced with then, is that despite the fact that brand names, store names etc. could very well signal product quality, little may be known about the actual quality characteristics (intrinsic) of the product that they are interested in. The tendency to depend on the reputation of retailers to support/suggest the quality of their products, can be extremely confusing: while a consumer feels comfortable with the reputation of a retailer, the reputation of the manufacturer that mimics his product quality by relying on the store's reputation, may still be at risk (Chu & Chu, 1994:178).

CONSUMER'S POST PURCHASE EVALUATION OF APPLIANCES (Objective 3)

Consumers' expectations of the service life of products may be unrealistic because of limited product knowledge and limited schemata in memory (due to limited product experience) to support their reasoning in this regard. Results in Table 4.13 revealed that the mean service life for the list of appliances ranged from 4.30 years (microwave ovens) to 9.26 years (for integrated stoves) which were alarmingly low in terms of the average suggested service life of 10-15 years or even 20 years that are proposed for certain appliances.

The low *reported service life figures* could further result in negative disconfirmation with the service life of appliances. In some cases participants expected almost twice as many years of service compared to what were eventually reported for most of the appliances. Participants' expectations of the service life of appliances exceeded the actual service life figures without exception. The low expected service life in conjunction with the even lower actual/reported service life figures is conducive for eventual consumer dissatisfaction. Retailers therefore need implement strategies to assist and facilitate consumers during the purchase process towards informed buyer decisions. Product information that should be provided, include intrinsic product characteristics such as technical know how that would enable an improved understanding of functional characteristics of appliances (e.g. the *rpm* of washing machines that affect the drying time of towels, jeans and creasing of delicate fabrics). The provision of after sales support to reduce disconfirmation and to arm consumers to make well informed judgment and buyer decisions are recommended.

AN EVALUATION OF CONSUMERS' PROBLEMS/COMPLAINTS

Data in Table 4.21 revealed that 50% of the sample complained about inefficient cleaning of the washing machine; between 10 and 50% complained about high electricity consumption; excessive water consumption; unsteady washing machines; damaged clothes; or fluffy deposit on textiles. Although some of the complaints could very well be valid, all of these complaints could be also be attributed to ignorance. It is a fact that top loader machines (apparently preferred by the sample), have high water consumption levels. In the same way, overloading of a machine would result in inefficient cleaning. The use of the wrong washing powders would result in inefficient cleaning and/or fluff on clothing. More research could thus be done to resolve existing problems. For the time being, proper instructions prior to the purchase and/or encouragement to use instruction manuals and manufacturers' help lines would solve many of the existing problems. Existing problems warrant a concerted effort to better inform and educate consumers before the actual purchase is made.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE INFORMED, RESPONSIBLE BUYER DECISIONS

The following are suggested to assist consumers to make informed buyer decisions and to make objective quality judgments:

- Design advertisements that include information on product features (intrinsic attributes) that would differentiate product quality and product performance to inform and assure potential buyers and to enhance consumer satisfaction through the creation of more realistic expectancy frameworks. Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:150) and an article from (<http://www.qaProject.com> 2004/08/25) indicate that quality means evoking/developing realistic expectations or standards of quality. For proper evaluation of quality, clear standards needs to be set and such standards should include dimensions or aspects relating to intrinsic attributes such as performance, reliability, guidelines and standard operating principles, features such as durability and service ability conformance. If such standards are clear, valid and realistic, they tend to offer a better monitoring tool to measure quality. By using dimensions like performance, durability etc, consumers will

be able to measure quality of a product by checking if the product performs as expected and also observing the period within which a purchased product has been used without being taken for repairs. The underpinning factors with regards to standards need to be implicitly understood by every consumer and they may also be explicitly written. Written standards are said to provide a framework or consensus within which quality products can be provided and allows for baseline measurement for monitoring quality (<http://www.qaProject.org:2004:1>). Consumers with limited product knowledge and limited experience have nothing to base their judgment on. They generally have to learn by experience, i.e. to purchase the product and learn the hard way or use extrinsic cues such as recommendation of the sales person or product price to judge quality. The only time they would be able to conclude that a particular product is of an inferior quality, would be after use when they discover and are confronted by unacceptable defects.

- Well-trained, empathetic salespeople should provide extensive product orientation in store.
- Follow up contacts with clients shortly after the purchase of appliances are recommended to determine whether they have understood the product features and are using the appliances properly. In this way, consumers' cooperation will be gained and consumer satisfaction will be enhanced.
- A comprehensive, explicit product guarantee is recommended to boost consumers' confidence in their decisions.
- Empowerment strategies for salespeople are recommended to regain consumers' confidence in sales personnel. Various studies have shown that salespeople are presently not trusted or confided in as trusted, empathetic and truthful information sources.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The questionnaire was quite lengthy and participants required assistance to complete them correctly. This was time consuming. However, by doing so, all of the questionnaires were returned.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A small sample of participants (30) participated in qualitative study. It would be worthwhile if this study could be pursued further employing a qualitative study where the researcher would go into the participants' houses, observe and record/capture information. Such information will be based on actual use of products and will assist in bringing in an understanding of exactly how participants go about using household appliances. Perhaps this would shed more light on why for example participants indicated low service life for household appliances like microwave ovens and stoves etc, and why they complained about inefficient cleaning of washing machines.

It is further suggested that retailers could employ strategies to train salespeople so that they could regain the confidence of consumers. Results of the projective techniques revealed that consumers view salespeople as not being honest but who are much more interested in profit. Consumer facilitation should be viewed pivotal during every purchase of major household appliances to reduce/minimize consumer complaints and dissatisfaction.



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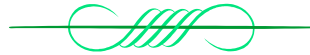
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Appendix 1

Projective technique





Department of Consumer Science

WRITTEN TASK ON THE SELECTION OF MAJOR HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES
to be used in a research project as part of a Master's Degree in Consumer Science

Introduction and Notification

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this research project. The intention with this research is to gain an understanding of consumers' experience with, and evaluation of major household appliances to eventually suggest ways in which customer service in retail could be improved to provide augmented customer service. Please give your honest opinion through out.

Your participation is appreciated!

Meriam Makgopa

Study leader: Dr Alet C Erasmus

All information will be treated as confidential. Participants' names will not be disclosed

TASK:

Assume that your best friend has approached you to assist her to purchase a refrigerator, a stove or a washing machine. **She wants to make sure that she selects the best quality appliance** from whatever appliances would be available in the store.

NOW:

Tell me in as much detail as you can, how your friend would be able to identify and select the appliance that would

- function properly, in other words that it will work properly
- would not give any problems, in other words that it will not break down after a short while
- last many years (Therefore, BEST QUALITY APPLIANCE in the store).

Please describe the appliances in terms of size, type, price range if you can, giving as much information as possible.

Then also, what would you warn her against, i.e. what must she NOT choose if she wants to make sure that she will be very happy with the appliance for many years and why?

Appendix 2

Questionnaire



Department of Consumer Science
QUESTIONNAIRE: EVALUATION OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES
Introduction and Notification

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this research project. The intention with this research project is to gain an understanding of consumers' experience with, and evaluation of major household appliances to eventually suggest ways in which customer service in retail could be improved to provide augmented customer service. Please give your honest opinion through out and try to be as accurate as possible when providing the requested figures.

Please complete ALL the questions. All information will be treated as highly confidential and participants will not be identified.

Your participation is appreciated!

Meriam Makgopa & Mphatso Kgagale (Masters' students)

Dr Alet C Erasmus

Senior lecturer

Geagte respondent,

Baie dankie vir u deelname aan hierdie navorsingsprojek. Die doel met hierdie navorsingsprojek is om verbruikers se ervaring met die keuse en evaluering van huishoudelike toerusting beter te verstaan om uiteindelik voorstelle aan die handel te kan maak om dienslewering te verbeter. Gee asseblief deurgaans u eerlike mening en probeer asseblief om syfers wat verlang word so korrek moontlik weer te gee.

Voltooi asseblief AL die vrae. Alle inligting sal as hoogs vertroulik beskou word en respondente sal nie geidentifiseer word nie.

U deelname word op prys gestel!

Meriam Makgopa & Mphatso Kgagale (Magister studente)

Dr Alet C Erasmus

Senior lektor

Respondent number:

Questionnaire: Section A



Demographic information of the respondent Demografiese inligting van die respondent								For office use				
Please mark with an X in the relevant boxes Merk asseblief met 'n X in die toepaslike blokkie								V1	1-3			
1. Gender of the respondent/ Geslag van die respondent					Male Manlik	Female Vroulik			V2	4		
2. Age (years)/ Ouderdom (jare):			25-35	36-45	46-55	56 +			V3	5		
3. Education level/ Opleidingspeil		Grade 7 or lower Graad 7 of laer	Grade 8 - 11	Grade 12	College diploma/ Kollege diploma	Degree/ Graad	Post graduate/ Nagraadse kwalifikasie			V4	6	
4. Household income per annum/ Huishouding se inkomste per jaar		Max R60 000	R60 001 to R90 000	R90 001 to R120 000	R120 001 to R150 000	R150 001 to R180 000	R180 001 to R240 000	R240 001 to R300 000	R300 001 to R500 000	Above / Meer as R500 000	V5	7
5. Geographic area: name of city/town Geografiese gebied: naam van stad/dorp								V6	8-9			
6. How long have you had electricity in your home? (Years) Hoe lank het u reeds elektrisiteit in u huis? (Jare)			0-3	4-5	6-10	11-15	As long as I can remember So lank as wat ek kan onthou			V7	10	

Section B: Experience with appliances/Ondervinding met toerusting

7. Please indicate your OWNERSHIP of the following appliances as required Dui asseblief u EIENAARSKAP van die onderstaande toerusting aan soos aangedui		We own one at present (Ons besit tans een)	We have owned one before (Het vantevore een besit)	Have never owned one (Het nog nooit een besit nie)	Not interested in having one (Stel nie daarin belang om een te besit nie)	Would like to have one Sou graag een wou besit	
Refrigerator/ Koelkas (Yskas)						V8	11
Separate freezer (Aparte vrieskas)						V9	12
Stove (hob & oven combined) (Stoof: oond en kookplate gekombineer)						V10	13
Separate oven plus hob (Aparte oond en kookplate)						V11	14
Extractor (cooker hood) (Stoofkap)						V12	15
Washing machine: top loader (Bolaai wasmasjien)						V13	16
Washing machine: front loader (Voorlaai wasmasjien)						V14	17
Washing machine: twin tub (Dubbelbalie wasmasjien)						V15	18
Dishwasher (Skottelgoedwasser)						V16	19
Tumble dryer (Tuimeldroer)						V17	20
Microwave oven (Mikrogoelfoond)						V18	21
Vacuum cleaner (Stofsuier)						V19	22
Sewing machine (Naaldwerkmasjien)						V20	23

8. Approximately HOW MANY YEARS of personal experience do you have of using the following appliances? Ongeveer HOEVEEL JARE van persoonlike ondervinding het u met die gebruik van die onderstaande toerusting?	None/ Geen	Maximum 3 Maksimum 3	4 to 5	6-10	More than 10 Meer as 10			
<input type="radio"/> Refrigerator/ Koelkas (Yskas)						V21		24
<input type="radio"/> Separate freezer (Aparte vrieskas)						V22		25
<input type="radio"/> Stove (hob & oven combined) (Stoof: oond en kookplate gekombineer)						V23		26
<input type="radio"/> Separate oven plus hob (Aparte oond en kookplate)						V24		27
<input type="radio"/> Extractor (cooker hood) (Stoofkap)						V25		28
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: top loader (Bolaaiër wasmasjien)						V26		29
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: front loader (Voorlaaiër wasmasjien)						V27		30
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: twin tub (Dubbelbalie wasmasjien)						V28		31
<input type="radio"/> Dishwasher (Skottelgoedwasser)						V29		32
<input type="radio"/> Tumble dryer (Tuimeldroer)						V30		33
<input type="radio"/> Microwave oven (Mikrogolfoond)						V31		34
<input type="radio"/> Vacuum cleaner (Stofsuier)						V32		35
<input type="radio"/> Sewing machine (Naaldwerkmasjien)						V33		36

9. Which of the following appliances have you chosen/selected for your own household's use in the past? Watter van die onderstaande toerusting het u al in die verlede uitgesoek/gekies vir u eie huishouding se gebruik?	Never/ Nooit	Once/ Een keer	More than once Meer as een keer			
<input type="radio"/> Refrigerator/ Koelkas (Yskas)				V34		37
<input type="radio"/> Separate freezer (Aparte vrieskas)				V35		38
<input type="radio"/> Stove (hob & oven combined) (Stoof: oond en kookplate gekombineer)				V36		39
<input type="radio"/> Separate oven plus hob (Aparte oond en kookplate)				V37		40
<input type="radio"/> Extractor (cooker hood) (Stoofkap)				V38		41
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: top loader (Bolaaiër wasmasjien)				V39		42
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: front loader (Voorlaaiër wasmasjien)				V40		43
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: twin tub (Dubbelbalie wasmasjien)				V41		44
<input type="radio"/> Dishwasher (Skottelgoedwasser)				V42		45
<input type="radio"/> Tumble dryer (Tuimeldroer)				V43		46
<input type="radio"/> Microwave oven (Mikrogolfoond)				V44		47
<input type="radio"/> Vacuum cleaner (Stofsuier)				V45		48
<input type="radio"/> Sewing machine (Naaldwerkmasjien)				V46		49

10a. Have anyone ever guided you on HOW TO EVALUATE household appliances prior to purchasing? If so, indicate <u>who</u> and <u>when</u> ? Het enigiemand u ooit wenke of riglyne gegee oor hoe 'n mens TOERUSTING EVALUEER voordat 'n aankoop gemaak word? Indien wel, spesifiseer <u>wie</u> en <u>wanneer</u> :	Never Nooit	Indirectly Indirek	Yes, intentionally Ja, doelbewus					
_____				V47		50		
_____				V48		51		
_____				V49		52		
_____				V50		53		
10b Considering ALL the factors that would influence your selection of a new household appliance, how important would the QUALITY of the product be in terms of your final decision? Met in agneming van AL die faktore wat u keuse van 'n nuwe huishoudelike toestel kan beïnvloed, hoe belangrik sal die GEHALTE van die produkte tydens u finale besluit wees?	Very important Bate belangrik	Important Belangrik	A consideration 'n Oorweging	Less important Minder belangrik	Of no importance Van geen belang	V51		54

Section C: Evaluation of appliances/ Evaluering van toerusting

11. Please answer ALL of the following questions Beantwoord asseblief AL die volgende vrae	Always/ Altyd	Sometimes/ Soms	Never/ Nooit		
1. Do you tend to use the <u>price of appliances</u> as an indication of quality? In other words, do you believe that more expensive appliances are of a better quality? Is u geneig om die <u>prys van toerusting</u> as 'n aanduiding van die kwaliteit daarvan te gebruik? Glo u dus dat duurder toerusting van 'n beter kwaliteit is?				V 52	55
2. Are you of the opinion that <u>imported appliances</u> are of a better quality? Is u van mening dat <u>ingevoerde toerusting</u> van 'n beter gehalte is?				V 53	56
3. Will you <u>trust salespeople</u> to recommend the best quality appliances to you? Sal u <u>verkoopsmense vertrou</u> om die beste gehalte toerusting vir u aan te beveel?				V 54	57
4. Do you use the <u>brand names of appliances</u> to discriminate differences in the quality of appliances? Gebruik u <u>handelsname van toerusting</u> as 'n aanduiding van die gehalte van toerusting?				V 55	58
5. Do you use <u>friends and family members' recommendations</u> to identify the best quality appliance? Gebruik u <u>vriende en familie se aanbevelings</u> om die beste gehalte toerusting te identifiseer?				V 56	59
6. Do consider the <u>guarantee as an indication of the quality</u> of an appliance? Beskou u die <u>waarborg</u> as 'n aanduiding van die gehalte van toerusting?				V 57	60
7. Do you regard <u>modern design as an indication of good quality appliances</u> ? Beskou u <u>moderne ontwerp</u> as 'n aanduiding van goeie gehalte toerusting?				V 58	61
8. In your opinion, do you regard appliances that are manufactured from <u>new (trendy) materials</u> to be of good quality? Is u van mening dat toerusting wat van <u>nuwe, moderne materiaal</u> vervaardig is, 'n aanduiding is dat dit van goeie gehalte is?				V 59	62
9. Do you believe that <u>widely advertised appliances</u> will be of good quality? Glo u dat <u>toerusting wat wyd geadverteer word</u> , van goeie gehalte sal wees?				V 60	63
10. Do you believe that an appliance that carries the <u>PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN</u> label, will be a good quality product? Is u van mening dat toerusting wat die <u>TROTS SUID-AFRIKAANSE</u> merk dra, van goeie gehalte sal wees?				V 61	64
11. Do you believe that there is <u>little difference in the quality</u> of appliances on the market? Glo u dat daar <u>min verskil</u> is in die <u>gehalte van toerusting</u> wat op die mark is?				V 62	65
12. Will you always go to <u>certain retailers</u> because you believe that they will only sell good quality appliances? Sal u altyd na <u>sekere handelaars</u> toe gaan omdat u glo dat hulle net kwaliteit toerusting sal verkoop?				V 63	66

Section D: Service life of appliances/ Lewensduur van toerusting

12. For any of the listed appliances that you've had to replace in the past, please indicate the APPROXIMATE SERVICE LIFE in terms of YEARS OF USE, from brand new until replacement because of total break down.

(Ten opsigte van die onderstaande toerusting wat u al voorheen moes vervang omdat dit onklaar geraak het, dui asseblief die BERAAMDE LEWENSDUUR van die toerusting aan IN JARE, vanaf aankoop tot dit in onbruik geraak het)

	Service years/ Diensjare	I have no experience of replacement Ek het nog nie toerusting vervang nie			
<input type="radio"/> Refrigerator/ Koelkas (Yskas)			V64		67-68
<input type="radio"/> Separate freezer (Aparte vrieskas)			V65		69-70
<input type="radio"/> Stove (hob & oven combined) (Stoof: oond en kookplate gekombineer)			V66		71-72
<input type="radio"/> Separate oven plus hob (Aparte oond en kookplate)			V67		73-74
<input type="radio"/> Extractor (cooker hood) (Stoofkap)			V68		75-76
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: top loader (Bolaai wasmasjien)			V69		77-78
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: front loader (Voorlaai wasmasjien)			V70		79-80
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: twin tub (Dubbelbalie wasmasjien)			V71		81-82
<input type="radio"/> Dishwasher (Skottelgoedwasser)			V72		83-84
<input type="radio"/> Tumble dryer (Tuimeldroer)			V73		85-86
<input type="radio"/> Microwave oven (Mikrogolfoond)			V74		87-88
<input type="radio"/> Vacuum cleaner (Stofsuier)			V75		89-90
<input type="radio"/> Sewing machine (Naaldwerkmasjien)			V76		91-92

13. If you were to purchase the following appliances at this stage (brand new), what is the SERVICE LIFE that you would EXPECT AS BEING REASONABLE (i.e. HOW LONG WOULD YOU EXPECT IT TO BE FUNCTIONAL UNTIL IT NEEDS TO BE REPLACED)?

Indien u nou toerusting in die onderstaande lys NUUT sou koop, WATTER LEWENSDUUR SOU U VERWAG en beskou as BILLIK (DUS, HOEVEEL JAAR SE WERKVERRIGTING SOU U VERWAG OM TE KRY TOTDAT DIE TOESTEL WEER VERVANG MOET WORD)?

	Years Jare	I am not interested in owning one, ever Ek stel nie daarin belang om ooit een te besit nie			
<input type="radio"/> Refrigerator/ Koelkas (Yskas)			V77		93-94
<input type="radio"/> Separate freezer (Aparte vrieskas)			V78		95-96
<input type="radio"/> Stove (hob & oven combined) (Stoof: oond en kookplate gekombineer)			V79		97-98
<input type="radio"/> Separate oven plus hob (Aparte oond en kookplate)			V80		99-100
<input type="radio"/> Extractor (cooker hood) (Stoofkap)			V81		101-102
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: top loader (Bolaai wasmasjien)			V82		103-104
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: front loader (Voorlaai wasmasjien)			V83		105-106
<input type="radio"/> Washing machine: twin tub (Dubbelbalie wasmasjien)			V84		107-108
<input type="radio"/> Dishwasher (Skottelgoedwasser)			V85		109-110
<input type="radio"/> Tumble dryer (Tuimeldroer)			V86		111-112
<input type="radio"/> Microwave oven (Mikrogolfoond)			V87		113-114
<input type="radio"/> Vacuum cleaner (Stofsuier)			V88		115-116
<input type="radio"/> Sewing machine (Naaldwerkmasjien)			V89		117-118



Section E: Product characteristics/ Produk kenmerke

<p>1. Indicate your view of the following statements Dui u mening oor die volgende stellings aan</p>	<p>True/ Waar</p>	<p>False/ Onwaar</p>	<p>Uncertain/ Onseker</p>		
<p>A stainless steel drum is recommended for a washing machine because it will be more durable (last longer) than a porcelain enamel drum/ 'n Vlekrystaal drom word aanbeveel vir wasmasjiene omdat dit meer duursaam sal wees (langer hou) as 'n porselein emalje drom.</p>				V90	119
<p>The rotation speed of the drum of a tumble dryer will influence its effectiveness Die rotasiespoed van die drom van 'n tuimeldroëer sal sy effektiwiteit beïnvloed</p>				V91	120
<p>A top loading washing machine will have a longer service life than a front loader automatic machine/ 'n Bolaaiër wasmasjiene sal langer hou (langer lewensduur) as 'n voorlaaiër outomatiese wasmasjiene</p>				V92	121
<p>Food is stored in a freezer at approximately minus ten degrees Centigrade Voedsel word by ongeveer minus 10 grade Celsius in 'n vrieskas gestoor</p>				V93	122
<p>Variable wattage control on a cylinder vacuum cleaner is mainly used to save electricity Die verstelbare wattsterkte op stofsuigers word hoofsaaklik gebruik om te bespaar op elektrisiteitsverbruik</p>				V94	123
<p>An upright vacuum cleaner cleans more effectively than a cylinder vacuum cleaner 'n Regoptipe stofsuier maak meer effektief skoon as 'n silindertipe stofsuier</p>				V95	124
<p>A ceramic glass hob will crack if cold water spills on the hot surface 'n Glasbladstoof kan kraak as koue water daarop stort</p>				V96	125
<p>In a convection oven (thermofan), several racks can be used for baking simultaneously (even delicate sponge cakes) /In 'n konveksie oond (waaier oond) kan daar tegelykertyd op verskillende rakke van die oond gebak word (selfs delikate sponskoek)</p>				V97	126
<p>Most top loading washing machines draw hot water from the geyser because they cannot heat the water / Die meeste bolaaiër wasmasjiene tap warm water vanaf die huis se warmwatersilinder(geyser) omdat hulle nie die water kan warm maak nie</p>				V98	127
<p>An electronic microwave oven consumes much more electricity than a mechanical model 'n Elektroniese mikrogolfoond gebruik meer krag as 'n meganiese mikrogolfoond</p>				V99	128
<p>A dishwasher with a concealed element is safer to use than one with a visible heating element in the bottom of the machine / 'n Skottelgoedwasser met 'n versteekte element is veiliger om te gebruik as een met 'n sigbare element in die bodem van die masjiene</p>				V100	129
<p>The newer refrigerators that have a stainless steel outer finish will last much longer than those with a white porcelain enamel coating /Die nuwer koelkaste met 'n vlekrystaal buite afwerking sal baie langer hou as dié met 'n wit porselein emalje afwerking</p>				V101	130
<p>The wattage of a refrigerator is higher than the wattage of a vacuum cleaner Die watt verbruik van 'n koelkas (yskas) is hoër as die watt verbruik van 'n stofsuier.</p>				V102	131
<p>Less electricity will be used to bake a kilogram of chicken portions in an oven than to fry them in a pan on a stoveplate / Minder elektrisiteit sal gebruik word om 'n kilogram hoenderporsies in die oond gaar te maak as om dit in 'n pan op 'n stoof plaat te braai.</p>				V103	132
<p>800 rpm is a particularly high rotation speed for a washing machine 800 rpm is 'n besonder hoë rotasiespoed vir 'n wasmasjiene</p>				V104	133
<p>If a stew is cooked in a microwave oven, the cooking time will be affected by the size of the baking dish /As 'n bredie in die mikrogolfoond gaargemaak word, sal die grootte van die bakskottel die gaarmaaktyd beïnvloed</p>				V105	134
<p>The sizes of different refrigerators are generally indicated in litres Die groottes van yskaste word gewoonlik in liters aangedui</p>				V106	135
<p>If the noise level of a washing machine is indicated as 40db, it means that the appliance is rather noisy/As die geraasvlak van 'n wasmasjiene aangedui is as 40db, beteken dit dat die masjiene redelik raserig sal wees</p>				V107	136
<p>A special detergent used by dishwashers, are more alkaline than the detergent used by washing machines/Die spesiale wasmiddel wat deur skottelgoedwassers gebruik word is meer alkalies as die wasmiddel wat deur wasmasjiene gebruik word.</p>				V108	137
<p>The dust bags of vacuum cleaners should be emptied every week Die stofsaakke van stofsuigers moet weekliks leeggemaak word</p>				V109	138
<p>A reasonable life span that could be expected from major household appliances, is approximately 7 years 'n Redelike lewensduur wat van groot elektriese toerusting verwag kan word, is sowat 7 jaar</p>				V110	139

Section F: Open ended questions/ Oop vrae

15. What kind of information would you like to get from a salesperson to assist you to choose the best quality washing machine? Explain in approximately 100 words

Watter tipe inligting sou u van 'n verkoops persoon in die winkel wou kry om u te help om die beste kwaliteit wasmasjien uit te kies? Verduidelik in omtrent 100 woorde

V111			140-141
V112			142-143
V113			144-145
V114			146-147
V115			148-149
V116			150-151
V117			152-153
V118			154-155
V119			156-157
V120			158-159

16. If your friend complains that the washing machine that she has recently bought is of poor quality, what would she probably be complaining about? Explain in approximately 100 words

As u vriend kla oor die swak gehalte van 'n wasmasjien wat hulle onlangs gekoop het, waaroor sal die vriend waarskynlik kla? Verduidelik in ongeveer 100 woorde.

V121			160-161
V122			162-163
V123			164-165
V124			166-167
V125			168-169
V126			170-171
V127			172-173
V128			174-175
V129			176-177
V130			178-179



Section G

<p>When you have to purchase a washing machine for your household, how would the following actions describe your behaviour? Hoe sal die volgende aksies u optrede beskryf as u 'n wasmasjien vir u huishouding moet koop?</p>	<p>Definite/Definitely</p>	<p>Soms/</p>	<p>Nooit/ Never</p>		
<p>I would go to a reliable store and I will generate all the information that I require in the store Ek sal na 'n betroubare handelaar(winkel) gaan en al die inligting wat ek nodig het daar gaan uitvind</p>				v131	180
<p>I would visit several stores before I make a final purchase decision Ek sal na verskeie winkels gaan voordat ek 'n finale besluit oor die produk neem</p>				v132	181
<p>I will contact friends or family to hear which appliances they would recommend Ek sal vriende, familie kontak om te hoor watter toerusting hulle sou aanbeveel</p>				V133	182
<p>I would purchase the same brand that I am familiar with Ek sal dieselfde handelsnaam gaan koop wat ek reeds ken</p>				V134	183
<p>I would browse through news papers and magazine advertisements to see what is advertised Ek sal kyk watter produkte in koerante en tydskrifte geadverteer word</p>				V135	184
<p>I would ask a salesperson to recommend the best product Ek sal 'n verkoopsman gaan vra om die beste produk aan te beveel</p>				V136	185
<p>I would visit several web sites to see what is available Ek sal op verskeie web tuistes gaan kyk wat is beskikbaar</p>				V137	186
<p>I will determine what I can afford and then I will only look at appliances within that price range Ek sal vasstel wat ek kan bekostig en slegs produkte oorweeg wat in daardie prysklas val</p>				V138	187
<p>Although I have to consider affordability, I regard other factors more important than the price of the appliance Hoewel ek bekostigbaarheid in ag neem, is ander faktore vir my belangriker as die prys van die toerusting</p>				V139	188
<p>I will get as much information about various products from different sources and product specialists before I make a final decision Ek sal soveel moontlik inligting omtrent verskillende produkte van verskeie bronne en spesialiste gaan inwin voordat ek 'n finale besluit neem</p>				V140	189
<p>I will choose the appliance on my own without consulting anybody else Ek sal die toerusting alleen kies sonder om iemand anders te raadpleeg</p>				V141	190
<p>I will buy the cheapest appliance that seems like good value for money Ek sal die goedkoopste toerusting koop wat lyk of dit goeie waarde vir geld sal wees</p>				V142	191
<p>I will choose a modern looking appliance Ek sal toerusting koop wat modern lyk</p>				V143	192
<p>I will take into consideration the economy of the appliance such as the water consumption and the wattage Ek sal die ekonomiese eienskappe in ag neem, onder andere die waterverbruik en die watt verbruik</p>				V144	193
<p>I will seriously consider the size of the machine Ek sal die grootte van die masjien baie sterk oorweeg</p>				V145	194
<p>I will find out where the appliance can be serviced and repaired Ek sal uitvind waar die toestel gediens en herstel sal kan word</p>				V146	195
<p>I will browse through the manuals of the different appliances before I make a final decision Ek sal deur die handleidings van verskillende toestelle blaai voordat ek 'n finale besluit neem</p>				V147	196
<p>I will compare the guarantees that are provided by various manufacturers Ek sal die waarborges wat deur verskillende vervaardigers gebied word, vergelyk</p>				V148	197
<p>I will choose an appliance wherever I can get a good credit arrangement Ek sal die toerusting gaan koop waar ek 'n goeie krediet reëling kan tref</p>				V149	198
<p>I will choose one of the more expensive appliances that are available Ek sal een van die duurste van die beskikbare toerusting koop</p>				V150	199
<p>I will take a friend along to help me choose the new appliance Ek sal 'n vriend of vriendin saamneem om my te help om die nuwe toerusting te kies</p>				V151	200
<p>I will search for a good second hand machine Ek sal kyk of ek 'n goeie tweedehandse masjien in die hande kan kry.</p>				V152	201
<p>I will be focus on the quality differences between appliances that are available Ek sal konsentreer op kwaliteitverskille tussen die aparate wat beskikbaar is</p>				V153	202

Appendix 3

Transcribed text: Projective techniques

4721	Refrigerator - Joint
Brand Reasons Economical	I would advise my friend to buy Electrolux because of its service life. Ours worked for more than 11 years, it never gave us any problem, we have never refilled gas. Consumption of electricity is very less (saves electricity)
Price Store	Price = we believe that the price of the appliance should be affordable (R±1500-00) we believe that the name of the store, and price can be used to determine the quality of the product
Size	Size= size of the house and of the product should be compatible. Size should also meet the needs of the family.
Colour	Colour= one should choose the color that match the color scheme of the house and the other bought products.
Guarantee Reasons	Guarantee: after purchase the product needs to be well taken care of. One should not use one plug for many appliances. One should also use proper packaging of food before placing it in the appliance; do not place hot food in the refrigerator because that could damage the refrigerator. The guarantee is not much an issue because if you are careless even when a product is of a good quality, the product may break or work for a short while. Warning
Sales person	Salesperson= check if the person is friendly and reliable, because sales persons are more interested in getting commission and less interested in discussing disadvantages of the product. Also check availability of parts in case there is a need for repairs.
Maintenance	Maintenance/caring for the product. It is also advisable to defrost your refrigerator regularly if it is not a frost free because if not, it might consume lots of electricity. Check expiry date as the fridge might end up smelly. Always choose your own model, even though it may be the same brand. It is important to have unique models (model not used by each and every household) clean regularly.
Model	
Security	Security= buy a refrigerator that has a key and that can be locked at any given time. The refrigerator should not be opened time and again.

4281	Stove
Brand	I would advise my friend to consider the brand name. There are many brands of appliances available in stores, some of which are inferior qualities, and I would advise my friend to consider Defy or Kelvinator because they have proved to be of a good quality. Defy and Kelvinator has proved to have a good reputation. People who bought these brands a long time ago can bare me out, their appliances are strong, bake well, and do not break or malfunction easily.
Brand Reasons	
Reasons	I'll recommend that my friend purchase a 621 model, and a 4-plate stove. I recommended a four plate stove because it is convenient especially when you have functions at home because you can cook 4 different dishes at a time and you can also make use of the oven.
Model	
Product characteristics	Built in stove can also be recommended as long as it is a Defy or Kelvinator, but I'll advise my friend to check if they will be staying in that house for a lifetime because if one intends to move to another area in future it becomes a disinvestment because you cannot take it (stove) along, the only option is to include the price of the stove in total sales price of the house.
Style	
Price	I'll also advise my friend to shop around and compare prices before making a purchase. I'll recommend a price range of ±R2900.00. I'll also advise my friend to check if for example financial charges are included in the price as some shops include all charges in the advertised/displayed price whilst others do not, so my friend need to check such information.
Guarantees	I'll also advise my friend to enquire about guarantees. She needs to check the period of the guarantee, check if there are maintenance people in the store/or if the store does the repairs, check if for example you inform them about the stove that needs to be repaired do they come and repair it at your home, or do you have to take it (stove) to the store et.
Maintenance	
Manuals	I'll also advise my friend to check if the manual is available. Some manuals are easy and straight and some are difficult to understand. My wish was that manuals could be easy to follow or understand them. I'll advise my friend to read the manual, and if she encounters problems, she needs to consult someone who has the knowledge (e.g. electrician) to assist her, because if one can take chances, she may end up hurting herself or even damaging the appliance.

3961	Electric stove
Style	Basically in shops, there are 2 types of stoves i.e. those that are plug in, and those that have built in pipes. I would advise my friend to buy a stove that has built in pipes because the plug in one always triggers the main switch to fall especially when you plug other appliances simultaneously on the plug. I had to change my plug in stove as a result of that.
Product characteristic Reasons	I would advise my friend to purchase a 4 plate stove because if one purchase a three plate one, and one of the 3 plates malfunctions then it means that the stove is left with 2 functional plates which are equivalent to an ordinary hot plate stove.
Product characteristic Reasons	I would also advise my friend to purchase a stove with controls that are at the top not in the front because the front controls are not save especially when you have small children because they might play with the controls and therefore controls may break after a short period of time and also they might switch the stove unawares and the house may catch fire.
Product characteristic Economical Reasons	I will also advise my friend to also purchase a stove with an oven that would distribute heat evenly when baking without having to switch the top and down element interchangeably for your cakes to be cooked. The oven that distributes heat evenly is more convenient, saves time and electricity.
Brand Salesperson	I believe that brand names indicate the quality of appliances e.g. stove, I would therefore advise my friend to ask salesperson to assist her with regard to quality brand names, because retailers have appliances with different and confusing brand names.
Price	I would also advise my friend to purchase a stove that falls between R4000.00 price range because my observation tells me that stoves within a R4000.00 range are of good quality; especially Defy products.
Guarantee	Guarantee = the issue of guarantee and insurance seem to be confusing. Retailers do not explain nor come clear with distinction between the two. Sometimes after purchasing a stove, say for example you conclude a 24 month contract and fall in arrears, when 24 months elapse and you are still paying for the appliance, when you take it for repairs, they'll ask you to pay for the repairs, stating that your payment of the account is long over due or that your contract for purchase was for 24 months and now that you have completed paying for your account, you need to pay for repairs.
Maintenance Higher purchase	

<p>Product characteristic</p> <p>Reasons</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Price</p> <p>Brand name</p> <p>Reasons</p> <p>Guarantee</p> <p>Warning</p> <p>Higher purchase</p>	<p>Stove</p> <p>I'll advise my friend to purchase a stove with solid plates because the stove can be easily cleaned; she needs to consider the size of the kitchen (space available) when deciding on the size of the stove.</p> <p>Price= I'll advise my friend to purchase a brand new stove, not second hand. I recommend a price of R5000.00 and R3000.00 when on special sale.</p> <p>Brand name= I'll recommend a Defy brand, because it has a long service life, it is reliable, ever since we bought the stove, we never encountered any problems with regard to breakage/ and or repairs. We bought the stove in 1994 – 2003 and we never experienced any problems.</p> <p>Guarantee= when you purchase a new stove from a reputable shop, the stove will come with a guarantee. I'll advise my friend to settle for an appliance with a longer guarantee (3years) because a longer guarantee shows that the manufacturer or the shop has confidence in their product.</p> <p>Warning</p> <p>It is always cheaper to purchase a stove on a cash base, if cash is not available I will advise her to settle for a shorter term because if one settles for a longer term one might end up paying double for one appliance.</p>
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4001	Refrigerator
Brand	Brand K.I.C. I bought K.I.C. refrigerator since I had some kind of experience with it. My parents have been using it for quite some time, approximately 10 years and I can't even remember one moment of disappointment form time.
Size	<p>There are various sizes to choose from depending on the size of the family and the affordability. The size of my fridge is 360 litres and I'm happy with it as I have a small family. It can easily fit all my monthly groceries. I have has this fridge since August 1999 and has never gave me any hassles.</p> <p>I bought my fridge from Checkers Hyper in Mayville. When I bought my fridge I was moving houses and was very desperate. I had to move into the new house on a Saturday and I went to the store the day before. I explained to the salesman that I needed a fridge desperately, as in the following day. He was very understanding of the situation but told me that there was nothing to give me in the store; he had to place an order for me. He phoned the warehouse in Johannesburg and was promised that the earliest he could get it was Tuesday. I paid the deposit and before leaving I told him that I would prefer to come fetch my fridge myself.</p> <p>On Monday when I phoned him he said he managed to get me a fridge on Saturday and he left messages for me at work, as I did not have a cell phone then. I phoned my work place and his story was confirmed. I arranged with someone to get my fridge and on Monday afternoon I had a brand new one.</p>
Price	The price was very reasonable i.e. R1999.99 and it is real value for money and the service I got was of world class.

<p>4681</p> <p>Brand name Reasons</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Size Reasons</p> <p>Guarantee</p> <p>Reasons Economical Product characteristic</p>	<p>Refrigerator</p> <p>When I choose a refrigerator I look at the brand name because other types wear out easily. For instance, Kelvinator, I recommend it because since I bought ± 10 years ago I experienced no problems. Since I bought it I did no refill gas, it lasted, others don't even take 3 years.</p> <p>I think buying a bigger refrigerator is advantageous because food will have enough space and the more the family grows the lesser the problem to increase the contents. You buy a small one next time you will be needed to buy again, that is nonsense. The cheaper the appliance the shorter time it takes.</p> <p>Guarantee of an appliance is very much important. You should take into consideration the time stipulated for that e.g. 3 months guarantee, 1-year guarantee. I would prefer a 1-year because I think the seller will be sure of his goods. 3 months is too short to can examine or study a product and if it gives a problem on the fourth month you will have to go back and buy again. When you buy an appliance don't just buy because you are desperate. Go for a good brand name, which will last you long, save you money. There are many fakes and you must be alert. The brand determines the type of the motto machinery used and that determines the durability of the product.</p>
<p>4561</p> <p>Model Brand name Guarantee</p> <p>Size Reasons Price</p> <p>Guarantee</p>	<p>Washing machine</p> <p>Things to consider when buying a washing machine. I'll recommend an automatic machine preferably LG.</p> <p>LG appliances have proved to be the best appliances as their guarantee normally are not less than a year.</p> <p>Looking at the size of my friend's family, I'll recommend that she buy a 24 Kg (the biggest) machine. The prices are reasonable considering the fact that LG is the best brand ever. They normally range from R2500.00 i.e. factory price.</p> <p>What not to choose</p> <p>I'll advise her not to choose second hand machines. Not to choose any machine for the sake of the price i.e. not to buy a machine because it is cheap. To guard against fake appliances, be sure of the brand she chooses. To check the guarantees and the warrantees of appliances as they can tell you the whole story about the appliance.</p>

<p>4801</p> <p>Product characteristic Reasons</p>	<p>Assisting to purchase best quality of refrigerator</p> <p>Firstly she must overlook the performance of refrigerator into consideration e.g. how long the refrigerator can get cold. Secondly she must look at features of it e.g. what are the extras that go with it. The durability of the product. How long it will last. The perception of quality, the indirect evaluation of a product's quality or reputation attached to it.</p>
<p>4761</p> <p>brand name</p> <p>Price</p> <p>Model Product characteristic Reasons</p> <p>Model Reasons</p> <p>Maintenance</p> <p>Guarantee</p> <p>Price Reasons Product characteristic Manual Brand</p>	<p>Electric stove 731 Defy</p> <p>The best stove I would advise one to by is Defy 621 as there are no complications in as far as operation is concerned. The stove has an element at the top as well as at the bottom in the oven. One will switch between the two elements when baking. There is extra job as changing of pans is concerned and when element are no more functional they can easily be replaced.</p> <p>The stove is more costly as compared to other brands but one thing is for sure it is quality. The booklet is supplied and it is easy to read and no complications as compared to the bigger stove Defy 731 which is having a fan in the oven to circulate heat. Defy products are long lasting and they are a good quality.</p> <p>I would not advise one to buy a Defy 731 model stove as it is complicates in operation. Once one makes a mistake in a particular part of operation, the other parts are affected e.g. the time must be set, switched to manual, one mistake with any of the two the oven is affected. Elements and the fan in the oven will stop their function.</p> <p>I bought a 731 thermofan stove in 2001. the oven stopped functioning in 2002. an electrician was sent from Defy. He repaired the oven but tampered with the cooking plates which stopped working afterwards. He was called for the second time and he fixed everything but that was still temporarily. When called for the third time he demanded a payment as the warranty has expired.</p> <p>My stove is now just occupying my house but I am unable to use the oven which is big enough with less job or changing pans when baking. I think the warranty should be extended as baking is not done everyday and one must be given plenty time to observe the stove.</p> <p>I would advise my friend to buy expensive appliances that are long lasting and not be impressed by the new brand and names which are less expensive. One will have to read the booklet supplied with the appliance and seek explanation where difficulty exists. As long as the appliance was installed by a qualified electrician I don't think one will experience difficulties. I will always go for Defy products. Thank you!!!</p>

	Advice on purchasing a refrigerator
Brand	The best name that have been in the market for the longest period
Reasons Reasons	The product or the refrigerator should have been approved by the SABS i.e. the South African Bereau for Standards for human safety or the quality for usage. The refrigerator should be rust proof so that it can be of use for a very long time.
Product characteristic Size Reasons	The size of the refrigerator should be a bigger or family size so that even if your family grows you will not be expected to buy again. The capacity should also be taken into consideration for one to be able to store in as much frozen food as possible for time saving.
Product characteristic Model Store Warranty Household insurance	<p>The dual type is the best for one can use either electricity or gas. The type of your refrigerator should have two doors for one to open the freezer or the refrigerator at a time.</p> <p>One should shop around to compare prices from different dealers. The guarantee or the warranty of the product or the refrigerator should also be taken into consideration. If you do not have an insurance for your house and property you should see to it that the refrigerator that you purchase is fully insured before it is delivered to you.</p> <p>One should opt for a price that is suitable for his/her pocket and the lesser price for the best quality.</p>
Models Brand names	There will be different names and different models choose the name that you know and have the knowledge of. The names that have been in the market for a long time have the best reputation. Names such as Defy, LG, Bower are the best to choose from.
Brand names Maintenance	You must not choose a Whirlpool refrigerator. They might look smart but they cannot stand the test of time. After a very short time of usage they stop freezing and it will be expensive to repair them from time to time.

4641	Washing machine (top loader)
Size Model Economical Reasons Price Reasons Maintenance	I'll advise my friend to look at the following: recommend LG 10 Kg top loader because the machine is big enough, can take a bigger load of laundry, less electricity, less soap, self dispensed stay soft, less water, may wash any material, convenient, washes for 15 minutes, one is able to control the wash time. Price is very high (±4000.00), but I feel you'll get value for your money. The machine will last longer (longer service life). The machine does not break easily nor need maintenance/repairs after a short while.
Guarantee	The machine has a warranty of 2 years and I thus feel that the guarantee is best.
Product characteristic Reasons Reasons	I believe the machine saves time because the machine is able to spin dry the laundry. The machine is more convenient. One is able to leave the machine and be busy with other chores. The machine doesn't need monitoring. I prefer LG products.
	Warning
Sales person	The machine need to be cared for properly, for it to last even much longer. May advice my friend not to take advice from salesperson.
	Stove
Brand name Store –spec Economical Price Maintenance	I'll recommend that my friend should buy a Kelvinator. I'll advise my friend to go to the factory shop to check for the brand. Kelvinator, is a very good product, it is small and saves electricity – it is affordable (R1500) The parts of a Kelvinator stove are easily found because the product is still available in stored. Kelvinator products comes in beautiful colors that make your kitchen beautiful.
Higher purchase Instalment Guarantee Product features	I can also advise my friend to purchase the stove through higher purchase as the instalments are easy to pay and affordable. The said stove comes with a guarantee. Before taking the appliance home please check if the controls function properly, please check if the plates are on, check the oven, switch on and off to check if they function properly, also she needs to check the glass of the oven door, check if it is fitted correctly, and advise the store accordingly.
Sales person	Check the sales person who might influence your choice. Stick to your choice. Do not listen to them when they persuade you to purchase the appliances they claim to be on special.

4081	Refrigerator
Reasons	I have purchased a Fridge master in 1997. it has never been to repairs. The only thing that I do not like about is that when it defrosts water ooses out my kitchen becomes messy and I'm forced to sort out the mess. Some of my cupboards are even damaged. I may not even advise my friend to purchase the model and brand I purchased.
Brand	I would advise my friend to rather purchase a refrigerator with a brand Whirlpool. I saw it at some of my friends. It is of a good quality, it is frost free, it is self regulatory, all it requires is the usual and ordinary cleaning.
Reasons Product characteristic	I do not use price to gauge the quality of the refrigerator. I believe that despite the price of the refrigerator, the best quality refrigerator is one that is able to meet my family needs in terms off functionality/performance or doing what it is expected to do.
Sales person Reasons	I will also advise my friend to be cautious with sales person. Some are not reliable, they do not offer proper after sales service care, once they managed to get commission profit from the products you purchased, they no longer care about the problems you encounter after the purchase.

4601	Washing machine - twin tub
Reasons	I'll advise my friend when purchasing a washing machine to request that she be given a machine which is still sealed (display not damaged), the reason is that
Reasons	sometimes retailers may give a machine which was returned by a customer as a result of malfunctioning but claim that the machine is new.
Brand	I'll also advise my friend to stick or insist on getting a brand she chose during the purchase and must not settle for a different one as retailers have a tendency to give customers alternative brands when their first choice is not in stock at that point in time. I'll advise my friend to purchase a Defy machine. I have
Reasons	purchased appliances with a Defy brand in the past to date and I have never encountered any problems with the brand. Defy is reliable and has a longer service life.
Size	I'll also advise my friend to purchase a machine that would meet the family needs and preferably a bigger size because one would be able to put heavy and
Reasons	bigger loads of soiled clothing.
Model	I'll advise my friend to purchase a twin tub. I find the machine easy to use and after purchase one doesn't need a plumber to insert pipes etc which will also
Reasons	add to the cost of the machine. I also like the fact that I'm able to measure powdered soap, stay soft water etc.
Size	I believe that the price of the machine should match the size (eg 9 Kg) of the machine and the quality of the machine. I'll recommend a price range of R2500-
Price	00 for a Defy 9,2 kg twin tub.
Reasons	I'll also advise her to pay a higher deposit so that she could pay less interest and finance charges and also the monthly installments will be reduced and
Higher purchase/ Installment	affordable. She must also pay the account regularly to avoid interest charged on arrears. I'll also advise my friend to check the issue of insurance, sometimes if
Household insurance	you are not careful even when you have household insurance, when you buy by higher purchase because they also include insurance in the installment which increases the total debt and one end up paying 2 insurances on one item.
Reading contract Sales person	I'll also advise my friend to read the contract thoroughly before signing it as sometimes salespersons may include the things you did not agree about when you were discussing the purchase and one might end up paying for the things she did not give consent to.

4041	Refrigerator
Brand name	I prefer to purchase KIC brand name as I regard it as the best quality. I have
Reasons	purchased the product for over 9 years and I haven't experienced any problems whatsoever except when we have a cut on electricity, because then it is difficult for it to be on again, one has to wait for ± 30 as a result of the interruption of electricity cut. I therefore would advise my friend to purchase this brand.
Price Reasons	When I purchased the refrigerator 9 yrs ago it was around $\pm R1700-00$ and now prices have gone up, but I'll still be prepared to purchased it at around $R2500-00$, because as a result of its quality, it has offered me the best service ever, and it has a long service life. Ever since I purchased the refrigerator, it has never gone for repairs or maintenance.
Reasons	I am presently satisfied with the size of my refrigerator as it meets the needs of my family, I only pick up problems when I have functions at home because then I have to ask neighbours to keep some of my perishable food in their refrigerators.
Store	I purchased the refrigerator at Trade Center. We knew the size of the refrigerator and we never really got any assistance from salesperson to for example who would have explained to us how the refrigerator works etc. No
Guarantee	one had time to even explain how guarantees work. We were just lucky because the refrigerator did not give us any problems.
Store	Warning I feel I cannot advise my friend to purchase a refrigerator or any major appliance at Trade Center because they do not offer any after service nor even orientate a first time buyer about how an appliance work. After the purchase you are on your own.
Product characteristic	As it is now, when the refrigerator is defrosted, the enamel paint falls off and I do not know whether it is my fault or the factory's fault, some of the parts are also affected by rust. I would then advise my friend to purchase a refrigerator which is rust free and frost free and must also check if the paint will not peel off. I'll also warn her to purchase from a shop where she'll be oriented about the product.
Store Reasons	

<p>4081</p> <p>Brand Model Economical Product characteristic Reasons</p> <p>Product characteristic Reasons</p> <p>Price</p> <p>Guarantee</p> <p>Size/capacity</p>	<p>Washing machine – front loader</p> <p>Brand – Defy automate – front loader I prefer automaid frontloader because is a good quality machine, convenient and saves time and electricity. The machine has buttons that can be set, the machine washes, rinses and bleaches the soiled clothes without the owner having to monitor it. The machine is also a best buy for people suffering from arthritis and one does not come into contact with water. The machine consumes/uses lots of water.</p> <p>The machine washes all types of material (e.g. silk wool etc), it is just a question of selecting the correct button. The machine has a longer service life, purchased for over 9 years, I have never experienced any problems with the machine and I therefore recommend that my friend purchase this type.</p> <p>I would advise my friend to purchase a washing machine with a price range within R4000-00. I'll discourage my friend to purchase a top loader as it needs the owner to rinse clothes etc.</p> <p>The guarantee for this machine is 2 years but the machine worked for 9 yrs including now without any hassles, this simply means that defy has trust in their products, they give longer guarantees knowing quite well that the machine will not break/malfunction.</p> <p>I'll recommend that my friend purchase a 5 Kg front loader machine.</p>
<p>4520</p> <p>Style Adding décor</p> <p>Product characteristic Economical Brand Product characteristic Reasons</p> <p>Guarantee</p> <p>Price affordability</p>	<p>Stove (separate oven)</p> <p>I prefer a built in stove with cookerhood. I like the fact that the oven is separate from the range and it thus add décor to my kitchen.</p> <p>Oven- I prefer an oven with a warmer because one is able to warm the food that was cooked earlier on, consumes less electricity, bakes faster, heat is distributed evenly in the oven.</p> <p>Brand- I prefer the Kelvinator brand, it has a longer service life, it bakes well, I have never encountered any problems with the brand. I bought the stove around 1992/93 but I have never taken it for repairs.</p> <p>I can no longer remember the price of the stove as I bought it a long time ago.</p> <p>Guarantee- I'll also advise her to settle for a long term guarantee.</p> <p>Warning</p> <p>I'll advise my friend to purchase a stove that is of quality must also check if she can afford to purchase the particular stove. It is important to consider the price.</p>

4841	Univa stove
Economical	I'll advise my friend to buy a stove which consumes less electricity and which is properly wired so as not to trigger the main switch to fall.
Brand	I purchased a Univa stove 3 yrs ago and I'm not happy with it. The oven is not working properly, it triggers the main switch to fall. It is evident that Univa is an inferior or a poor quality brand and I would therefore not recommend it to anyone. We intend replacing it by buying a defy as defy brand is said to be of a good quality. I'll therefore advise my friend to purchase any other brand including defy and discourage her to purchase Univa.
Reasons	
Reasons	
Price	I believe that a defy stove within a price range of R±3500-00 would be of a good quality. I payed a high price on Univa stove but I've already repaired it twice within a period of 4 years, Univa's solid plates cracks easily.
Maintenance	The guarantee for Univa stove was very short (12 months) after the expiry date of the guarantee we started experiencing problems with the stove. I would recommend that my friend settle for appliances with a longer guarantee (3 yrs) so that when it malfunction within the period you are able to return it to them without having to pay.
Guarantee	
M-3921	Refrigerator
Brand name	I purchased a refrigerator with 'Ocean' as its brand name. The refrigerator had dual functions ie it was both gas and electricity. I purchased the dual one because we did not have electricity then and I was hoping that in future we will have electricity. I purchased the refrigerator between (1994 & 1995). I'm satisfied with the appliance and I will thus advise my friend to purchase Ocean brand name. If in future I might want to change this refrigerator, I would also choose the Ocean brand because they are also strong.
Reasons	
Price	
Reasons	I would also advise my friend to purchase a refrigerator which falls within middle price range (±R2500-00). I believe that appliances that are priced high are of a good quality. (I have a bad experience with small appliances that were sold cheap. I had to repair many a times until I decided to discard them). Ever since I resorted to purchasing highly priced products, I got value for my money, the product have longer service life and I never had to return them for repairs.
Price	
Reasons	The sales people from where we bought the appliance were very friendly and they showed and explained to us how we should operate the refrigerator especially because the dual one with gas is difficult to operate.
Sales person	
Reasons	Warning
Price	I would warn my friend to purchase the refrigerator from retail store and avoid purchasing from people. I would also warn my friend not to purchase cheap products because they do not last long and he might be forced to replace them quickly because they are of inferior quality.

<p>4201</p> <p>Price Store Reasons</p> <p>Guarantee Reasons</p> <p>Brand name Reasons Maintenance Reasons Size Reasons</p> <p>Model</p> <p>Sales person Reasons</p>	<p>Refrigerator</p> <p>I'll advise my friend to purchase an expensive refrigerator (ranging from R4000-00 upwards) cheaper appliances do not last long. And I'll also advise her to purchase from reputable shops like Ellerines not from informal shops like (Indian shops) because their products are of inferior poor quality.</p> <p>Guarantee – I believe a guarantee period of about 3-4 yrs is a sign that a product is of good quality and if an appliance can need repairs before the expiry date of the guarantee, I feel that the product is of a poor quality and I'll therefore advise my friend to consider a longer guarantee for appliances.</p> <p>Brand name- GALAXY – I prefer Galaxy products because it is strong, it is easily maintained, parts are available for replacement. Consumption of electricity is ok and also its gas is ok. It lasts longer (bought in 1996).</p> <p>Size – I will also advise my friend to buy a bigger fridge. A bigger fridge is important especially during Christmas or even when relatives are visiting because you are able to place larger quantities of perishable food in it. I'll also recommend a double door fridge because if it happens that the other door or section malfunctions one would still be able to use the other one.</p> <p>I'll also warn my friend about salesperson. She must not let them stand in her way because what their interested in is only profit or commission. She must just buy what she wants to buy but not what the salesperson wants her to buy.</p>
<p>4462</p> <p>Model</p> <p>Product characteristic Reasons</p> <p>Size Reasons</p> <p>Economical</p> <p>Brand Reasons</p>	<p>Washing machine</p> <p>I'll advice my friend to purchase an automatic top loader washing machine, it guides you about the size of load one may put/insert in the machine it also guides you with the amount of detergent, fabric softener, bleach etc. It saves you time because you can let the machine do the washing whilst you continue with other household chores.</p> <p>I'll also advise my friend prior to purchase to consider the size of the machine and the purpose of the machine. If for example she would like to do laundry including blankets, I'll recommend a bigger machine, because smaller machine has smaller motors and cannot handle heavy loads. Also consider the size of the machine eg may not buy a 8,5 kg when they are only 3 in the family (smaller family). A top loader is a best buy, it saves time and labor it also saves electricity because it does everything within a short space of time as compared to a twin tub machine where you have to come into contact with the water. You are forced to add and remove water when washing, rinsing and adding stay soft.</p> <p>I'll advise my friend to choose a brand that has a good reputation and has long been in the market. New brands are cheaper than the old brand even though they might not be of the same quality as the old ones.</p>

4162	Stove
Store Price	I'll advise my friend to shop around before making a final decision to purchase with regard to price, I'll advise my friend to get quotations from different stores and compare prices.
Brand	I'll advise my friend to check on the brand name defy which is long lasting, some brand do not last long.
Price	I'll also advise to be prepared to part with money for her to get the best quality appliance.
Economical Product characteristic Reasons	Spiral plates on a stove consumes less electricity but breaks easily, has less heat retention capacity, is not easily cleaned and wears easily and I will thus advise my friend to purchase a stove with solid plates as the plates last long, are easy to clean, retains heat for a long time, do not break easily. The disadvantage of solid plates is that if you place a very cold pot on it when the stove is off, when you switch the stove on, the main switch is triggered to fall off. Arrangement of the appliances in the kitchen also affects the service life of the appliance eg steam from the cooked products damages the switch and the wires.
Household insurance	I'll also advice my friend to get a household insurance as the insurance we get from retailers is short lived. Once you pay off the account the insurance lapses or stops.
Store	I'll also recommend a store with a good reputation of selling best quality appliances.
	Fridge – double door fridge
Size	I'll advise my friend to check the capacity/size of the fridge, because she would be able to buy enough food to store for the whole month or more. I'll also
Model	advise her to check if the refrigerator is a frost free refrigerator, and I'll advise her to purchase the frost free refrigerator, bcos she wouldn't be able to find
Reasons	crystal ice over her freezed stuff (crystal ice is very poisonous for your health), with frost-free you'll have the grazed ice, which is advantageous to have on freezed stuff, (not poisonous). When washing it you don't need to defrost the refrigerator as it is frost-free, u need to cool it down a little bit (for an hour or two) then wipe with a clean cloth, then switch it on again.
Product characteristic Colour	The modern fridges contains plastic racks, and with colors. I would advice her to go for the silver color, bcos she doesn't have to wipe it everyday.
Product characteristic	U could wash the frost free only once per trimester – (time and energy saving)
	I would advise her to check-out the brand name and I would advise her to go

Brand name	for the old brand-names i.e. Kelvinator, LG, Samsung. As we invest a lot of trust in them. I would advise her to go for the refrigerators with chilled rooms and storage rooms in.
Product characteristic	Refrigerators that have the juice, water, milk, crushed or cubed ice on the outside of the door for our convenience.