AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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DECLARATION

I, Evan Koekemoer, hereby declare that:

- the work in this dissertation is my own original work;

- all sources used or referred to have been documented and recognized; and

- this study has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfilment of the requirements for an equivalent or higher qualification at any other recognized educational institution.

Evan Koekemoer

January 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each individual/household progresses through the family life cycle (FLC). This progression, which is characterized by various stages and varying consumption portfolios, can be traditional or non-traditional in nature.

In the general marketing sense, the FLC concept has great value. The concept is utilized in a variety of marketing activities, particularly in segmentation, and is also applied in consumer behaviour.

The lack of research regarding the FLC in South Africa and the need to investigate the concept's applicability to different environments motivated this research. The aim of the study was to determine how the FLC within a South African context compared to the theoretical depiction of the concept.

The evaluation of literature revealed five distinct traditional stages and an array of non-traditional stages, determined by a combination of life stage determining variables. Regarding the empirical approach, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample consisting of 225 students and staff members of the then Port Elizabeth Technikon. The empirical findings revealed the following.

- Non-traditional stages were more prevalent than traditional stages.

- Marital status, the presence/absence of children and living arrangement appear to be sufficient life stage determining variables for both current and prospective life stage classifications.

- The consumption portfolios of individuals in the traditional FLC were similar to theory. The research provided insight into the consumption portfolios of individuals in the non-traditional FLC.

- Based on the intentions of certain individuals regarding marriage, having children and living arrangements, it appears as though the future FLC will include an integration of traditional and non-traditional progressions.

KEY WORDS: Consumer behaviour

Consumption

Contemporary family life cycle

Family

Household

Non-traditional family life cycle

Segmentation

Traditional family life cycle

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 REASONS FOR THE STUDY

For years sociologists and marketers have recognized the fact that as household members grow older, most families tend to pass through a rather stable and predictable series of stages. "These stages constitute what has become known as the family life cycle (FLC)" (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:434).

Lee and Norman (1996:¶1) define the FLC as an attempt "to explain consumer behavior patterns of individuals as they age, marry, have children, [and] retire". Alternatively, the FLC represents the "idea that domestic groups typically undergo a cyclical process of birth, growth, decay, and dissolution over time" (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan 2002:511). These contrasting viewpoints indicate that the FLC concept can be applied to both individual consumers and household units as consumer-related variables in the marketing environment.

In the general marketing sense, marketers employ the concept of the FLC when segmenting the market, analyzing market potential, identifying target markets and developing more effective marketing strategies (Peter & Olson 1999:344). Kotler and Armstrong (2001:180) reason that the concept's utility even extends to product development and the formation of marketing plans.

The FLC's value in the process of market segmentation is emphasized by authors, such as Arnould et al (2002:511); Cant, Brink and Brijball (2002:195); Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2004:171); Loudon and Bitta (1984:297); Solomon (2002:359) and Stanton, Etzel and Walker (1994:132). Zikmund and d'Amico (2001:226) explain that individuals of the same age with different family structures (for example, single, married with children and married without children) are likely to have little in common regarding their spending behaviour. In such situations, the FLC is a more precise segmentation variable than age.

Marketers should be aware that at each stage of the life cycle, domestic units can be grouped into market segments with distinct needs, attitudes and desires (Arnould et al 2002:511). Furthermore, people's consumption of various types of products/services increase or decrease in importance as they progress from one FLC stage to the next or take on different life roles (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:434).

The FLC concept is furthermore particularly useful as a demographic variable explaining why people of the same age and gender have different consumption patterns (Lamb et al 2004:171; Stanton et al 1994:131). According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:54), "the FLC-based classification of age offers marketers valuable insights into the consumption patterns of customers as they move from one age group to the next".

The FLC model is essentially an American concept. Bellón, Vela and Manzano (2001:613) aptly point out that "FLC models were conceived by taking the US family as the almost exclusive reference". Up to the 1950s and mid 1960s "most Americans followed the same life path and went through about the same stages in life. People got married, had children, stayed married, raised their children and sent them on their way, grew old, retired, and eventually died". This "linear sequence of family types" constituted the notion of a traditional FLC (Peter & Olson 1999:341).

However, "what was the rule has been on the decline" (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:285) since the late 1970s. It is at this point that the traditional FLC no longer seemed to adequately represent the typical path through which households and living arrangements progressed (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:436). This 'deviation' from the 'norm' was brought on by cultural, sociodemographic and lifestyle trends, as well as technological advances that have influenced the structure and profile of the American family (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:436). For these reasons the non-traditional FLC was developed.

Not only has it become necessary to reconsider the paths of the FLC, but it has also been suggested that the concept be renamed. Engel et al (in Krisjanous no date:2); Wilkes (in Bellón et al 2001:618) and Wilkie (in Krisjanous no date:2) suggest the use of household life cycle over family life cycle as a more descriptive term. The suggestion to revise the terminology can be attributed to the growing integration of family types (Wilkes in Bellón

et al 2001:618). It can, however, also be speculated that this revision could have been influenced by the cultural, sociodemographic, lifestyle and technological trends in modern American society (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:436), as well as the classical distinction between families and households.

Families are regarded as individuals who share some form of relation - either by blood, marriage, or adoption; whereas households consist of members not necessarily related by any of these factors (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:275-276). However, Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:276) argue that the terms household and family be treated as synonyms in the context of consumer behaviour. These authors maintain that the traditional FLC be limited to traditional family structures, whereas the non-traditional FLC should incorporate (non-traditional) family structures, as well as non-family structures (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:290).

It has been pointed out that the FLC model is essentially based on the American situation. There is, however, a need to investigate the FLC in different environments. Bellón et al (2001:613) aptly state that "FLC models, and their use in segmentation when they concern consumption, ought to be verified in the environment of each country". The adaptation of FLC models to the socioeconomic progress in the United States of America equally necessitates an assessment of the extent of parallel progression in other countries and environments (Bellón et al 2001:613).

As far as could be determined through database searches, relatively little research has been done regarding the FLC in South Africa. Given the value of the concept in the field of marketing and consumer behaviour and the need to investigate its applicability to different environments, the following research question arose:

"Can a family life cycle (FLC) be identified within a South African context and if so, how does it compare to the theoretical depiction of the concept?"

From this question, the following related issues arose:

- what, according to literature, is a typical FLC?
- how do the life stage determining variables prescribed in literature apply to the FLC within a South African context?
- what, according to the literature and empirical study, are the typical product/service requirements at each stage of the FLC?
- which FLC classification (traditional or non-traditional) if any, is more prevalent within a South African context?
- which of the terms family life cycle or household life cycle would be the more accurate term for a life cycle within a South African context?
- how will certain individuals' future family plans influence the FLC?
- can a unique FLC be identified within a South African context?

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Given the need to investigate the FLC within different environments, it cannot simply be assumed that the American based FLC is applicable to the South African market environment. Local marketers could lose market potential because of inefficient segmentation schemes directed at South African life stages dissimilar to theoretical (American) descriptions of these stages. The research was hence important for the reasons stated below.

- Given the function of the FLC in market segmentation and targeting, marketers should be aware of how the prescribed life stage determining variables influence the structure of the FLC within a South African context.

- Considering the influence of the FLC on consumption behaviour, marketers should have an understanding of the product/service needs of consumers as they move through the FLC.

- Local marketers should be aware of an anticipated future structure of the South African FLC to enable effective planning of marketing activities.

- It would appear that little research has been done regarding FLCs in South Africa.

This research could therefore lead to a better understanding of the FLC within a South African context, while also contributing to the limited body of knowledge that exists, possibly invoking greater interest in the subject.

1.3 OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED

The preceding discussions led to the following research objectives, namely to:

- examine the literature regarding the FLC and provide an understanding of the concept;

- determine whether the life stage determining variables identified from literature apply to the FLC within a South African context;

- identify the similarities and differences between the foreign models and the South African one, based on the literature and empirical studies;

- provide some insight into the consumption portfolios associated with the FLC stages that result from the empirical research; and

- explain what impact individuals' prospective family plans might have on the future FLC.

1.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

The following is a brief overview of the procedure employed to address the objectives of the research.

1.4.1   Literature study

A study of books, journals, articles and electronic sources was undertaken to provide a conceptual framework for the research. The literature review is contained in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.4.3   Empirical study

Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2000:36-37) reason that the research design serves as a master plan for the empirical study. The main elements of the research design as described by Sekaran (2000:121-122) are briefly described below. Chapter 4 provides a more detailed description of the research methodology.

The current study was classified as descriptive research. The aim of the research was to investigate the existence of a South African FLC and identify the similarities and differences between the foreign models and the South African one. The goal was not to generalize the resulting life stages to the total South African population.

The type of investigation was quantitative. Baines and Chansarkar (2002:23-24) stipulate three research methods generally associated with quantitative investigations, namely surveys, observation and experimentation. In this instance, the survey method was employed. Self-administered questionnaires were directed at a convenience sample of 225 respondents. The sample from the then Port Elizabeth Technikon College Campus

(subsequently named Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University [NMMU], Second Avenue Campus) was grouped as follows:

- 100 questionnaires were distributed to full-time students;
- 75 questionnaires were distributed to part-time students;
- and the remaining 50 questionnaires were distributed to full and part-time staff members.

In terms of sample proportions, it was assumed that most full-time students would represent the early stages of the FLC and would hence contribute information regarding possible future structures. Part-time students and staff members were expected to represent a variety of FLC stages.

1.5   REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The FLC is discussed extensively in American marketing and consumer behaviour literature. This can be attributed to the fact that the FLC is historically an American concept. In contrast, as far as could be determined through Internet and literature searches, a limited body of knowledge exists regarding the FLC in South Africa.

South African research that could be sourced included the South African Advertising Research Foundation's (SAARF) life stage classification system used by South African marketers for segmentation purposes, along with a report by Corder (2004:slide 1-119) who utilized the SAARF classification.

This classification system, which categorizes individuals/households according to a combination of age, marital status, living arrangement and the presence or absence of children, is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

A number of studies correlate the FLC and consumption behaviour. Bellón et al (2001:619-620), for example, report on research done by Danko and Schaninger (dated 1990 & 1993 respectively) who investigated food and beverage consumption relating to the FLC. Cruz and Redondo added a third category, namely cosmetics, in their 1998 study (Bellón et al 2001:620). Fritzsche (1981:227-232) analyzed energy consumption patterns per FLC stage. In a more general sense Bellón et al (2001:612-638) adapted a FLC model reflecting the particular characteristics of the Spanish social environment.

Existing research on the FLC is discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3. The paucity of information and lack of related South African research was a clear indication that research regarding the FLC in South Africa was necessary. This study is expected to help fill the gap.

1.6   DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS

The following section firstly defines the FLC concept. This is followed by a discussion of the life stage determining variables and of alternative FLC classifications. Lastly, a report on the conceptual evolution of the FLC model is provided.   Although such detail in this chapter might be deemed

unconventional, an extended definition and discussion of the FLC is necessary as it provides a framework for the discussions to follow in Chapters 2 and 3. Furthermore, it formulates the contextual description of the FLC to be adopted for the current study.

1.6.1   Definition of the family life cycle concept

The FLC encompasses a series of stages commencing with independence (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:285) or formation (Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley & Rudelius 2000:166; Javalgi & Dion 1999:75) and concluding with dissolution (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:285) or retirement (Berkowitz et al 2000:166). It has been established that the FLC concept can be applied to both individual consumers and households as market forms (Loudon & Bitta 1984:297; Sheth & Mittal 2004:54; Watson no date:¶7). Bellón et al (2001:614) and Lee and Norman (1996:¶1) support the individual perspective. When referring to households, Hanna and Wozniak (2001:434); Kotler and Armstrong (2001:180); Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:285) and Zikmund and d'Amico (2001:225) define the concept in terms of the family unit. Arnould et al (2002:511) prefer the term domestic group, which provides a more neutral approach to the concepts of families and households. For the purpose of the current study, the FLC is defined in terms of the series of stages through which individuals and domestic groups (incorporating families and households) advance over time.

1.6.2   Life stage determining variables

Bellón et al (2001:614) portray the FLC "as a multidimensional variable resulting from combining other unidimensional ones".   Gursoy (2000:69) argues that these unidimensional variables (such as age, marital and employment status) are socioeconomic and/or demographic in nature. However, various authors differ in opinion as to which variables determine the structure of the FLC (i.e. the number and sequence of stages).   The opinions of selected authors on proposed life stage determining variables are summarized in Table 1.1. A more detailed discussion follows the table.

TABLE 1.1

VARIABLES DETERMINING THE LIFE CYCLE STAGE

	Age	Marital status	Children	Employment status	Death	Family size
Bellón et al (2001); Gursoy (2000); Hanna & Wozniak (2001); Watson (no date); Xiao (1996)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cant et al (2002); Schiffman & Kanuk (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lamb et al (2004); Solomon (2002)	✓	✓	✓			
Peter & Olson (1999)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Own construction

Bellón et al (2001:614) and Watson (no date:¶6) are of the opinion that variables, such as age, marital and employment status and the age of the youngest child, have a significant impact on the structure of the FLC. Hanna and Wozniak (2001:434); Lamb et al (2004:171); Solomon (2002:360) and

Xiao (1996:22) also include age and marital status. The reference made to children, however, relates to their presence or absence, as well as their age. Hanna and Wozniak (2001:434) also include the employment status of the head of the household. On the other hand, Xiao (1996:22) regards the retirement status of this individual as an influential factor.

Peter and Olson (1999:341) are of opinion that marriage, birth and the departure of children, aging, retirement and death should define the structure of the FLC. Cant et al (2002:195) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:285), on the other hand, argue that marital status, the size of the family, the age of the oldest and youngest child and employment are the variables that should be considered in determining the structure of the FLC.

Wells and Gubar (in Gursoy 2000:69) had already concluded in 1966 that the FLC is a multivariate concept defined by the household head's age, marital and employment status, and by the age of the youngest child. For the purpose of the current research, these life stage determining variables are accepted (and verified in the empirical research) as Wells and Gubar have been credited as the most frequently referenced researchers in the marketing context (Kirsjanous no date:2; Watson no date:¶8). However, the current research does not focus exclusively on the age, marital and employment status of the household head. Derrick and Lehfeld (in Xiao 1996:22) propose a similar approach. The life stage determining variables are used separately as indicators of the life stage. Furthermore, the ages of children are excluded and only their presence or absence is considered.

1.6.4   Alternative family life cycle classifications

As pointed out earlier, the FLC can be divided into a traditional and non-traditional (contemporary) classification.   Each of these is subsequently described in more detail.

1.6.4.1   The traditional family life cycle

The traditional cycle follows an encoded sequence that starts with a bachelorhood stage, progresses to matrimony, family augmentation and reduction, and ends with the disbanding of the basic unit (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:285). Kirsjanous (no date:2) reasons that "transition through stages in the traditional models is consecutive, with no acknowledgement that some may 'recycle' to former stages".

The traditional FLC incorporates two of the three family types suggested by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:276-277), namely the married couple (husband and wife) and the nuclear family (the spouses and one or more children). It disregards the extended family (the nuclear family and at least one grandparent residing together).

1.6.4.2   The non-traditional family life cycle

The traditional FLC can no longer sufficiently symbolize the path through which contemporary domestic and living arrangements progress (Hanna &

Wozniak 2001:436).   Non-traditional arrangements are the result of cultural changes and sociodemographic factors such as delayed marriages, divorce and the absence of children (Peter & Olson 1999:342; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:289).

Unlike the traditional FLC, the contemporary scheme does not necessarily follow an encoded sequence.   It can rather be argued that any deviation from the traditional progression constitutes a contemporary life cycle.

Hanna and Wozniak (2001:436-437) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:290-291) reason that the non-traditional FLC includes both non-traditional family and non-family households.   Non-traditional family households are composed of:

- childless couples;
- couples who marry later in life;
- couples who have their first child later in life;
- couples with a child or children, who enter into matrimony;
- single parents; and
- extended families.

Non-family households are composed of:

- unmarried couples;
- divorced persons with no children;

- single persons; and

- widowed persons.

1.6.4   Evolution of the family life cycle model

The stages of the FLC are customarily depicted in a model. As established earlier, the model typically starts with an independent/formation stage and concludes with a dissolution stage. The stages between these extremes are influenced by the life stage determining variables.

Based on the evaluation of existing literature, it was determined that a substantial number of life cycle models have been developed. Each of these models presents a unique approach to the life cycle concept. The number and description of the various stages differ for each model, probably due to the different applications of the life stage determining variables.

According to Murphy and Staples (in Bellón et al 2001:614), there are three periods in the "conceptual evolution" of the FLC concept. These periods and the major contributors of models in each phase are depicted in Figure 1.1. The figure was compiled from information by Bellón et al (2001:614); Krisjanous (no date:2); Schiffman and Kanuk (1987:410) and Watson (no date:¶8).

FIGURE 1.1

THE PERIODS IN THE 'CONCEPTUAL EVOLUTION'

OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

TRADITIONAL FLC MODELS	TRADITIONAL FLC MODELS	TRADITIONAL & NON-TRADITIONAL FLC MODELS
PERIOD 1 Up to 1930s	**PERIOD 2** 1940s – 1950s	**PERIOD 3** 1960 – present day
CONTRIBUTORS: Rowntree (dated 1903) Kirkpatrick et al (dated 1934)	CONTRIBUTORS: Bigelow (dated 1942) Glick (dated 1947) Lansing & Morgan (dated 1955) Lansing & Kish (dated 1957) Blood & Wolfe (dated 1958)	CONTRIBUTORS: Farber (dated 1964) Wells & Gubar (dated 1966) Duvall (dated 1971) Murphy & Staples (dated 1979) Gilly & Enis (dated 1982) Hepworth (dated 1987)

Source: Own construction

During the founding period (first phase lasting up to the 1930s) the model consisted of as little as four stages. The concept was further developed during the "period of expansion" (second phase lasting through the 1940s and 1950s) and was comprised of a maximum of seven stages. The final period, which extends from the 1960s to the present day, appears to include the most comprehensive models. In certain instances, these comprehensive models consist of 13 stages. Lifestyle arrangements during this period necessitated the need for the development of non-traditional models, such as those contributed by Murphy and Staples and Gilly and Enis (Bellón et al 2001:614).

1.7   CHAPTER OUTLINE

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 detailed the reasons for the study, the objectives to be achieved and the research approach. It furthermore contained a definition and discussion of the FLC.

The report on the literature study is contained in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 focuses on the stages and characteristics of the traditional FLC, while Chapter 3 focuses on the stages and characteristics of the non-traditional FLC. The constructed consumption portfolios associated with each of the traditional stages are contained in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 includes a less meticulous discussion of consumption related aspects due to a lack of available literature.

The report on the empirical study is contained in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the research design, while Chapter 5 presents the findings resulting from the empirical study.

Chapter 6 consists of a synopsis of the study and lists the conclusions and recommendations on both the literature and empirical findings.

CHAPTER 2

TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGES

AND ASSOCIATED CONSUMPTION PORTFOLIOS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The concept of the FLC was delineated in Chapter 1. It was established that the concept is divided into two classifications: the traditional and non-traditional (contemporary) FLC.   The current chapter focuses on the traditional FLC.   This chapter commences with an overview of various traditional FLC models. A discussion of the stages of a selected traditional FLC model follows.

2.2   ALTERNATIVE TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODELS

It was pointed out in Chapter 1 that a number of traditional models have been developed. Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2 illustrate the stages of these alternative life cycle models which exemplify how family and household types were classified and how the concept was redefined and expanded through the second and third periods of development (see Figure 1.1).

The various stages of alternative traditional models have been synthesized into five broad categories, each with a descriptive caption.   Table 2.1 contains a selection of four alternative traditional models (two each from

periods 2 and 3 as illustrated in Figure 1.1) and illustrates how the stages of

these models were synthesized into a new classification.

TABLE 2.1

ALTERNATIVE TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODELS

LANSING & KISH (1957)	BLOOD & WOLFE (1958)	FARBER (1964)	WELLS & GUBAR (1966)	SYNTHESIZED MODEL
Young single		Premarital stage	Bachelor stage, not living at home	**Stage I: Bachelorhood**
Young married couple, no children	Honeymoon stage, childless and married less than four years	Couple stage	Newly married couple, young, without children	**Stage II: Honeymooners**
Young married couple, with youngest child under six years	Preschool stage, oldest child under six years	Preschool phase	Full nest I, youngest child under six years	**Stage III: Parenthood**
Young married couple, with youngest child six years or older	Preadolescent stage, oldest child six to 12 years	Elementary school phase	Full nest II, youngest child six years or older	
	Adolescent stage, oldest child 13 to 18 years	High school phase	Full nest III, older married couple with dependent children	
	Unlaunched stage, oldest child 19 years or older and still living at home	College phase		
		Post school phase		
Older married couple, no children	Post parental stage (children have left home)	In-law phase	Empty nest I, no children at home, head in labour force	**Stage IV: Post parenthood**
		Grandparent phase	Empty nest II, head retired	
Older single individual	Retired stage, non-employed husband 60 or over	Widowhood and remarriage	Solitary survivor, in labour force	**Stage V: Dissolution**
		End of cycle	Solitary survivor, retired	

Source: Adapted from Schiffman & Kanuk (1987:410)

The table illustrates that the models typically start with a stage consisting of young single individuals (bachelorhood). The marital status variable influences this stage and is responsible for these individuals' transition into Stage II (honeymooners). At this stage children are still absent in the life cycle.

The presence of children classifies the married couple in the next stage, namely parenthood. This is the first stage to be divided into sub-stages. As can be deduced from the table, Lansing and Kish and Blood and Wolfe utilize the age of the children as a dividing factor in their models, while the focus is also on the children's dependence on their parents in the Wells and Gubar model. Farber meticulously divides the parenthood stage into five sub-stages.

Stage IV (post parenthood) is once again determined by the absence of children (as in the case of the bachelorhood and honeymooners stages). In the Wells and Gubar model, the employment status of the household head is incorporated into this stage.

Stage V (dissolution) is determined by a permutation of variables. Age is incorporated into the models of Lansing and Kish and Blood and Wolfe. Lansing and Kish, as well as Farber utilize marital status and Wells and Gubar retain the employment status as an influential factor in their model.

Figure 2.1 depicts Duvall's FLC model. It appears that a discrepancy exists regarding the date of origin of Duvall's model. Although Bellón et al (2001:614) and Watson (no date:¶8) reference this model as 1971, Gursoy (2000:69) and Kirsjanous (no date:2), in contrast, date this model earlier to 1957 and 1955 respectively.

FIGURE 2.1

DUVALL'S FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL

Stage 1 Establishment (newly married, childless)	→	**Stage 2** New parents (infant to 3 years)	→	**Stage 3** Preschool family (oldest child 3 to 6 years, possibly younger siblings)
Stage 6 Family with young adult (oldest child 20, until first child leaves home)	←	**Stage 5** Family with adolescent (oldest child 13 to 19 years, possibly younger siblings)	←	**Stage 4** School-age family (oldest child 6 to 12 years, possibly younger siblings)
Stage 7 Family as launching centre (from departure of first child to departure of last child)	→	**Stage 8** Postparental family (after all children have left home)		

Source: Adapted from Duvall's family life cycle (no date:278)

As with the Blood and Woolfe model, Duvall's model deviates from the 'typical' model as it omits young single people as the starting point for the model and instead commences with married individuals who remain childless (stage 1). Marital status and the absence of children thus influence this stage.

Stages 2 to 7 depict the presence of children and their relevant age at each stage. Stage 8 is influenced only by the absence of children and this is the final stage of the model, thus no dissolution stage is recognized.

2.3   TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL ADOPTED FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

The preceding section introduced a selection of traditional models. The Wells and Gubar life cycle classification (contained in Table 2.1) is considered to be the "internationally recognised classification system" (Lancaster no date:3). The model utilizes marital status, the head of the household's age, the age of the youngest child, the dependence of children and the head's participation in the labour force as taxonomy criteria (Bellón et al 2001:615). The model consists of a total of nine stages and divides the parenthood, post parenthood and dissolution stages into sub-stages according to a combination of the life stage determining variables.

The synthesized model (also contained in Table 2.1) consists of five stages and is acknowledged by Cant et al (2002:195); Hanna and Wozniak (2001:434) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:285). Although the model is less meticulous in nature, it is regarded as a sufficient classification system for the purpose of the current study. The life stage determining variables of age, marital and employment status are not limited only to the household head. Furthermore, the ages of children are excluded and only their presence or absence is considered.

2.4   TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGES

A description of each of the five stages contained in the synthesized traditional model follows. These descriptions highlight selected categories of products and services typically consumed at each stage. Only the products and services that were referenced by at least three literature sources are included in the tables positioned at the end of each section. Other products and services that merit acknowledgment are mentioned in the text.

2.4.1   Bachelorhood

Cant et al (2002:195); Churchill and Peter (1995:239); Peter and Donnelly (1998:63) and Peter and Olson (1999:342) concur that individuals (males and females) in the bachelorhood stage are young, single and do not live with their parents. Loudon and Bitta (1984:297) and Stanton et al (1994:131) agree that these individuals are young and single, but neglect to establish whether they have independent living arrangements.

Members of this stage are either typically employed on a full-time basis or studying at tertiary institutions (Cant et al 2002:195; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:285). Those individuals with a source of income are said to frequently have a sufficient amount of disposable income - "the amount of income left to an individual after taxes have been paid, available for spending and saving" (Investorwords.com 2003:¶1) - to indulge themselves (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:286). On the other hand, Loudon and Bitta (1984:297) argue that

although these individuals have relatively low earnings, their discretionary income - the amount of disposable income left after paying for necessities, such as food, rent, furnishings and insurance (Perreault & McCarthy 2002:146) - is rather high due to few financial burdens. Kotler (1991:171) and Lamb et al (2004:172) confirm the lack of financial burdens.

Irrespective of their type of funding, bachelorhood individuals have considerable purchasing power "and their lack of responsibilities gives them considerable discretion in spending it" (Peter & Olson 1999:342). These individuals thus typically have money available to consume the products and services they desire in this independent state.

Kotler (1991:171); Lamb et al (2004:172) and Loudon and Bitta (1984:297) characterize consumers in the bachelorhood stage as "recreation-orientated" and "fashion opinion leaders". These characteristics are expected to have an influence on their consumption of products and services during this stage.

Berkowitz et al (2000:166) argue that bachelorhood individuals consume non-durable items, such as prepared foods and personal care products. Home furnishings include basic furniture and kitchen equipment (Kotler 1991:171). Table 2.2 portrays bachelors' typical consumption portfolio as identified by selected literature sources.

TABLE 2.2

CONSUMPTION PORTFOLIO ASSOCIATED WITH

THE BACHELORHOOD STAGE

	Home furnishings	Vehicle-related consumption	Clothing and accessories	Entertainment/ Recreation	Travelling/ Vacationing
Analysis of retailing industry #5 (no date)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Berkowitz et al (2000)			✓	✓	
Cant et al (2002)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friedman (2000)			✓	✓	✓
Hanna & Wozniak (2001)				✓	
Kotler (1991)	✓	✓			✓
Lamb et al (2004)	✓	✓			✓
Loudon & Bitta (1984)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Schiffman & Kanuk (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zikmund & d'Amico (2001)		✓	✓	✓	

Source: Own construction

2.4.3   Honeymooners

Cant et al (2002:195) state that bachelorhood individuals progress to the honeymoon stage immediately after the wedding vows are taken and continue to be categorized as honeymooners until the married couple's first child is born. Churchill and Peter (1995:239); Peter and Donnelly (1998:63) and Stanton et al (1994:131) agree that children remain absent during this stage.

Lancaster (no date:4) labels honeymooners as 'DINKIES'. The term 'DINKY' is an acronym for 'Double Income No Kids Yet' (Information for marketing

2003:¶10). The double income notion results from the assumption that both spouses are employed during this stage of the FLC (Berkowitz et al 2000:166; Cant et al 2002:195; Sheth & Mittal 2004:54).

Honeymooners use their combined income to now purchase and consume durable goods as opposed to the non-durable goods they utilized during their bachelorhood stage (Lamb et al 2004:172; Perreault & McCarthy 2002:147; Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:227). Home furnishings are now composed of durable furniture (Kotler 1991:171) and a variety of appliances (Cant et al 2002:195). Table 2.3 portrays honeymooners' typical consumption portfolio as identified by selected literature sources.

TABLE 2.3

CONSUMPTION PORTFOLIO ASSOCIATED WITH

THE HONEYMOONERS STAGE

	Home furnishings	Vehicle-related consumption	Clothing and accessories	Entertainment/ Recreation	Travelling/ Vacationing
Analysis of retailing industry #5 (no date)	✓		✓		✓
Berkowitz et al (2000)	✓				
Cant et al (2002)	✓				
Friedman (2000)		✓	✓		✓
Hanna & Wozniak (2001)				✓	
Kotler (1991)	✓	✓			✓
Lamb et al (2004)	✓	✓			✓
Loudon & Bitta (1984)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Perreault & McCarthy (2002)	✓	✓			
Sheth & Mittal (2004)		✓	✓		✓
Stanton et al (1994)		✓	✓	✓	
Zikmund & d'Amico (2001)	✓			✓	

Source: Own construction

2.4.3   Parenthood

When the married couple have their first child, the honeymoon stage ends and the married couple move into the parenthood stage, which continues as long as at least one child stays in the parents' home (Cant et al 2002:196; Hanna & Wozniak 2001:434; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:286).   This stage, which has an estimated duration of 20 years, is also affectionately referred to as the full nest stage (Cant et al 2002:196; Lancaster no date:4; Peter & Donnelly 1998:63; Stanton et al 1994:131).

During this parental stage, children signify the fundamental transformation in the pattern of individual/family development that most influences consumption patterns (Watson no date:¶10).   Parents' expenditure patterns are now often driven by the needs of their children (Berkowitz et al 2000:166).

As was the case in the honeymoon stage, full nesters still consume durables (Kotler 1991:171) and they now have a particular interest in new products (Kotler 1991:171; Lamb et al 2004:172; Loudon & Bitta 1984:298). Table 2.4 portrays full nesters' consumption portfolio as identified by selected literature sources.

TABLE 2.4

CONSUMPTION PORTFOLIO ASSOCIATED WITH

THE PARENTHOOD STAGE

	Homes	Home furnishings	Food	Toys	Education	Children's lessons	Travelling/ Vacationing	Medical products/services
Analysis of retailing industry #5 (no date)	✓				✓		✓	
Friedman (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Hanna & Wozniak (2001)			✓					
Kotler (1991)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Lamb et al (2004)	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Loudon & Bitta (1984)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Solomon (2002)			✓					
Zikmund & d'Amico (2001)		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

Source: Own construction

The expanded consumption portfolio is influenced by the presence of children. Food consumption includes baby food, bulk food purchases and fast food from restaurants (Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:227). Hanna and Wozniak (2001:435) and Solomon (2002:362) also emphasize health food consumption. Education-related consumption extends over four periods: pre-school, elementary school, high school and tertiary education (Cant et al 2002:196). Educational consumption also exists in the form of children's lessons, for example, music and dance lessons (Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:227). In addition to the products listed, Loudon and Bitta (1984:303) and Solomon (2002:362) also highlight the consumption of child care services.

2.4.4   Post parenthood

The (now older) married couple enters the post parenthood stage (also referred to as the empty nest stage) when their children no longer reside with them (Cant et al 2002:196; Hanna & Wozniak 2001:434; Lancaster no date:4; Stanton et al 1994:132). The departure of the now independent children from the 'nest', initiates a new individual life cycle (bachelorhood) for the children.

Berkowitz et al (2000:166) and Zikmund and d'Amico (2001:227) concur that empty nesters possess a substantial amount of discretionary income. Some retire while still healthy (Cant et al 2002:196; Lancaster no date:4; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:288). Unlike full nesters, empty nesters are not interested in new products (Kotler 1991:171; Lamb et al 2004:222; Loudon & Bitta 1984:298).

Empty nesters might refurnish their homes or sell them in favour of smaller ones, as the children no longer reside with them (Cant et al 2002:196). Medical and educational-related consumption are now geared toward the parents, with mothers typically furthering their education during this stage (Cant et al 2002:196; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:288). A great part of empty nesters' discretionary income is spent on vacations (Sheth & Mittal 2004:54). Table 2.5 portrays empty nesters' consumption portfolio as identified by selected literature sources.

TABLE 2.5

CONSUMPTION PORTFOLIO ASSOCIATED WITH

THE POST PARENTHOOD STAGE

	Homes	Home furnishings	Education	Travelling/ Vacationing	Recreation	Medical products/services
Analysis of retailing industry #5 (no date)	✓			✓	✓	
Berkowitz et al (2000)		✓				
Cant et al (2002)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Friedman (2000)	✓			✓		
Kotler (1991)			✓	✓	✓	✓
Lamb et al (2004)			✓	✓		✓
Loudon & Bitta (1984)	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Schiffman & Kanuk (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Zikmund & d'Amico (2001)	✓			✓	✓	

Source: Own construction

2.4.5   Dissolution

The dissolution stage is brought on by the death of one spouse (Cant et al 2002:196; Hanna & Wozniak 2001:434; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:288). In essence, the remaining spouse returns to a bachelorhood-like stage, but now older, independent and single, still working or retired (Churchill & Peter 1995:239; Kotler 1991:171; Lancaster no date:4; Peter & Donnelly 1998:64; Stanton et al 1994:132). In some instances, these individuals enter into subsequent marriages (Cant et al 2002:196; Schiffman & Kanuk 2004:288).

Products and services associated with this stage mostly include travelling/vacationing (Berkowitz et al 2000:167; Loudon & Bitta 1984:298) and health/medical products and services (Berkowitz et al 2000:167; Kotler 1991:171; Loudon & Bitta 1984:298; Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:227).

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter commenced with a description of various alternative traditional models. The five stages contained in the synthesized FLC model were described and the consumption portfolios associated with each stage highlighted.

Chapter 3 focuses on the non-traditional FLC, evaluates various non-traditional models and describes non-traditional stages and (where available) associated consumption aspects.

CHAPTER 3

NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGES

AND ASSOCIATED CONSUMPTION ASPECTS

3.2   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 described the stages of a traditional FLC model and expanded on related consumption portfolios. The current chapter firstly assesses various non-traditional FLC models, thereafter describes the stages of a number of non-traditional models and elaborates on consumption aspects associated with selected stages. The chapter concludes with a revision of the life stage determining variables.

3.2   ALTERNATIVE NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODELS

The most acknowledged non-traditional life cycle models are those of Murphy and Staples (dated 1979) and Gilly and Enis (dated 1982) (Bellón et al 2001:614; Kirsjanous no date:2), developed during the third period of the FLC's evolution (see Figure 1.1). Unique to the South African context is the SAARF classification system. The two models and classification system are now discussed in further detail.

3.2.1   The Murphy and Staples model

The Murphy and Staples model, a modernization of the traditional Wells and Gubar model, allowed space for non-traditional (American) family types. These family types were the result of:

- divorce;
- cohabiting couples (not married);
- individuals getting married at a younger age;
- a decrease in the average number of individuals per household and in the frequency of large families; and
- an increase in the number of single-person households (Bellón et al 2001:615).

The model added the category divorced in marital status (Bellón et al 2001:615), a life stage determining variable that disrupts the FLC pattern (Perreault & McCarthy 2002:147; Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:226). The head of the household's age became organized into three bands – young (below 35 years), middle-aged (35 to 64 years) and older (above 64 years). The ages of the children also allowed for the creation of sub-stages (Bellón et al 2001:615). Gursoy (2000:70) and Lee and Norman (1996:¶1) add that in addition to divorced stages, the model also incorporated childless stages.

The Murphy and Staples model, depicted in Figure 3.1, contains a flow diagram that incorporates recycled flows (Kirsjanous no date:2). The main

horizontal queue portrays the stages of the traditional FLC. Above and below the main horizontal queue are selected alternative FLC stages that represent some significant contemporary family households (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:289).

FIGURE 3.1

THE MURPHY AND STAPLES FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL

| Usual flow | Traditional stages (Main horizontal queue) |
| Recycled flow | Non-traditional stages |
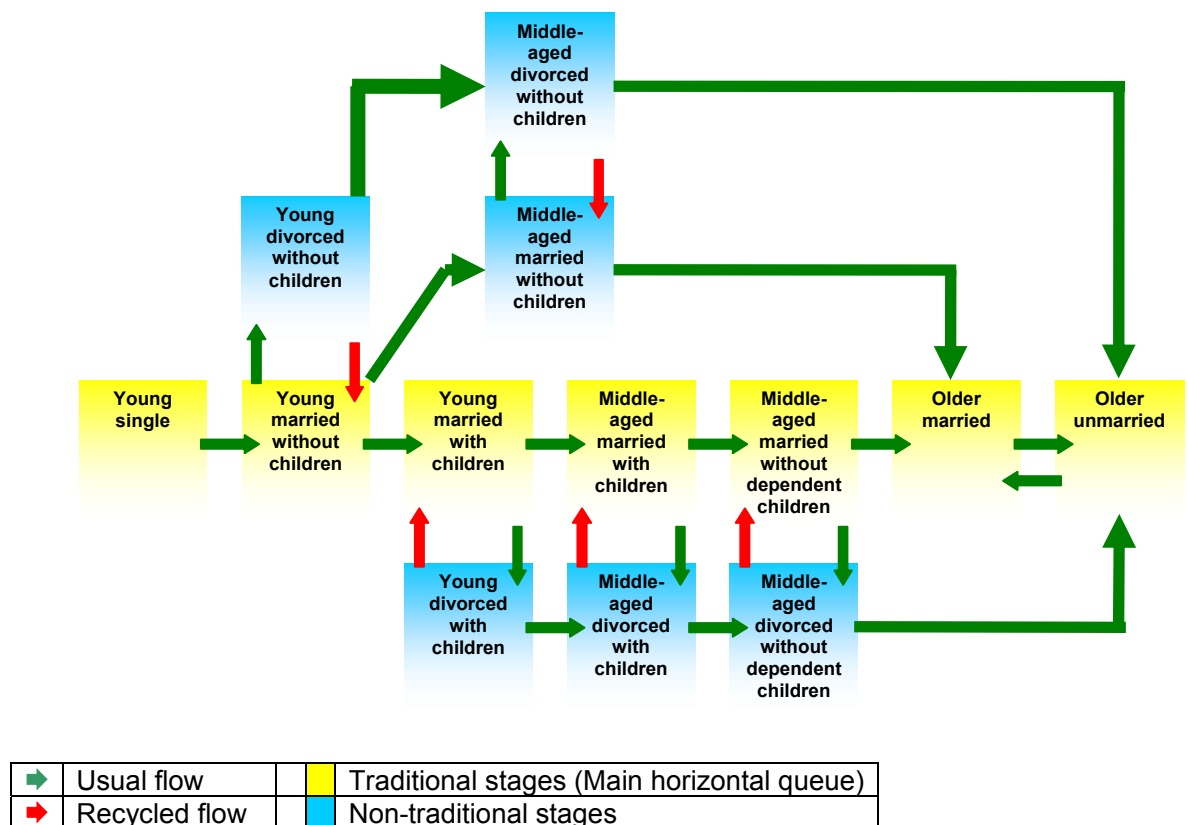
Source: Adapted from Lamb et al (2004:172)

Bellón et al (2001:616) acknowledge that the model includes various situations of divorced people, but criticize the model for excluding household arrangements above and below certain age groups (including singles and

widows), single parent households headed by a non-divorced parent and older parents living with their children. Kirsjanous (no date:2) further comments that the model acknowledges only those families that start in matrimony, while Gursoy (2000:70-71) highlights the exclusion of cohabiting couples, unwed individuals with children and married couples who are separated.

3.2.2   The Gilly and Enis model

According to Bellón et al (2001:617), the Gilly and Enis model (depicted in Figure 3.2) "is not a single sequence model; instead an individual can move along various routes". The three age bands of the Murphy and Staples model are retained; marital status is interpreted as "any couple that cohabits with the intension of maintaining a stable relationship" and divorced and widowed persons without children are comparable to singles. "The age of the youngest child […] is the dividing line between full nest I and II, between single parent I and II, and between delayed full nest and full nest III" (Bellón et al 2001:617).

Households comprise of one adult or two adults cohabiting, with or without children and although the model includes a number of non-family household categories (Lee & Norman 1996:¶1) it does not consider mature households with children still living at home (Bellón et al 2001:617).

FIGURE 3.2

THE GILLY AND ENIS FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL
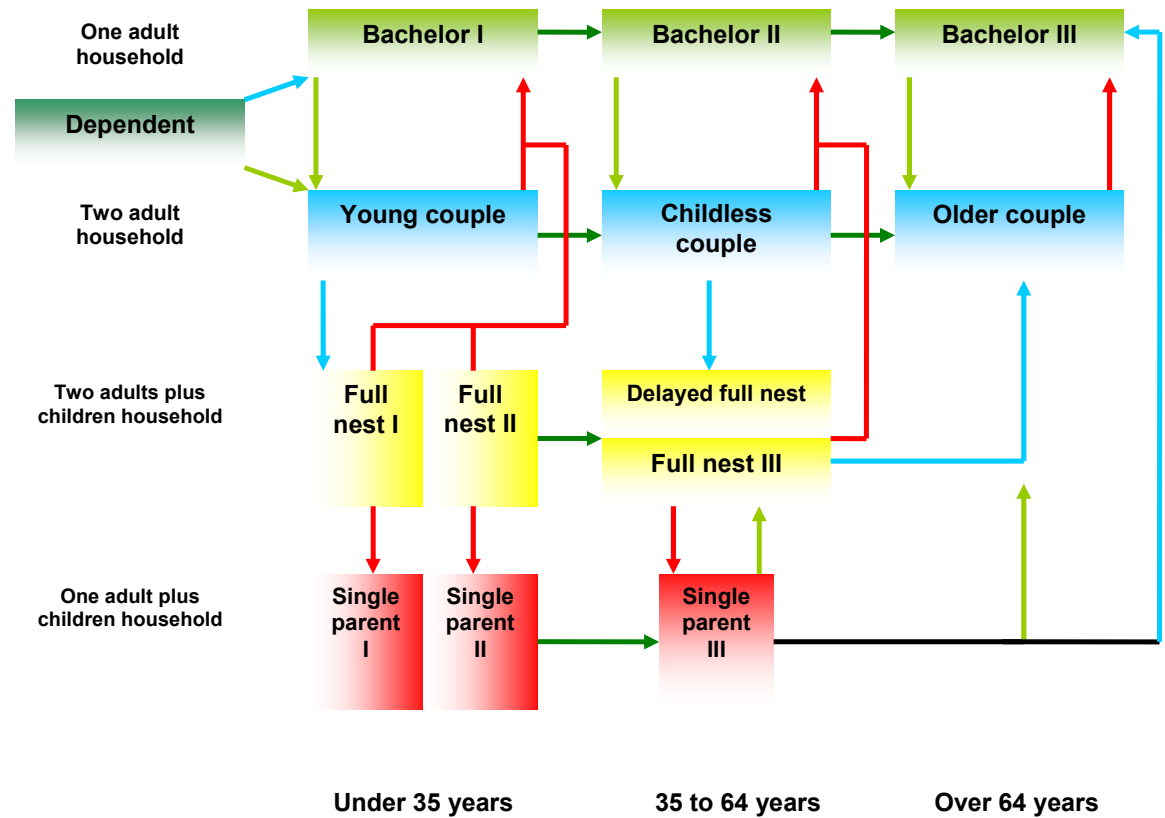
➡ Marriage	➡	Divorce/Death
➡ Children enter or leave	➡	Aging

Source: Adapted from Bellón et al (2001:618); Solomon (2002:361)

3.2.3   SAARF classification system

The SAARF classification system (depicted in Table 3.1) is used by South

African marketers for segmentation purposes (Cant et al 2002:196-197). As

can be deduced from the table, the classification system incorporates three

of the four previously mentioned life stage determining variables, namely

age, marital status (including life partners) and the presence or absence (dependence) of children. An individual's employment situation is ignored. The age bands differ from those incorporated in the Murphy and Staples and Gilly and Enis model. Furthermore, the classification system does not clearly distinguish between married couples and life partners.

TABLE 3.1

SAARF CLASSIFICATION OF LIFE-STAGE GROUPS

CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
At-home singles	Up to 34 years old Live with parents Not married/not living together No children of their own/no dependants
Starting-out singles	Up to 34 years old Not living with parents Not married/not living together No children of their own/no dependants
Mature singles	35 to 49 years old Not married/not living together No children of their own/no dependants
Young couples	Up to 49 years old Married/living together No children of their own/no dependants
New parents	Married/living together With children up to 12 years old No children 13+ years old Children dependent on parents
Mature parents	Married/living together With children - at least one 13+ years old Children dependent on parents
Single parents	Not married/living together With children of their own Children dependent on parent
Golden nesters	50+ years old Married/living together No dependent children or no children at all
Left alones	50+ years old Not married/not living together No dependent children or no children at all

Source: Adapted from Cant et al (2002:197)

3.3   CONTEMPORARY LIFE CYCLE STAGES

Because of the limitations of the non-traditional models, as explained in the previous section, the discussion of contemporary life cycle stages is not only limited to the stages depicted in the aforementioned models and classification system, but also includes any stages identified in the evaluation of existing literature.   Where available, the products and services typically consumed at particular stages are specified.   It was not possible to construct consumption portfolios (as was done in Chapter 2) due to a lack of literature regarding consumption during non-traditional stages.

3.3.1   Singles

The SAARF classification system separates singles into three clusters: at-home, starting-out and mature singles (Cant et al 2002:197).   At-home singles best represent a contemporary lifestyle arrangement.   These individuals are aged up to 34 and still live with their parents, an aspect that sets them apart from traditional bachelors.   They are not married and have no children or dependants (Cant et al 2002:197).

Hanna and Wozniak (2001:436) argue that singles should comprise anyone who is currently unmarried, regardless of their prior marital status.   This reasoning correlates with that of Gilly and Enis (in Bellón et al 2001:617) as they compare individuals without children and who are either divorced or widowed, to singles.   However, for the purpose of the current study,

individuals who have never been married, have no children/dependants and reside in their parents' homes are classified as singles.

Singles can progress from a contemporary single to a traditional bachelor stage, when the individual establishes an independent residence (all other factors remaining constant).

3.3.2   Bachelor I - III

Peter and Olson (1999:342) remark that there is an increasing propensity to postpone or avoid marriage. Perreault and McCarthy (2002:147) corroborate that young individuals delay marriage, but argue that they do marry eventually.

Deducing from the Gilly and Enis model it can be assumed that those individuals that choose not to marry or to postpone marriage are categorized in the bachelor I to III stages. Individuals that choose not to engage in marriage follow the horizontal progression in the model (i.e. bachelor I – III). The model further recognizes that some individuals marry later in life (bachelor II) and as such would constitute a non-traditional arrangement based on sociodemographics (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:289). Assuming the individual follows the vertical progression of the model, having children later in life (delayed full nest) would furthermore constitute a non-traditional family unit (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:436). Once again, however, this is based on the individual's sociodemographic environment.

3.3.3   Mingles

Stanton et al (1994:133) define mingles as "unmarried couples of the opposite sex living together". As long as these cohabiting individuals do not have children or dependants, they are classified as "young couples" in the SAARF system (Cant et al 2002:197). As such they constitute a non-traditional market form (Kotler & Armstrong 2001:180). Hanna and Wozniak (2001:436) and Gilly and Enis (in Bellón et al 2001:617) are of the opinion that the term married should include any couple that lives together and intends to share an extended relationship. For the purpose of the current study, however, unmarried couples (life partners) without children, residing together, are referred to as mingles.

3.3.4   Parental mingles

Within the SAARF classification individuals that live together (mingles) and have (a) dependent child(ren) are labelled "new parents" (Cant et al 2002:197). The absence of marriage and the presence of children thus influence this stage. New parents progress onto mature parents as they themselves and their children age. In the context of the current study these stages are jointly referred to as parental mingles as this study does not include the age of the children as a distinguishing variable.

3.3.5   Childless couples

The Murphy and Staples and Gilly and Enis models acknowledge married couples who never have children. The Murphy and Staples model indicates that married couples can progress through the following stages: young married without children, middle-aged married without children, older married and eventually older unmarried. The Gilly and Enis model in turn, indicates a horizontal flow that includes the following stages: young couple, childless couple and eventually older couple.

3.3.6   New bachelors

Peter and Olson (1999:344) label divorced individuals as "new bachelors". In the context of the current study, this term refers to the young divorced without children segment in the Murphy and Staples model. The absence of children is also incorporated into this classification. Lamb et al (2004:171) reason that "when [the] young married move into the young divorced stage, their consumption patterns often revert back to those of the young single stage of the cycle".

3.3.7   Single parents

Single parents include individuals who are divorced, widowed or have never been married (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:439; Stanton et al 1994:132), but have dependent children (Cant et al 2002:197; Peter & Olson 1999:342;

Stanton et al 1994:131). The Gilly and Enis model acknowledges single parent households and differentiates between single parent I and II groups (where the youngest child is younger than six years or six years and older) (Bellón et al 2001:617). In the context of the current study, no distinction is made between single parent I and II groups as this study ignores the age of the children and only considers their presence or absence.

Berkowitz et al (2000:166); Hanna and Wozniak (2001:435 & 439) and Zikmund and d'Amico (2001:227) note that single parent households consume convenience foods such as fast food and frozen dinners and are in need of child care services (Perreault & McCarthy 2002:147; Solomon 2002:362; Zikmund & d'Amico 2001:227). Consumption might be affected by the financial position of the household as, according to Berkowitz et al (2000:166), "single parents […] are the least financially secure of households with children". Stanton et al (1994:132) reason that "a single parent family […] with dependent children faces […] economic problems quite different from those of a two-parent family". Perreault and McCarthy (2002:148) reason that the FLC may start over again if a single parent enters into a subsequent marriage.

3.3.8   Boomerangers

The term "boomerang kids" refers to children who initially left their parents' home to establish their own households or for work or educational purposes, but are now returning to live with their parents again (Carter & Carter

2002:¶2; Hanna & Wozniak 2001:438; Peter & Olson 1999:343). According to Carter and Carter (2002:¶5) and Hanna and Wozniak (2001:438-439), children return because of failed relationships and personal or financial reasons. Their consumption patterns typically include entertainment, clothes and personal care items.

Boomerangers also include divorced individuals who return home, parents who move in with their children and newlyweds who stay with their in-laws. The latter two scenarios constitute an extended family (Hanna & Wozniak 2001:437).

3.3.9   Extended parents

"Extended parents" is the term used to refer to parents whose children return home after they initially left (Kotler & Armstrong 2001:180). Boomerang kids are responsible for this non-traditional stage and they might have an influence on the housing consumption of their parents. Empty nesters might have considered selling the family home, but boomerang kids can put a damper on their parents' plans (Carter & Carter 2002:¶11).

3.3.10   Divorced and alone

Stanton et al (1994:132) refer to "divorced [individuals] without dependent children" as "divorced and alone". Given the definition, this segment could relate to the middle-aged divorced without dependent children stage in the

Murphy and Staples model. This correlation assumes that the individual previously had dependent children and is at a more mature stage in the life cycle.

3.3.11 Golden nesters and left alones

The SAARF classification acknowledges individuals who were at one stage married/living together, had dependent children (in the case of golden nesters) and at a later stage are widowed/no longer living with a partner. These stages are termed golden nesters and left alones respectively (Cant et al 2002:197). In the context of the current study these stages apply to life partners. These stages are the last two stages of a contemporary life cycle.

3.4 REVISION OF THE LIFE STAGE DETERMINING VARIABLES

The multiplicity and complexity of the non-traditional FLC necessitated the revision of the life stage determining variables listed in section 1.6.2.

A number of discrepancies regarding the age variable exist in the (traditional) Wells and Gubar model and the (contemporary) Murphy and Staples model and SAARF classification system. Furthermore, the ages stipulated in the Wells and Gubar, Murphy and Staples and Gilly and Enis models were exclusive to the household head. As stated in Chapter 1, the current study does not focus on household heads exclusively. It should also be noted that age is subjective within different sociodemographic environments (for

example, the age at which it is 'socially acceptable' to be married or have children differs from one environment to the next). For these reasons, the age variable is disregarded as a life stage determining variable in the context of the current study.

Wells and Gubar regard the employment status of the household head as a life stage determining variable. However, this variable is not included in the non-traditional models, the SAARF life stage classification system, or any other stages identified in the literature study. For these reasons, employment status is disregarded as a life stage determining variable in the context of the current study.

The introduction of singles, boomerangers and extended parents highlighted the need to consider living arrangements as a life stage determining variable. In the (traditional) Wells and Gubar model, bachelorhood is instituted by, amongst other variables, the establishment of an independent living arrangement. During the remaining traditional stages, an independent living arrangement is implied. However, the fact that singles (non-traditional life stage) reside with their parents, sets them apart from bachelors. The living arrangement variable also impacts on boomerangers and extended parents (as a result of the former stage). The living arrangement within a domestic unit can also influence the classification of a household or family which, in turn, impacts on the terminology of the life cycle (household life cycle or family life cycle). For these reasons, living arrangement is added as a life

stage determining variable in the context of the current study. The revised contextual definition follows.

For the purpose of the current study, the FLC is defined in terms of the series of stages through which individuals and domestic groups (incorporating families and households) advance over time. These stages are influenced by:

- marital status (married, life partners, divorced, widowed);
- the presence or absence of children; and
- living arrangement.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter identified an array of non-traditional life cycle stages resulting from an evaluation of non-traditional models and existing literature. The various stages were described and associated consumption aspects were identified. A revision of the life stage determining variables concluded the chapter. Chapter 4 contains a description of the research methodology employed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.3   INTRODUCTION

The literature study contained in Chapters 2 and 3 provided the framework for the empirical design by describing the various stages of both the traditional and non-traditional FLC and identifying the consumption portfolios associated with each stage.

Chapter 4 is the first of two empirical chapters. This chapter details the research methodology and commences with a discussion of the research design applied in the study. The discussion of the research design includes the categories of research, a comparison of qualitative and quantitative research and the description of the sampling design. The data collection method and technique are detailed, with specific reference to the questionnaire used as a data collection instrument. The section on data analysis introduces the life stage classification matrix developed for the study. A report on the problems experienced during the research process and the limitations of the study concludes this chapter.

4.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

Chisnall (2005:36) states that the research design "forms the framework of the entire research process". Sekaran (2000:122) provides such a framework, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1

THE RESEARCH DESIGN
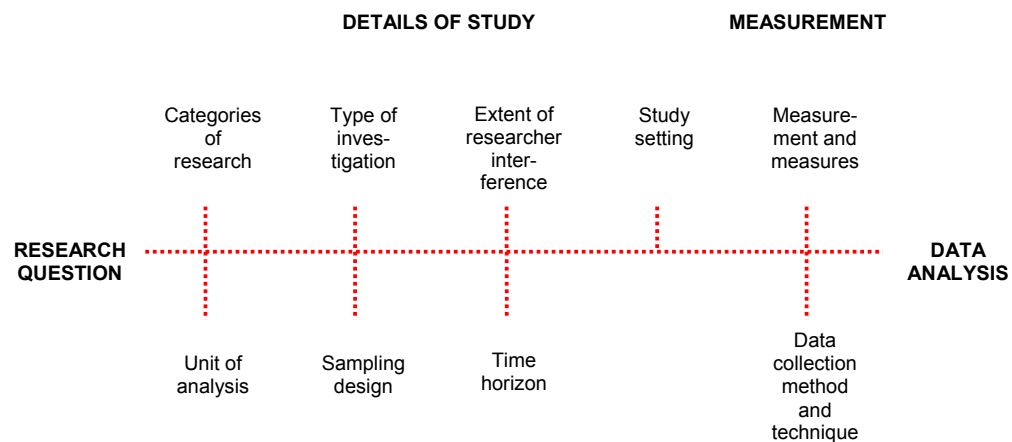
Source: Adapted from Sekaran (2000:122)

Selected elements of the research design as listed by Sekaran (2000:121-122) that were of relevance to the current study are discussed in the following sub-sections. Of lesser importance were:

- the extent of researcher interference: No researcher interference occurred.

- time horizon: The research study was cross sectional.

- measurement and measures: Descriptive statistics (means, modes)

4.2.1   Categories of research

Baines and Chansarkar (2002:5); Hair et al (2000:36-37) and Parasuraman, Grewal and Krishnan (2004:44) acknowledge three categories of research, namely exploratory, causal and descriptive research. The current study fell within the descriptive category.

4.2.1.1   Exploratory research

According to Hair et al (2000:37,215), the focus of exploratory research is on collecting either primary or secondary data and using an unstructured format or informal procedure to interpret the data. This design is often used simply to classify problems or opportunities and is not intended to provide conclusive information from which a particular course of action can be determined. Baines and Chansarkar (2002:5) and Chisnall (2005:37) add that exploratory research enables the formulation of relevant hypotheses. Furthermore, this type of design is applied in a qualitative study (Baines & Chansarkar 2002:5; Hair et al 2000:215; McDaniel & Gates 2005:108). Data collection techniques employed in this design include focus groups, interviews, experience surveys and pilot studies (Hair et al 2000:215; McDaniel & Gates 2005:55). Given the fact that the current study was a quantitative investigation and none of the aforementioned data collection techniques were employed, exploratory research was not conducted.

4.2.1.2 Causal research

Causal research enables the researcher to model cause-and-effect relationships between two or more market (or decision) variables by collecting raw data and creating data structures and information (Baines & Chansarkar 2002:5; Hair et al 2000:37). This type of design is applied in a qualitative study (Hair et al 2000:215; McDaniel & Gates 2005:108). The data collection technique most appropriate to this design is experimentation as it allows researchers to establish cause-effect relationships by means of variable manipulation (Hair et al 2000:37). The current study did not aim to investigate cause-effect relationships and variable manipulation by means of experimentation would have been inappropriate.

4.2.2.3 Descriptive research

Descriptive research, as was applied in the current research, uses a set of scientific methods and procedures to collect raw data and create data structures that describe the existing characteristics of a defined target population (Hair et al 2000:38). This type of research design also allows for the construction of portfolios (Parasuraman et al 2004:44), which was one of the outcomes of the data collection in the current study. Descriptive research designs are quantitative in nature and, as was the case in the current study, involve the use of survey methods (Baines & Chansarkar 2002:5; Hair et al 2000:215, 253; McDaniel & Gates 2005:108).

4.2.3   Type of investigation

The empirical study was quantitative in nature, a research method that emphasizes using formalized standard questions and encoded response options in questionnaires administered to large numbers of respondents. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is used to gain preliminary insights into decision problems and opportunities from a relatively small sample by asking questions or observing behaviour (Hair et al 2000:216).

Table 4.1 illustrates the general differences between quantitative and qualitative research. Although the table highlights the differences between the two approaches, Hair et al (2000:216) point out that "there is no single agreed-on set of factors that distinguishes them as being mutually exclusive". Parasuraman et al (2004:196) also comment that the line between these two approaches is not always clear.

Based on the information in Table 4.1, the characteristics of the quantitative method as they applied to the study are listed below.

- Sample size: Large (compared to samples in some qualitative studies).
- Type of research: Descriptive.
- Type of questions: Mostly structured.
- Type of analysis: Statistical and descriptive.

TABLE 4.1

COMPARISON OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE

RESEARCH METHODS

FACTORS/ CHARACTERISTICS	QUALITATIVE METHODS	QUANTITATIVE METHODS
Research goals/objectives	Discovery and identification of new ideas, thoughts, feelings; preliminary insights into and understanding of ideas and projects	Validation of facts, estimates, relationships, predictions
Sample size	Small	Large
Type of research	Normally exploratory designs	Descriptive and causal designs
Type of questions	Open-ended, semi-structured, unstructured, deep probing	Mostly structured, limited probing
Representativeness	Small samples, limited to sampled respondents	Large samples, normally good representation of target populations
Type of analysis	Debriefing, subjective, content, interpretive, semiotic analysis	Statistical, summation, descriptive, causal predictions and relationships
Researcher skills required	Interpersonal communication, observation, interpretive skills	Scientific, statistical procedure and translation skills; some subjective interpretation skills
Ability to generalize results	Very limited; only preliminary insights and understanding	Usually very good; inferences about facts, estimates of relationships

Source: Adapted from Hair et al (2000:215); McDaniel & Gates (2005:108)

4.2.3   Study setting, unit of analysis and sampling design

The study setting was the NMMU, Second Avenue Campus. Being an educational institution the population consisted of students and staff members (unit of analysis). These two segments are further divided into full-time and part-time segments (applicable to both the students and staff members).

From the institution's population, a non-probability sample of 225 respondents was selected. Non-probability sampling is a subjective procedure in which the probability of selecting a population unit cannot be determined, whereas probability sampling is objective in nature and each sampling unit has a known, non-zero possibility of being included in the sample (Hair et al 2000:344; Parasuraman et al 2004:360). The sample was divided into three groups as depicted in Figure 4.2.

FIGURE 4.2

DIVISION OF THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE
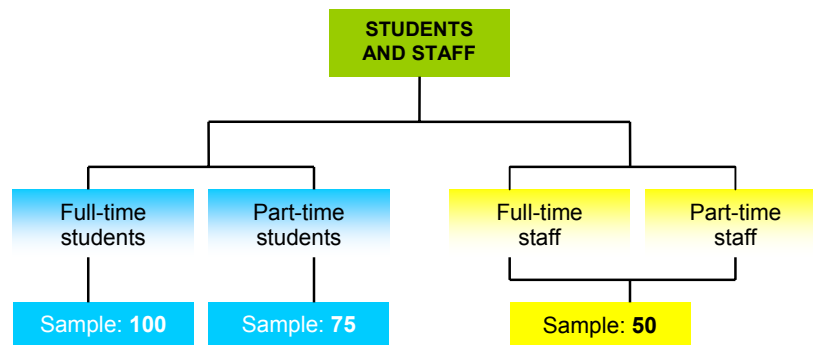
The fundamental belief was that each of these individuals represented some form of a domestic arrangement. The only criteria was that the sample had to be gender and ethnically diverse and that foreign students had to be excluded as the research concentrated on the South African context.

In terms of the sample proportions, it was assumed that most full-time students would be either bachelors or singles (the first stages of the respective life cycle classifications and influential in the FLC's future

structure) and that the part-time students and staff members would represent a variety of FLC stages.

4.2.4   Data collection method and technique

The data collection method and technique utilized in the research design are identified and justified in this section. The advantages and disadvantages of both the method and technique are briefly described.

4.2.4.1   Data collection method

Information can be collected by means of observation, experimentation, or surveys, the latter being the method usually associated with descriptive research and quantitative research methods (Baines & Chansarkar 2002:23-24; Hair et al 2000:253). Furthermore, the survey method was chosen given the need of the researcher to collect raw data from a relatively large number of people (n=225) who could be grouped into a number of traditional and non-traditional stages.

4.2.4.2   Data collection technique

Hair et al (2000:256) highlight four survey research techniques: person-administered, telephone-administered, self-administered and computer-assisted survey research. The researcher chose to make use of the self-administered technique, a situation in which an interviewer is absent and

respondents read the questions and record their answers in their own time (Hair et al 2000:261; McDaniel & Gates 2005:158). This scenario particularly applied to the full-time students where the researcher had lecturers distributing the questionnaires. As the researcher was responsible for questionnaire distribution among some of the part-time students, questions that arose could be answered.

With regard to the staff members, a variation of the self-administered survey, namely the drop-off survey, was employed. This technique involves leaving the questionnaire with the respondent and arranging a collection date (Hair et al 2004:256). This technique also meant that the researcher was absent at the time of questionnaire completion.

4.2.4.4 Advantages and disadvantages associated with the self-administered survey

Aaker, Kumar and Day (2004:244-245); Hair et al (2000:254) and McDaniel and Gates (2005:158) list a number of advantages associated with using a survey and a self-administered questionnaire. Relevant advantages and their application to the current study are listed below.

▪ The method accommodated the relatively large sample size of 225 respondents.
▪ The method allowed for ease of administration as respondents simply had to follow the instructions provided.

- The absence of an interviewer meant that respondents could freely provide sensitive information, which they might otherwise have been reluctant to provide if an interviewer conducted the survey.

The disadvantages associated with the particular method and technique are:

- the difficulty of developing the survey instrument;
- a potentially low response rate;
- the difficulty in determining whether responses are truthful; and
- the absence of an interviewee to clarify issues that arise during the completion process (Aaker et al 2004:244-245; Hair et al 2000:254; McDaniel & Gates 2005:158).

Problems with the development of the survey instrument were addressed by consulting a statistician and a lecturer in Research Methodology. A very high response rate of 89.8% was obtained and the fact that no interviewer was present and respondents remained anonymous, are expected to have reduced the possibility of providing dishonest responses.

4.3   THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire (See Annexure A) consisted of five pages. A cover letter preceded the questions. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, assured respondents of their anonymity and the fact that the completion of the questionnaire would not be too time consuming.

The questionnaire was divided into eight sections, incorporating the three life stage determining variables (marital status, presence/absence of children and living arrangement) identified in the literature study. In addition to these variables, questions pertaining to other demographic factors (age, employment and income), life cycle progressions and consumption were also included. These questions allowed the researcher to categorize respondents according to various traditional and non-traditional life stages.

With the exception of five questions, the entire questionnaire consisted of structured questions. These questions were combinations of dichotomous, multiple choice and interval scale questions. Three of the open-ended questions required the respondent to merely provide numbers; the remaining two were not applicable to all respondents and involved minimum effort to complete. The questionnaire was also pre-coded to ease the data capturing process.

To ensure that the questionnaire was an acceptable survey instrument, a statistician was consulted. Changes were made and the questionnaire was pre-tested with a sample of 10 full-time students, who did not experience any difficulty in completing it. As a further precaution, a research lecturer evaluated the questionnaire. This final analysis resulted in the changing of a few questions for clarification purposes.

4.4   DATA ANALYSIS

Two hundred and two questionnaires were returned. However, after preliminary editing, only 182 questionnaires were found useful.   The remaining 20 questionnaires were excluded because they were either not sufficiently completed or because conflicting information was provided. The 'skip' format questions proved to be problematic for some respondents, as they did not follow the instructions accompanying such questions.

The questionnaires were categorized and labelled according to the various stages identified using the matrix contained in Table 4.2 as a basis. This process simplified the process of data classification. The table illustrates how the three revised life stage determining variables (see section 3.4) apply to each stage. It should be noted that the following non-traditional stages (discussed in Chapter 3) have been re-classified due to the use of the revised life stage determining variables:

- bachelor I – III (classified as bachelors);
- childless couples (classified as honeymooners); and
- new bachelors (classified as divorced individuals).

The bachelor I – III and childless couples stages were re-classified due to the exclusion of the age variable.

TABLE 4.2

LIFE STAGE CLASSIFICATION MATRIX

		LIFE STAGE DETERMINING VARIABLES		
		Marital status	Presence/absence of children	Living arrangement (independence from parents)
TRADITIONAL STAGES	Bachelorhood	Single	Absent	Independent
	Honeymooners	Married	Absent	Independent
	Parenthood	Married	Present (and living with parents)	Independent
	Post parenthood	Married	Present (but not living with their parents)	Independent
	Dissolution	Widowed	Present (but not living with the remaining parent)	Independent
NON-TRADITIONAL STAGES	Singles	Single	Absent	Residing with parents
	Mingles	Life partners	Absent	Independent
	Parental mingles	Life partners	Present (and living with parents)	Independent
	Single parents	Single/ Divorced/ Widowed	Present	Independent
	Divorced individuals	Divorced	Absent/present	Independent
	Boomerangers	Any marital arrangement	Absent/present	Have returned to parents' home after initially having left
	Extended parents	Married	Present (have returned to parents' home after initially having left)	Independent
	Golden nesters	Life partners	Present (but not living with parents)	Independent
	Left alones	Previously had a life partner	Absent/present (but not living with parents)	Independent

Source: Own construction

The researcher enlisted the aid of a data capturer and provided the statistician with a code sheet, specifying the characteristics of the various life stages and the analysis required for each stage. Only descriptive statistics were obtained as the objectives of the study and the sample composition did not allow for advanced statistical analysis.

4.5 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

No major problems were experienced during the research process. In some instances, collecting the questionnaires from staff members was delayed because the questionnaires had not been completed by the due date. In these instances, a later collection date was agreed upon. Some questionnaires were not retrieved at all as some staff members were not available on the subsequent collection dates agreed upon. Since the questionnaires aimed at students were distributed during lectures, problems of this nature were not experienced with this group, however, some questionnaires were not returned.

4.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because the sample consisted of students and staff members, a minimum and maximum age distribution was probable. While the minimum age distribution had no effect on the study, the sample excluded individuals above the retirement age. This could have meant the exclusion of the final stage of the traditional and non-traditional life cycle. The younger age groups

were, however, deemed more important as these respondents would have represented groups that would still move from one stage to the next in the life cycle, while this would not have been the case with those in the final stage of the life cycle.

As pointed out before, the aim of the research was to verify the existence of a FLC within a South African context and compare this to the theoretical depiction of the concept. It is acknowledged that the sample size of 182 respondents and the geographic limitations of the study did not allow the researcher to generalize the findings of the empirical research (contained in Chapter 5) to the South African population at large.

4.8   SUMMARY

This chapter contained a report on the theoretical aspects of the empirical study by discussing the elements in the research design. Furthermore, the questionnaire used as a data collection instrument was described and the procedure followed in the analysis of the data was detailed. Lastly, the problems and limitations regarding the study were explained. Chapter 5 contains a report on the findings of the empirical study.

CHAPTER 5

REPORT ON EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.3   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 detailed the research methodology applied in the study.   This chapter presents the findings of the survey conducted, commencing with a demographic depiction of the respondents.   This is followed by the descriptions of the various traditional and non-traditional stages identified. Since the total number of responses varied for different questions, the specific number of respondents is indicated in each section.

5.4   DEMOGRAPHIC DEPICTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The 182 respondents consisted of 95 full-time students, 54 part-time students and 30 staff members.   Three respondents did not specify their student status. Table 5.1 contains a demographic depiction of the respondents. The student status of the respondents was cross referenced with three demographic variables, namely gender, ethnic group and age. It should be noted that not all respondents completed the general information and age sections of the questionnaire from which this cross tabulation was constructed. Therefore, the number of respondents does not necessarily add up to 182. The information regarding the respondents' income is reported in the description of the various life stages (section 5.3).

TABLE 5.1

DEMOGRAPHIC DEPICTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	Full-time	Part-time	Staff members	TOTAL
Gender				
Male	41	28	8	**77**
Female	54	25	22	**101**
TOTAL	**95**	**53**	**30**	178
Ethnic group				
Black	31	26	4	**61**
Coloured	7	12	4	**23**
Indian	1	1	1	**3**
White	53	15	20	**88**
Other	3	0	0	**3**
TOTAL	**95**	**54**	**29**	**178**
Age				
Below 20	20	1	0	**21**
20 – 29	74	36	3	**113**
30 – 39	1	13	6	**20**
40 – 49	0	3	11	**14**
50 – 59	0	0	5	**5**
60 – 69	0	0	3	**3**
TOTAL	**95**	**53**	**28**	**176**

More than half (56.7%) of the 178 respondents who completed the relevant question were female. The largest ethnic group consisted of White respondents (49.4%), followed by Black respondents (34.3%). Of the specified ethnic groups, the Indian respondents were in the minority (1.69%). The age distribution ranged from younger than 20 to 69 years as the sample included students and staff members. The largest number of respondents was aged 20 to 29 (64.2%), with the average overall age of the respondents determined as 27 years.

5.3   DESCRIPTION OF LIFE STAGES RESULTING FROM THE
       EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Figure 5.1 is the result of the data analysis using the matrix depicted in Table

4.2 as a basis.

FIGURE 5.1

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO

TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL STAGES

Bachelors	52
Honeymooners	3
Full nesters	25
Empty nesters	4
Dissolution	1
Total	85

Singles	78
Single parents	11
Boomerangers	2
Extended parents	1
Divorced individuals	4
Total	96

46.7%   52.8%   0.5%

□ Traditional stages ■ Non-traditional stages □ Transitional stages
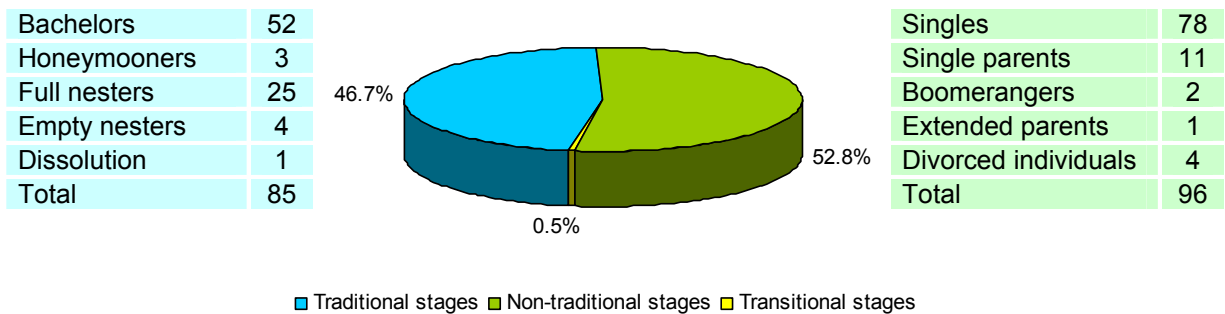
The figure indicates that slightly more than half (96 or 52.8%) of the 182

respondents were in one of the non-traditional stages of the life cycle, while

85 (46.7%) of them were in one of the five traditional stages.   One

respondent (0.5%) was not grouped into a FLC classification.   This

respondent was engaged and therefore classified as being in a transitional

stage. As the empirical report is based on collective findings, a meaningful

description could not be provided for a one person category. The following

section commences with a description of the traditional stages that resulted

from the empirical research.

5.3.1   Traditional family life cycle stages

The analysis of the data revealed that 85 respondents were in one of the five traditional FLC stages. With the exception of the dissolution stage, this section reports on the findings concerning these stages. Only one respondent was classified in the dissolution stage and as the empirical report is based on collective findings, a meaningful description could not be provided for a one person category.

5.3.1.1   Bachelorhood

The bachelorhood stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, intentions regarding marriage and parenthood, employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Fifty-two respondents were classified as bachelors because they were single, childless individuals who did not live with their parents. Fifty-one respondents specified their student status of which 38 were full-time students and 11 were part-time students. Two respondents were staff members and no longer students. The average age of the 51 respondents who provided their year of birth was 23 years. The majority of the respondents (45 or 88.2%) regarded themselves as recreation-orientated and slightly more than

half (28 or 54.9%) thought of themselves as fashion opinion leaders (based on answers provided by 51 respondents for both variables).

(b)   Intentions regarding marriage and parenthood

The respondents' intentions regarding marriage and having children were examined as this was expected to have an influence on their future progression through their life cycle. The findings are illustrated in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2

RESPONDENTS' MARITAL AND PARENTAL INTENTIONS (BACHELORS)
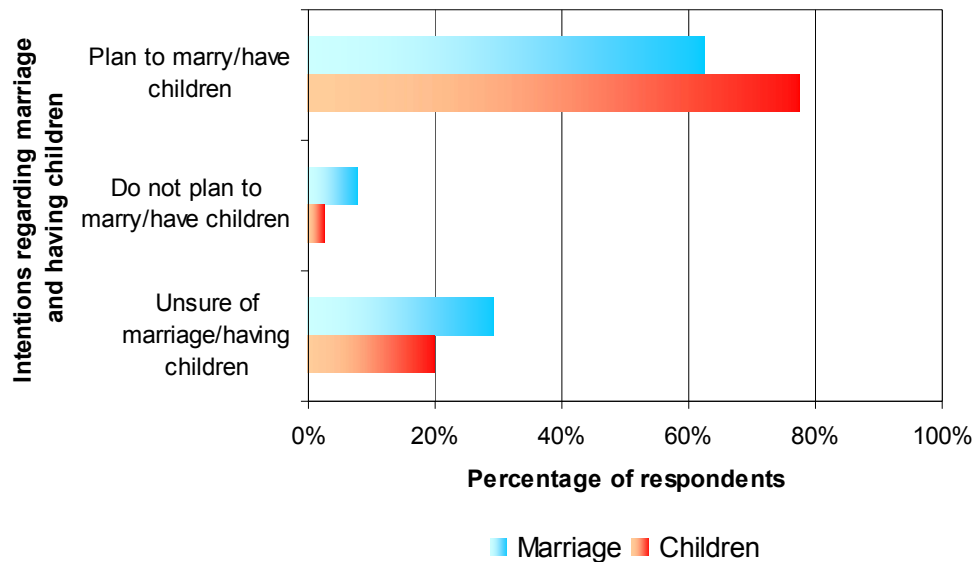
Fifty-one respondents provided their intentions regarding marriage. The majority (32 or 62.8%) of these 51 respondents intended to engage into marriage, while the minority (four or 7.8%) did not. Fifteen (29.4%) respondents were unsure of whether they would get married. Only 40 respondents provided their intentions regarding having children. However, in

terms of proportions, respondents' intentions of having children were similar to their intentions regarding marriage. Once again, the majority (31 or 77.5%) of the respondents intended to have children, while the minority (one or 2.5%) did not. Eight (20%) respondents were unsure of whether they would have children or not.

Table 5.2 contains a cross tabulation of the findings regarding marital intentions and having children.

TABLE 5.2

CROSS TABULATION: INTENTIONS REGARDING

MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD (BACHELORS)

| PLAN TO GET MARRIED	PLAN TO HAVE CHILDREN			
	Yes	No	Don't know	No response
Yes (32)	25	0	0	7
No (4)	3	0	1	0
Don't know (15)	3	1	7	4
Total (51)	31	1	8	11

The majority of the respondents intended to get married and have children. Of particular interest are those respondents who indicated that they did not intend to get married although they planned to have children (75%). A substantial number of respondents who were unsure of marriage were also unsure about having children, while some indicated that they did want children.

(c)   Employment status

Forty-six respondents specified their employment status.   Of the 46 respondents more than half (27 or 58.7%) were unemployed. Their sources of financial support included pocket money (73.1%) and funding from bursaries/sponsorships (26.9%) (based on answers provided by 26 respondents).   The average monthly amount of money available to these unemployed respondents amounted to R 1 180.00 (calculated from amounts specified by 25 respondents). Of those 19 respondents who were employed, nine were full-time employees and 10 worked on a part-time basis. These respondents' average monthly amount of disposable and discretionary income was determined as R 3 500.00 and R 1 552.63 respectively.

(d)   Living arrangement

Because bachelors have residences separate from their parents, the living arrangements of these 52 respondents were investigated. The results are contained in Figure 5.3. The most common living arrangement was sharing a residence with non-family members (32.7%). Other notable domestic arrangements included single person households (25%) and individuals who resided at the university residence (26.9%). The average household that was made up of respondents who shared a residence with other individuals, consisted of four members (based on figures provided by 39 respondents).

FIGURE 5.3

RESPONDENTS' LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (BACHELORS)
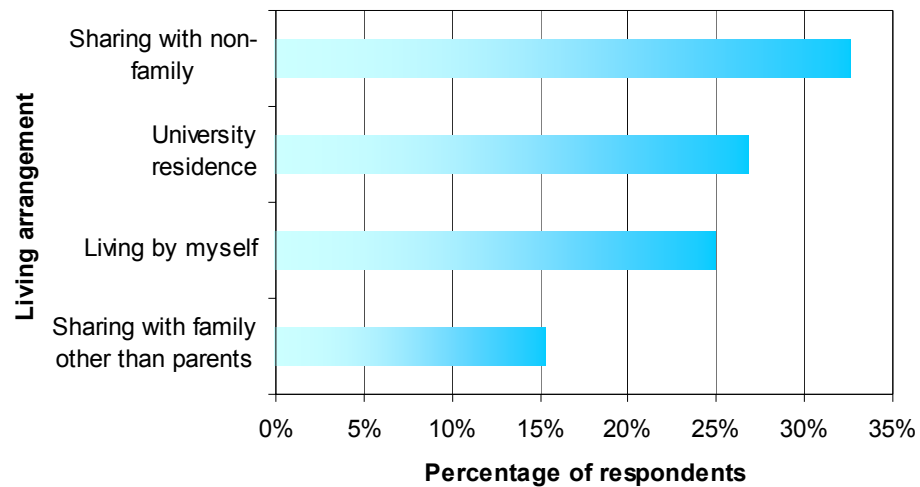
The overwhelming majority of respondents (46 or 93.9%) were not homeowners (based on answers provided by 49 respondents). The majority (33 or 63.5%) of the 52 respondents did not intend to return to their parents' home, whereas seven (13.5%) intended to live with their parents again in the future. Twelve respondents (23%) were unsure of their future living arrangements with their parents.

(e)   Consumption

Figure 5.4 indicates the frequency with which the bachelors purchased specified products and made use of selected services.

FIGURE 5.4

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (BACHELORS)
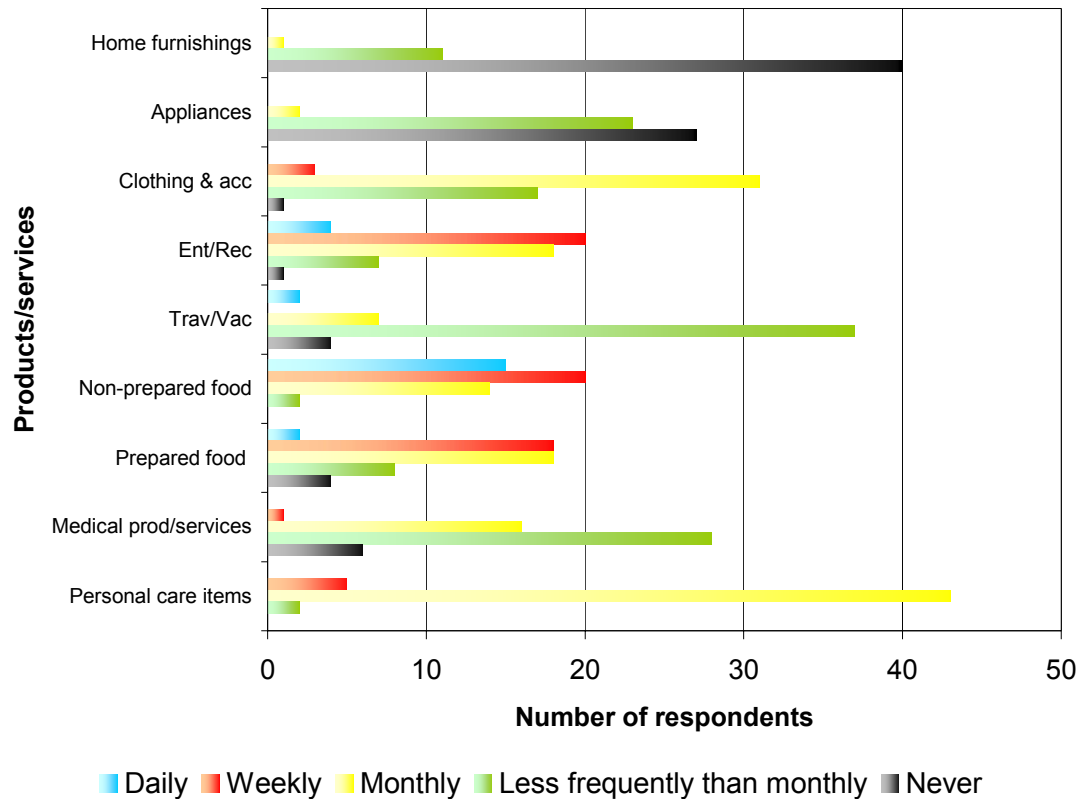
While in most of the categories (seven of the nine) some respondents indicated never purchasing certain products/services, home furnishings (n=52) were purchased the least as indicated by slightly more than three quarters of the respondents (76.9%). Slightly more than half (51.9%) of the respondents also never purchased appliances, while those that did (48.1%) did so at less than monthly or monthly intervals (n=52). For the most part, respondents purchased clothing and accessories (n=52) and personal care items (n=50) on a monthly basis (59.6% and 86% respectively), while travelling/vacationing (n=50) and medical products/services (n=51) were

purchased on a less frequently than monthly basis by most respondents (74% and 54.9% respectively). Entertainment/recreation (n=50) and non-prepared food items (n=51) were purchased on a weekly basis (40% and 39.2% respectively). The purchase frequencies for prepared food items (n=50) were alike (weekly and monthly). Only 17 (34.7%) out of the 49 respondents who answered the question relating to vehicle ownership, owned a vehicle.

5.3.1.2   Honeymooners

The honeymooners stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, intentions regarding parenthood, employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Three respondents were classified as honeymooners because they were married, had no children and were not residing with either of their parents. These respondents were all part-time students and the average age of the two respondents that provided their year of birth was 31 years. All three respondents indicated that they followed a traditional life cycle progression. Two of the three respondents considered themselves recreation-orientated and as opinion leaders regarding fashion.

(b)   Intentions regarding parenthood

These respondents' intentions on having children were investigated as this was expected to have an influence on their future progression through the FLC. Two respondents indicated that they wanted to have children.

(c)   Employment status

Two of the three respondents indicated that they were employed on a full-time basis and their average monthly amount of disposable and discretionary income was determined as R 8 000.00 and R 3 500.00 respectively. The same two respondents' spouses were employed and the combined amount of monthly discretionary income in these households averaged to R 10 000.00.

(d)   Living arrangement

Two of the three respondents were homeowners (household size of two) and the remaining couple shared a residence with non-family members (household size specified as five). Two respondents indicated that they did not intend to live with their parents again.

(e)   Consumption

Figure 5.5 indicates the frequency with which the honeymooners purchased specified products and made use of selected services.

FIGURE 5.5

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (HONEYMOONERS)

The respondents unanimously indicated that they purchased entertainment/recreation and medical products/services on a monthly basis, while home furnishings were purchased less frequently than monthly. The purchase frequencies for both appliances and travelling/vacationing were evenly spread and these were the only categories where non-purchases

were also specified (one respondent in both instances). Two respondents indicated that they owned vehicles.

5.3.1.3   Full nesters (Parenthood)

The parenthood stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Twenty-five respondents were classified as full nesters because they were married, had children who resided with them and the couples were not living with either of their parents. Twenty-four respondents provided their year of birth and the average age was 42 years. On average, the 25 respondents had two children. Twenty-four of the 25 respondents indicated that they followed a traditional life cycle progression up to the parenthood stage. Twenty respondents were recreation-orientated, but only three regarded themselves as fashion opinion leaders.

(b)   Employment status

The majority of the respondents (24 or 96%) were employed; 22 (88%) were full-time employees while two (8%) were employed on a part-time basis. Only one respondent (4%) was unemployed. Twenty three respondents

specified their income. On average, these respondents' monthly amount of disposable and discretionary income was determined as R 5 934.78 and R 2 152.17 respectively. Of the 23 respondents that answered the question regarding their spouse's employment status, the overwhelming majority's (22 or 95.7%) spouses were also employed and the average total amount of monthly discretionary income in these respondents' households was determined as R 5 181.82.

(c)   Living arrangement

All the respondents in this stage were homeowners. One couple shared their residence with non-family members and another had family (other than their parents) residing with them. The average household size of these respondents consisted of four people (based on figures provided by 23 respondents). Eighteen respondents completed the questions regarding their intentions on living with their parents in the future. The majority (16 or 88.9%) of these respondents did not intend to return to their parents' home, while two were unsure.

(d)   Consumption

Figure 5.6 indicates the frequency with which the full nesters purchased specified products and made use of selected services. Most respondents (82.6%, 87.5%, 54.2%, 68% respectively) purchased home furnishings (n=23),   appliances   (n=24),   clothing/accessories   (n=24)   and

travelling/vacationing (n=25) less frequently than monthly. Products and services mostly purchased on a weekly basis included entertainment/recreation (n=24) and both prepared and non-prepared food items (n=25 for both categories). Products and services mostly purchased on a monthly basis included medical products/services and personal care items (n=25 for both categories). The majority of respondents (20) owned a vehicle.

FIGURE 5.6

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (PARENTHOOD)
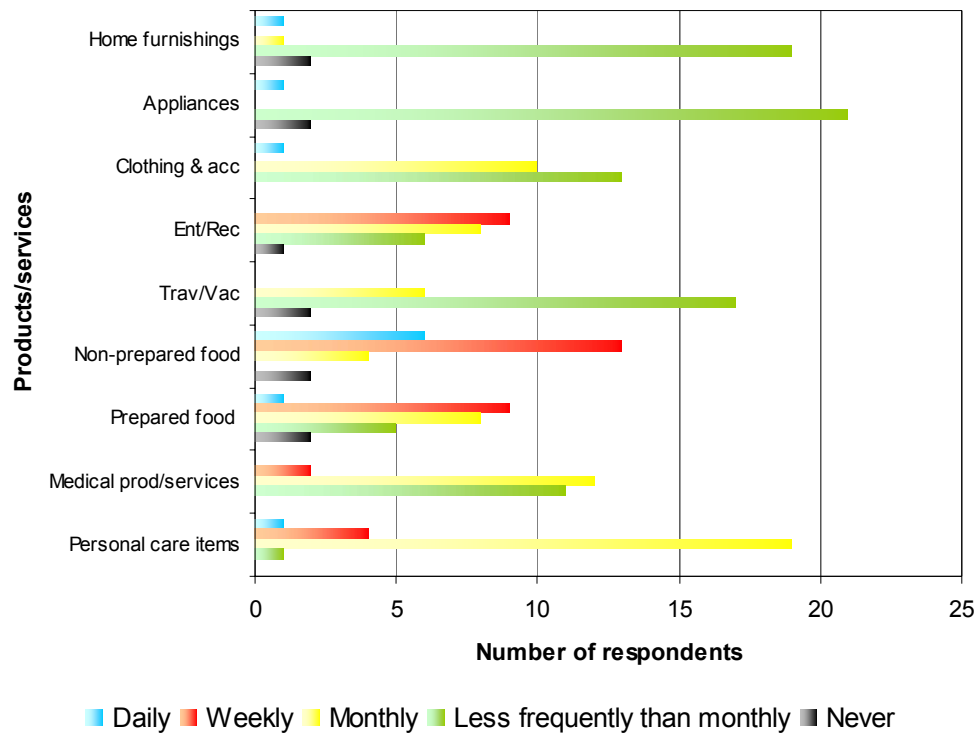
As these respondents had children still living with them, they were requested to complete the question regarding child-related consumption. Table 5.3

indicates the number of respondents that made use of selected child-related products and services.

TABLE 5.3

RESPONDENTS' USAGE OF SELECTED CHILD-RELATED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (PARENTHOOD)

CHILD- RELATED PRODUCTS/SERVICES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Elementary school education	5
Primary school education	2
Secondary school education	8
Tertiary education	8
Children's lessons	4
Medical products/services	14
Child care services	6
Toys	7

Table 5.3 shows that the same number of respondents who had children in elementary or primary school also bought toys. These figures also almost correlate with those for child care services. Only a few respondents' children attended extramural lessons.

5.3.1.4   Empty nesters (Post parenthood)

The post parenthood stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Four respondents were classified as empty nesters because they were married, their children no longer resided with them and the couple did not live with either of their parents. The fact that some empty nesters continue their education after their children have left the parental home was highlighted in Chapter 2 and therefore it is necessary to report that only one respondent was a mature full-time student. The other three respondents were staff members. The average age of the respondents was 53 years. Three respondents indicated that they followed a traditional life cycle progression up to the post parenthood stage. Two respondents were recreation-orientated, while none of the respondents viewed themselves as fashion opinion leaders.

(b)   Employment status

All the respondents in this category were employed on a full-time basis and the average monthly amount of disposable and discretionary income amounted to R 5 000.00 (calculated from figures specified by four and two respondents respectively). Half of the respondents' spouses were employed and the average total amount of monthly discretionary income in these households was determined as R 3 500.00.

(c)   Living arrangement

Three of the four respondents were homeowners. The same number of respondents had no intention of living with their parents in the future. The average household consisted of two people (based on figures provided by three respondents).

(d)   Consumption

Figure 5.7 indicates the frequency with which the empty nesters purchased specified products and made use of selected services. None of the products/services specified in the figure were purchased on a daily basis. Home furnishings, appliances, clothing and accessories, and travelling/vacationing were purchased at less frequently than monthly intervals. Products and services mostly purchased on a weekly basis included entertainment/recreation and non-prepared food items (n=3 for both categories). Half of the respondents in this category owned vehicles.

FIGURE 5.7

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (POST PARENTHOOD)

■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly ■ Less frequently than monthly ■ Never
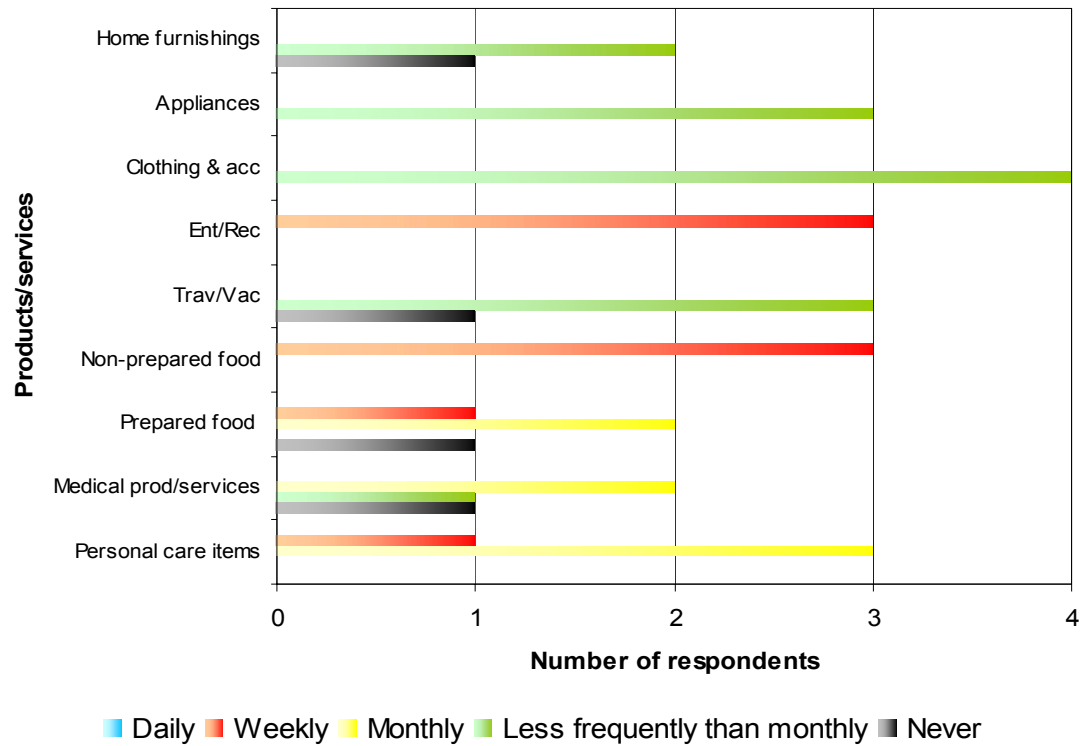
5.3.2 Non-traditional family life cycle stages

The 96 remaining respondents represented five distinct non-traditional life stages. The following section reports on four of these stages. As with the dissolution stage, only one respondent was classified as an extended parent (because his child had left the family home and subsequently returned to live there again) and hence a meaningful description could not be provided for this one person category.

5.3.2.1   Singles

The singles stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, intentions regarding marriage and parenthood, employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Seventy-eight respondents were classified as singles because they were single, childless individuals who were living with their parents. Of these respondents, 52 (66.7%) were full-time students, 25 (32.1%) were part-time students and one (1.2%) was a staff member. The average age of the respondents was 22 years. The majority (69 or 90.8%) of the 76 respondents indicated that they were recreation-orientated. On the other hand, only 30 (40%) of the 75 respondents considered themselves fashion opinion leaders.

(b)   Intentions regarding marriage and parenthood

These respondents' intentions regarding marriage and having children were also examined as this was expected to have an influence on their future progression through their life cycle. The findings are illustrated in Figure 5.8. All of the respondents indicated their marital intentions, but only 68 respondents provided their intentions on having children.

FIGURE 5.8

RESPONDENTS' MARITAL AND PARENTAL INTENTIONS (SINGLES)
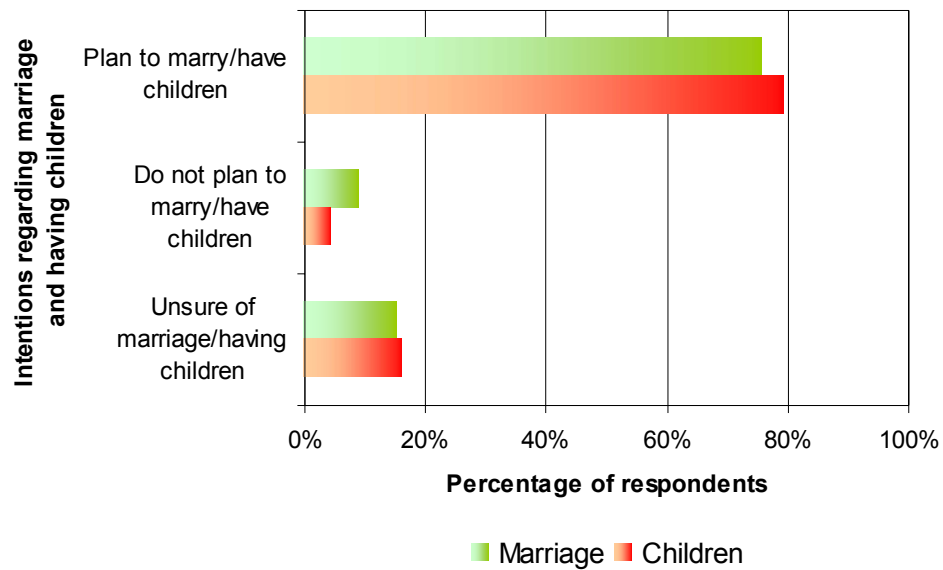
As can be seen in Figure 5.8, the majority of the respondents (59 or 75.6%) intended to engage into marriage while the minority (seven or 9%) did not. Twelve of the respondents (15.4%) were unsure of their marital plans. Among the 68 respondents that provided their intentions regarding parenthood, the same proportions repeated as the majority (54 or 79.4%) planned to have children, while the minority (three or 4.4%) did not. Eleven (16.2%) respondents were unsure of whether they would have children. It was interesting to find that the proportions of intentions for both of the above questions were similar to those of the bachelor group of respondents.

Table 5.4 contains a cross tabulation of the findings regarding marital intentions and having children.

TABLE 5.4

CROSS TABULATION: INTENTIONS REGARDING

MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD (SINGLES)

PLAN TO GET MARRIED	PLAN TO HAVE CHILDREN			
	Yes	No	Don't know	No response
Yes (59)	49	0	2	8
No (7)	2	2	1	2
Don't know (12)	3	1	8	0
Total (78)	54	3	11	10

The majority of the respondents intended to get married and have children.

A large number of respondents who were unsure of their future marital status

were also not sure of whether they would have children (66.7%). Some

respondents wanted to have children even though they did not intend to get

married or were unsure about marriage.

(c)   Employment status

Seventy-four respondents specified their employment status. Of these

respondents, the majority (51 or 68.9%) were employed. Of the employed

group, 13 (25.5%) were full-time employees and 38 (74.5%) were part-time

employees. With regard to income, these respondents' average monthly

amount of disposable income amounted to R 2 132.65 (based on amounts

provided by 49 respondents). Their average monthly amount of discretionary

income amounted to R 1 250.00 (based on amounts provided by 48

respondents). Twenty of the 23 unemployed respondents indicated that their

monthly source of funding was pocket money to the average value of R 750.00.

(d)   Living arrangement

Because singles are individuals who reside with their parents, respondents were asked whether this was because of financial or personal reasons. More than half of the respondents (42 or 53.8%) indicated that is was because of financial reasons while the remainder (36 or 46.2%) resided with their parents because of personal reasons. The respondents lived in households with an average of four members (based on figures provided by 76 respondents).

(e)   Consumption

Figure 5.9 indicates the frequency with which the singles purchased specified products and made use of selected services. While in all of the categories some respondents indicated never purchasing certain products/services, the majority (61.8%) indicated that they never purchased home furnishings (n=76). Most of the respondents purchased entertainment/recreation (n=76) on a weekly basis (64.5%). Both non-prepared food items (n=75) and prepared food items (n=76) were also mostly purchased on a weekly basis. Clothing and accessories (n=75) and personal care items (n=77) were mostly purchased on a monthly basis, while appliances (n=77) and medical

products/services (n=75) were mostly purchased less frequently than monthly.

FIGURE 5.9

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (SINGLES)
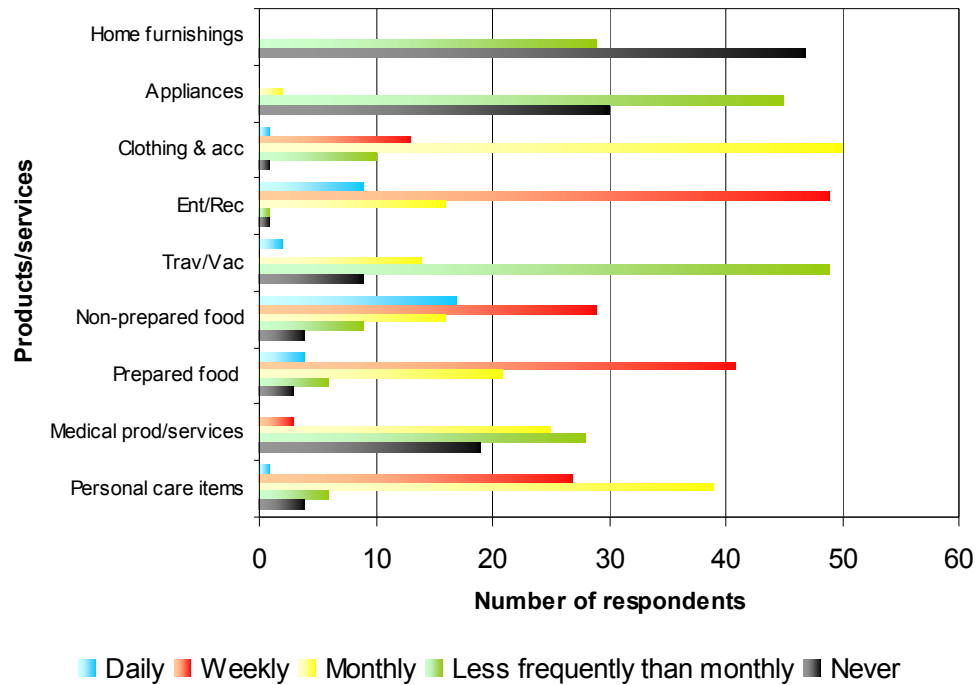
Given the fact that singles reside with their parents, none of the respondents were homeowners. Slightly more than half of the 76 respondents (40 or 52.6%) owned a vehicle.

5.3.2.2   Single parents

The single parenthood stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents (including intentions regarding marriage

and child-related aspects), employment status, living arrangement and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Eleven respondents were classified as single parents based on the fact that they had a child(ren), but were not married. Three of these respondents were full-time students, seven were part-time students and one was a staff member. The average age of these respondents was 30 years. Most of the respondents (nine) were recreation-orientated, while a small number (four) regarded themselves as fashion opinion leaders.

Four respondents intended to get married. The same number of respondents were unsure, while three respondents did not intend to get married. Most of the respondents (nine of the 11) had only one child, one respondent had two children and the remaining respondent did not specify the number of children. In most cases (eight out of the 11), the children did not live with the respondents.

(b)   Employment status

Most of the respondents (eight out of the 11) were employed, seven on a full-time basis and one on a part-time basis. The average monthly disposable and discretionary income of these respondents was determined as R 4 000.00 and R 2 357.14 respectively (calculated from amounts provided

by eight and seven respondents respectively). The three unemployed respondents received monthly pocket money to the average value of R 500.00.

(c)   Living arrangement

Three respondents resided with their parents, two because of financial reasons and one because of personal reasons. Of the remaining eight respondents, seven specified their living arrangements which included staying at the university residence (one respondent) and sharing with family other than their parents (one respondent). Three respondents indicated that they were living by themselves and two respondents shared a residence with non-family members.

(d)   Consumption

Figure 5.10 indicates the frequency with which single parents purchased specified products and made use of selected services. The respondents purchased all of the products and services contained in the portfolio. The purchase patterns for home furnishings and appliances were identical. Half of the respondents purchased clothing and accessories (n=10) on a monthly basis. The purchase frequencies for non-prepared food items were alike (daily and monthly). Prepared food items (n=11) were mostly purchased on a weekly basis. Almost half of the respondents (45.5%) purchased entertainment/recreation on a weekly basis (n=11). Almost three quarters of

the respondents (72.7%) purchased personal care items (n=11) on a monthly basis. One respondent owned a home and only two owned a vehicle.

FIGURE 5.10

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (SINGLE PARENTS)
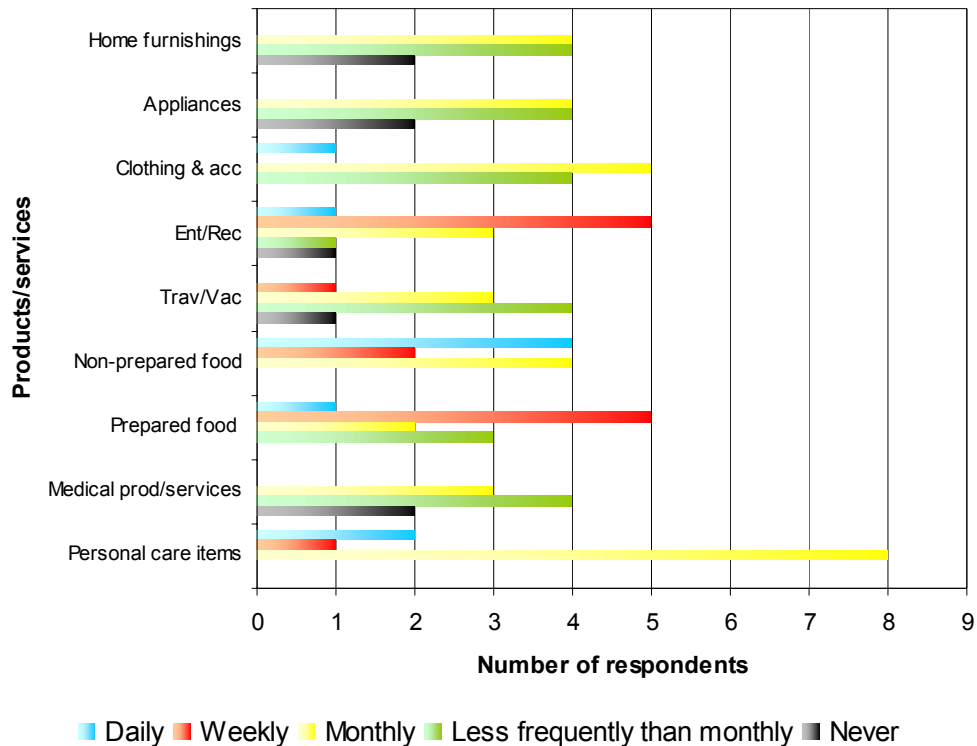
Table 5.5 indicates the number of respondents that made use of selected child-related products and services. None of the respondents' children attended a tertiary institution. The number of respondents who had children in elementary or primary school almost corresponded with the number of respondents who bought toys for their children. Only four respondents made use of child care services. With the exception of one respondent's child, the children did not receive extramural education.

TABLE 5.5

RESPONDENTS' USAGE OF SELECTED CHILD-RELATED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (SINGLE PARENTS)

CHILD-RELATED PRODUCTS/SERVICES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Elementary school education	4
Primary school education	3
Secondary school education	3
Tertiary education	0
Children's lessons	1
Medical products/services	6
Child care services	4
Toys	8

5.3.2.3   Boomerangers

The boomerang stage is discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, employment status and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Two respondents (both married, one couple with a child) were classified as boomerangers because they were living with their in-laws and had not established an independent living arrangement. One respondent was a part-time student and the other a staff member. The respondents indicated following a traditional progression concerning their respective life stages up to the point of residing with their in-laws. The respondents had contrasting views regarding whether they were recreation-orientated, but neither regarded themselves as fashion opinion leaders.

(b)   Employment status

Both respondents were employed, one on a full-time basis and the other part-time.   The average monthly amount of the respondents' disposable and discretionary income was R 2 499.50 and R 999.50 respectively.   Both respondents' spouses were employed and the average total amount of monthly discretionary income amounted to R 4 999.50.

(c)   Consumption

One respondent indicated that she never travels or goes on vacation while the other did so less frequently than monthly. With regard to non-prepared food items, one respondent purchased these items on a weekly basis while the other's purchase pattern was monthly.   Both respondents purchased personal care items on a monthly basis.   The respondent with a child had secondary school and medical expenses.   Both respondents were vehicle owners.

5.3.2.5   Divorced individuals

Divorced individuals are discussed under the following headings: general description of respondents, employment status, living arrangement, life stage progression and consumption.

(a)   General description of respondents

Four respondents were divorced, all of whom were staff members and the average age of the three respondents who specified their year of birth was 46 years. Three respondents indicated that they had no intention of re-marrying. The same number of respondents had children and in two instances, their children lived with them. Three of the four respondents were recreation-orientated. The same number of respondents did not think of themselves as opinion leaders regarding fashion.

(b)   Employment status

Three respondents were employed on a full-time basis and one on a part-time basis.   The average monthly amount of disposable and discretionary income was determined as R 6 250.00 and R 4 500.00 respectively.

(c)   Living arrangement

None of the respondents lived with their parents and two indicated that they did not intend to live with their parents again. Half of the respondents lived by themselves. Two respondents indicated that they were homeowners.

(d)   Life stage progression

The respondents indicated the following life stage progressions:

- single ➡ married ➡ parenthood ➡ divorced (children still reside at home);

- single ➡ married ➡ parenthood ➡ divorced (children still reside at home) ➡ post parenthood; and

- single ➡ married ➡ divorced.

(e)   Consumption

Figure 5.11 indicates the frequency with which divorced individuals purchased specified products and made use of selected services (n=4 for all categories). The purchase patterns for home furnishings and appliances were identical, while the purchase frequencies for clothing and accessories and entertainment/recreation were alike. The respondents unanimously indicated that they purchased travelling/vacationing on a less frequently than monthly basis. Three of the four respondents owned a vehicle.

FIGURE 5.11

PURCHASING FREQUENCY OF SPECIFIED PRODUCTS

AND SERVICES (DIVORCED INDIVIDUALS)
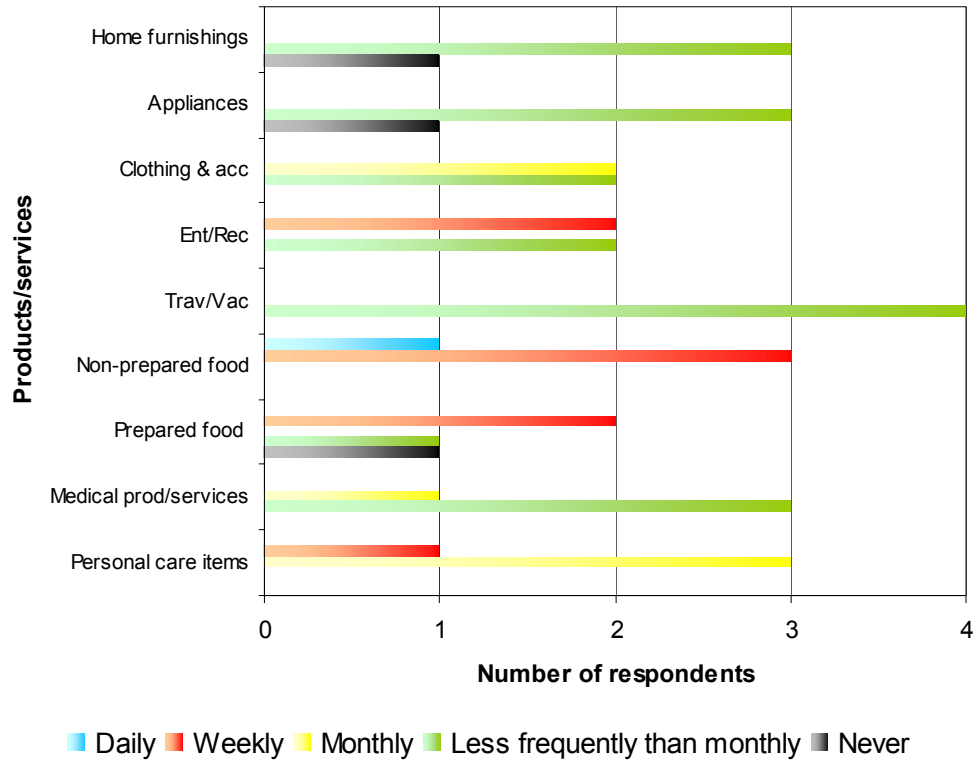
5.4   SUMMARY

The chapter reported on the findings of the empirical research making use of charts, tables and text.   A demographic depiction of the respondents preceded the description of each traditional and non-traditional stage identified.   Chapter 6 provides the conclusions and recommendations from these findings.

CHAPTER 6

SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3   INTRODUCTION

Chapters 2 and 3 reported on the literature findings regarding the FLC, whereas Chapter 5 reported on the findings of the empirical study. These three chapters provide the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the FLC. The current chapter contains said conclusions and addresses the research objectives set forth in Chapter 1. The recommendations resulting from the conclusions are also provided.

6.4   SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to determine how the FLC within a South African context compared to the theoretical depiction of the concept. Chapter 1 provided the basis for the research and contained definitions, which established the foundations of Chapters 2 and 3.

The literature study was contained in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Chapter 2 concentrated on the theoretical description of the traditional FLC and associated consumption portfolios. The focus of Chapter 3 was similar, but related to the non-traditional FLC.

As with the literature study, the description of the empirical study was also contained in two chapters. Chapter 4 provided the theoretical background pertaining to the empirical study, while Chapter 5 contained the findings of the survey conducted among 182 respondents.

6.3   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sections contain the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Because the empirical findings cannot be generalized to represent the entire South African population, the recommendations are fundamentally contextual.

6.3.1   Variables determining the life cycle stage

The empirical findings seemed to confirm the use of the life stage determining variables proposed in section 3.4 and Table 4.2. The literature review showed that marital status and the presence/absence of children are useful variables for differentiating the various stages of the FLC. It was, however, proposed that living arrangement be added as this variable allowed for a distinction between households and families, bachelors and singles and the classification of boomerangers and extended parents. Not only were these three variables sufficient in classifying an array of life stages; they are also expected to influence future life cycle progression as is discussed in section 6.3.4.

Although not regarded as a life stage determining variable in the current study, it can be postulated that the employment status of an individual could delay life cycle progression. For example, singles may live with their parents because of financial constraints and thus delay their progress into bachelorhood. Therefore, it is recommended that the influence of unemployment as an impeding factor be investigated in future research.

6.3.2   Life stages resulting from the empirical research

The life stage descriptions that follow are based on a comparison of Chapters 2 and 3 and the empirical findings contained in the previous chapter. The first four stages are traditional and the remaining four are non-traditional.

6.3.2.1   Bachelors

The respondents classified as bachelors consisted of young individuals (average age 23 years). Given the nature of the study, the majority were students. More than half of the bachelors were unemployed and the number of part-time employees slightly outranked the number of full time-employees. The majority of bachelors were recreation-orientated (a typical characteristic highlighted in the literature). The opinion regarding fashion influencers, however, was less conclusive as slightly more than half of the bachelors thought of themselves as fashion opinion leaders.

Traditionally bachelors are characterized as having sufficient amounts of disposable and discretionary income. Those bachelors who were employed had a substantial amount of monthly disposable income (R 3 500.00) and the overall amount of monthly discretionary income was indeed high (above R 1 500.00), giving them considerable purchasing power as suggested by Peter and Olson (1999:342).

It was also evident that although some individuals no longer resided with their parents, their parents still supported them financially, as was the case with those bachelors who received pocket money. Furthermore, given the monthly amounts of pocket money these bachelors received, it can be concluded that their parents financed their expenses, for example, rent/residence fees and perhaps even food.

The consumption portfolio constructed in Chapter 2 included five main categories of products and services. With the exception of home furnishings, the bachelors purchased all the products and services as suggested in the literature. These were:

- vehicle-related consumption (applicable to only a few bachelors);
- clothing and accessories;
- entertainment/recreation; and
- travelling/vacationing.

The finding that slightly more than three quarters of the bachelors did not purchase home furnishings can be attributed to the fact that the majority of them did not possess their own home, but shared a residence with non-related individuals. A small number of them resided with family members other than their parents. A quarter of the bachelors represented single person households and this proportion is most likely to be those that purchased home furnishings at monthly or less frequently than monthly intervals.

In addition to the above-mentioned categories, bachelors also purchased prepared food and personal care items at regular intervals (as suggested by Berkowitz et al 2000:166). In contrast to what Kotler (1991:171) suggests, slightly more than half of the bachelors did not purchase appliances. Once again, this can be attributed to the fact that they did not posses their own homes.

6.3.2.2   Honeymooners

The honeymooners in the current study were still relatively young. Two of the honeymooners could be labelled 'DINKIES' as both them and their spouses were employed. These 'DINKIES' had considerable amounts of collective discretionary income. Two couples had established their own residences while another shared a residence with non-family members, constituting a household rather than a family.

The consumption portfolio constructed in Chapter 2 included the products and services listed below, all of which were purchased by those classified as honeymooners.

- Home furnishings
- Vehicle-related consumption (applicable to two honeymooners)
- Clothing and accessories
- Entertainment/recreation
- Travelling/vacationing

6.3.2.3   Full nesters

The average age of the full nesters was 42 years. The employment rate among the respondents was high and the average combined monthly discretionary income of spouses amounted to slightly more than R 5 000.00.

All of the full nesters were homeowners. Two couples shared their residence with other individuals. In particular, those that had non-family members staying with them constituted a household instead of a family.

The consumption portfolio constructed in Chapter 2 included the products and services listed below, all of which were purchased by those classified as full nesters.

- Homes (all 25 full nesters were homeowners)

- Home furnishings

- Food

- Toys

- Education

- Children's lessons

- Travelling/vacationing

- Medical products and services

Compared to the previous two stages, the consumption portfolio has expanded because of the presence of children (as suggested in the literature). Of particular interest is the fact that non-prepared food items were mostly purchased on a weekly basis. Given this finding, it can be concluded that these parents did not buy food in bulk as suggested by Zikmund and d'Amico (2001:227). Bulk shopping is usually done on a monthly or less frequent basis. Prepared food items (fast food) were also purchased on a weekly basis.   Most of the respondents would also have automotive expenses.

The full nesters' children attended various levels of educational institutions. Given the correlation between the number of parents whose children attended elementary and primary school and the number of parents who purchased toys and made use of child care services, it can be concluded that these full nesters had young children.   Parents made use of medical products/services for themselves and their children.   Contradictory to

Zikmund and d'Amico's (2001:227) opinion, most of these full nesters'
children did not receive extramural education.

6.3.2.4   Empty nesters

There are certain authors that argue that some empty nesters retire while
they are still healthy.   However, all the empty nesters surveyed were still
working and in two instances, their spouses were also employed.   As
suggested in literature, these empty nesters had a substantial amount of
(monthly) discretionary income (R 3 500.00).

The consumption portfolio constructed in Chapter 2 included the products
and services listed below.   With the exception of education, the empty
nesters purchased all the products and services suggested by literature.
These were:

- homes (three empty nesters were home owners);
- home furnishings;
- travelling/vacationing;
- recreation; and
- medical products/services.

Although Cant et al (2002:196) and Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:288) suggest
that mothers typically further their education during this stage; the student in
this instance was a male.   Furthermore, Sheth and Mittal (2004:54) suggest

that empty nesters spend a large part of their discretionary income on vacations. Although these empty nesters had sufficient amounts of discretionary income, they chose not to regularly spend it on vacations.

6.3.2.5 Singles

The group of singles was made up of young (average age 22) respondents. Those singles who were employed had reasonable amounts of discretionary income (R 1250.00), compared to those who received pocket money (R 750.00). Both groups of individuals, however, are expected to have considerable purchasing power as they do not have all of the expenses of an individual who no longer stays with his/her parents.

Although a large number of singles were employed, more than half of the singles stated that they still lived with their parents due to financial reasons. Given the employed individuals' average monthly income, it is evident that they were not capable of establishing independent living arrangements.

The consumption portfolio derived from the literature study consisted of nine categories of products/services. With the exception of home furnishings, most of the respondents consumed the remainder of the products/services at various intervals.

The finding that singles did not purchase home furnishings can be attributed to the fact that they resided with their parents. The expenditure on

appliances was most likely for their own use rather than to be used by the entire household. The recreation-orientated individuals purchased entertainment/recreation on a weekly basis, but travelled/vacationed less frequently than monthly. Overall, singles did not consider themselves fashion opinion leaders.

6.3.2.6   Single parents

The single parent respondents were still young, averaging at 30 years. In most instances, their child(ren) did not live with them. This can be attributed to the fact that most of them were studying while also being employed. Berkowitz et al (2000:166) and Stanton et al (1994:132) point out that single parents usually face financial constraints and compared to employed full nesters, they are less financially secure. This was evident by the fact that these single parents had less than half of the amount of discretionary income available to two income-earning parents.

The three respondents that received pocket money from their parents were most likely those who also lived with them. These respondents were unemployed and thus two of them still resided with their parents because of financial reasons. The remaining respondents indicated an array of living arrangements, most of which included sharing a residence with others. This could be another reason why their children did not live with them.

Single parents purchased all of the products/services listed in the consumption portfolio derived from the literature study. The finding that (in most cases) their children did not live with them could be the reason why these recreation-orientated individuals enjoyed entertainment/recreation on a weekly basis. With regard to the child-related products and services, the respondents had relatively young children as the oldest children attended secondary schools and most of the respondents bought toys for their children. There are authors who state that single parents make use of child care services, however, most of these individuals did not. This could be attributed to the finding that in most cases their children did not live with them. As with full nesters' children, few single parents' children received extramural lessons.

6.3.2.9   Boomerangers

Based on the views of Hanna and Wozniak (2001:437) the married individuals who were residing with their in-laws were regarded as boomerangers. Combined, these couples had a very high monthly discretionary income, most likely because they did not have all of the expenses associated with couples who have established their own residences. The fact that they remain with their in-laws most likely also had an influence on their consumption habits. Despite following a traditional progression, these individuals were classified in a non-traditional stage.

6.3.2.10   Divorced individuals

Three classes of divorced individuals existed among the respondents: honeymooner to divorced (without children), divorced single parents and divorced and alone (children no longer dependent on the divorced single parent). Divorced single parents' average monthly discretionary income was less than that available in a full nest household, yet more than the monthly average of single parents. The latter finding could be attributed to the fact that divorced single parents might also have received parental child support. The divorced individuals consumed all of the products/services listed in the consumption portfolio derived from the literature study.

6.3.3   Contextual life cycle model

Figure 6.1 illustrates the life cycle model developed from the empirical findings. The model contained in Figure 6.1 integrates both traditional and non-traditional stages (described in the previous section) and indicates the respondents' progression through the cycle. It should be noted that the model reflects respondents' progression up to the current life stage; it does not include intended progression.

FIGURE 6.1

CONTEXTUAL FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL
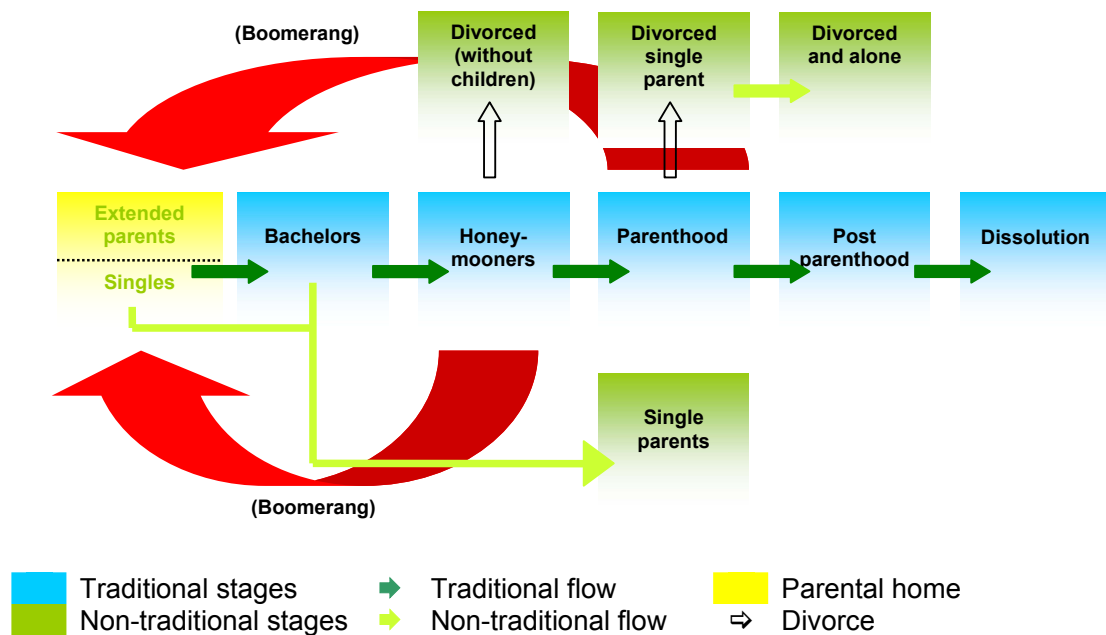
Source: Own construction

6.3.4 Future intentions

One of the research objectives was to provide some insight into the future FLC based on the intentions of individual consumers. To attain this objective, questions relating to marital intentions, children and future living arrangements were included in the questionnaire, as these variables were expected to influence individuals' progression through the life cycle. Conclusions based on the intentions of bachelors and singles (the first two stages of the respective life cycle classifications) regarding marriage, parenthood and living arrangements (in the case of bachelors) are discussed below.

6.3.4.1   Intentions of bachelors

Depending on bachelors' intentions, a number of progressions through the FLC are possible.   Some of the possible progressions are described below and illustrated in the model contained in Figure 6.2.   The descriptions and model are based on the cross tabulation in Table 5.2 and the discussion of living arrangement in section 5.3.1.1.

- Those bachelors that intended to marry and have children are expected to follow a traditional progression, moving from bachelors to honeymooners to parenthood.

- Those bachelors that did not intend to get married, but intended to have children could either become single parents or find a life partner (mingles stage) and progress onto the parental mingles stage (all are non-traditional progressions).

- Those bachelors that intended to live with their parents again will be classified as boomerang kids.   Because of their return to the family home, their parents will be classified as extended parents (both non-traditional stages).

FIGURE 6.2

POSSIBLE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL

(BASED ON BACHELORS' INTENTIONS)
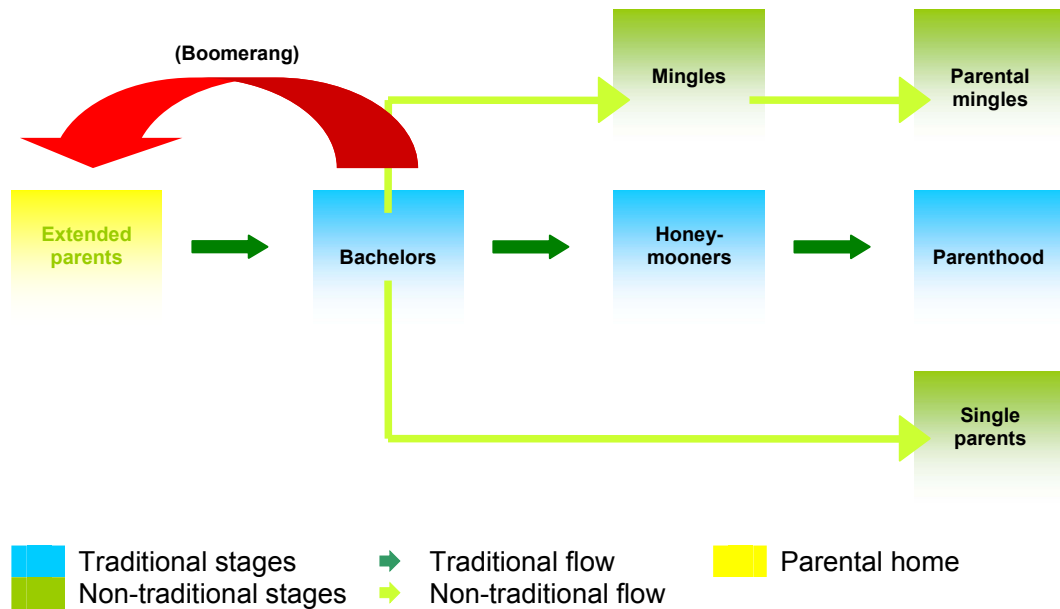
Source: Own construction

6.3.4.2   Intentions of singles

Depending on singles' intentions, a number of progressions through the FLC are possible.   Some of the possible progressions are described below and illustrated in the model contained in Figure 6.3. The descriptions and model are based on the cross tabulation in Table 5.4 and exclude the intentions regarding future living arrangements.

- The singles that intended to marry and have children are expected to follow a traditional progression from being single to honeymooners to parenthood.

- Those singles that did not intend to get married, but intended to have children could either become single parents or find a life partner (mingles stage) and progress onto the parental mingles stage (all are non-traditional progressions).

- Those singles that did not intend to get married or have children could find a life partner and progress onto the mingles stage.

FIGURE 6.3

POSSIBLE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE MODEL

(BASED ON SINGLES' INTENTIONS)

| Traditional stages | ➡ Traditional flow | Parental home |
| Non-traditional stages | ➡ Non-traditional flow | |
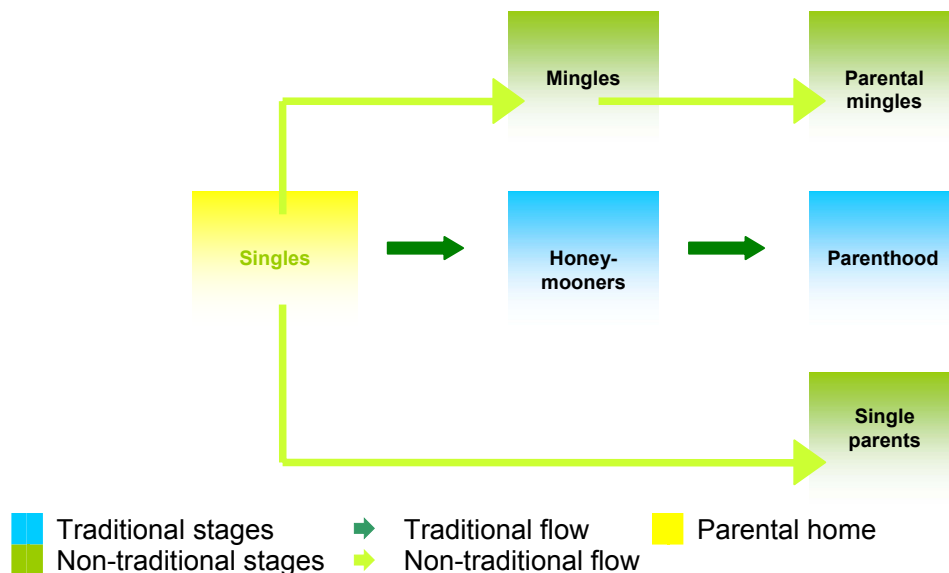
Source: Own construction

When planning their future marketing activities (for example, segmentation) marketers should bear in mind that consumers may progress through both traditional and non-traditional stages, depending on their intentions regarding marriage, having children and living arrangements. Besides consumers' future intentions, the unemployment rate and elevated property prices in South Africa might give rise to more singles (contemporary stage) who cannot afford to establish independent residences (like traditional bachelors). These factors might also lead to the establishment of more households (non-related individuals residing together) within both the traditional and non-traditional classifications.

6.3.5   Concept's terminology

The most prevalent domestic unit was a family (as in the case of singles, empty nesters, boomerangers and extended parents, and some honeymooners, full nesters and single parents). However, the term household life cycle also applies to the South African context. The traditional life cycle did not exclusively consist of families. Some honeymooners and full nesters shared their residences with non-related individuals. Those bachelors who either lived by themselves or resided with non-related individuals also established households. Furthermore, the living arrangements of certain single parents and divorced individuals also constituted households.

A neutral term such as life stage progression (LSP) is proposed as it would not be subject to the 'traditional' connotations of families and households. Such a term could also represent both traditional and non-traditional progressions. The term life stage stagnation could be used to refer to perpetual states. For example, there are some bachelors who have no intentions of marrying or having children. In essence, these individuals would become perpetual bachelors as they would not progress past the bachelorhood stage in the LSP.

6.3.6   Final conclusion

The research question that motivated this research was:

"Can a family life cycle (FLC) be identified within a South African context and if so, how does it compare to the theoretical depiction of the concept?"

The research results showed that a FLC could indeed be identified within a South African context. The stages of this FLC were described in section 6.3.2 (where the similarities and differences between the theory and the empirical findings were highlighted) and illustrated in the model in Figure 6.1. As can be seen in Figure 6.1, evidence of both the traditional and non-traditional FLC was found and in some instances, individuals/households followed an integrated progression (a combination of traditional and non-traditional stages) through the life cycle.

6.3.7   Future research areas

Research into the following areas is proposed.

- 'Intermediate progression' (instances where individuals are in transitional stages) should be investigated. The consumption patterns of individuals that are engaged and married couples that are expecting their first child, for example, might be different from the conventional stages in which they would normally be classified (bachelorhood/single and honeymooners respectively).

- The life stage classification system that resulted from the empirical study (contained in Table 4.2) should be verified through further research. The classification system depicts traditional and non-traditional life stages (some based on the South African situation) according to marital status, the presence or absence of children and living arrangement.

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Department of Marketing

College Campus

Port Elizabeth Technikon

Dear Sir/Madam

I am enrolled for a Master's degree in Marketing. My dissertation investigates the family life cycle (FLC) within a South African context. The FLC is based on a combination of factors (marital status, the presence or absence of children and living arrangement) applicable to an individual or household and is a process each individual/household progresses through.

Kindly complete the attached questionnaire. It will take no more than 10 minutes. As you do not have to provide your name, you will be anonymous. My report will contain combined findings.

Once the questionnaire is completed, students must return it to their lecturer; I will arrange a collection date with staff members. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

Yours sincerely

E. Koekemoer

PLEASE INDICATE YOUR ANSWERS WITH AN X IN THE SPACE PROVIDED

GENERAL INFORMATION

1 Please indicate your gender.

Male	1	Female	2

4

2 Please indicate your ethnic group.

Black	1
Coloured	2
Indian	3
White	4
Other	5

5

3 Please indicate your <u>registered</u> student status.

Full-time	1
Part-time	2
Not applicable	3

6

AGE

1 Please indicate the year in which you were born.

19		

7

MARITAL STATUS

1 Please indicate your marital status.

Single	1
Engaged	2
Married	3
Divorced	4
Divorced and re-married	5
Widowed	6
Widowed and re-married	7
Life partners (arrangement similar to marriage without formally exchanging vows)	8

8

2 If you are currently single, do you plan to ever get married?

Yes	1	No	2	Don't know	3

9

CHILDREN

1 Do you have any children?

Yes	1	No	2

10

➡ (If **yes**, complete questions 2, 3, 4 and 5; then continue to the next section. If **no**, continue to question 6; then to the next section).

2 Please indicate the number of children.

11

3 Do any of your children live with you?

Yes	1	No	2

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4 Have any of your children left home and subsequently returned to stay with you again?

Yes	1	No	2

13

➡ (If **yes**, complete question 5).

5 Please indicate the reason for your child(ren)'s return.

Financial reasons	1
Personal reasons	2

14

6 Do you plan on ever having children?

Yes	1	No	2	Don't know	3

15

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

1 Please indicate your employment situation.

Unemployed	1
Employed full-time	2
Employed part-time	3

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➡ (If you are **employed**, full-time or part-time, complete questions 2 and 3; then continue to questions 6 and 7. If you are **unemployed**, complete questions 4 and 5; then continue to questions 6 and 7).

2 Please indicate your <u>individual</u> <u>monthly</u> amount of disposable income (money after taxes have been paid, available for spending).

R 0 - R 999	1
R 1 000 - R 1 999	2
R 2 000 - R 2 999	3
R 3 000 - R 3 999	4
R 4 000 - R 4 999	5
R 5 000 - R 5 999	6
R 6 000 - R 6 999	7
R 7 000 - R 7 999	8
R 8 000 and more	9

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3 Please indicate your <u>individual</u> <u>monthly</u> amount of discretionary income (amount of disposable income left after paying monthly expenses and making essential purchases).

R 0 - R 999	1
R 1 000 - R 1 999	2
R 2 000 - R 2 999	3

R 3 000 - R 3 999	4
R 4 000 - R 4 999	5
R 5 000 - R 5 999	6
R 6 000 - R 6 999	7
R 7 000 - R 7 999	8
R 8 000 and more	9

(more options on the next page)

18

4 Please indicate your source of <u>monthly</u> income.

Pocket money	1
Bursary/Sponsorship	2
Other, please specify :	3

19

5 Please specify the amount.

R 0 - R 999	1
R 1 000 - R 1 999	2
R 2 000 - R 2 999	3
R 3 000 and more	4

20

6 If you have a spouse/fiancé/life partner, is he/she employed?

Yes	1	No	2	Not applicable	3

21

7 Please indicate the <u>total</u> amount of monthly discretionary income for your <u>entire household</u> (Amount of disposable income left after paying monthly expenses and making essential purchases).

R 0 – R 1 999	1
R 2 000 – R 3 999	2
R 4 000 – R 5 999	3
R 6 000 – R 7 999	4
R 8 000 – R 9 999	5
R 10 000 and more	6

22

LIVING ARRANGEMENT

1 Do you live with your parents?

Yes	1	No	2

23

➡ (If **yes**, complete question 2; then continue to question 5. If **no**, continue to questions 3, 4 and 5).

2 Please indicate the reason for living with your parents.

Financial reasons	1
Personal reasons	2

24

3 Please indicate your living arrangement.

Technikon residence	1
Living by myself	2
Home owner (home for your own family)	3
Sharing residence with non-family members	4
Sharing residence with family other than	5

parents (e.g. siblings/cousins)	
Sharing residence with fiancé/life partner	6
Living with spouse/fiancé/life partner's parents	7

25

4 Do you intend to live with your parents again in the future?

Yes	1	No	2	Don't know	3

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5 Please specify the number of people in your household.

[ ]

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LIFE CYCLE PROGRESSION

1 Please select the life cycle progression that describes your life stages. If your life stage progression is not represented by the descriptions below, briefly describe your progression in the space provided. <u>Note</u>: this classification ignores engaged stages.

Single	1
Single → Married	2
Single → Married → Parenthood (children live at home)	3
Single → Married → Parenthood (children live at home) → Post parenthood (all children have left family home)	4
Single → Married → Parenthood (children live at home) → Post parenthood (all children have left family home) → Widowed	5

Other:	6

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CONSUMPTION

1 Please indicate how frequently you purchase the following selected product and service categories.

	Purchase frequency					
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less frequently than monthly	Never	
Home furnishings (e.g. beds, chairs, couches, tables)	1	2	3	4	5	**29**
Appliances (e.g. DVD players, fridges, microwaves, televisions)	1	2	3	4	5	**30**
Clothing and accessories	1	2	3	4	5	**31**
Entertainment/Recreation (e.g. clubs, movies, restaurants)	1	2	3	4	5	**32**
Travelling/Vacationing	1	2	3	4	5	**33**
Food items for self preparation	1	2	3	4	5	**34**
Prepared food items (e.g. restaurant meals, take aways)	1	2	3	4	5	**35**
Medical products/services	1	2	3	4	5	**36**
Personal care items (e.g. fragrances, creams, shampoo, soap)	1	2	3	4	5	**37**

2 If you have children, please specify which of the following child-related products/services you make use of for your children.

	Yes	No	
Elementary school education	1	2	**38**
Primary school education	1	2	**39**
Secondary school education	1	2	**40**
Tertiary education	1	2	**41**
Children's lessons (e.g. music, dance)	1	2	**42**
Medical products/services	1	2	**43**
Child care services	1	2	**44**
Toys	1	2	**45**

3 Are you currently a homeowner?

Yes	1	No	2

46

4 Are you currently a vehicle owner?

Yes	1	No	2

47

5 Do you consider yourself recreation-orientated? (Partake in leisure activities or indulge in a hobby)

Yes	1	No	2

48

6 Do you consider yourself a fashion opinion leader? (Someone who influences others regarding fashion)

Yes	1	No	2

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION