Exploring the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores: An exploratory study in Tshwane

by

Corinne Nell

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Master of Commerce

In the Subject

Business Management

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Supervisor: Prof. J.A. Wiid
Co-supervisor: Prof. M.C. Cant

February 2013

DECLARATION

I, Corinne Nell, declare that this research report "Exploring the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores: An exploratory study in Tshwane" is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Business Management at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

....
SIGNATURE   DATE

ABSTRACT

This research study aims to obtain a holistic view of the area of store atmospherics, which forms part of the retail industry. A consumer-centred response approach was followed. Store atmospherics and its influence on consumers' buying behaviour has received very little attention in the literature to date. Consumers' views on in-store atmospheric elements and the influence of these elements on their buying behaviour were obtained. The primary research aim that was derived from the preliminary literature was therefore to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. The type of research design used in this study was exploratory, making use of a qualitative approach and a communicative technique of interviews. The selected method was focus group interviews and naïve sketches. The data gathered was analysed by means of Tesch's inductive descriptive coding technique, better known as thematic analysis. It was found that atmospheric elements have the ability to influence consumers in either a subconscious or a conscious way. This has a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers will spend in-store and ultimately influences their buying decisions and behaviour either positively or negatively. This had a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers will spend in-store and ultimately influences their buying decisions and behaviours either positively or negatively, meaning that the consumers' will display either an approach- or avoidance behaviour.

Key terms:

Store atmospherics; visual merchandising; stimuli; senses; sight; sound; scent; touch; consumer behaviour; decision-making process; apparel; retail industry; retailers.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Lutz and Elsa Nell, who have given me the opportunity to invest in my career and future. They also supported me throughout the course of this thesis as well as during my previous studies. Your encouragement and unreserved love have made this possible. I am grateful for having you in my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support, guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. I would never have been able to finish it without the strength of my Lord, the guidance of my colleagues, help from friends and support from my family.

- First and foremost, I offer my sincerest gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. J.A. Wiid and Prof. M.C. Cant. They have supported me throughout my thesis with their patience, knowledge, outstanding guidance, caring and belief in me. I am thankful for the support and courage that you have given me.

- I would like to thank my parents Lutz and Elsa, my sister Inge and friend Neville for their unlimited support, encouraging words and belief in me. Thank you!

- I would like to thank my friends, who have offered constant words of encouragement and support.

- I would like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Marketing and Retail Management for their support and participation in my study.

- I would like to thank Mrs Jenny Seagreen for helping me with the formatting of the research project.

- Last but not least, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength, determination and courage to complete my studies.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

GLOSSARY

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

Ambience: The "overall feeling or mood projected by a store through its aesthetic appeal to human senses" (Dunne & Lusch, 2008:457).

Apparel: Can be defined as clothing, especially outerwear, garments or attire used for the purpose of covering and decorating the body (Dictionary.com, 2011). Therefore all body parts are covered by clothing, such as gloves, scarves, shoes and hats.

Approach behaviour: All positive behavioural intentions that are influenced by an environment such as good lighting, pleasant music etc. (Kang, Boger, Back & Madera, 2011:3).

Atmospherics: The physical characteristics of a store that are used to develop an image in order to attract consumers (Berman & Evans, 2010:508).

Avoidance behaviour: All negative behavioural intentions, meaning to stay away from a store or not wanting to enter a store (Kang *et al.,* 2011:3).

Brand: A unique name or symbol such as a logo, design or a trademark that companies use to identify and differentiate their products or services offered from those of their competitors or other offerings (Levy, Weitz & Beitelspacher, 2012:593).

Buyer behaviour: The processes that individuals, groups or organisations use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on consumers and society. Buyer behaviour explains how consumers behave in certain buying situations (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:8).

Category: A group of "things" which have some qualities in common (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:212).

Consumer buying behaviour: Can be defined as "the study of individuals, groups or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impact that these processes have on consumers and the society" (Cant, Van Heerden & Ngambi, 2010:51).

Consumer decision-making process: A chronological and repetitive set of psychological and physical activities varying from problem recognition to post-buying behaviour (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2012:251).

Emotions: Can be defined as "oral expression of feelings and as a personal, subjective psychological state" (Liao & Liaw, [n.d.]:2).

Family decision-making: Can be defined as the "process by which decisions that directly or indirectly involve two or more family members are made" (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:207).

Feature areas: Those areas in a store that are specifically designed in order to grab consumers' attention (Levy *et al.*, 2012:479).

Fixtures: All the different types of equipment used to display merchandise (Levy *et al.,* 2012:471).

Focus group interviews: A formal process of bringing a small group of people, normally eight to twelve participants, together for an interactive, spontaneous discussion on one specific topic or concept (Hair, Bush & Orinau, 2009:161).

Layout: The effective flow of used space, traffic control and sales productivity of a retail store in order to ensure that consumers are comfortable while shopping and that the overall appearance of a store is attractive (Levy *et al.,* 2012:473).

Lifestyle: Can be defined as "a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed in activities, interests, and opinions" (Kotler & Keller, 2006:183).

Mannequin: A silent fibreglass body/figure that shouts and whispers at potential consumers by using its own "brand" of body language to display merchandise trends with the aim of reaching passers-by (Bell & Ternus, 2006:296).

Marketing research: Can be defined as the "systematic gathering, recording and analysis of data about problems or opportunities relating to the marketing of goods and services" (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:31).

Motivation: Can be defined as the "inner states that direct a person towards the goal of satisfying a need. The individual takes action to reduce the state of tension and return to a condition of equilibrium" (Cant *et al.,* 2010:52).

Naïve sketch: An approach that provides non-verbal or mute evidence of an experience. Open-ended questions are asked based on pictures given to participants. Participants have to form and write their own conclusions based on these pictures (Hodder, 1994:703–716).

Needs: Can be defined as "an imbalance between the consumers' actual and desired states. A person who recognises or feels a significant or urgent need then seeks to correct the imbalance" (Cant, 2010:41).

Perception: The process in which people select, organise and interpret information in order to form a meaningful picture of the world (Zainbooks, 2008:7).

Point-of-purchase displays: Interior displays that provide shoppers with extra information to add to the store atmosphere and that serve as a promotional tool (Berman & Evans, 2010:614).

Presentation techniques: Sorting merchandise according to styles, colours, end-use and type of fabric (Bell & Ternus, 2006:162).

Props: Any items or objects used in a setting other than painted walls and merchandise displayed (Bell & Ternus, 2006:381). Therefore it is any physical object used in order to create a display, such as a wooden barrel, a miniature aeroplane, a mock tree with autumn leaves, a chair and table, magazines lying around etc. (Dunne & Lusch, 2008:456).

Retailing: Business activities involved in selling goods and services to consumers for their personal, family or household use (Berman & Evans, 2010:615).

Scent: Any particular or often agreeable smell, such as pleasant fragrances or bad odours (Macmillan Dictionary, 2012).

Sight: The act of seeing and forming a perception of specific things or objects by using the eyes (AR Dictionary, 2010).

Signage and graphics: Any drawings, paintings or words to create a graphic display that is used by retailers within a store to help consumers locate particular products and departments (Pegler, 2010:256).

Sound: A specific feeling that is produced by the stimulation of the hearing organs through vibrations sent out through the air or any other medium, such as the sound of music (Dictionary.com, 2012).

Store atmospherics: A store's physical characteristics such as music, scent, temperature, lighting, colour and much more that are used to develop an image and draw customers (Berman & Evans, 2010:605).

Store design: The interior design of a store where goods are sold to the community. The goal of retail design is to make the store space more appealing and inviting to customers (Burns, 2012).

Thematic analysis: An exercise in qualitative research that involves searching through qualitative data in order to identify any repeated patterns (Tesch, 1990:113).

Theme: Can be described as "umbrella" constructs that are generally identified by the researcher before, after and during the data collection. A theme can therefore be seen as a cluster of linked categories that express the same meanings. The term "construct" can be defined as "an image or idea specifically invented for a given research and/or theory-building purpose" (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:37).

Touch: A tactile or tangible sense through which consumers have the ability to make physical contact with the surrounding world as well as to investigate three-dimensional objects (Kang *et al.*, 2011:3)

Visual displays: Used when a retailer wants to show a wide range of merchandise to the customer. They may be open, randomly situated in-store or closed, in a specific area or window (Berman & Evans, 2010:521).

Visual merchandising: The artistic display of merchandise and theatrical props used as scene-setting decoration in the store (Dunne & Lusch, 2008:526).

Window display: A window outside a retail outlet that is used by retailers to display merchandise for sale or otherwise designed to attract consumers into their store (Bell & Ternus, 2006:20).

CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the retail industry has grown exponentially, resulting in a highly intensive and competitive market (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:2; Liaw, 2007:1). Today, it has become difficult for retailers to benefit only from their products, prices, promotions and place (Liaw, 2007:1; Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:5). It is therefore essential that retail stores use store space opportunities effectively, in order to differentiate themselves from competitors in the retail market as well as provide consumers with a pleasant shopping experience.

Spies, Hesse and Loesch (1997:1) have indicated that irrespective of the specific merchandise being offered, some stores are more attractive than others. Various stores provoke a feeling of happiness and wellbeing, whereas other stores can easily provoke a feeling of irritation. For this reason it is essential for retail stores to create a positive in-store environment, as a positive mood can easily increase the consumers' time and money spent (Spies *et al.*, 1997:1).

A positive and pleasurable in-store environment can be created by focusing on various elements such as music, scent, lighting, colours and flooring that excite the senses of shoppers (Berman & Evans, 1998:552). According to ACP Connections ([n.d]:1), 83% of all in-store communications appeal only to one sense – the eyes – and only 17% are left to cater for the other four senses. 75% of consumers' day-to-day emotions are influenced by what they smell, and there is a 65% chance of a mood change when exposed to positive sounds. It is found that most retailers use only sight as a sense to attract consumers into their stores, but envisage the consumers' experience when sound, smell and touch are also added to the in-store environment (ACP Connections, [n.d.]:1).

This chapter focuses on a variety of factors and commences with the purpose of the study, followed by detailed background on store atmospherics, atmospheric elements and their influence on consumers' buying behaviour. After the background discussion, the research question together with the research objectives are identified, followed by the significance of the study. A brief description is given of the research methodology that was used to achieve the objectives set out in the research study.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. The study will provide apparel retailers in Tshwane insight into the value and importance of atmospherics in their stores.

This research study aimed to obtain a holistic view of the field of store atmospherics, which forms part of the retail industry. A consumer-centred response approach was followed. Store atmospherics and its influence on consumers' buying behaviour has received very little attention in the literature to date. The study will benefit apparel retailers in the Tshwane region as the consumers' views on in-store atmospheric elements and their influence on the consumers' buying behaviour are determined. Apparel retailers in the Tshwane region can consider implementing the research findings and outcomes of the study in their retail environment. Alternatively, the outcomes and findings can be used purely for academic purposes and future research.

An in-depth background of store atmospherics and its possible influences on consumers' buying behaviour is given in the next section.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF STORE ATMOSPHERICS

The physical bricks and mortar retail environment has in the past as well as now provided both the focus and the setting for consumer engagement (Ogden-

Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:5). However, consumers today are increasingly turning to alternative channels such as the internet to browse, compare and ultimately purchase products, which is a threat to the traditional retail store environments. Faced with this evolution, it is critical for brick and mortar retailers to reconsider the principles and practices of in-store consumer engagement and to understand in more detail how their physical in-store environments can be influenced in the best possible way in order to ensure sales optimisation, consumer satisfaction and sustainable profitability (Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:5).

In today's society consumers are experiencing more time pressures and have a need to escape from hectic and stressful days (Deccan Chronicle, 2011:1; Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:7). It can therefore be inferred that it might be essential for retailers to realise this and make their physical in-store environment as pleasant as possible in order to satisfy consumer needs and provide them with an enjoyable experience, not reminding them of their "busy and rushed" lifestyles (Gobé, 2009:109). Liaw (2007:1) states that retail stores that do improve on their in-store environment create an effective consuming condition that might stimulate and satisfy the consumers' immediate purchasing behaviour.

Ogden-Barnes and Barclay ([n.d.]:21) are of the opinion that subtle factors experienced through the senses, namely sight, sound, touch, scent and taste, either individually or together, can affect a consumer's emotion in relation to a degree of stimulation and relaxation. For example, different light and temperature combinations can act to influence consumer perceptions of the retail offer, with soft or warm light tones and cool or warm temperature variables all creating different perceptions in dissimilar product sectors. It is therefore critical for retailers to determine how these key atmospheric elements are optimised in relation to the brand and product offer in order to create a pleasurable shopping environment that will stimulate and encourage sales. The term "atmospherics" is a word used by retailers to describe elements (lighting effects, colours used, aromas, music and so on) that are attractive to the five human senses and that add to the overall environment of a retail store (Bell & Ternus, 2006:21).

Given this importance of in-store atmospherics, especially with the rise of online retailing, the question can be asked: When is the use of in-store atmospheric elements important? According to Kotler (2001:52), retail stores can implement atmospheric designs in four different ways. Firstly, they can use atmospherics as a marketing tool where products are bought and where they have the ability to make use of design options. Secondly, atmospherics becomes essential to retailers the moment that more competitors enter the market. Thirdly, in retail industries where product and price similarities occur, the use of atmospheric elements is becoming a more attractive strategy to differentiate from competitor offerings. In the fourth place, the use of atmospheric elements is important to differentiate between different social classes or lifestyle buyer groups.

According to Hunter and Mukerji (2011:119), elements such as scent, temperature, lighting, colour and even the music playing inside retail stores have been analysed in the past. Based on the emotional concept of stimulus-response, researchers have suggested that these factors can have an influence on arousal and pleasure, which can have a direct effect on consumers' decision-making as either approach or avoidance behaviour. For example, stimuli such as overcrowding and loud music might reduce consumers' interaction, browsing time and the purchasing of unnecessary products. This implies that if consumers experience an in-store environment/atmosphere that overly increases arousal and decreases the pleasure of the experience, it will have a negative impact on consumers' buying behaviour (Hunter & Mukerji, 2011:119).

The Mehrabian and Russell (M-R) environmental psychology model (1974), also known as the stimuli-organism-response (SOR) model is one of the most commonly used models by retailers to determine the effect of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour. This model can therefore be described as one of the most effective models to use to explain the effect that physical store environments have on consumers' buying behaviour (Liu & Jang, 2009:494). The model suggests that environmental stimuli (S) lead to an emotional reaction (O) that influence consumers' behavioural responses (R) as depicted in figure 1.1 below (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451; Kang *et al.*, 2011:2).
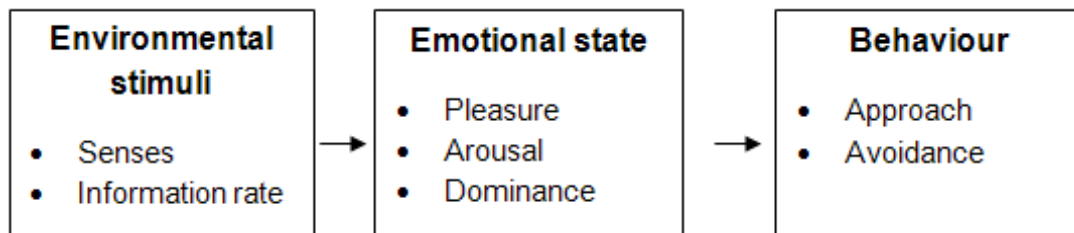
Figure 1.1: The Mehrabian-Russell model
Source: Adapted from Mehrabian and Russell (1974)

The SOR model indicates that consumers have three emotional states in response to environmental stimuli: these are pleasure, arousal and dominance. These emotional responses result in two contrasting behaviours, namely approach, also known as a positive behaviour and avoidance, also known as a negative behaviour (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451). The environmental stimuli elements that are focused on for the purpose of this study are:

- sight – colour, lighting
- sound – music,
- scent – smell, fragrances
- touch – temperature (what consumers can feel)

The environmental stimuli elements lead to three types of emotions. The first emotion is pleasure, which can be described as an effectual reaction indicating whether consumers find the environment as enjoyable or not (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451). The second emotion is arousal, which indicates how much the environment stimulates the consumers, for example slow music can result in slow consumer movement. The dominance dimension is third, and is concerned with whether consumers feel in control or not in the environment (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451). These emotional reactions will have a direct effect on the behavioural responses. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) define human beings' behavioural responses to an environment as well as their emotional state as approach and avoidance. Approach behaviours are all positive behavioural intentions that are influenced by an environment, such as good lighting, pleasant music and attractive smells, whereas avoidance behaviours are the opposite (Knag *et al.,* 2011:3). For the purpose of this study the type of behaviour

experienced by the consumers will be referred to as positive meaning an approach behaviour and negative meaning an avoidance behaviour.

From the Mehrabian and Russell (M-R) environmental psychology model, it is clear that environmental stimuli do have an influence on consumers' emotions, which in turn affect their behavioural response. The question is whether the concept regarding this model is also applicable to the apparel retail industry in the Tshwane region.

The research question, together with the primary and secondary objectives, is discussed next.

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

It has previously been proven that visual merchandising and store atmospherics (store design, sound, lighting, fixtures, props, etc.) are of high importance in the retail industry (Levy *et al.,* 2012:489). The existing literature falls short in that it fails to directly recognise the potential that lies in all store atmospheric elements (sight, sound, touch and scent) to influence the emotional and behavioural responses of consumers. The viewpoints of consumers regarding the use of in-store atmospheric elements have not been determined either. The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region.

The research question derived from the preliminary literature was therefore as follows: What is the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region? From the research question, specific primary and secondary objectives were derived.

1.4.1 Primary objective of the study

The primary research objective that was derived from the preliminary literature review was:

- to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region

From the primary objective a number of secondary objectives were formulated.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives of the study

The secondary objectives as derived from the primary objective are as follows: To explore the influence of:

- sight on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- sound on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- touch on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- scent on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

The above objectives were formulated to address the identified problem/ opportunity.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The available literature regarding this subject area deals with the elements of store atmospherics and their effect on customer patronage, buying behaviour and customer store choice decisions (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:2; Liaw, 2007:1; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000:139; Liu & Jang, 2009:494; Jang & Namkung, 2009:451; Kang *et al.*, 2011:1). The majority of studies have, however, focused on the retail industry, more specifically on supermarkets (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:2), spas (Kang *et al.*, 2011:1), restaurants (Liu & Jang, 2009:494; Jang & Namkung, 2009 :451) and furniture stores (Spies *et al.,* 1997:1). A number of studies have focused on different types of store atmospheric elements, such as lighting, design layout, product display and cleanliness (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:2), the effect of store characteristics on customers' mood, satisfaction and purchasing behaviour (Spies *et al.,* 1997:1), the influence of store design, store music and store employees on shopping

mood and patronage satisfaction (Liaw, 2007:1; Liao & Liaw, [n.d.]:1), the effect of music on shopping times (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000:139) as well as the effect of atmospherics, emotional responses, perceived value such as service and product quality and behavioural intentions (Liu & Jang, 2009:494; Jang & Namkung, 2009:451) and environmental sensory components such as sight, smell, sound and touch (Kang *et al.*, 2011:1).

It is therefore clear that the term "store atmospherics" has been investigated in various ways, but none of the above studies focused on the apparel retail industry or on all the atmospheric elements such as layout, colour, lighting, scent, sound, fixtures, wall texture, temperature, width of aisles, dressing facilities, personnel, merchandise, prices, cash register placements, cleanliness and technologies (Berman & Evans, 1998:553). According to Liaw (2007:1), many studies have focused on the individual factors of store environment such as music and lighting, but none has focused on the overall store environment cues. All of the above studies were conducted in different parts of the world, especially in Taiwan, USA, India, Sri Lanka and Australia, but as far as could be established, no studies have been done in Africa or South Africa. A gap in the existing literature was therefore identified and the opportunity was taken to investigate the influence of store atmospherics (sight, sound, touch and scent) on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

This research study took a consumer-centred response approach to store atmospherics in an attempt to holistically consider this area of the retail industry. This research study explores an area in the retail industry that has received very little attention in literature. The study will benefit apparel retailers in the Tshwane region as the consumers' views on in-store atmospheric elements and their influence on the consumers' buying behaviour are determined.

The methodology is discussed in the next section.

1.6　METHODOLOGY

The problem investigated determines the most appropriate methodology to answer the research question. The main components of the research methodology for the purposes of this study will now be explained as they appear in figure 1.2 below.

Research design	Sampling technique	Data collection instrument	Data analysis
• Exploratory design • Qualitative approach	• Non-probability sampling technique	• Focus group interviews • Naïve sketches	• Thematic analysis (Tesch's inductive descriptive coding technique)
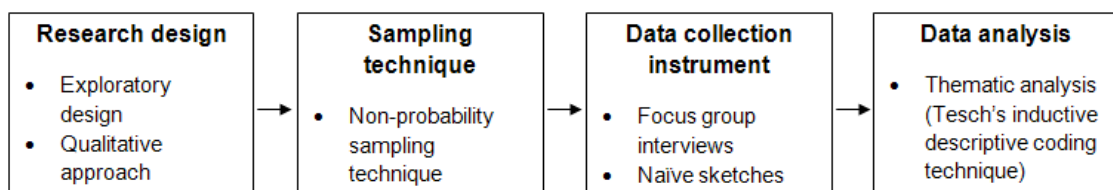
Figure 1.2:　Research methodology

A more detailed discussion of the research methodology of the study is given in chapter 4.

1.7　RESEARCH DESIGN

As depicted in figure 1.2, the research design is the first aspect to consider in addressing the research problem at hand. For the purpose of this study an explorative research design was followed. According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010:54), exploratory research is conducted to clarify unclear situations or to find possible business opportunities through the gathering of in-depth information. An exploratory study was appropriate for this study because it will enable apparel retailers in Tshwane to have a better in-depth understanding of their consumers' needs and wants in terms of store atmospherics and its influences on consumers' buying behaviour. Furthermore, this study followed a qualitative approach which was contextual in nature, meaning that all data collected told the researcher how and why things occurred as they did. It included a selection of interpretive techniques which sought to explain, decode, translate or else come to terms with the meaning and not the frequency (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:162).

1.8 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The second component that the researcher needed to consider, according to figure 1.2, was the sampling technique. Given the exploratory nature of the research, the study applied a non-probability sampling method whereby purposive sampling was utilised to gather the required data. Cooper and Schindler (2008:169) state that qualitative research usually involves non-probability sampling where little effort is made to generate a representative sample. Purposive sampling was deemed to be the best sampling technique in this study as all the members for such a study are chosen with a particular purpose in mind. In this case the inclusion criteria of the study stipulated that any male and female consumers older than 18 years, which have bought merchandise at an apparel retail store in the past, which lives in the Tshwane region and can write, read and speak English could deliberately be chosen to be non-representative. The fact that purposive sampling is based on the selection of any individual participant that is easily available and that falls into the inclusion criteria contributes to the non-representativeness of the population and might therefore be one of the main disadvantages of the study (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010:287). However, the purpose of the study was to explore and to gain more knowledge about store atmospherics and its influence on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region, and not to generalise; therefore the input of any individual participant that was prepared to participate was valued.

1.9 DATA COLLECTION

The data collection instrument is the third component, according to figure 1.2, that the researcher had to consider. Data was collected through focus group interviews and naïve sketches, which were considered appropriate for this type of research (Zikmund *et al.*, 2010:54). A focus group is an unstructured, free-flowing interview with a small group of people, usually between six and twelve participants, that discuss a particular issue for one to two hours (Cooper &

Schindler, 2008:149; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:148; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:347). For the purpose of this study, any individual that fell into the inclusion criteria (as stipulated earlier) and that was easily available was asked to participate in the focus group interviews and naïve sketches. Two focus group interviews were held, each consisting of eight participants. However, if the researcher did not receive efficient data, a third and fourth focus group session would have been held until the point of saturation was reached. Seven structured open-ended questions were asked where all eight participants needed to state their views on each question. Each session was recorded by using a video camera.

Naïve sketches were used as a second method to collect data in order to ensure that enough data was collected. A naïve sketch provides written and mute evidence of an experience (Hodder, 1994:703–716). Seven structured open-ended questions were asked based on two pictures given to participants. Participants had to form and write their own conclusions based on these pictures. A naïve sketch was handed to each participant to complete before the focus group interview started.

The use of focus group interviews and naïve sketches to collect data aligns well with an exploratory approach as they enable the researcher to shed light on unclear situations. The specific research topic needed to be discussed in detail as more knowledge and understanding about the viewpoints of consumers regarding store atmospherics and its influence on their buying behaviour is needed.

1.10   DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, as the research study was contextual in nature. Thematic analysis can be described as a qualitative research process that involves intensive searching through data in order to identify any possible patterns that might occur more than once (Tesch, 1990: 113). The exploratory influence of this acknowledged technique can be enhanced

when the analyst requires background information on the research topic and therefore cannot be influenced by unfairness. Conversely, it is recommended that the analyst have a basic understanding of the research topic at hand before data analysis can start (Tesch, 1990:113).

The thematic analysis process that the researcher and the independent coder followed to analyse the gathered data from the focus group interviews and naïve sketches will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

1.11   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher took the different possible limitations of this research study into account. The fact that a non-probability purposive sampling method was used in this study can in itself be seen as a limitation, as the findings cannot be generalised to the greater population. It would therefore be advisable for future researchers to select a more representative sample. Similarly, the sample was drawn from consumers living in the Tshwane area and was therefore not geographically representative. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the main aim was not to be representative, but rather to be able to use the research findings for other research studies and also to provide the apparel retail industry in the Tshwane region with more and better knowledge regarding the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour.

1.12   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 is the *introduction* to the research study and explains the purpose of the study. A detailed discussion on the background of the study regarding store atmospherics and its influence on consumers' buying behaviour is given, followed by the research question and objectives formulated to address the problem. The research methodology is also briefly described.

Chapter 2 deals with *store atmospherics* in detail. This chapter commences with a brief discussion on visual merchandising and its elements, followed by an in-

depth discussion on store atmospherics. The different store atmospheric elements are identified, followed by the emotional and behavioural effect of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour.

Chapter 3 describes consumer buying behaviour and decision-making. It commences with a definition of consumer behaviour, followed by the individual and group factors that have an influence on the consumer buying behaviour and decision-making process. The consumer decision-making process is discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 explains the *methodology* that is relevant to the research study. It focuses on the research process, with an explanation of the research design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis technique used. The limitations to the study, the ethics and the strategies followed to ensure the validity of the data are also pointed out.

Chapter 5 focuses on the *findings* of the exploratory study. The collected data is discussed according to themes and categories. This forms part of thematic analysis in order to address the research objectives as outlined in chapter 1.

Chapter 6 emphasises the *conclusions and recommendations* of the study and is also the final chapter. The findings reported on in chapter 5 are used to address each of the objectives. Recommendations are made based on the findings. These are followed by a discussion on the contribution of this study to the apparel retail industry in Tshwane. Suggestions for future research purposes are also made.

CHAPTER 2:   STORE ATMOSPHERICS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Giraldi, Spinelli and Merlo (2003:3) recall that, in earlier years the key decision to make when opening a store was to choose the location and display items on shelves; after that, the store looked after itself. In modern times, however, these aspects (location and displays) have changed. Markets are becoming more competitive and sophisticated and the old view does not necessarily hold true anymore (Giraldi *et al.,* 2003:2). Consumers have more decisions to make and are more in touch with products worldwide. This implies that other factors can and will influence their buying decisions. This might mean that retail stores need to be aware of what else to offer consumers in order to create a pleasant and satisfied experience once they are in the store. One way to improve on the consumers experience is through the stores atmosphere and whether it is conducive to making consumers buy. Giraldi *et al.* (2003:4) define a store's atmosphere as "... the psychological feeling that the retailer creates in the consumer when they visit the store". It is the store's responsibility to ensure that the elements that influence the consumers' buying behaviour are managed. Various elements influence the atmosphere, such as lighting, store layout, colours, temperature, music, fragrances, fixtures and visual displays. These focus on the human senses of sight, sound, scent and touch (Kerfoot, Davies & Ward, 2003:143).

The above-mentioned elements form part of visual merchandising, and should be managed by retailers. In order to manage visual merchandising, the retailer needs to understand what visual merchandising entails, as well as how store atmospherics fits into visual merchandising. Visual merchandising basically consists of five components – store design, fixtures, presentation techniques, mannequins and store atmospherics, as indicated in figure 2.1 below. This figure will be used as a guideline for this chapter, where visual merchandising and all the components will be discussed. The component of store atmospherics will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3, focusing on the elements, namely

sight, sound, scent and touch. Thereafter the influence of store atmospherics (environmental stimuli) on consumers' emotions will be discussed followed by a summary.

	2. Fixtures
1. Store design	1. Round racks
	2. Straight racks
1. Layout	3. Superquads
2. Signage and graphic	4. Gondolas
3. Feature areas	5. Bins and cubes

```
                              2. Fixtures
  1. Store design              1.  Round racks
                               2.  Straight racks
    1. Layout                  3.  Superquads          3. Presentation
    2. Signage and             4.  Gondolas               techniques
       graphic                 5.  Bins and cubes
    3. Feature areas                                    1.  Idea-oriented
                                                            presentation
                                                       2.  Item and size
  5. Store          VISUAL                                  presentation
  atmospherics    MERCHANDISING                        3.  Colour presentation
                                                       4.  Price lining
  1.  Sight – colour &                                  5.  Vertical
      lighting                                              merchandising
  2.  Sound – noise &                                  6.  Tonnage
      music               4. Mannequins                     merchandising
  3.  Scent – smell &                                  7.  Frontal
      fragrances                                           presentation
  4.  Touch –
      temperature &
      texture
```

Figure 2.1: Visual merchandising

Source: Adapted from Bell and Ternus (2006:20) and Levy et al. (2012: 487-492)

2.2 VISUAL MERCHANDISING DEFINED

"If you have ever stood outside a shop admiring the artistry of the window display, or been distracted by a sale item while passing through a department store, or paused to take in information from a store guide, then you have been sidetracked by visual merchandising" (Morgan, 2008:6). This description of Morgan is very applicable as it captures the essence of what visual merchandising is. There are, however, many views on what visual merchandising is.

Visual merchandising is defined by Bell and Ternus (2006:20) as "... the process of promoting the sale of products by producing mental images that urge potential consumers to make purchases". Wanninayake and Randiwela (2007:6) define visual merchandising as the activity that synchronises effective merchandise selections with effective merchandise displays. Dunne and Lusch

(2008:456) describe visual merchandising as the creative displays of merchandise by using props in order to create and decorate a specific scene/setting in the store. Pegler (2010:1) states that visual merchandising is not just a matter of making merchandise look more attractive to consumers, but it is all about the physical selling of merchandise through the means of a visual medium. It can therefore be inferred that visual merchandising is concerned with how the product/brand is visually communicated to the shoppers and if the intended message was correctly communicated to them.

To create and sustain a store's physical and mental image in the consumers' mind, visual merchandising techniques can be used which can also provide support for the rest of the store's selling effort (Bell & Ternus, 2006:20). In other words, the merchandise in-store should be displayed and marked in such a way that it will be possible to sell itself, without the help of a sales assistant.

According to Berman and Evans (2010:504–506) and Dunne and Lusch (2008: 458), various visual merchandising techniques can be used to establish and enhance the overall image of a store. Some of these are:

- colours and lighting to create a specific in-store image
- scents, sounds and temperature to influence a shopper's mood
- wall textures and the width of aisles to improve the store's image
- the width of aisles to influence consumer spending
- the availability and state of dressing rooms
- the availability, appearance and image of store personnel
- the displaying of merchandise.

Figure 2.1 shows the components and elements of visual merchandising that contribute towards creating an overall effective in-store environment and store image (Bell & Ternus, 2006:20; Levy *et al.,* 2012:487). All of these components consist of a number of elements which all contribute to the overall store image. These components together with their elements will be discussed briefly.

2.2.1 Store design

The first component of visual merchandising is store design. Store design can be described as "... the interior design of commercial premises where goods are sold to the public. Retail design aims to make these commercial spaces more appealing and inviting to customers" (Burns, 2012). The main purpose of store design is to aid in the execution of the retailer's strategy. It is important that the design be consistent as well as reinforce the retailer's merchandise strategy by meeting the needs of their target market and creating a sustainable competitive advantage (Levy *et al.,* 2012:468). The store design of each retail store will be different, as it will depend on the type of merchandise sold as well as its image (Morgan, 2008:34).

The design of the retail store will usually focus on three main aspects, namely layout, signage and graphics, and a feature area in order to create an effective consuming condition.

According to Bell and Ternus (2006:62) and Levy *et al.* (2012:473), *layout* refers to the effective flow of used space, traffic control and sales productivity of a retail store in order to ensure that consumers are comfortable while shopping and that the overall appearance of a store is attractive.

The second aspect, *signage and graphics,* is defined as any drawings, paintings or words which create a graphic display that is used by retailers within a store to help consumers locate particular products and departments (Pegler, 2010:256). An effective sign attracts the attention of consumers as well as communicates the brand identity. All of this contributes towards the consumers' first impression of what they will find when they enter a store (Levy *et al.,* 2012:476; Bell & Ternus, 2006:190).

The third aspect of store design refers to a feature area. *Feature areas* are those areas in a store that are specifically designed to grab consumers' attention (Levy *et al.,* 2012:479). Feature areas include window displays, entrances,

freestanding displays, promotional aisles or areas, walls, dressing rooms, point-of-purchase counters and props.

2.2.2　Fixtures

As depicted in figure 2.1, the second component of visual merchandising is fixtures. Fixtures can be described as all the different types of equipment used to display merchandise (Levy *et al.,* 2012:471). Retailers use fixtures to hold and display the merchandise they offer as well as to direct the traffic flow in a store. Fixtures should be integrated with other design elements, such as floor coverings and lighting, to add to and create the correct image and atmosphere in the store (Levy *et al.*, 2012:487). Retailers commonly use fixtures such as round racks, straight racks, superquads, gondolas, bins and cubes to display merchandise in a store and also to create the right image and atmosphere in a store. The primary function of *round racks* is to stock basic merchandise that has been purchased by retailers in large volumes and that is left after a clearance sale (Bell & Ternus, 2006:75). A *straight rack* is a long pipe that is balanced between two support poles which can either be attached to the floor or to a wall. It can hold many merchandise items, but cannot display styles or colours effectively (Levy *et al.,* 2012:487).

Superquads have two crossbars that sit perpendicular on a stand which can hold a lot of merchandise in such a way that it enables consumers to view it clearly (Levy *et al.,* 2012:487). *Gondolas* are widely used in discount and grocery stores to display any type of product from canned food to rugby balls. Apparel merchandise can also be displayed on gondolas; however, all items need to be folded, which makes it difficult for consumers to view (Bell & Ternus, 2006:79). *Bins* are usually referred to as containers which are open on top, whereas *cubes* are referred to as containers that are open on the sides. Bins and cubes are usually used in apparel retail stores as selling floor fixtures that carry folded items (Bell & Ternus, 2006:80).

2.2.3   Presentation techniques

In figure 2.1, the third component of visual merchandising is presentation techniques. Presentation techniques can be described as sorting merchandise according to styles, colours, end-use and the type of fabric (Bell & Ternus, 2006:162). As seen in the figure, there are seven types of presentation techniques: idea orientation, item and size, colour, price lining, vertical merchandising, tonnage merchandising and frontal presentation. Retail stores can implement these to present/display their merchandise.

Idea orientation is a method of presenting products based on a particular idea or the image of the store. For example, apparel stores display jeans with shirts and accessories to create an overall idea of how the jeans can be worn. *Item and size* is the second type of presentation technique which is a known technique often used by grocery, discount, hardware stores and pharmacies, as well as apparel stores in order to display merchandise. The third technique is *colour* presentation which is used by retailers to display their merchandise according to colours (Levy *et al.,* 2012:488). *Price lining* is the fourth technique used to arrange and display merchandise according to predetermined price points or price categories, for example a signage board that is placed above a round rack stating "R79,95" (Levy *et al.,* 2012:489). The fifth technique is *vertical merchandising* where all merchandise is presented vertically one below the other by using walls and high gondolas. *Tonnage merchandising* is the sixth presentation technique, which enables retailers to display large volumes of merchandise together. Lastly the *frontal* presentation technique enables retailer to display merchandise in the front area of the store in order to grab the attention of consumers.

2.2.4   Mannequins

The fourth component of visual merchandising is mannequins. The term "mannequin" refers to a silent fibreglass body/figure that shouts and whispers at potential consumers by using its own "brand" of body language to display

merchandise trends with the aim of reaching passers-by (Bell & Ternus, 2006: 296). Mannequins have been the trademark of window displays for years and they are regarded as the most effective and popular tool to introduce and present the latest fashion trends to the world (Morgan, 2008:182). They may therefore be regarded as a store's most valuable asset (Pegler, 2010:91). Mannequins will stand untiringly for hours and days, in exactly the same place, position or attitude and they are always smiling, clean and amusing. Mannequins do not gain or lose weight, they never get colds or headaches and they do not ask for time off. Figure 2.2 is an illustration of female mannequins.

Figure 2.2: Mannequins
Source: Made in China.com. (2012:1)

The next component as indicated in figure 2.1 is store atmospherics, which will be discussed next.

2.2.5   Store atmospherics

This is the main thrust of the study, and will be discussed in detail below.

2.3   STORE ATMOSPHERICS DEFINED

The fifth component of visual merchandising is store atmospherics. The goal behind any retail store's design is to enhance consumer spending, to differentiate it from competitors and to enhance in-store traffic (Pradhan, 2007: 347). A method to enhance this can be seen to come through the aspect of "atmospherics" – a term first introduced by Phillip Kotler (Pradhan, 2007:347). It is a word used by retailers to describe elements such as lighting, colour, music, aromas and so on that appeal to the five human senses and that contribute to the overall in-store environment (Bell & Ternus, 2006:21). Bell and Ternus (2006: 21) state that atmospheric elements have the ability to influence consumers' feelings about being in and staying in a retail store and that the longer consumers stay in a store, the higher the chance that they will buy.

The term "atmosphere" or "atmospherics" can be defined as the physical characteristics of a store that are used to develop an image in order to attract consumers (Berman & Evans, 2010:508). Liu and Jang (2009:495) have defined atmospherics as "... the conscious designing of space to produce specific emotional effects in buyers that enhance their purchase probability". Levy *et al.* (2012:490) describe atmospherics as the design of a store environment by making use of the five human senses. They indicate that more retail stores have come to realise that it is very beneficial to develop atmospheric elements that complement other aspects of the store, such as the store design and merchandise (Levy *et al.*, 2012:490). For the purpose of this study, the definition of store atmospherics proposed by Kotler is used as the basis for the discussion of this topic. Kotler (2001:50) defines atmospherics as the designing of a buying environment in which specific buying emotions are created through the use of the senses (sight, sound, scent and touch) in order to enhance the consumer's likelihood of purchasing.

A retailer's image depends greatly on its atmosphere – the psychological feeling evoked within consumers the moment they enter a store (Berman & Evans, 2010:508). Berman and Evans (2010:508) as well as Bell and Ternus (2006:36)

maintain that a store's atmosphere has the ability to influence consumers' shopping satisfaction, the physical time spent browsing and evaluating the merchandise, the eagerness of consumers to communicate with store personnel and to make use of store facilities such as dressing rooms, the consumers' willingness to spend more money than originally planned and the possibility of future patronage. These elements do not only contribute to the overall image of the store, but can also be used as an effective marketing tool to differentiate one store from other stores/competitors, to effectively communicate with their consumers and to attract consumers' attention (Kotler, 2001:50).

From the above, it can be inferred that the atmosphere of any retail store is essential and will often determine whether or not consumers are prepared to spend more time browsing in a store. Different atmospheric elements can tactically be used to target specific consumers (Gupta & Randhawa, 2008:225). The elements of the store atmospherics component that will be focused on in this study are sight, sound, scent and touch as indicated in figure 2.1. All of these elements contribute towards the overall in-store atmosphere and visual appeal.

2.3.1   Sight

The first element of store atmospherics as depicted in figure 2.1 is sight. Sight refers to the act of seeing and forming a perception of specific things or objects by using the eyes (AR Dictionary, 2010). It is regarded as the most powerful of all the human senses and it is also the most seductive (Hultén, 2011:259). Gobé (2009:259) reports that individuals from the age of ten years and older use sight as the most predominant sense in order to explore, discover and understand the world. Kotler (2001:51) has classified sight as all the visual elements such as the colours, lighting, shades and shapes that retailers use to create an appealing atmosphere. From this it can be deduced that what people see in terms of a store's interior and exterior or a brand is critical to draw their attention (Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009:87).

Kerfoot *et al.* (2003:145) found that 90% of in-store environment cues are taken in through sight, due to the fact that many in-store cues in the retail setting are visually communicated. The CEO, founder and owner of the Swedish fashion retailer "Gina Tricot" states that "what the eyes see is extremely important. I say that the eyes buy 70 or 80 percent of what people buy. This is enormously important to bear in mind" (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:9).

According to Kotler (2001:51) several factors can have an impact on sight. Two important factors are colour and lighting which will be discussed next.

2.3.1.1   Colour

According to Esaak, (2012) colour "... is the element of art that is produced when light, striking an object, is reflected back to the eye". He further indicated that there are three known and important characteristics of colour. The first characteristic is shade, which refers to the name that is given to a colour, for example red, blue and green. The second characteristic is intensity, which means the strength and brightness of a colour, for example, "royal" blue or a "dull" gray. The last characteristic of colour is the value thereof, which refers to the lightness or darkness of a colour that can change (Esaak, 2012).

Colour is one of the first things that consumers recognise and are therefore one of the most imperative design instruments used by retailers to communicate to their consumers (Bell & Ternus, 2006:38). The role and importance of colour is well documented and it has the ability to affect:

- consumers' sight experience, because it can create certain emotions and feelings within consumers that activate and stimulate specific memories, thoughts and experiences (Gobé, 2009:79)
- organisations, brands, logos, products and even window displays and it enables a better recall of different brands or products in the future as well as a better and more accurate understanding of what a specific organisation or brand represents (Gobé, 2009:80)

- different cultures by giving them social meanings (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:97; Morgan, 2008:78; Levy *et al.,* 2012:491), for example the colour white in China symbolises a period of death and mourning, whereas in Western cultures it is symbolic of purity. Table 2.1 provides the meaning of the different colours.

Table 2.1: Meaning of colours

Colour	Meaning
Yellow	Associated with sunshine and gold, happiness, brightness, friendliness and cheerfulness. It is related to lemons and daisies, as well as to spring and summer.
Orange	Seen as a friendly, kind and sociable colour that is filled with anticipation and excitement. People associate it with fire and flames, a tropical sea and a sun setting.
Red	Associated with words such as exciting, loving, powerful, stimulating and angry. Red normally comes across as a warm and passionate colour and it is also associated with love, Valentine's Day and Christmas. It expresses terms such as sales, warnings or fire.
Pink	Associated with words such as sweet, loving, pretty, girly, ribbons and lace. It can also be associated with raw meat, as well as flowers, Mother's Day and lingerie.
Green	Associated with being alive and growing, as well as with summer and spring. Bushes, trees, forests, nature and St. Patrick's Day are related to green.
Blue	Most people's favourite colour and is associated with pureness, coolness and calmness as well as with soft woollen skies, gentle horizons, the ocean and loyalty. It is a quiet colour, but it can become moody or even depressing.
Blue-green	Can be described as cool, tasteful and alive, but it can also be a sensitive colour. It is associated with water, sky and grass and it is a very effective summer colour.
Peach	A "toned down" colour from orange and suggests warmth and happiness. This is a pretty and comfortable colour – easy to be with and pleasant to be in.
Rust	Derived from orange, but has a deep, rich and earthy shade with none of the obvious "bright" qualities of orange. It is an earthy colour that easily fits in with other colours and it is normally related to autumn.
Violet/purple	Associated with happiness and youthfulness, as well as with taste, judgement and distinction. Purple is a high fashion colour and a colour that is normally worn by kings, queens and members of the court.
Grey	Known for making separations but no statements. Grey goes very well with other colours that are more vibrant and it is associated with being depressed or it can be a very elegant and sophisticated colour – depending on how it has been used.

Brown	Associated with the earth, a farm or a home, and with things such as clay, wood or any other natural material. It is a warm, relaxed colour which is related to autumn and it has the ability to complement other colours without disappearing.
White	A strong as well as supporting colour that makes every other colour bigger, brighter and bolder. It is associated with innocents, hope, angels and pureness.
Black	Associated with the night, darkness, death, funerals, depression and mystery. It is also a colour of sophistication and elegance that can easily fit in with other colours.

Source: Adapted from Pegler (2010:9-10) and Bell and Ternus (2006:38)

Table 2.2 clearly indicates that colour can directly influence consumer's acts in a certain way. For instance, some colours can make consumers feel warm, friendly, big-hearted and responsive enough in order to buy. Other colours will make consumers feel cold, unfriendly, unresponsive, moody and impossible to reach. Table 2.2, further indicates that some colours share more or less the same types of characteristics and can therefore be grouped into three ambiguous, but convenient groups (Pegler, 2010:9–10) as shown in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Colour groupings

Colours	Meaning
Warm colours – Red, orange, yellow, pink, rust, brown, gold and peach	Warm, aggressive, spirited, advancing colours. Also known to be emotional, vibrant, hot and to stimulate active responses.
Cool colours – White, blue, green, violet and blue-green	Cool and receding colours. Also known to have a peaceful, gentle and calming effect.
Neutral colours – White, grey, black and brown	Neutrals can either be warm or cool. Black, white and all the shades of grey are considered cool, while anything from off-white through all the shades of beige to the deepest brown is called a warm neutral.

Source: Adapted from Pegler (2010:9-10) Bell and Ternus (2006:38) and Levy et al. (2012:491)

It is therefore important for retailers to know and understand the history and psychological meaning behind colours. This will help them to create a pleasant in-store atmosphere that will stimulate positive emotions within consumers, thus motivating them to make a purchasing decision (Pegler, 2010:8; Gobé, 2009: 81).

2.3.1.2   Lighting

The next factor identified by Kotler (2001:51) is lighting and can be defined as "... the medium of illumination that makes sight possible" (Collins, 2012). It simply means that it is the use of both artificial and natural light sources in order to make objects, figures, pictures et cetera visible, as all colours depends on any form of lighting (Eicar, [n.d]; The Free Dictionary, 2012).

Without the use of proper lighting, colour cannot be as effective as it is intended to be. It is through the use of light that things/objects become visible. Therefore, all types of colours depend greatly on the use of lighting (Pegler, 2010:25). According to Hultén *et al.* (2009:99), appropriate lighting has the ability to create an appropriate mood, which in itself attracts and captures the consumer's interest. Hultén *et al.* (2009:99); Pegler, (2010:25) and Levy *et al.,* (2012:490) have also identified several reasons why lighting is important:

- It offers apparel retailers the opportunity of variation, meaning that it enables them to create a different in-store scene/atmosphere from time to time (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:99). For example, an athletics store uses different lighting colours to reflect the seasons, such as green lighting for spring.
- It is an important element in a retail store's inner and outer design, because it can create a favourable impression of all the merchandise on offer and display, which ultimately contributes to the store's atmosphere (Gupta & Randhawa, 2008:225).
- It has the ability to highlight merchandise, to separate one area from another, to form space and to create a mood or a feeling that can enhance the store's overall image (Levy *et al.,* 2012:490).
- It has the ability to guide consumers into a store as well as through it, by moving their attention from one feature area to another (Pegler, 2010:28).
- It is an important factor that can contribute to the overall atmosphere of the store, especially when a specific mood needs to be created, such as warm,

cosy or romantic, or even just to put consumers in a specific mind set (Levy *et al.,* 2012:491).

From this, it can be inferred that lighting plays a critical role in the creation of an effective in-store atmosphere. It is therefore important for retailers to know and understand the importance and effective uses of lighting (Binggeli, 2010:306). Retailers should keep in mind that the type of lighting used must at all times focus on and complement good colour, creating contrasts and balance (Binggeli, 2010:306).

2.3.2   Sound

As given in figure 2.1, the second element of atmospherics is sound. Sound can be described as a specific feeling that is produced by the stimulation of the hearing organs through vibrations sent out through the air or any other medium, such as the sound of music (Dictionary.com, 2012). Kotler (2001:51) has classified sound as the volume or pitch of music that retailers use in order to create an appealing atmosphere. Hultén *et al.* (2009:67) state that "... sound affects our mood and psychological state, alerts us to danger, and promotes peace of mind for the soul". Sound has always been very important in society for both individuals as well as organisations. This is because people attach certain meanings to different types of sounds and music genres. This can be regarded as an important source of motivation and information in relation to making an association with specific organisations, stores, brands or products (Gobé, 2009:73).

Sound plays an important role not only in creating a pleasant in-store atmosphere, but also in communicating with consumers (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000:140). Retailers can use sound in a number of ways:

- It can be implemented in mass marketing in order to communicate messages about an organisation, its products and brands, and it can also

be used as an effective way of creating awareness (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:67; Krishna, 2010:137).

- It can be used to create or activate specific emotions or feelings within consumers (Hultén *et al.* 2009:74).

- It can be used to strengthen the identity and image of a specific retail store, brand or product (Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:15).

- It can be used to create an effective and memorable sound experience through certain voices, jingles and music genres which can be regarded as a signature sound that characterises a particular retailer, brand or product (Daye & VanAuken, 2010:1).

It is important that retailers that are making use of sounds in advertisements or in their stores should realise that consumers react with different feelings towards different types of music genres and voices (Gobé, 2009:73). They should therefore ensure that the type of music or voices used should match the style of merchandise offered, as well as the types of consumers that are attracted to the specific merchandise (Morgan, 2008:170). Organisations should also realise that sounds with high frequencies are normally the first sound that people notice. However, a number of sounds can have a subconscious effect on them. For instance, when a continuous, low-frequency sound stops, such as the noise from a refrigerator, a fan or a rattle, consumers may experience huge relief (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:68). From this it can be deduced that sound is an important element that retailers should carefully consider, as it may play a vital role in the consumers' consumption experience (Krishna, 2010:137).

Kotler (2001:51) has previously stated that sound; more specifically music is a very important element to use in order to contribute to the overall atmosphere of a retail store and will therefore be discussed next.

2.3.2.1   Music

Much like colour and lighting, music can also either add to or take away from a retailer's overall store atmosphere. However, unlike other atmospheric cues, music can easily be altered and changed to either create a different in-store

atmosphere or to reach different consumers (Levy *et al.,* 2012:491). This can be done in the following ways:

- Music can be used to section-off different departments in a store, for example use music that will distinguish women's wear from children's wear (Levy *et al.,* 2012:491).
- Using various music genres to affect the behaviour of consumers, to direct and control the pace of in-store traffic, to create a specific image and to draw consumers' attention (Levy *et al.,* 2012:491). A toy store in the USA is a good example of a store that realised that it was important to not play children's songs such as "Twinkle twinkle little star", but rather to play classical music, because the parents are the buyers of the products, even though the children are the ones using them. The store's sales actually increased by 10% after the music was changed.
- Using music to guide consumers in a store and to create a sense of belonging (Gobé, 2009:76).

From this, it is clear that music has the ability to help create an atmosphere that attracts different consumer groups, but only if the type of music is correct. Playing music that does not appeal to or attract different consumer groups is as bad as using the wrong colours, lighting that is either too low or too dark or temperature that is either too cold or too hot (Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]). Hultén *et al.* (2009:77) explain that if a retail store can manage to create the right in-store atmosphere through the use of music, then the chance that consumers will be more stimulated is much higher. Music can therefore positively affect their behaviour in terms of:

- time perception – music with a slow tempo in contrast with music with a fast tempo increases emotional responses and makes consumers perceive the waiting time to be shorter, thus resulting in staying longer in the store (Krishna, 2010:149)
- spending more money than originally planned (Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:15)

- positive word of mouth – recommending the store to others (Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:15).

Music therefore has a direct effect on the speed of shopping, the amount of time spent in the store, the amount of time consumers are willing to spend waiting for things, as well as the amount of money they are prepared to spend (Krishna, 2010:77).

2.3.3   Scent

According to figure 2.1, scent is the third element of atmospherics. Scent refers to any particular or often agreeable smell, such as pleasant fragrances, or bad odours (Macmillan Dictionary, 2012). Hultén *et al.* (2009:41) assert that "our search for pleasure and daily well-being is most often led by our nose". Gobé (2009:99) mentions that scent is the strongest of all five senses, because it has the ability to evoke consumer emotions the best. The sense of smell is closely related to the part of the brain that deals with emotions, called the right cerebral hemisphere. Here, scents stimulate feelings and influence emotions. Scent has the ability to reach people on a conscious as well as on an unconscious level and it takes only one smell to stimulate a person's senses and create a perception (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:56). Furthermore, scents have the ability to help individuals to remember, to describe certain things and to tell or explain what the fragrance smells like (Hultén, 2011:266). In addition, scents can:

- affect the emotions of consumers, because they are closely related to the emotional life of consumers and also help them to remember past memories (Rodrigues, Hultén & Brito, 2011:43). People are capable of remembering up to 10 000 different scents and the perception of a previously experienced scent is enough to associate it with past memories (Krishna, 2010:77).
- add to the sensory experiences in order to create a specific image or better awareness of products, brands or retail stores on a short- and long-term basis (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:7).

- act as a marketing tactic to advertise new products or to create awareness of products that are slow moving. Scents can also be used in strategic marketing to differentiate, position and reinforce a brand and its image or even just to enhance the overall in-store atmosphere (Krishna, 2010:75; Ogden-Barnes & Barclay, [n.d.]:18).

- enhance a store's atmosphere by channelling different aromas to other departments in order to attract people from far away or simply just to enhance the overall feeling within the store (Gupta & Randhawa, 2008: 225; Gobé, 2009:101). A good example is a Swedish grocery store that used an artificial scent of oranges in the fruits and vegetables section. This resulted in a noticeable increase in the sales of oranges for a limited period (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:42).

- influence consumers in a positive manner, because pleasant fragrances such as coffee, perfume and baked bread have the ability to make consumers feel happier and more relaxed, which might lead to an unselfish behaviour, resulting in unplanned purchases (Morgan, 2008:170).

Furthermore, Levy *et al.* (2012:491) indicate that an important benefit of the use of various scents that retailers should know is that consumers tend to think that they have spent less time shopping than when they have shopped in an unscented store. The reason for this is that scents are subconscious, in other words, consumers might realise that something is pleasant about the in-store environment, but they cannot always pinpoint what is making the atmosphere pleasant.

From the above it can be inferred that scent as an atmospheric element contributes largely to the overall in-store atmosphere. Table 2.3 below, explains the importance of the aspects, product congruency, intensity and gender congruency.

Table 2.3: Scent congruency

Aspects	Explanation
Product congruency	Refers to how naturally and obviously a scent is associated with a product. For instance, a lemon smells like a lemon and not a banana; a ladies boutique should smell like fresh flowers and not like a hospital. It is said that scents that are product congruent are assumed to improve consumers' viewpoints of a product, thus making them more flexible in looking for a bigger variety (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:48; Krishna, 2010:81). An example of product congruency is the British shirt maker "Thomas Pink" which uses the smell of newly washed clothes in-store.
Intensity	Refers to whether a scent is discrete or subtle in order to affect the opportunity to achieve a positive smell experience (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:49). For example, two pairs of identical Sketcher shoes could be placed in two different rooms, with the only difference between the two being that one room is filled with a subtle scent of flowers and the other with no scent.
Gender congruency	Refers to scents that can be used to distinguish between genders in different stores, by using either feminine or masculine fragrances (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:49). Usually the women's and men's departments are clearly separated in a store, resulting in an excellent opportunity to further separate the departments by using scents. For example, a feminine fragrance such as rose or vanilla can be added to the women's department, whereas a spicy-honey fragrance can be added to the men's department (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:50). Gender-congruent scents also have the ability to positively influence any beliefs that consumers have about products, prices, qualities and even the in-store atmosphere. It was found that consumers stayed longer in-store, purchased more products and spent more money when gender-congruent scents were present (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:50).

Source: Adapted from Hultén *et al.* (2009:48–50) and Krishna (2010:81)

Research done by Morgan (2008:170) indicates that scents can either be natural, for example a flower fragrance, or artificial, for example spearmint fragrances. One of the oldest and most effective ways of creating a pleasant in-store atmosphere through the use of scent is the smell of freshly baked bread (Morgan, 2008:170). Other scents such as basil is used to stimulate as well as to improve consumers' memory. The scent of grapefruit is believed to be energising, the scent of oranges and mints are used to calm consumers and to limit their stress and the scent of citrus in general is believed to be harmonising, reducing suspicion (Chebat & Michon, 2003:529).

The scent that a retailer uses must fit in with the type of merchandise being offered, the image of the store and their consumers. This will lead to creating a pleasant in-store atmosphere that would most probably motivate as well as stimulate the emotions of consumers and result in increased time spent in-store, which will ultimately lead to increased spending (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:42, 50; Morgan, 2008:170; Krishna, 2010:76, 80; Gobé, 2009:100–101; Chebat & Michon, 2003:530).

2.3.4 Touch

As depicted in figure 2.1, the fourth element of atmospherics is touch. Touch as a sense can be described as a tactile or tangible sense through which consumers have the ability to make physical contact with the surrounding world as well as to investigate three-dimensional objects (Kang *et al.*, 2011:3). It makes it possible for consumers to remember and relive how certain things feel only by looking at them as well as thinking about them. Hultén *et al.* (2009:11) emphasise that it is important for the physical form of products to be available to make it possible for consumers to interact with the product by touching, squeezing and turning it upside down, as this will also contribute to the overall in-store atmosphere. Products, brands and store attributes can be described through tactile sensory expressions, such as materials and surfaces, as well as through temperature and weight (Kang *et al.*, 2011:3).

Hultén *et al.* (2009:134) and Gobé (2009:94) highlight that it is important that all types of organisations use the sense of touch as an opportunity to engage consumers' hearts and minds through different forms of interaction. Gobé (2009:94) states that consumers want to feel the different textiles of clothing, towels and linen; they want to try on shoes and handbags and apply lipsticks, perfumes and make-up before making a purchasing decision. The reason for this is not just to test a shade, colour or style, but also to experience the total pleasure when holding and playing with something, before buying it. For example, if a woman is going to wear a blouse, she wants to feel the type of textile that the blouse is made from, as well as how it will feel against her skin.

Retailers that do allow their consumers to touch and interact with their products have the potential to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Hultén *et al.* (2009:136) mention that the interaction process becomes known through touch and it begins with the skin, which is known as the body's largest organ. The tactile (touch) sense has the ability to strengthen experiences when the other senses cannot be fully used, for instance when it is dark and the eyes cannot provide sufficient information. Touch also enables individuals to create a sense of form which informs them that a knife is sharp, a rock is hard or a tennis ball is round, without the need to touch it. Through this, individuals have the ability to recall as well as to relive feelings of touch just by seeing or thinking about an object (Rodrigues *et al.,* 2011:43).

It can therefore be deduced that the sense of touch is extremely important in how consumers perceive a store, its products and quality. This is especially true in the car, apparel, electronics and food industries where the choice between the brands depends mostly on how the product physically feels. A touch experience can add positively to the perception of a product in situations where product-related information such as the price or features is left out (Krishna, 2010:18). Therefore, the touch experience that products add to the individual's sensory experience is extremely important when they are planning to buy something (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:136).

Krishna (2010:19) reveals that consumers touch products for many different reasons, not necessarily to determine the material or product features. She has therefore developed four categories of touch in consumer behaviour:

- Touch to purchase – here the actual goal is to make a purchasing decision.
- Touch to obtain non-touch product information – here the goal is to remove non-touch information, such as visuals, smells and sound assessments.
- Touch to obtain touch product information – here the goal is to remove specific material properties such as weight, texture and temperature.
- Hedonic touch – here the goal is to generally explore in terms of the senses or just purely to have fun.

In the first three categories of touch, consumers are supposed to be involved in goal-directed, problem-solving and pre-purchase behaviour. The classification of touch indicates that consumers are touching products to possibly make a purchasing decision, whereas in the case of the fourth category – hedonic touch – touch is an end in itself with the focus being the sensory experience of touch. Hedonic touch may or may not result in purchasing in the end (Krishna, 2010:20).

It can therefore be inferred that it is critical for retailers to realise that touch as a sense is extremely important to consumers for them to decide whether or not to make a purchasing decision. Texture, temperature, weight and materials used are the elements that contribute towards creating the perception of an object among consumers. When they are in contact with a specific object, certain memories are recalled, experienced and relived (Kang *et al.*, 2011:3; Hultén *et al.*, 2009:11). Materials, surfaces, temperature and weight are aspects of the sense of touch that retailers should take into consideration in order to contribute to the overall store atmosphere. Table 2.4 is an explanation of these important aspects.

Table 2.4: Important aspects of touch

Aspects	Explanation
Materials and surfaces	As a sensory expression, materials and surfaces have the ability to clarify a brand's identity and values. Natural materials, such as leather and wood, are normally perceived as warm and soft and tend to make individuals feel relaxed and in harmony with nature (Hultén *et al.,* 2009: 139). Unnatural materials, such as glass and metal, are normally perceived as cold and hard and are frequently related to outdoor environments (Krishna, 2010:39). Hultén *et al.* (2009:140) state that consumers have the ability to judge products, brands and stores in the same way that they judge people, based on their appearance. Therefore, products and brands that are made out of unattractive materials may be judged as bad, even though the product features and functions are known, and the same applies to a store.
Temperature and weight	Temperature as a sensory expression is registered by consumers' receptors as either warm or cold. Whether a product or an in-store atmosphere is considered warm or cold is essential for the touch experience. For instance, when a person goes to a coffee shop he/she expects the cup of coffee to be warm, otherwise the experience can turn out to be negative. The same applies to almost all types of industries, especially in the apparel, grocery and restaurant industries. If consumers

| | perceive a retail store to be either too warm or too cold, an unacceptable atmosphere is created and it can have a direct negative impact on their behaviour (Krishna, 2010:37–38).

Weight as a sensory expression is used to determine the quality of the product or brand, whereas light and plastic products are regarded as cheap and low in quality (Hultén *et al.*, 2009:142). |
|---|---|

Source: Adapted from Hultén *et al.* (2009:139–142) and Krishna (2010:37–39)

From the above, it can be derived that the different types of materials and forms used as well as the in-store temperature have a direct effect on consumers' moods and emotions, which will further have an influence on the amount of time they are willing to spend in-store (Rodrigues *et al.,* 2011:43). It is therefore important that retail stores give attention to the touch sense in order to create a pleasant in-store atmosphere. This might motivate consumers to touch more products that they have never touched before or ultimately motivate them to buy more than they originally intended to buy.

It is clear from the above mentioned discussion that store atmospheric elements do have an influence on consumers' emotions in some or other way and as indicated in figure 1.1 in chapter 1, environmental stimuli such as the senses (sight, sound, scent and touch) do have an influence on consumers' emotions which can further on result in a specific behavioural response (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451; Kang *et al.*, 2011:2). The influences that environmental stimuli (atmospheric elements) have on consumers' emotions are discussed in the next section.

2.4   EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), in-store environmental stimuli such as the human senses have a direct influence on consumers' emotions which further results in a behavioural response (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451; Kang *et al.*, 2011:2). From the literature mentioned above, it can be seen that the human senses do have an influence on consumers' emotions. Two of the senses (scent and taste) have a huge influence on the emotions of consumers and the

moment that consumers see, smell, taste or hear a specific picture or object, past memories are immediately recalled and re-experienced and therefore specific emotion, such as happy or sad, is brought to the consumers' mind (Hultén *et al.,* 2009:10, 57, 115).

Liao and Liaw ([n.d.]:2) define emotions as the "... oral expression of feelings and as a personal, subjective psychological state". A store's environment can elicit three types of emotions. The first emotion is pleasure, which can be described as an effectual reaction, which will indicate whether consumers find the environment enjoyable or not (Jang & Namkung, 2009:451). The second emotion is arousal, which indicates how much the environment stimulates the consumers, for example slow music can result in slow consumer movement. The third emotion is dominance which is concerned with whether consumers feel in control or not in the environment. Jang and Namkung (2009:451), however, indicate that dominance has a non-significant effect on behaviour.

From the above it is likely that certain positive emotional reactions caused by the senses will result in increased consumer spending, but it will highly depend on the type of in-store atmosphere that is created (Kotler, 2001:54). Therefore, it can be inferred that emotional reactions (pleasure, arousal and dominance) will most likely have an influence on consumers' behavioural responses. Furthermore, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) defined the emotional state and behavioural responses of consumers' to an environment as approach (positive) and avoidance (negative). Approach behaviours include all positive behavioural intentions that are influenced by an environment such as good lighting, pleasant music and attractive smells, whereas avoidance behaviours are the opposite which include all the negative behavioural intentions (Kang *et al.,* 2011:3).

It can be deduced from the above literature that in-store atmospheric elements do have an influence on the emotions of consumers and will further influence their buying behaviour. Due to the fact that the information was obtained from past studies in different parts of the world, except South Africa, the question can still be asked: Will store atmospherics have an influence on the buying

behaviour of consumers (living in the Tshwane region)? In the next chapter, consumers' buying behaviour will be discussed in detail.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter visual merchandising was defined and discussed together with its five components, namely store design, fixtures, presentation techniques, mannequins and store atmospherics. Emphasis was placed on the component store atmospherics, where it was defined and discussed in detail. The atmospheric elements (sight, sound, scent and touch) were explained and the influence that these elements have on consumers' emotions was discussed. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the emotional effects – pleasure, arousal and dominance and the influence that these emotional effects have on consumers' buying behaviour.

In the next chapter, the influence of the environmental stimuli (in-store atmospheric elements) on consumers' buying decisions and behaviour is discussed.

CHAPTER 3:   CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION-MAKING

3.1   INTRODUCTION

According to Cant *et al.* (2010:50), consumers are the "life blood" of any organisation that wants to survive, and without them, there is no market. It can therefore be inferred that marketers should know their consumers as well as their needs and wants. Without consumer knowledge, it will be hard to make a success of any organisation. It is not sufficient for organisations to only know what consumers want, but it is also critical for them to know and understand how consumers make their buying decisions (Cant, 2010:38). Organisations should therefore be attentive to how consumers think, what influences their decisions and how these elements can be used to get them to purchase a specific brand or to become loyal to a specific store.

Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:250) give two basic reasons why individuals have to make decisions. The first reason is to satisfy their needs and wants and the second reason is that consumers often have more than one choice or alternative that will satisfy their needs. Whatever the reason may be, consumers need to make decisions, and consumer decision-making determines the types of products and services that they will want, purchase, own and use.

This chapter provides an overview of consumers' buying behaviour as well as the ways in which consumers make their decisions. The term "consumer buying behaviour" will be defined, followed by a discussion on the individual as well as group factors that have a direct influence on how consumers behave. The steps in the consumer decision-making process are explained in detail, followed by a summary.

3.2   CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR DEFINED

Organisations can do research on consumer buying decisions and their actual purchases in order to answer questions about what consumers buy, where they buy, when they buy, how and how much they buy, as well as why they buy (Cant, Brink & Brijball, 2006:1). However, learning about the why's of consumer buying behaviour is not so easy – the answers to these questions are often kept deep within the consumer's head (Zainbooks, 2008:1).

By understanding consumers and their buying habits, organisations have the ability to create effective offerings to help them satisfy the consumers' needs and wants (Cant *et al.,* 2006:1). Organisations that truly understand how consumers might react towards different marketing stimuli have an advantage over their competitors (Zainbooks, 2008:1); therefore the study of consumer buying behaviour is of major importance to organisations.

Consumer buying behaviour can be defined as "... the study of individuals, groups or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impact that these processes have on consumers and the society" (Cant *et al*., 2010:51; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:6; Cant, 2010:39; Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:8; Cant *et al.,* 2006:2). Kardes, Cline and Conley (2011:8) add that consumer behaviour involves all the activities that are related to the purchase, use and disposal of products and services, together with the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioural responses that lead, determine, or follow these activities. Figure 3.1 illustrates the above discussion visually.
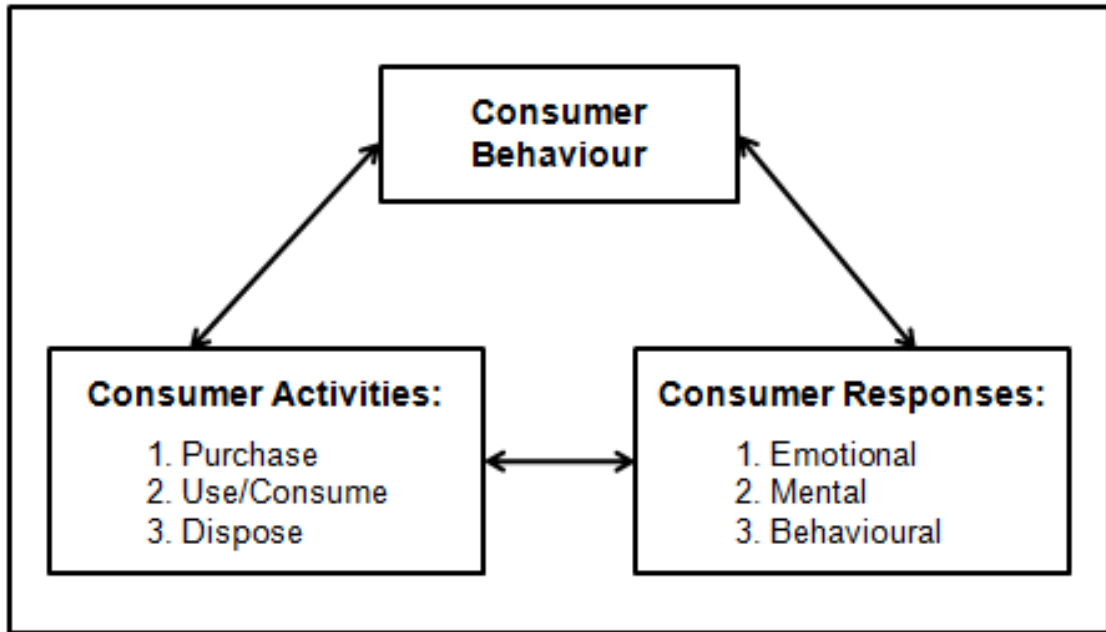
Figure 3.1: Consumer behaviour
Source: Kardes *et al.* (2011:8)

From figure 3.1 it is clear that consumer behaviour is determined by consumer activities and consumer responses, each with its own elements that influence one another. A consumer's emotional, mental and behavioural responses have a direct or indirect influence on consumer reactions to the purchase, the use and the disposal of activities.

As seen in figure 3.1, the first element of consumer responses is an emotional response which reflects the consumers' feelings as well as their mood. The second element in figure 3.1 refers to the mental or cognitive responses, which include a consumer's thought processes, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and intentions towards products and services (Kardes *et al.*, 2011:11). These can also include a consumer's feelings towards a specific apparel retail store. The last element depicted in figure 3.1 is behavioural responses, which include a consumer's decisions (approach or avoidance) and actions during the purchase, use and disposal activities. As explained in chapter 2, the environment of a retail store could also influence the consumers' purchase decision.

For example, if a consumer wants to buy a new pair of boots, both pleasure and indecisiveness can form part of his/her emotional responses, as a number of decisions have to be made. The consumer must decide on a specific store, brand product, style and colour, as well as on a payment method. As part of consumer responses, the consumer will possibly imagine wearing the boots, making a mental list of characteristics that the boots should have in order to enhance the decision-making process.

Consumer activities as the second component involve all the activities regarding the physical purchase, use and disposal of products and services (Kardes *et al.*, 2011:11). It is useful to categorise consumer behaviour according to the type of activity, because the consumers' responses to stimuli can be different, depending on whether they are purchasing, using, or disposing a product or a service. To use the example of the consumer buying boots (referred to above), the consumer will start by comparing the different stores and brands with one another, paying attention to various advertisements, trying on different boots and gaining opinions from friends and family. If the consumer is not totally satisfied with the store environment, he/she will most probably make a mental choice not to enter the store and decide not to purchase the boots in that store. All of these actions can therefore have an influence on the way in which consumers behave.

A model of consumer behaviour is depicted in figure 3.2 and provides a general outline of the steps in the consumer behaviour process (Kotler & Keller, 2009: 92). This model will be used as the basis of discussion in this chapter. The consumer behaviour model starts by identifying marketing stimuli that may influence the behaviour of consumers and then moves on to the individual and group factors that influence the consumers' decision-making process.
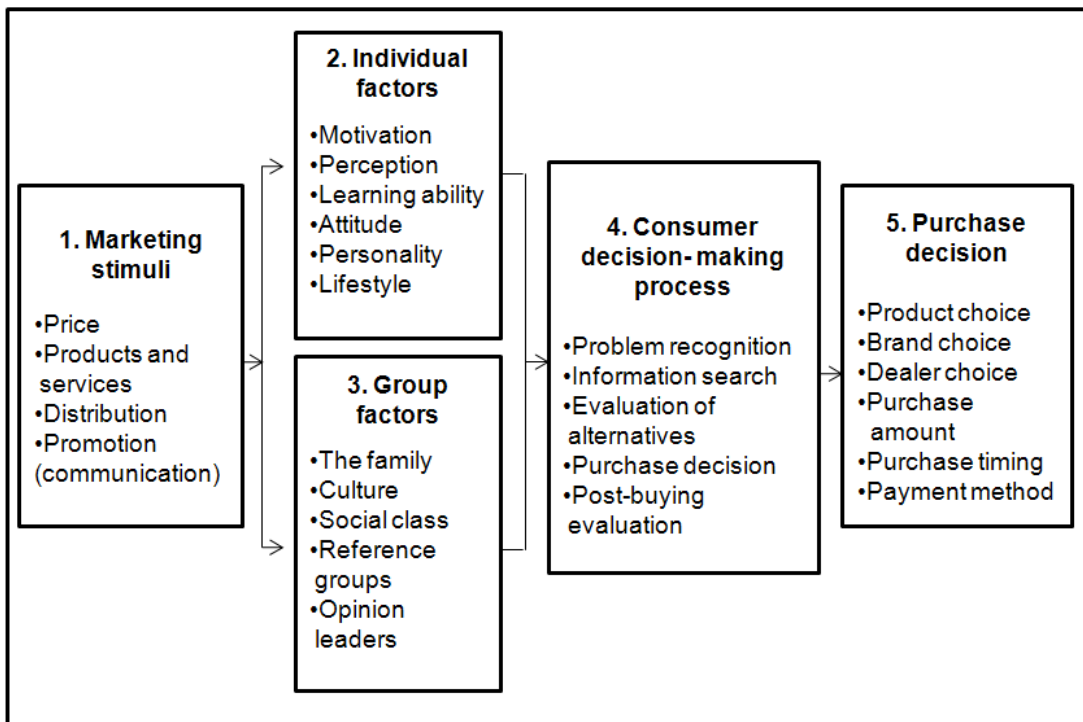
Figure 3.2: Model of consumer behaviour

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2009:92)

When focusing on the decision-making process of individual consumers, it is clear that the basic decision made by the individual is whether or not to spend his/her money and thus possibly to save (Cant *et al.,* 2006:193).

The various components of the consumer behaviour model indicated above are discussed below. Marketing stimuli will be discussed briefly in order to provide a complete understanding of the consumer behaviour model. The outcome of the individual's decision will depend on many influencing variables, which can be divided into individual factors, also known as internal determinants, and into group factors, also known as external determinants. Marketing stimuli are dealt with in section 3.3, the influencing factors in section 3.4 and the consumers' decision-making process in section 3.5.

3.3   MARKETING STIMULI

Marketing stimuli refer to the 4P's, also known as the traditional marketing mix elements, which consist of price, product, place and promotion (communication) (Koekemoer, 2011:9), as well as sensory elements such as music, lighting, colours, scents and layout. All these elements create awareness among consumers and it is important that organisations should try to understand what happens in the consumers' awareness between the arrival of the outside marketing stimuli and the ultimate purchase decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2009: 92).

From figure 3.2, the first element of marketing stimuli is price. Price can be described as the amount of money that a consumer is willing to pay for a product at a specific point in time (Koekemoer, 2011:9). For example, a consumer may be willing to pay R1 000 for a pair of leather boots during the winter season. The second element of marketing stimuli according to figure 3.2 is product, which consist of a set of tangible and intangible attributes, and which can include packaging, colour, price, quality, brand, the store's services and its reputation (Koekemoer, 2011:6).

Distribution is the third marketing stimuli and includes the process of ensuring that the product is made available at the right time, at the right place, in the right condition and in the right quantities (Koekemoer, 2011:9). For example, clothing items are distributed to the correct apparel retail stores, in the right quantities, at the right time and in excellent condition. Promotions (communication) are the last element of the traditional marketing mix as depicted in figure 3.2. These are a mixture of different activities and actions that collectively inform consumers of new products, ideas or services and convince them to purchase the products (Koekemoer, 2011:10). Advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and other communication techniques can be used to communicate with consumers.

Both the traditional marketing mix and the sensory elements influence consumers when they need to make a decision. As depicted in figure 3.2, marketing stimuli lead to the individual and group factors that are common to this model.

3.4   FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Cant *et al.* (2010:51) maintain that "... a customer's buying decision is not determined by only one factor but mostly by a number of factors". Therefore, individual as well as group factors can have a direct influence on consumers' buying behaviour. A detailed discussion of individual and group factors as depicted in figure 3.2 will be given, based on the literature of Cant *et al.* (2010: 51–64) and Cant (2010:39–52).

3.4.1   Individual factors

Individual factors refer to internal or basic determinants of consumer behaviour and include consumers' motivation, perception, learning ability, attitudes, personality and lifestyle (Kotler & Keller, 2006:180). Schiffman and Kanuk (2004:553) explain that the human mind is often compared to a "black box" where the input stimuli and the output response are known, but the inner working process of the mind is not known.

Cant *et al.* (2010:51) state that human needs, more specifically consumer needs, are the basis of all contemporary marketing as well as the core of the marketing concept. The term "needs" can be defined as "... an imbalance between the consumers' actual and desired states. A person who recognises or feels a significant or urgent need then seeks to correct the imbalance" (Cant, 2010:41). The answer to an organisation's survival, profitability and growth in a very competitive marketing environment is its ability to recognise and satisfy unfulfilled consumer needs better than their competitors.

In figure 3.2, six individual factors influence consumer behaviour, namely motivation, perception, learning ability, attitude, personality and lifestyle. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

3.4.1.1   Motivation

Cant *et al.* (2010:51) assert that when an organisation knows what motivates an individual to purchase a specific product, it will be easier to sell to that individual, since the marketing message will be directed at the motivating factor. Fiore, Yah and Yoh (2000:30) found that gamblers that were exposed to a pleasant fragrance in a casino area spent more money than gamblers in an unscented area. For organisations to understand motivation, they need to understand why consumers act and behave in a certain way. People do things for a particular reason or purpose and are therefore motivated by a specific need for something, such as a need to protect their bodies from cold weather or to have a peaceful shopping experience.

Motivation is what moves people to take action and it is critical for any organisation to look at the consumers' behaviour to understand their motives. Motivation is defined by Cant *et al.* (2010:52) as the "... inner states that direct a person towards the goal of satisfying a need. The individual takes action to reduce the state of tension and return to a condition of equilibrium". When retailers start looking at the buying choices of consumers, they will find unsatisfied needs. Needs are the basic sources of buyer behaviour, but they have to be stimulated before a consumer is determined enough to take action. A close relationship therefore exists between needs and motives – needs lead to motives and a motive is a need adequately stimulated to move an individual to seek satisfaction (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:360).

3.4.1.2   Perception

Perception is the process by which people select, organise and interpret information in order to form a meaningful picture of the world (Zainbooks, 2008: 7; Kotler & Keller, 2009:93). Cant *et al.* (2010:55) explain that once consumers

have formed their perception of a specific product, brand or store, it is almost impossible for them to change that specific perception.

People can form different perceptions of the same stimulus, because of the perception process (Zainbooks, 2008:7). The perception process consists of four steps, namely exposure, attention, interpretation and recall (Cant *et al.,* 2010:55). Firstly, perception begins the moment a consumer is *exposed* to a certain stimulus, sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The majority of the stimuli to which an individual is exposed are selected on purpose, in other words, certain stimuli are sought out, others are avoided and the meaning of some is twisted – this is known as *selective exposure*.

Secondly, *attention* is activated when one or more of the sensory receptors are stimulated and the resulting sensations (atmosphere, ambience or feeling) are processed in the human brain (Kotler & Keller, 2009:93). All individuals are exposed to more stimuli than they can process and therefore it is critical that individuals be selective in attending to marketing and other messages. This is known as *selective attention*.

Thirdly, *interpretation* is the meaning that consumers give to sensory stimuli. Consumers differ a lot in terms of the stimuli that they perceive, as well as in the event of assigning a meaning to these stimuli. In other words, two individuals can see or hear the same thing, but their interpretations can be totally different. Thus, an individual normally interprets information on the basis of their own attitudes, beliefs, experiences and motives, known as *selective interpretation* (Cant, 2010:45).

Lastly, consumers cannot remember all the information that they see, hear or read, even just after attending to and interpreting it. Therefore *selective recall* refers to the fact that consumers can forget the specific message that was created by an organisation (Kotler & Keller, 2009:93).

3.4.1.3 Learning ability

Learning ability is the third individual factor indicated in figure 3.2. When people act, they learn. Learning illustrates the different changes in an individual's behaviour arising from experience (Kotler & Keller, 2009:94). Learning takes place through the interchange of forces, stimuli, cues, responses and reinforcement (Zainbooks, 2008:7). In the view of Schiffman and Kanuk (2004:207), the basic elements of learning are stimulus, response and reinforcement and these elements are active in all types of learning.

- **Stimulus** is the first requirement for learning. Consumers can be stimulated through tangible things, such as products, brands, shapes and sizes, or through intangibles, such as service and quality. The moment a consumer has perceived a specific stimulus, he/she needs to be motivated in order to seek the stimulus before learning can take place (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:207).

- **Responses** can be classified as any action, reaction or mindset that results from a specific stimulus or cue. The same response to a stimulus can take place before the response is learned (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:208).

- **Reinforcement** increases the probability that a specific response will take place in the future as the result of specific cues or stimuli (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:208).

3.4.1.4 Attitudes

When a person is asked whether they like a specific product, advertisement or store, they are actually being asked to express their opinion. Thus, if a person says they prefer classical in-store music to hip hop music, it means that they have a positive attitude towards it (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:252).

Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010:392) state that a person's attitude is regarded as having three components: cognitive (beliefs), affective (feelings) and behavioural (response tendencies). The *cognitive component* consists of a consumer's belief about an item or thing, in other words, people's knowledge

and perceptions obtained through direct experiences with a product, brand or store. It is important to know that it is not necessary for beliefs to be correct or true, as long as they exist.

A consumer's feelings or their emotional reaction towards a specific item or thing reflects the *affective component* of an attitude (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:395). It captures the overall evaluation of a product by consumers, and the evaluation can be a general feeling that they have towards a specific product, brand or store which is developed without cognitive information.

The *behavioural component* represents the outcome of the cognitive and affective components, in other words whether to purchase or not. It is of critical importance to every organisation to know and understand the knowledge and feelings that consumers have about their products. Consumers may have positive information about products or brands and they might even like them, but still not buy the products for a number of reasons, such as high prices or loyalty to other brand or product types (Cant, 2010:47).

The cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitudes seem to be constant. This means that a change in one attitude component tends to create allied changes in the others (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:256). Organisations are concerned with influencing behaviour, since consumers can easily be influenced by listening to sales personnel, advertisements or by examining packages. Organisations therefore have the ability to indirectly influence the behaviour of consumers by supplying them with information that influences their beliefs about a product if the three components are consistent with one another (Cant *et al.,* 2010:58).

3.4.1.5   Personality

Personality is the fifth individual factor shown in figure 3.2 and varies from person to person, time to time as well as place to place. It can have a huge influence on the buying behaviour of consumers. In fact, personality is not what a consumer wears, but rather how he/she behaves in different situations (Shah,

2010:5). Personality entails different types of characteristic traits such as dominance, perseverance, aggressiveness, honesty, and so on, which can be very useful in determining consumers' behaviour regarding a specific product, services, brands and stores (Kardes *et al.,* 2011:241).

Personal satisfaction concerns the need for a sense of achievement, social recognition and enjoyment of the finer things in life (Haque, Khatibi & Rahman, 2009:389). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010:373) define personality as "... an individual's characteristic response tendencies across similar situations". Schiffman and Kanuk (2004:120) define it as "... those inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment".

Therefore, an individual's personality refers to their inner characteristics, in other words, those specific qualities, features, traits and gestures that distinguish one individual from another. These deeply embedded characteristics, called personality, are likely to influence an individual's product and store choices as well as the way in which a consumer reacts towards organisations' promotional messages (Cant, 2010:48).

3.4.1.6   Lifestyle

The last variable of individual factors indicated in figure 3.2 is lifestyle, and it refers to the way in which individuals live. Kotler and Keller (2006:183) describe lifestyle as "... a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed in activities, interests, and opinions". Lifestyle describes the "entire person" interacting with his/her environment. It is important that organisations have a deeper insight into their consumers' lifestyle and behaviour by looking at how they spend their time and what they think of the various elements in their environment, in order to better their product and in-store offerings (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2010:191). A person's lifestyle and values influence all the aspects in the consumption process, because a person's lifestyle and values are those individual intrinsic characteristics that have been shaped and formed through social interaction as

the person has grown through the life cycle (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:373).

Now that all the individual factors in the consumer behaviour model have been discussed, group factors that can influence the behaviour of the consumers are discussed next.

3.4.2 Group factors

Group factors can be defined as the things that influence consumers by being involved with other consumers on a daily basis, whether in the family, culture, social class or reference groups (Cant *et al.,* 2010:62).

In figure 3.2, five group factors that influence consumer behaviour are identified: the family, culture, social class, reference groups and opinion leaders. These groups wield a great influence on individuals and it is the responsibility of the retailer to be aware of these factors and its impact.

3.4.2.1 The family

From figure 3.2, the first group factor is the family. The family plays an important role in the decision-making process, as the whole family will consume or use products and therefore has a huge influence on their buying behaviour. When families make purchase decisions, they will normally consider the needs of all the family members (Levy *et al.*, 2012:94). Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010:207) define family decision-making as the "... process by which decisions that directly or indirectly involve two or more family members are made".

Because consumer behaviour is strongly influenced by a specific family member, retailers define the roles and the influence of the husband, wife and children (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:208). For example, if the buying decision of a specific product is influenced by the wife, then the apparel retailers will target women with their visual merchandising displays, music and scents. Table 3.1

below summarises the roles that members in the family fulfils in the decision-making process (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010:208).

Table 3.1: Family decision-making roles

Member	Role
The initiator	Suggests that a specific product needs to be purchased and he/she will also provide the necessary information needed to motivate the specific suggestion.
The influencer	Has an influence on the final decision in either an explicit or an implicit way in order that his/her suggestions and requests are reflected in the family's decisions.
The decision maker	Makes the final decision after all alternatives has been evaluated.
The purchaser	Buys the physical product.
The user	Is the specific member(s) in the family that uses the product.

Source: Adapted from Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010:208)

3.4.2.2   Cultural group

From figure 3.2 cultural group is the second group factor. According to Kotler and Keller (2009:87), a person's culture is the most elementary determinant of their wants and behaviour. A culture is the meaning, beliefs, morals and values that are shared by the majority of members in a society (Levy *et al.,* 2012:96). These norms, values and beliefs are passed on from one generation to another to ensure the survival of the culture and also to facilitate changes due to the conditions of life. Each individual's culture further determines their overall priorities in relation to the different types of products, services and activities. Therefore, products that provide consumers with benefits that are consistent with those of their culture have a much better chance of being accepted in the market (Cant *et al.,* 2010:62).

3.4.2.3 Social class

Social class is the third group factor that can influence consumer behaviour. Social class is a group of people who are seen as basically equal in their status or community esteem, who regularly socialises in a formal and informal way and who share the same behaviour patterns. Social classes have distinguishing behaviour patterns that are a function of occupation, income and education (Kotler & Keller, 2009:87).

According to Cant *et al.* (2010:62), a social class structure normally consists of an upper class, middle class and lower class. Social classes can have a huge influence on consumers' lifestyles and are usually a good indicator of the types of products or brands that consumers would be interested in. Additionally, consumers have the ability to purchase products in order to demonstrate their membership to a particular social class and to move ahead in their social standing in society. Organisations are aware of the fact that consumers desire membership of a higher social class and therefore make sure that their marketing messages communicate that by purchasing their product, the consumer may achieve a membership of a higher social class.

3.4.2.4 Reference group

Reference groups are a further factor influencing consumer behaviour, as shown in figure 3.2. Any individual or a group of individuals that can extensively influence a person's behaviour can be called a reference group. This group has the ability to expose people to new and different lifestyles and behaviours, influence their attitudes, feelings and self-concept, as well as create pressure for consistency that might have an influence on their brand and product choices (Kotler & Keller, 2009:88). Reference groups are significant to the degree that consumers have a desire to be like them, follow them, listen to them, identify with them and buy what they buy (Evans *et al.,* 2010:242). A reference group has the ability to influence consumers' buying decisions by providing them with

information, rewards for specific purchasing behaviours and boosting their self-image (Levy *et al.,* 2012:94).

3.4.2.5 Opinion leaders

The last variable of the group factors (according to figure 3.2) that can have an influence on consumer behaviour is opinion leaders. The role of opinion leaders is very important and can have a significant impact on consumer behaviour. Opinion leaders can be defined as formal and/or informal leaders of reference groups, and their opinions regularly influence opinion development in others (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010:282). General opinion leaders are leaders within society, such as lawyers, doctors and politicians and those who are seen as subject matter specialists, for instance an image consultant or clothing designer that can give consumers advice on choosing the most appropriate wardrobe for their figure.

From the above discussion, it can be inferred that the individual and group factors do have a direct and/or indirect influence on how consumers think and behave, thus influencing their decision-making and buying behaviour.

3.5 CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The next component in the consumer behaviour model as illustrated in figure 3.2 is the consumer decision-making process. Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:251) state that the consumer decision-making process is a chronological and repetitive set of psychological and physical activities varying from problem recognition to post-buying behaviour. The stages in the process, however, do not necessarily follow one another in a strict order. Thus, consumers can commence with any stage in the process and follow any order, or they can even skip certain activities. However, the consumers' final decision depends on specific variables that can have an influence on any of the stages in the consumer decision-making process.

Figure 3.3 below is a representation of the steps in the consumer buying decision-making process.


```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              PROBLEM RECOGNITION                         │
│  The individual recognises that they have a need that    │
│                   they want to satisfy                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              INFORMATION SEARCH                          │
│  They look for information about possible solutions in   │
│  the external environment, or use the information they   │
│              have stored in their memory                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES                    │
│  They evaluate or assess the various alternatives,       │
│  using all the information they have at hand, together   │
│     with their experiences and come to a decision        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               PURCHASE DECISION                          │
│            They buy the item they have chosen            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              POST-BUYING EVALUATION                      │
│  They use the product and evaluate whether they are      │
│  satisfied with it, i.e. whether their needs are         │
│                     satisfied                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 3.3: Stages in the consumer decision-making process
Source: Cant *et al*. (2006:195)

The five stages in the consumer decision-making process are based on Kotler and Keller (2009:96–101), Cant *et al.* (2006:195–205) and Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:252–263), as indicated in figure 3.4 above.

3.5.1   Problem recognition

The first step in the consumer decision-making process is problem recognition. A problem occurs when consumers become aware of a difference between what they perceive as the current or actual state of affairs and the state of affairs that they would want (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:555). Problem recognition is an

awareness of the need to change the existing state to match the desired or ideal state. For example, a woman realises that she has nothing suitable to wear to her interview and that she really needs to go and shop for a garment. Problem recognition is mainly a perceptual occurrence. The difference between the existing and desired state of affairs causes a state of motivated behaviour. The result is the development of a range of psychological activities and attitudinal responses which is called a cognitive process. The woman in the above example can go to a number of different shops that she likes and that she thinks might have a suitable garment for her interview.

The process of problem recognition usually varies, depending on the outcome of a variety of influencing factors (Cant *et al.,* 2006:196). There are three factors that have an effect on the specific need or problem recognition. These factors are information stored in memory, individual differences and environmental influences. However, social influences are also important for consumers who value the responses of others.

Cant *et al.* (2006:196) explain that problem recognition can occur in every stage of the decision-making process:

- Problems related to whether a product is really needed – this is the most basic level of problem recognition.
- Problems about which brands to select or what products to buy – this results from searching for and processing information.
- Problems concerned with whether to buy on credit or with cash, or how to delay the buying process – this is a result of the buying response.
- Problems that are concerned with whether consumers are happy and pleased with what they have bought – this is a result of the post-buying behaviour.

The majority of consumer problems occur as a result of one or more of the following (Cant *et al.,* 2006:197):

- **Assortment inadequacies:** This happens when consumer supplies of a particular item are running out, for example when the last bit of the liquid soap has been used.

- **New information:** This creates a state of awareness that makes consumers feel the need for a product or a service which they perceive as a solution to their problem. For example, when women see an advertisement of the magical pants "Trim & Lift" which make them appear thinner.

- **Expanded desires:** People always have a desire to improve their standard of living, thus resulting in a desire for new products or services. For example, people that already have a TAG Heuer watch may like to have a Rolex watch as well.

- **Expanded or reduced means:** A rise in consumer income will almost always mean a rise in consumer spending, whereas a financial dip will have the opposite effect. Consumers' financial resources are the most important factor in determining how much and what types of products and services they will consume.

As is clear from the first step, there are various ways in which problem recognition may occur. The next step in the consumer decision-making process indicated in figure 3.4 is the search for information.

3.5.2   Information search

The consumer is now aware of the problem and requires information to solve it. Consumer search for information is the psychological and physical activities undertaken by consumers to obtain information on a recognised problem (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:556). The search for information is a learning process through which consumers become aware of substitute products or brands, specific stores, prices of products, terms of sales as well as consumer services. The process makes information available that is important to the consumer when they are evaluating substitutes in order to make a choice that produces the best benefits at the lowest cost. It is a selective process, due to the fact that consumers have the ability to select information that is most aligned with their

wants and that is most likely to correspond with their beliefs, views, personality and attitudes.

A consumer's search for information can be either internal or external. An internal search concerns information that is in the consumer's memory, which is based on prior experiences. They will use this information to shorten a lengthy search process (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:556). An external search, on the other hand, is when consumers obtain information from outside sources such as reference groups, family and friends in order to help with their decision-making (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:556). External searches can also include advertisements, in-store promotions, pamphlets and brochures. This type of information search is influenced by individual differences and environmental factors. Figure 3.4 below depicts the influence of internal and external factors in the search for information.
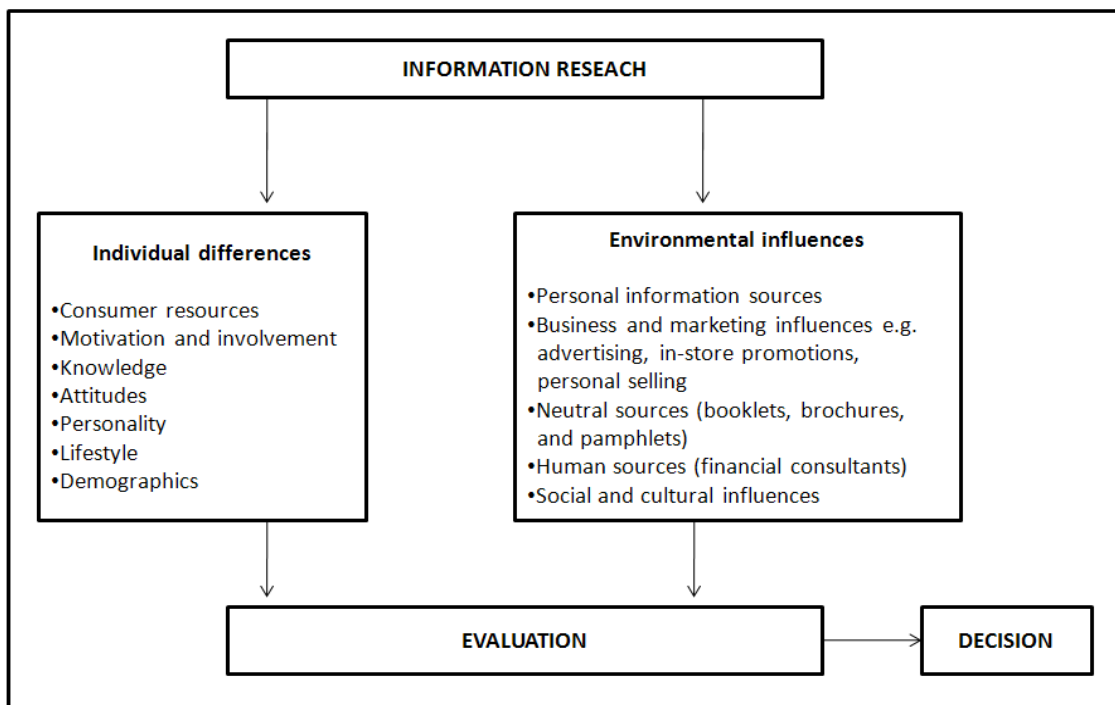

Figure 3.4: The search for information
Source: Adapted from Cant *et al.* (2006:198)

From figure 3.4 it is clear that marketers face a challenge in presenting consumers with information on which they can base their decisions. Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:256) found that it is important to control the

information flow in order to help consumers to better match their preferences, to have better remembrance and knowledge about the area they are exploring and to be more confident in their judgements.

Mittal, Holbrook, Raghbir and Woodside (2008:319) indicate that the shopping style of consumers can also have an influence on the way in which consumers search for information, because consumers have different shopping styles. Some consumers are passionate shoppers who search extensively to buy the best products, whereas other consumers are brand loyal shoppers who will stay with the brands that they know and trust the best. For example, consumers that only purchase clothing from Edgars do so because they trust the brand, whereas consumers that find shopping interesting will enjoy shopping in apparel retail stores that create a pleasing and interesting atmosphere.

After consumers have searched for information, they need to evaluate it. The evaluation of alternatives is the third step in the consumer decision-making process as illustrated in figure 3.3.

3.5.3   Evaluation of alternatives

Consumer evaluation is the act of identifying alternative solutions to a problem and measures the relative merits and demerits of each (Kotler & Keller, 2009: 98). When consumers evaluate the different alternatives, they compare the product features and measure them according to pre-established criteria. The evaluation criteria of consumers are the limits that they decide are acceptable when they search for a solution to their problems (Kotler & Keller, 2009:98). The criteria for evaluation are the standards, features or specifications that consumers use to compare products and brands. Consumers use different evaluation criteria when they need to evaluate products, brands or stores and alter the criteria in response to the situation or the specific environment (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004: 560).

The evaluation criteria are formed and influenced by individual and environmental variables. Individual influences, such as personality and attitudes, have an impact on the anticipated outcome (Kotler & Keller, 2009:98). The reason for this is that consumers buy the products towards which they have a favourable and positive attitude and which are in line with their personality and lifestyle.

Cant *et al.* (2006:201) and Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:259) have identified four types of individuals that are involved in decision-making:

- The *economic individual* makes a calculated and logical decision based on complete information.
- The *passive individual* is not knowledgeable about the product and can easily be influenced by the marketer. They react on impulse and in an unreasonable way.
- The *emotional individual* bases consumer decisions only on personal and irrational needs.
- The *cognitive individual* bases consumer decisions on information that is obtained from the environment, on personal needs, on social influences, attitudes and perceptions and on experience.

It is clear that individuals are involved in different levels of evaluation, based on their personal orientations. In an ideal world, the cognitive individual represents consumer behaviour the best, since the theory of consumer decision-making focuses on the behaviour of cognitive consumers that actively and wisely evaluate a number of products in order to reach a decision that offers the best possible usefulness and fulfilment (Cant *et al.,* 2006:201).

Once all the alternatives have been evaluated, the consumer has to make a decision. The buying decision or response is the next step in the consumer decision-making process.

3.5.4   Purchase decision

The consumer's decision is the result of evaluation, and it involves the psychological process of selecting the most attractive and pleasing substitute from a set of options that a consumer has created (Kotler & Keller, 2009:99). The most appropriate choice is the one that is the closest to the evaluation criteria formulated by the consumer. It is all the data which is gathered as a result of the search activity and the effort that lays the basis for the evaluation and decision. The correct and most suitable decision is dependent on sufficient information.

Having made a decision, either choosing the best alternative or deciding not to make a purchase is the fifth and final stage of the consumer decision-making process, called the post-buying evaluation.

3.5.5   Post-buying evaluation

Cant *et al.* (2006:202) and Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2012:260) indicate that the reason why a person enters the consumer decision-making process in the first place is because a difference in perception occurs of what they have and what they need. Therefore, consumers' buy products in order to fulfil these differences that have occurred. However, from a marketing point of view, it is very important to ask whether consumers are satisfied once they have bought a specific product.

Hence, the post-buying evaluation is all about a consumer's evaluation of the performance of the product or service, in relation to the criteria once it has been bought (Kotler & Keller, 2009:99). In other words, it is the consumers' perception of the outcome of the buying process (Kotler & Keller, 2009:99). The post-buying evaluation phase involves different forms of mental and emotional processes that consumers can experience after buying something.

Post-buying learning means that after buying a product or service, a consumer has the ability to learn something new about the product, stores this new knowledge in their long-term memory, changes pertinent attitudes and is ready for the next decision process with an improved knowledge base (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:570). The results of buying can be classified as either satisfaction, dissatisfaction or conflict, which refers to an emotional response with the evaluation of a product or service.

3.5.5.1   Post-buying satisfaction

A positive evaluation of a buying decision results in post-buying satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction happens the moment the outcome, such as the product, brand or store, as well as the conditions surrounding the purchase are in line with the consumer's expectations (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:570).

3.5.5.2   Post-buying dissatisfaction

A negative evaluation of the buying decision results in post-buying dissatisfaction. Consumers experience dissatisfaction when the outcome does not match their expectations or when they feel that the product they have bought falls short in many ways (Kotler & Keller, 2009:99). When a consumer realises that a substitute would have been more attractive and satisfying, they are inclined to be more dissatisfied with the chosen product.

Kotler and Keller (2009:99) point out that consumer responses to a dissatisfying purchase can either be verbal or behavioural. In other words, they can either talk about it or act out their dissatisfaction in a particular way:

- Verbal response: Consumers spread negative rumours about a product.
- Behavioural response: A negative behavioural response may involve complaint behaviour, which can be private, such as warning a friend or brand switching.

3.5.5.3   Post-buying conflict

Sometimes consumers experience post-buying conflict and question whether they have made the correct choice or should have bought another product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:570). Consumers may experience hesitation or nervousness, particularly after they have made a difficult, important as well as a long-term decision. This type of nervousness is called post-buying dissonance. Dissonance occurs because making a fairly permanent commitment to a specific choice of product necessitates the individual giving up the attractive characteristics of the substitutes that they did not choose (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:571).

Even though the post-buying evaluation is the final stage in the consumer decision-making process, it is not necessarily the end of the process. All the information that was gained as a result of buying and the post-buying assessment is stored in an individual's memory as part of their experience. This enables consumers to remember all the information regarding a specific product when they need to start another buying decision-making process (Kotler & Keller, 2009:99). Thus, in spite of the outcome, a post-purchase evaluation is a learning process that provides the consumer with feedback and it stores all necessary information for future references.

3.6   SUMMARY

This chapter commenced with a discussion on the importance of consumers to any type of organisation and that marketers should ensure that they truly know and understand their consumers' needs and wants as well as how they make their buying decisions (Cant *et al.,* 2010:50). Apparel retail stores that really know their consumers will be able to create a pleasant in-store atmosphere that will most probably have the ability to evoke feelings of happiness and excitement rather than irritation (Spies *et al.,* 1997:1). Furthermore, the importance of what influences consumers' decisions was also emphasised as well as how these

elements can be used to get the consumers to purchase a specific brand or to become loyal to a specific store (Cant, 2010:38).

All people make a number of buying decisions every day, whether it is to purchase a planned or unplanned product or whether to enter a store or not (Cant *et al.,* 2006:1). All these decisions are being influenced by individual as well as group factors. Both these sets of factors were discussed in detail after the discussion on buying behaviour. As previously discussed, atmospheric elements do have an influence on consumers' emotions and can therefore influence their emotions either positively or negatively, resulting in either an approach or avoidance behaviour, i.e. to buy or not to buy. This chapter concluded with a discussion on the consumer-decision making process, where the five basic steps were explained in detail.

In the chapters that follow, the research methodology will be discussed, as well as the empirical research results, where a conclusion will be drawn on whether in-store atmospheric elements have an influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

CHAPTER 4:   METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the marketing research process that the study followed to address the purpose of the study. Research can be defined as the study of a particular topic with the aim of gaining new knowledge about the topic (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2012). Marketing research is purposely understood to be research, as defined above, in order to gather more and better information to make marketing decisions (Tustin, Ligtehlm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005:7). Marketing research is usually conducted in a structured, systematic way, better known as the marketing research process, to ensure the quality and validity of the data gathered (Zikmund & Babin 2007:58). This chapter commences with a thorough discussion of the primary and secondary objectives of the study, followed by the main concepts of the marketing research process. A detailed description of the research methodologies that were utilised in the current study is given, along with an in-depth focus on the research design, approach, sample, sampling techniques and data collection method used. The limitations of the study are also identified.

4.2   MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS

According to Bradley (2010:7), market research is one of the most useful tools in any type of business, as it enables organisations to find out what their consumers and potential consumers need, want and care about. It is due to research that some stores spray lemon instead of orange scents in their store or why some specific products are placed next to other specific products, for example flu medicine next to cough medicine.

As a result of research, organisations have come to realise that they need to have a better understanding of the behaviour of their employees, stockholders and consumers in order to influence their needs and wants in a better, more

positive and satisfactory way (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:5). To gain a better understanding, organisations need to embark on marketing research activities. Tustin *et al.* (2005:6) and Wiid and Diggines (2009:31) define marketing research as the "... systematic gathering, recording and analysis of data about problems or opportunities relating to the marketing of goods and services". Similarly, McDaniel and Gates (2010:6) define marketing research as "... the planning, collection, and analysis of data relevant to the marketing decision making and the communication of the results of this analysis to management".

The researcher has to follow a particular process. The research process is defined by Aaker, Kumar, Day and Leone (2011:47) as a process that provides a researcher with a systematic, planned procedure towards the research project to ensure that all parts of the research project are consistent with one another. However, Zikmund and Babin (2007:57) caution that the marketing research process does not always follow a general set of steps, because some of the steps can overlap one another during the investigation period. However, there is a general pattern that marketing research needs to follow to ensure that an investigation is conducted in its entirety. Based on the analysis of the various research processes developed by a number of authors, the process as depicted in figure 4.1 was followed in this study.
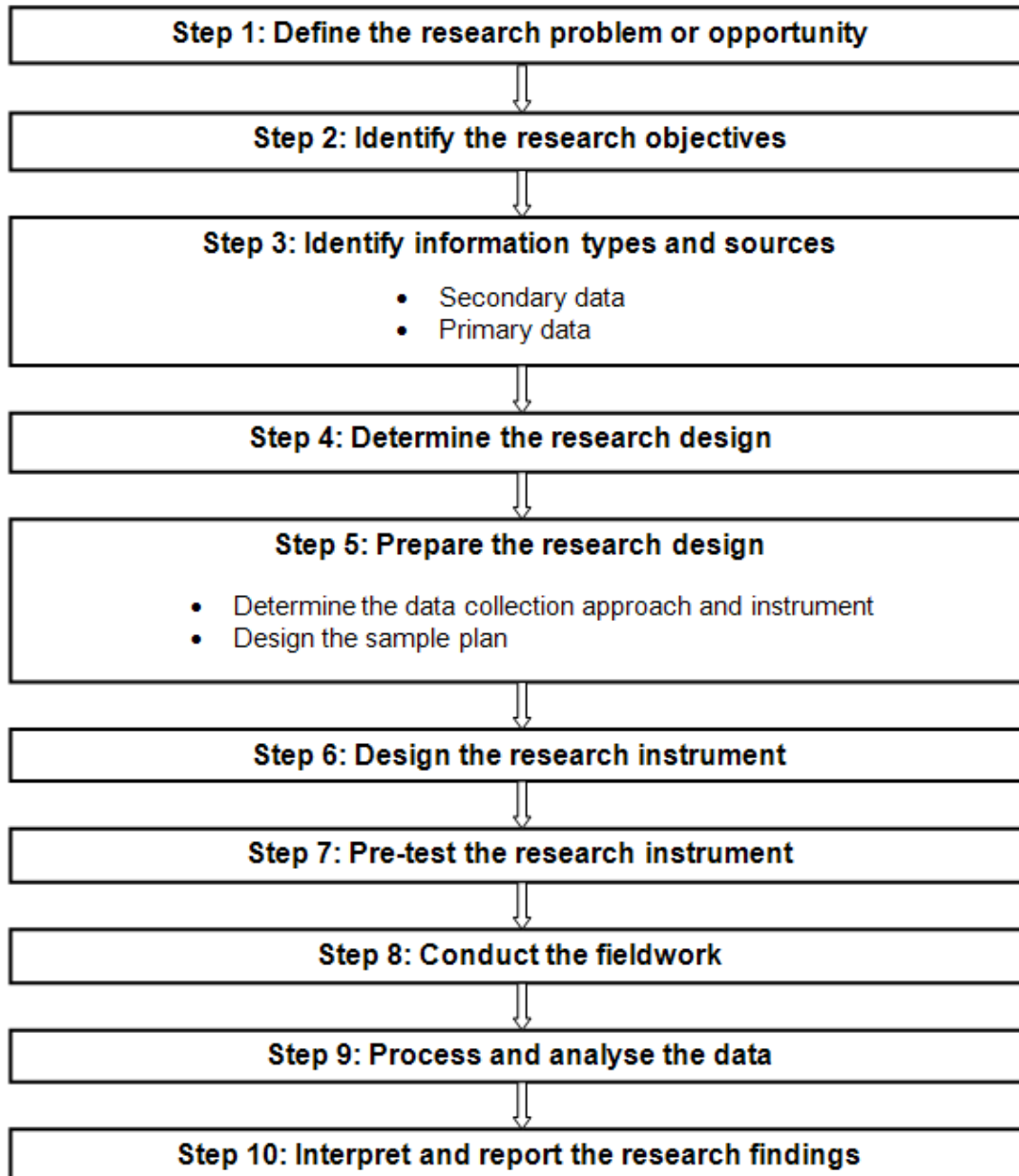
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 1: Define the research problem or opportunity      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 2: Identify the research objectives                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 3: Identify information types and sources          │
│                                                           │
│              •  Secondary data                            │
│              •  Primary data                              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 4: Determine the research design                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 5: Prepare the research design                     │
│                                                           │
│   •  Determine the data collection approach and instrument│
│   •  Design the sample plan                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 6: Design the research instrument                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 7: Pre-test the research instrument                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 8: Conduct the fieldwork                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 9: Process and analyse the data                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ⇓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Step 10: Interpret and report the research findings     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 4.1: The marketing research process

Source: Adapted from Wiid and Diggines (2009:32), Cant (2010:64) and Tustin *et al.* (2005:76)

The marketing research process as indicated in figure 4.1 is discussed in sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.10. Each step is discussed in detail, focusing on applicable theory, followed by an application to the study under investigation.

4.2.1   Step 1: Define the research problem or opportunity

The first step in the marketing research process is defining the research problem or opportunity. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:583), a marketing

research problem can be defined as the presentation of a specific problem to management. A marketing research opportunity, on the other hand, refers to any favourable or untouched situation in one or more of the marketing environments that can be utilised proactively by decision-makers to the advantage of the organisation (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:44). The marketing research problem or opportunity will specify the type of information needed to address the specific problem or opportunity at hand, as well as how this information can be obtained in an effective and efficient way (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:46). Hence, a research problem that is clearly stated can be considered as the core of the marketing research process (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:33).

In this study, the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour was investigated. In chapter 2 it was emphasised that visual merchandising and store atmospherics (store design, sound, lighting, fixtures, props, etc.) are of high importance in the retail industry (Levy *et al.,* 2012:489). It was found in previous studies (indicated in chapter 1) that certain atmospheric elements have an influence on consumer buying behaviour, but none of these studies investigated the effect of four of the senses (sight, sound, scent and touch) on consumer buying behaviour in a single study (Hunter & Mukerji, 2011:119). These previous studies focused on the retail industry in general, but none focused on the apparel retail industry in particular (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007:2; Liaw, 2007:1; Liu & Jang, 2009:494; Jang & Namkung, 2009:451; Kang *et al.*, 2011:1). Furthermore, all of the abovementioned studies were conducted in different parts of the world, especially in Taiwan, USA, India, Sri Lanka and Australia, but as far as could be established, none had been done in Africa or South Africa. A gap in the existing literature was therefore identified and the opportunity was taken to investigate the influence of store atmospherics (sight, sound, touch and scent) on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The study will provide apparel retailers in Tshwane insight into the value and importance of atmospherics in their stores.

Based on the research opportunity, a number of objectives were formulated, which is the second step of the marketing research process, shown in figure 4.1.

4.2.2   Step 2: Identify the research objectives

The research objectives that are formulated for a specific investigation are the goals necessary to be achieved and are usually referred to as the deliverables of a research project (Zikmund *et al.,* 2010:63). These objectives are stated in terms of specific information that is needed for researchers to address a specific research problem. Furthermore, McDaniel and Gates (2010:48) state that well-formulated objectives can be seen as an effective road map that a researcher can follow to achieve the research problem or opportunity.

The set of research objectives formulated for an investigation can be broken down into two different categories, Berndt and Petzer (2011:29) suggest. These are a primary objective, which is the thrust that the researcher wishes to achieve, and secondly, a few secondary research objectives, which are directly linked to and derived from the primary objective. For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary objectives were formulated. The secondary objectives were developed from the primary objectives.

The primary research objective that was derived from the preliminary literature review was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region.

From the primary research objective, a number of secondary objectives were formulated to explore the influence of:

- sight on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- sound on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- touch on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- scent on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

The above objectives were formulated to address the identified problem.

After the objectives have been formulated, the researcher must decide on the information needed to answer these questions and the sources from which this

information can be obtained. This is the third step in the marketing research process indicated in figure 4.1.

4.2.3   Step 3: Indentify information types and sources

The researcher has to decide on the type of data that is necessary to meet the objectives. There are two possible sources in which the desired information can be found, namely through secondary research data sources, also known as theoretical data, or through primary research data, also known as empirical research.

According to Wiid and Diggines (2009:70), secondary data is usually regarded as the starting point in defining the kind of research that needs to be conducted. However, primary data will be considered by the researcher when the availability of secondary data is limited.

4.2.3.1   Secondary data

Secondary data is data that already exists in the marketplace. To obtain this secondary data, researchers must follow a secondary research process also known as "desk research" (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:120). This means that the data has already been gathered and published by another researcher for a different purpose other than the specific study under investigation (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:71). Researchers can utilise the existing data to address new problems or opportunities.

Aaker *et al.* (2011:93) maintain that secondary data is a very effective tool that researchers can use in a number of different ways. It can provide researchers with information based on the historical context of the particular topic or study under investigation, as well as allowing them to form a longitudinal trend analysis within the specific industry (Hair *et al.*, 2009:114 & 116). Other advantages of secondary research are that it is more cost-effective and less time-consuming because researchers can obtain information quicker and easier

(Aaker *et al.,* 2011:93). However, the major disadvantage of secondary data is that it cannot always solve a specific problem completely, as the data was originally gathered for a different purpose. The advantages and disadvantages of secondary data as identified by Aaker *et al.* (2011:93) and McDaniel and Gates (2010:72–75) are briefly summarised in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of secondary data

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Alerts the researchers in advance of possible problems and/or opportunities	• Gathered for another purpose, thus lacking relevance to current study
• It can provide alternative primary research methods	• Different definitions are used to categorise data
• Might help to process the problem at hand	• Data can be inaccurate
• Builds credibility for a research report and provides sufficient background information	• Data might not be sufficient to make a decision or to solve a research problem
• May provide a sample frame	• It may not be reported in the required form
• Some information can only be obtained from secondary data	• Measurement unit does not match or meet the data requirements
• Might provide a solution for the research objective	• A lack of availability in some fields
• Available almost all the time	• Data can be outdated
• Enhances primary data	
• Easily and quickly obtained	
• Can be more accurate than primary data	
• Low in cost in relation to primary data	

Source: Adapted from Aaker *et al.* (2011:95) and McDaniel and Gates (2010:72-75)

Secondary data can be broken down into two main categories, namely internal and external secondary data (Hair *et al.,* 2009:115). Internal secondary data is data that is collected within an organisation, for instance marketing activity reports and previous sales figures. External secondary data, on the other hand, is data that is collected from outside sources, such as the internet, academic and industry sources (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:104). For the purpose of this study various external secondary research sources were consulted. These included the internet, academic textbooks and journals. When secondary printed or electronic sources are used, it is critical that the researcher conduct a source evaluation to ensure that the selected information sources are valid and accurate. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008:109), there are a few aspects that the researcher should consider when selecting secondary information sources,

namely the purpose, accuracy, consistency, credibility, methodology and format of the sources. The researcher ensured that the secondary information sources used in this study met these conditions.

For the researcher to have achieved the specific research objectives, she had to consider secondary data for two reasons: firstly, to know and understand the type of research that was previously conducted with regard to this study, as well as the theories, results and behaviour patterns that were previously developed in the marketing field, and secondly, to assist the researcher in developing appropriate constructs for the current study. As a result of using secondary data, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken; see chapters 2 and 3. Zikmund *et al.* (2010:654) define a literature review as a direct investigation into published data that includes books and journals which discuss theory and present experiential results that are relevant to a specific topic and can be used to explain and define a research problem.

After a clear and thorough understanding of the constructs of the study was gained, primary research was conducted to validate the formulated research objectives for the current study.

4.2.3.2 Primary data

If, after the analysis of secondary data and the study of existing literature, a solution to the marketing problem or opportunity has not yet been found, primary data is collected (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:93). Primary data can be described as data that is collected from scratch to solve a specific marketing problem or opportunity, thus to address the research problem or opportunity at hand (Malhotra, 2010:73). Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:68) identify two ways in which primary data can be collected, firstly through observational techniques and secondly through communicational techniques. Wiid and Diggines (2009:134) define observational techniques as "... the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of people, objects and occurrences without questioning or otherwise communicating with them" and these include human or mechanical methods (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:70). Communicational techniques can be

defined as "... a method of primary data collection in which information is gathered by communicating with a representative sample of people" and these include surveys, questionnaires, personal interviews, telephone surveys, written communication (mail) or web-based internet methods (Wiid & Diggines, 2009: 106).

After identifying the information types and sources, the research design is determined.

4.2.4   Step 4: Determine the research design

In step 4 of the marketing research process (figure 4.1), the researcher had to determine the research design in order to conduct primary research, which was believed to be necessary to satisfy the research objectives of the current study.

A research design is the blueprint or framework for conducting a marketing research project and it deals with all the processes that are necessary to follow in order to obtain the specific information needed to answer and solve the research problem or opportunity at hand (Malhotra, 2010:102). Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:30) are of the opinion that it is the "glue" that holds all the elements of the research project together. There is not one single definition of a research design, although Cooper and Schindler (2008:140) have managed to create a description which was derived from various authors. The description by Cooper and Schindler (2008:140) was used as a framework for this study. A research design entails firstly a time-based activity plan, secondly it is a plan that is based on a specific research question, thirdly it is a guide that helps to select information types and sources, fourthly it is a framework for identifying the relationships between the different study variables and lastly it is a practical outline for every research activity.

The first step in the research design phase was selecting the most appropriate research design type. There are two types of research designs that a researcher

can apply, namely an exploratory design or a conclusive design (Malhotra, 2010: 120) as illustrated in figure 4.2.
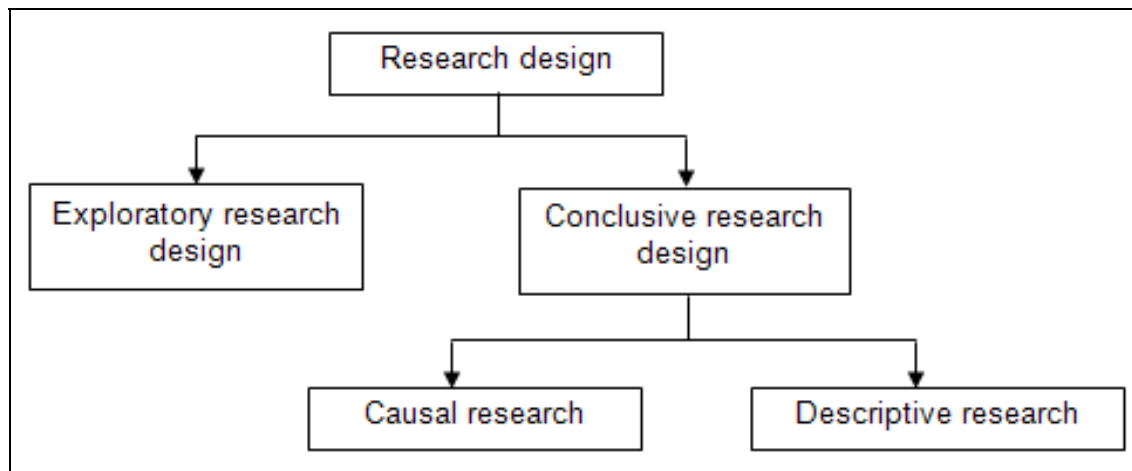

Figure 4.2: Types of research designs
Source: Adapted from Malhotra (2010:100)

4.2.4.1   Exploratory research design

As shown in figure 4.2, the first category of research design is exploratory research, which, as the name suggests, wishes to explore new opportunities (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:55). According to Zikmund and Babin (2007:42), exploratory research is used to explore and to clarify ambiguous situations and ideas that could potentially create business opportunities or solve a particular problem. Exploratory research is considered as preliminary research that will help researchers to understand the problem or opportunity at hand (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:43). Exploratory research is typically qualitative in nature, which will enable researchers to uncover any underlying motivations and/or ideas that participants might have about the given topic at hand (Hair *et al.,* 2009:152–153). McDaniel and Gates (2010:44) point out that exploratory research can take on several forms, such as in-depth interviews, pilot studies, experience surveys, case analysis, projective techniques and focus groups, which are discussed later on in this chapter.

4.2.4.2   Conclusive research design

The second type of research design as shown in figure 4.2 is *conclusive research*, which is research that provides information or data that is used in achieving certain conclusions or in making certain decisions (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:31). A conclusive research design is typically more formal and structured than exploratory research and is based on large representative samples. The data obtained is usually quantitative in nature (Malhotra, 2010:104). Conclusive research can be further broken down into the following:

- *Causal research* investigates whether or not one variable determines or is the cause of the value of another variable. This is tested to determine if there is a relationship between the two different variables (Aaker *et al.,* 2011:306). In most cases, experiments are used to measure causality (Tustin *et al.,* 2005:87). Causal research allows causal assumptions to be made and seeks to identify cause-and-effect relationships (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:53).

- *Descriptive research,* as the name implies, is used to describe objects, people, groups or environments and attempts to address the who, what, when, where, why and how questions (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:56). Consumer attitudes, intentions, preferences, purchase behaviours, evaluation of current marketing mix strategies and demographics are all examples of descriptive information. This research type may provide information about competitors, target markets and environmental factors (Hair *et al.,* 2009:51). The research methods used in descriptive research are structured and quantitative in nature. Usual approaches to a descriptive research design include personal interviews, surveys, email and web-based surveys and telephone interviews (Tustin *et al.,* 2005:86).

Table 4.2 below is a summarised comparison of the three different primary research designs in terms of the following aspects: objectives, characteristics, uses and methods.

Table 4.2: The difference between the primary research designs

	Exploratory	**Descriptive**	**Causal**
Objective	Discovery of new ideas and gaining insight	Describe the market characteristics or their functions	Determining cause-and-effect relationships
Character-istics	- Flexible - Versatile - Often the front end of the total research design	- Marked by the prior formulation of specific hypotheses - A pre-planned and structured design	- The manipulation of one or more independent variables - The control of other mediating variables
Uses	- Formulate problems more accurately - Develop hypotheses - Establish research priorities - Eliminate impractical ideas - Clarify concepts	- Describe the characteristics of specific groups - Estimate the proportion of people in a population who behave in a certain way - Make specific predictions	Provide evidence about the cause-and-effect relationship between variables by means of: - associated variation - time order in which variables occur
Methods	- Secondary data analyses – qualitative - Expert survey - Pilot studies - Case studies - Qualitative research	- Secondary data analyses – quantitative - Surveys - Panels - Observational and other data - Cross-sectional - Longitudinal	- Laboratory - Field experiments

Source: Adapted from Wiid and Diggines (2009:57)

The current study followed an exploratory design. Exploratory research was performed because it can clarify unclear situations (Zikmund *et al.* 2010:54). This research method is not supposed to provide any specific evidence from which a specific route to follow is established. It is more important for the researcher to get suggestions and insight rather than scientific objectivity (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:199). Therefore the reasoning as to why exploratory research was selected for this study was that it would enable apparel retail stores in Tshwane to have a better in-depth understanding of their consumers' needs and wants in terms of store atmospherics and its influences on their buying

behaviour. In the following section the various data collection approaches that are available to a researcher are explained.

4.2.4.3   Qualitative and quantitative research

The second step in the research design is to decide whether to use a qualitative or a quantitative research approach. The main difference between these two approaches is that ***quantitative research*** is a research approach that makes use of a larger and more representative sample by addressing the research objectives through an experiential assessment that involves numerical measurements and analysis (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:83). ***Qualitative research***, on the other hand, is an unstructured, exploratory research design that makes use of small samples to provide detailed insight and understanding of the particular problem at hand (Malhotra, 2010:73). This approach is effective when it is important for the researcher to discover true feelings, perceptions, motivation, understanding and new insights without using statistical evidence (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:86). It can therefore be described as an interpretive technique that explains, decodes and translates information (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:214). The differences between these two approaches are set out in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Qualitative research vs. quantitative research

Research aspect	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Purpose	To understand and interpret	To test hypotheses, look for cause and effect and make predictions
General framework	Exploratory research Seeks to explore phenomena Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions Uses semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation	Descriptive and causal research Seeks to confirm hypotheses about phenomena Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions Uses highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys and structured observation

Analytical objectives	To describe variation	To quantify variation
	To describe and explain relationships	To predict causal relationships
	To describe individual experiences	To describe characteristics of a population
	To describe group norms	
Question format	Open-ended	Closed
Data format	Textual – obtained from audiotapes, videotapes and field notes	Numerical – obtained by assigning numerical values to responses
Flexibility in study design	Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion or wording of particular interview questions)	Study design is stable from beginning to end
	Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next	Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next
	Study design is iterative, that is data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned	Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions
Requirements of administration	Interviewer with special skills	Interviewer with fewer special skills or no interviewer
Ease of replication	Difficult	Easy
Time frame	Relatively short	Significantly longer
Sample size	Small	Large
Outcome	Develop an understanding – less generalisable findings	Recommend a final course of action – generalisable findings that can be applied to other populations

Source: Adapted from Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namely (2005:1) and Wiid and Diggines (2009:86-87)

According to Mack *et al.* (2005:1), the strength of qualitative research lies in its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how individuals experience a given research problem or issue. It provides researchers with information regarding the "human" side of a problem or an issue which is normally different behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships. This is in line with the objectives of the study.

For this study, the research methodology that was followed was a qualitative approach. The first reason for this is that an in-depth understanding of the influences of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour was required and therefore an interpretive technique that explains, decodes and translates was necessary to obtain the required information. Secondly, the researcher required a detailed explanation and understanding of store atmospherics and its influence on consumers' buying behaviour. Qualitative research has the ability to learn new insight and true significance about the available data. Lastly, a qualitative approach was successful because the researcher wanted more personalised data from the participants in order to answer the research question and to achieve the research objectives.

4.2.5   Step 5: Prepare the research design

Step 5, as depicted in figure 4.1, refers to how the research design for the current study was prepared. In this section the focus is firstly on the data collection instrument and secondly on the sample frame.

4.2.5.1   Determining the data collection approach and instrument

Having selected a research design for the study, the next step was to determine how the study would collect the needed data in order to achieve the research objectives. As previously discussed, the two primary methods by which data can be gathered are observation and communication (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:68). Communication methods include mainly in-depth interviews, projective techniques, surveys and focus groups, to name a few. These methods are the most common ways that researchers use to collect the necessary data (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:51; Wiid & Diggines, 2009:88; Bradley, 2010:115).

- *Observation research* is a research method that monitors respondents' actions without any direct face-to-face interaction with the respondents (Cant, 2010:70). This may involve watching consumers or using a variety

of machines (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:51). According to Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:68), observational research can be either structured or unstructured in nature. In a structured observation, the units, the conditions of observation and the methods used to select and record the observations are all well-defined. Such a structured approach is usually used in descriptive studies, whereas an unstructured observational approach is often used in exploratory studies (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:68).

- *Survey research* involves an interviewer who interacts with respondents in order to acquire facts, opinions and attitudes. Questionnaires are used to make sure that a systematic and structured approach to data gathering is followed. Face-to-face interviews with the respondents can be held in either the respondent's home, a shopping centre or in an office (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:51). According to Berndt and Petzer (2011:132), survey research is used when information is collected from individuals in order to achieve the study objectives. Furthermore, a survey is a measurement process that collects information in a highly structured way, where the goal is to derive comparative data across different subsets of the selected sample (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:215).

- *In-depth interviews* are a formal process in which a well-trained interviewer asks a participant a set of semi-structured questions in a face-to-face setting (Hair *et al.,* 2009:158). Wiid and Diggines (2009:92) explain that an in-depth interview is a relatively unstructured and extensive interview in which the interviewer asks a lot of questions and probes for in-depth answers. None of the questions that are asked in an in-depth interview are consciously formulated, but are rather developed spontaneously as part of the natural interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. The contribution of the interviewer is limited in terms of stating the general theme of the information required, motivating the participant to participate as well as stimulating the discussion through any clues or hints.

- *Projective techniques* are an indirect method of questioning which enables a participant to project certain beliefs and feelings onto a third party, into a

task situation or onto a non-living object (Zikmund *et al.,* 2010:153). Wiid and Diggines (2009:95) state that people have a propensity to answer questions in such a way that will make them look good and wise, and therefore may not reflect their true feelings or opinions regarding a specific topic. The interviewer wants to know their hidden feelings or attitudes that are not uttered verbally, but that will provide the answers to the questions. Projective techniques are therefore designed and used to expose these hidden opinions or beliefs.

- *Focus group interviews* are a formal process of bringing a small group of people, normally eight to twelve participants, together for an interactive, spontaneous discussion on one specific topic or concept (Hair *et al.,* 2009: 161). Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:83) describe focus group interviews as a survey research instrument that can be used as either an alternative or in addition to a personal interview approach. The main feature of a focus group interview is that the interviewer tries to keep the discussion guided by a moderator who is focused on the topic of concern and therefore tries to direct the group towards the focus of the research. Focus group interviews will be discussed next in more detail.

For the purpose of this study focus group interviews together with naïve sketches were selected as a means of data collection. As a result, an in-depth understanding about the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour was gained.

Focus group interviews

A focus group can be seen as a free-flowing interview that consists of small groups of participants (Zikmund *et al.,* 2010:145). This type of data collection method fits well with an exploratory approach, because they enable the researcher to shed light on unclear situations (Welman *et al.*, 2005:201). The topic under investigation had to be discussed in detail, because different consumers' views had to be explored and this would not have been possible with a structured questionnaire. Two groups of eight participants were asked

about the influence of store atmospherics on their buying behaviour when shopping in an apparel retail store.

Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:83) and Hair *et al.* (2009:177) provide several advantages as well as disadvantages, listed in table 4.4 below, that a researcher could experience when focus groups have been chosen as the data collection method:

Table 4.4: Advantages and disadvantages of focus group interviews

Advantages	Description
New ideas	The spontaneous, unrestricted interaction among focus group participants can stimulate new ideas, thoughts and feelings that may not be raised in a one-on-one interview.
Underlying reason for behaviour	Detailed data is collected regarding the underlying reasons why people act as they do in different market situations.
Client participation	The participants (decision-makers) have the opportunity to be involved in the overall process from start to finish, thus creating the research objectives.
Breadth of topics covered	An unlimited range of topics and management issues can be covered within a focus group session.
Special market segments	Focus groups have the ability to bring together different types of people, such as doctors, lawyers and engineers, who might not otherwise be willing to participate.
Disadvantages	**Description**
Inability to generalise results	Focus group interviews lack representativeness regarding the target population and this therefore makes it difficult for researchers to generalise the results to the larger market.
Questions of data reliability	Extremely small sample sizes prevent the researchers from analysing the data in terms of statistical formats.
Subjectivity of interpretations	Given the subjective nature of the data collected, the researcher can misinterpret the data.
High cost per participant	The cost of identifying, recruiting and compensating focus group participants together with the cost of the interviewer and moderator are overall quite high.

Source: Adapted from Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:83) and Hair *et al.* (2009:177)

Although focus group interviews do present a number of advantages as well as disadvantages as listed above, this method of data collection might not be a feasible method for all research problems. Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:89) have identified possible errors or biases that can be made by both the interviewer

and the participants. These errors or biases are summarised and described in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Errors made by both interviewer and participants

Participant bias	Interviewer
Participant may not wish to be rude or to offend the interviewer and therefore gives polite and popular answers.	Interviewer may become considerate towards the problems and circumstances of the participant, thus affecting the results negatively.
Participants may provide dishonest and exaggerated information.	Interviewer may change the wording of a question in order to simplify the meaning of the questions to participants.
Participants may be unwilling to respond or fail to give sufficient attention to the question.	Interviewers should not give their reactions to the responses given by the participant as this will result in bias.
Participants may perceive or understand the purpose of the study incorrectly.	
Participants may respond incorrectly, due to poor recall.	

Source: Adapted from Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:89)

Naïve sketches

Naïve sketches were also used by the researcher as a method of exploring the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores (see appendix A). A naïve sketch, according to Giorgi (in Visagie & Maritz, 2009:4), refers to a frank description such as an essay, short story or notes. Hodder (1994:703–716) describes naïve sketches as an approach that provides non-verbal evidence of an experience. In other words, a naïve sketch can be seen as an open-ended questionnaire where the participants are asked a few questions that relate to the research study at hand.

To summarise steps 3 and 4, the type of research design that this study applied was exploratory, with a qualitative approach using a communicative technique of interviews, and the selected methods were focus group interviews and naïve sketches. See figure 4.3 below for a visual presentation of the research design, research approach and techniques selected for this research study.
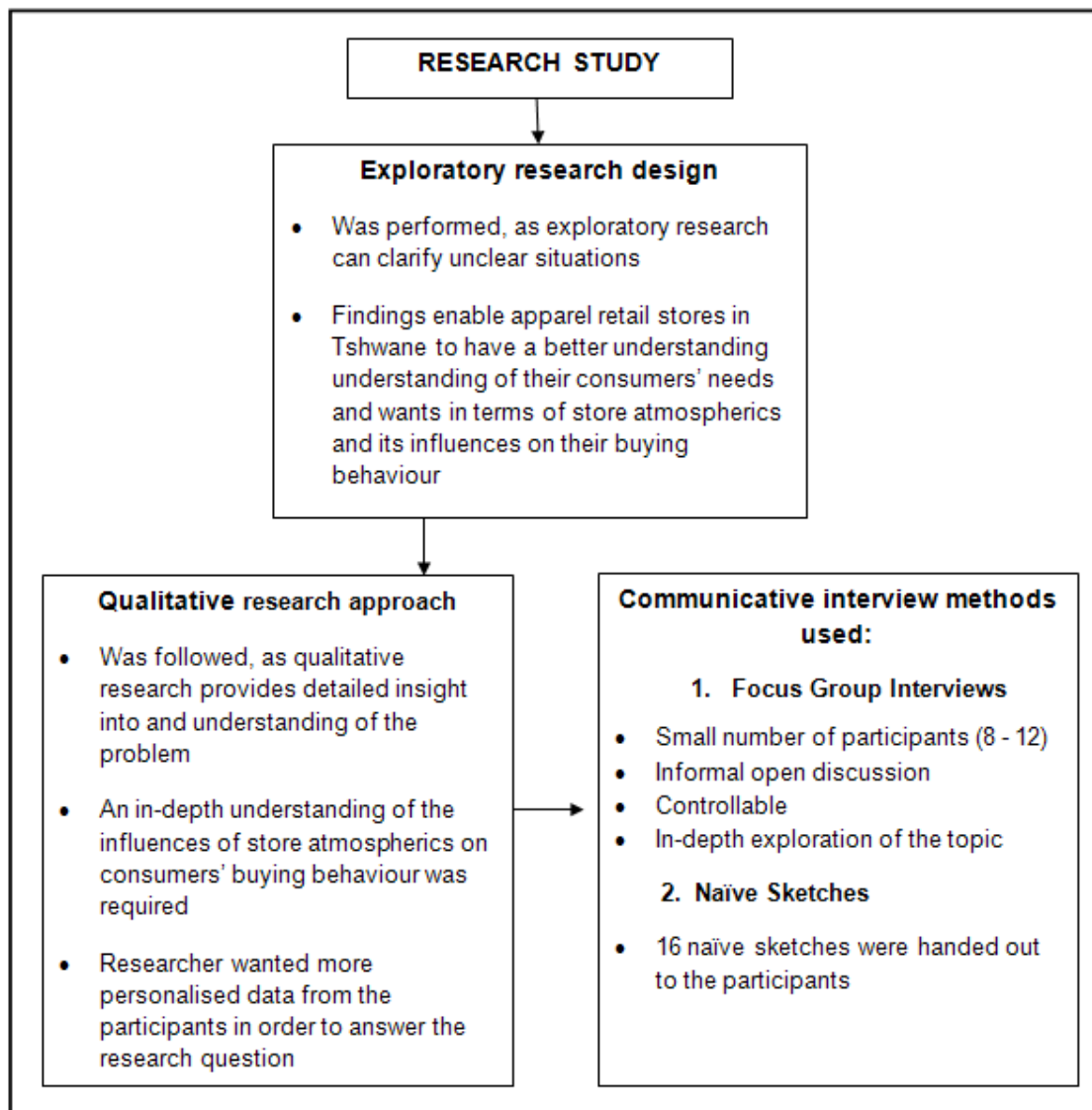
Figure 4.3: Research design and research approach for this study

Source: Adapted from Wiid and Diggines (2009:55, 88-89) and Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010:31, 83)

The final stage of the preparation of a research design is designing the sampling frame.

4.2.5.2   Designing the sampling frame

The selection of the sampling frame, as indicated in figure 4.1, is the second point in step 5 of the marketing research process.

The sampling process

Sampling is a process which involves making use of a small part of a specific population in order to draw conclusions about the entire population. A sample is therefore a subset or some part of a larger population and its purpose is to estimate an unknown characteristic of a particular population (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:266). The most important aspect to consider when a researcher wants to make accurate estimates or predictions is that samples need to be selected in a scientific manner to ensure the representativeness of the population at large (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:326). Figure 4.4 indicates the five phases in selecting a sample for a research project.
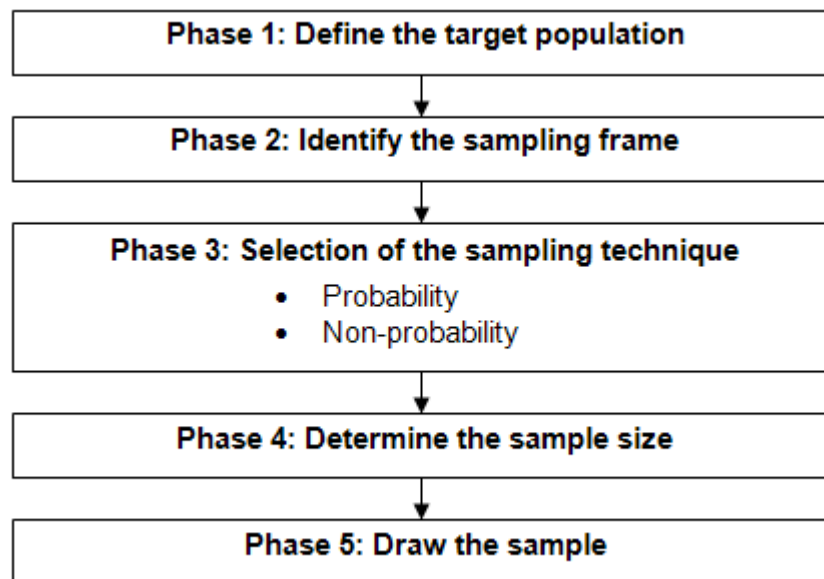
Figure 4.4: Sampling process
Source: Adapted from Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010) and Zikmund *et al.* (2010:391)

Phase 1: Target population and units of analysis

The target population of interest can be defined as the total group of people that a researcher will need to gather data from in order to investigate the problem at hand (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:266). In other words, a population is the larger group that a subgroup will be representative of (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:195).

When qualitative research is used, it is not necessary for the researcher to collect data from everyone in the area of interest in order to produce credible and realistic results. In qualitative research, only a sample of a population is selected for a given study (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:215). The target population that was of interest to the current study was defined as any person that buys apparel-related products in retail stores in the Tshwane region of Gauteng in South Africa. After the target populations were defined, the researcher had to specify the sampling frame.

Phase 2: Sampling frame

A sampling frame is a representation of the elements of the target population and it includes a list of characteristics to identify the target population (Malhotra, 2010:373). It can therefore be defined as a list of individuals in the population that will be selected to participate in the sample (Aaker *et al.,* 2011:338). A sampling frame is only necessary if a probability sample is drawn. A probability sample indicates that every element in the population has a known and fair chance of being selected (Tustin *et al.,* 2005:344), whereas with non-probability sampling, the sample relies on the judgement of the researcher.

Because this study used a non-probability sample (discussed in phase 3 of the sampling process), it was not necessary to specify a sampling frame. After the sampling frame has been specified, the next phase is to select a sampling technique.

Phase 3: Sampling technique

As indicated in figure 4.4, the third step in the sampling process is the selection of the sampling technique. The sampling technique depends on the objectives of a stated research problem, the available resources, funds and time as well as on the nature of the research problem (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:332). There are two main types of sampling techniques (as indicated in figure 4.5), namely probability and non-probability sampling and they can be further broken down into a number of techniques. Both probability and non-probability sampling are

discussed in detail below, together with the reason why non-probability sampling was used for this study.
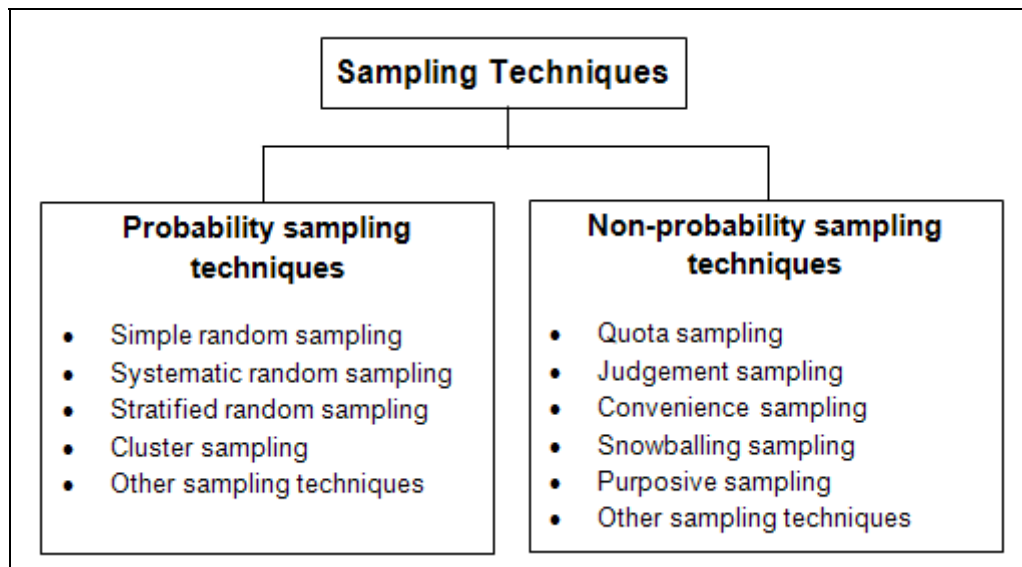
Figure 4.5: Types of probability and non-probability sampling designs
Source: Malhotra (2010:373, 377)

Probability sampling

Probability sampling, also referred to as random sampling, means that every element or individual in the population has a known and fair chance of being selected (Tustin *et al.,* 2005:344). Probability samples are often referred to as sampling ratios that are equal to the number of items in a sample divided by the total number in the population. Probability sampling methods enable researchers to generalise to the total population as defined in the sampling frame. Researchers are able to estimate or predict errors that can be expected (Hair *et al.,* 2009:312; Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:137; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:52).

The different sampling techniques that can be used in probability sampling as discussed by Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:287–306) and Bryman and Bell (2007:185–188) include the following:

- Simple random sampling is a sampling technique that assures that each element in the population has a fair and known chance of being selected for the sample.

- Systematic random sampling is a sampling process where a starting point is selected by a random process and then every n^{th} number on the list is selected for the sample.

- Stratified random sampling is distinguished by a two-step process. Firstly, the parent population is divided into equally selected subsets or groups and secondly, a simple random sample of elements is separately chosen from each subset or group.

- Cluster sampling is a sampling technique that is distinguished by a two-step process. Firstly, the parent population is divided into equally selected and complete groups or subsets and secondly, a random sample of that group or subset is selected.

Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling is done in a non-random manner, meaning that every element or individual in the population does not have a known or fair chance of being selected and that the sample relies on the judgement of the researcher (Tustin *et al.,* 2005:344). Non-randomness refers to population elements or individuals that are selected on the basis of convenience, as they are easy and/or inexpensive to reach. Furthermore, non-probability samples cannot be generalised to the total population as defined in the sampling frame and the degree of sample errors to be expected is difficult to determine (Hair *et al.,* 2009:312; Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:142; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:52).

The different sampling techniques that can be used in probability sampling as discussed by Iacobucci and Churchill (2010:286–287) and Bryman and Bell (2007:197–201) include the following:

- Quota sampling is a sampling technique in which pertinent characteristics are used to stratify the sample.

- Judgement sampling is a sampling technique where all the members are chosen based on the researcher's judgement of what a representative sample of the population comprises.

- Convenience sampling is a sampling technique where those that are included in the sample enter by "accident", in other words they just happen to be where the study is being conducted when it is being conducted.

- Snowball sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher chooses the original members judgementally and then they are asked to identify others with the desired characteristics to be part of the sample.

- Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which all the members are chosen with a particular purpose in mind and are therefore deliberately chosen to be non-representative.

Table 4.6 below shows the main differences between probability and non-probability sampling methods:

Table 4.6: The difference between probability and non-probability sampling

Description	Probability sampling	Non-probability sampling
List of the population elements	A complete list is necessary	A list of the population is not necessary
Information about the sampling unit	Each unit must be identifiable	Details regarding the habits, activities, traits etc. of the participants are required
Sampling skill required	Researcher requires sufficient skills	Researcher requires little skill
Time requirement	Very time-consuming	Low time consumption
Cost per unit sample	Moderate to high costs involved	The costs involved are low
Estimates of population parameters	Unbiased	Biased
Sample representativeness	Good and assured	Suspect, undeterminable
Accuracy and reliability	Computed with confidence	Unknown
Measurement of sampling error	Statistical measures	True measures are not available

Source: Adapted from Hair *et al.* (2009)

The sampling methodology that was deemed appropriate for this study was non-probability sampling mainly due to budgetary constraints, time limitations and

the exploratory nature of the study. Non-probability sampling methods tend to be biased in the sampling process due to the fact they rely on the personal judgement of the researcher rather than chance to select the sample elements or units (Malhotra, 2010:376). Bias is defined by Kapoor and Kulshrestha (2010: 328) as a systematic tendency of a sample to misrepresent the population. It may be caused by inappropriate representation of the population in the sample, interviewing techniques, wording of questions and data entry. This bias does not mean, however, that non-probability sampling techniques cannot give good results. The only problem is that the researcher is unable to provide any suggestions of the reliability of the results that are achieved from the researcher (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:199). Another disadvantage of non-probability sampling techniques is the fact that the findings cannot be generalised to the whole population and therefore representativeness of the sample cannot be drawn. However, given the nature of this study it was not the intention for the findings to be representative of the whole population, but it was rather to explore and to gain more knowledge and understanding of the apparel retail industry.

The non-probability sampling technique that was utilised for this study was purposive sampling. The researcher chose participants "at random" (meaning as they wished or where she found them) based on their unique characteristics, experiences, attitudes or perceptions which were in line with the research question and problem at hand. The participants were therefore chosen on the basis of their accessibility and by the purposive personal judgement of the researcher. This sampling technique is generally used when one or more predetermined groups are needed, when the researcher must reach a targeted sample in the shortest possible time and where sampling for representativeness is not the main concern. A purposive sampling method becomes appropriate when the sampling plan systematically excludes or includes certain subsets of the population (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:332). The inclusion criteria for the purposive sampling for this study were as follows:

- Any male or female older than 18 years
- Any person who bought at apparel retail stores

- Any person who resided in the Tshwane region of Gauteng
- Any person that could understand, speak and write English

After the sampling method was chosen, the researcher had to determine the sample size.

Phase 4: Sample size

Once a sampling technique has been selected, the next step, as indicated in figure 4.4, will be to determine the sample size. Malhotra (2010:374) says that a sample size is the number of individuals or elements that need to be included in a study in order to represent the entire population. Determining the correct sample size is a complex process, as a sample that is too large can waste valuable time, money and resources, while a sample that is too small can lead to inaccurate results (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:145). It is therefore crucial that researchers consider certain qualitative and quantitative factors depending on the research design. With regard to qualitative research, researchers need to consider the importance of the decision, the nature of the research, the number of variables, the nature of the analysis, the sample size used in similar studies, incidence rates, completion rates and resource constraints when determining the sample size (Malhotra, 2010:374). With quantitative research, researchers use formulae to calculate the sample size required, given target levels of acceptable error and levels of confidence (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:335). The sample size will essentially depend on what a researcher wants to do with the findings, as well as the types of relationships the study wishes to establish.

The sample size for the current study consisted of two focus group sessions, with eight participants in each group, thus a total of 16 participants. This sample is quite small, but it is acceptable because the nature of the research was exploratory with qualitative research (Malhotra, 2010:374). The sample size for purposive samples is frequently determined on the basis of theoretical saturation, meaning that the point in data collection when new data no longer brings extra information to the research question has been reached (Mack *et al.,* 2005:5).

This sample size of 16 participants was regarded as sufficient, but the researcher was prepared to hold a third and fourth focus group had it not been acceptable.

Phase 5: Draw the sample

The last and final phase of the sampling process is selecting the sample elements for the study.

For the purpose of this study, each of the participants was invited to the focus group sessions by means of an email. The email stipulated the purpose of the study, the questions that would be asked, the time and date when it would take place, as well as the time duration. The sample was finalised when all 16 participants (eight for each session) confirmed that they would attend.

The researcher invited participants according to the inclusion criteria (phase 3 of the sampling process). A more diversified and representative sample of the population was achieved by ensuring that there were male and female participants, as well as ages ranging from 20 to 65 years of age in the sample.

After all the necessary information has been gathered to form a sample, the next step in the marketing research process, as indicated in figure 4.1, is to design the research instrument.

4.2.6   Step 6: Designing the research instrument

The research instrument is the tool that the researcher uses to collect the information needed from the sample (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:98). There are two types of question structures that a researcher can implement to obtain the necessary data: structured or closed questions, and unstructured or open-ended questions.

- *Structured or closed questions* are used when a researcher provides a respondent with a set of response alternatives and specifies the format of the question. Examples of structured or closed questions are dichotomous, multi-choice or scale-type questions (Malhotra, 2010:344).

- *Unstructured or open-ended questions* are questions where the respondents are allowed to answer the questions in their own words. These questions are far less biased than structured questions, as they allow respondents to express their opinions and attitudes, and can help researchers in understanding responses to structured questions (Malhotra, 2010:343).

According to Zikmund and Babin (2007:232), open-ended questions are the most beneficial type of question to use when researchers are conducting exploratory research, particularly when the variety of responses is not known. This type of question structure can be very effective when researchers want to learn more about the words and phrases that participants spontaneously give to the free-response question. Participants are free to give any answer that comes to mind. In gathering free and natural responses, the researcher may find some unexpected reactions towards the research problem. However, there are a few disadvantages of open-ended questions that the researcher should keep in mind. Firstly, there is a possibility of interviewer bias which can influence the participants' answers, secondly, the cost involved in open-ended questions may be high because the data needs to be transcribed, edited, coded and analysed (Zikmund & Babin, 2007:232) and lastly, there may be a risk that the recorded voices are not clear and therefore cannot be transcribed (Kapoor & Kulshrestha, 2010:84). The advantages and disadvantages of open-ended questions are summarised in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Advantages and disadvantages of open-ended questions

Advantages
• Respondents can answer in their own way.
• Allow for unusual responses to be received.
• Questions do not provide the respondent with specific answers.
• Useful for exploring new ideas or areas in which the researcher has limited knowledge or where there has been limited research on the topic.
• The questionnaire is useful for generating fixed-choice format answers.

Disadvantages
• Time-consuming to administer.
• The participants' responses need to be coded.
• Questions require greater effort from respondents.
• Variability between the respondents and the interviewer's recording of answers.

Source: Adapted from Bryman and Bell (2007:259)

In this study, the instruments that were used to obtain the required data were focus group interviews and naïve sketches (as discussed in step 4 of the marketing research process). The researcher compiled a set of seven open-ended questions (see Appendix A), which were based on the research objectives of the study to ensure that the objectives would be achieved by the collected data. These questions were firstly asked in the naïve sketches and then in the focus groups. Questions regarding the demographics of each participant were asked at the end of the naïve sketches. The reason for this, as Aaker *et al.* (2011: 289) recommend, is that sensitive or difficult questions dealing with income, age, gender and so forth should not be asked in the beginning of naïve sketches, but at the end. See Appendix A for the naïve sketches and Appendix B for the demographic open-ended questions.

Now that the research instrument has been designed, the next step in the marketing research process, as indicated in figure 4.1, is to pre-test the research instrument.

4.2.7   Step 7: Pre-test the research instrument

Before the data collection process can begin, it is necessary to test the open-ended questions. Malhotra (2010:354) defines a pre-test as "... the testing of the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents for the purpose of improving the questionnaire by identifying and eliminating potential problems". By doing this, it was feasible for the researcher to evaluate the seven open-ended questions to ensure that all possible problems were eliminated.

For the purpose of this study the seven questions that were asked in both the naïve sketches and in the focus group interviews were pre-tested among ten participants that did not form part of the final sample. The pre-test was conducted to ensure that all possible errors that could potentially occur were minimised, and also to ensure that the participants understood the wording of the questions, that no misunderstanding occurred or that the participants would not find it too difficult or offensive to respond or to participate. In the pre-test no significant problems were identified.

After the researcher has pre-tested the questions, the next step in the marketing research process, as shown in figure 4.1, is to conduct the fieldwork.

4.2.8   Step 8: Conduct the fieldwork

As earlier mentioned in section 4.2.5, the researcher used two data collection methods, focus group interviews and naïve sketches. Both the focus groups and naïve sketches were based on the use of visual material to create an atmosphere. Photographs were taken of the atmospheric themes implemented by two stores in the Tshwane region and they were included in the naïve sketches (see Appendix A). There were seven open-ended questions which were derived from the research objectives that the participants had to answer. These questions were used in both the focus group and naïve sketch session. The questions are as follows:

1.   What do you understand about a clothing retail store's atmosphere?
2.   When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of the colours and lighting (what you can see) used in-store on your buying behaviour?
3.   When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of sound (what you can hear – music) used in-store on your buying behaviour?
4.   When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of the temperature (what you can feel – air-conditioning) in-store on your buying behaviour?
5.   When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of scents (what you can smell – fragrances) used in-store on your buying behaviour?

6.   What other atmospheric elements do have an influence on your buying behaviour?

7.   What is the most important atmospheric element that influences your particular buying behaviour?

The researcher had planned to conduct two focus group sessions, each consisting of eight members, but if the themes were not saturated, a third or fourth focus group would have been held. However, after the second focus group and 16 naïve sketches, the data was saturated. The researcher and the moderator had one and a half hours per session to collect the required data. Two sessions in total were held in a conference room, each with eight participants. The interviewer introduced the researcher and the moderator and informed the participants of the purpose and objectives of the particular study. Participants were firstly requested to sign the letter of consent (see Appendix C) and then to complete the naïve sketch individually, before the focus group commenced. The naïve sketch consisted of the same seven questions that were asked in the focus groups. In this way the researcher was able to obtain double the number of the responses and compare the responses from the naïve sketches with those of the focus groups in order to gain deeper insight into the research problem.

After the participants had completed the naïve sketches, they were asked by the interviewer to sit in a circle, where the focus group had taken place. The same questions were asked. A fieldworker with experience in qualitative research assisted in taking extensive field and observation notes as part of triangulation. The data was collected until the sample had been saturated as evidenced by repeating themes (Visagie & Maritz, 2009:4). The focus group interviews were recorded by video camera and thereafter transcribed and edited. For this study to be scientifically measurable, 16 participants were regarded as sufficient, as the point of saturation was reached within the second focus group interview.

After all the data has been collected, the next step in the marketing research process is to process and analyse the data.

4.2.9   Step 9: Process and analyse the data

According to Tustin *et al.* (2005:102), the purpose of data analysis is to understand the collected data and to draw possible conclusions from it.

For the purpose of this research study, the researcher made use of thematic analysis, since the required data for this research study was contextual in nature. Thematic analysis can be described as a qualitative research process that involves intensive searching through data to identify any possible patterns, known as themes and categories that might occur more than once (Tesch, 1990:113). A *theme* can be described as "umbrella" constructs that are generally identified by the researcher before, during and after the data collection. A theme can therefore be seen as a cluster of linked categories that express the same meanings (Ryan & Bernard in Welman *et al.,* 2005:211). A *category* is a group of things that have some qualities in common, for example frustration, joy and happiness can all be categorised or classified as emotions. The researcher should identify the important words and meanings that a specific group has attached to specific categories and let the group of individuals explain the meaning of these words (Welman *et al.,* 2005:212). Therefore to categorise is to make something part of a system or classification (Visagie & Maritz, 2009:12). The exploratory influence of this acknowledged technique can be enhanced when the analyst requires background information on the research topic and therefore cannot be influenced by unfairness. Conversely, it is recommended that the analyst have a basic understanding of the research topic at hand before data analysis can start (Tesch, 1990:113).

The thematic analysis process that the researcher and the independent coder followed to analyse the gathered data from the focus group interviews and naïve sketches is discussed next. See Appendix D for an example of how the coding was done.

During the data analysis process, both the independent coder and the researcher read the notes from the naïve sketches and the focus group interviews to have a better and clearer understanding. All the ideas that came to the coder's and

the researcher's mind were written down in the margins next to the notes. The independent coder as well as the researcher highlighted the most interesting data and continuously asked themselves the question "what is this about?" in order to determine the underlying meaning. The ideas were transformed into relevant topics that reflected both the researcher's and the coder's meaning. All the related topics were grouped together into columns that were classified as either "main topics", "unique topics" or "leftovers topics". This list was then evaluated against the original data and topics were reduced to codes which were written next to the most suitable segments of the text. The most expressive wording for the different topics was selected and then defined and grouped into categories and then into themes. After the independent coder and the researcher had coded, processed and analysed the data, an original dataset was given to another independent coder to ensure that the themes and categories were correct and relevant. Lastly, a consensus session was held between the researcher and the two independent coders to confirm the findings. Controlled literature provided a structure and a benchmark for evaluating and contrasting the results in terms of themes and categories of this particular research study with other research findings.

After all the data and research findings have been analysed, the researcher then needs to report the research findings (see figure 4.1).

4.2.10   Step 10: Interpret and report the research findings

According to Cant (2010:81), this final step involves the interpretation of information that has been gathered and the reporting of such information to management for decision-making purposes.

The findings and recommendations of this study are presented in chapters 5 and 6 of this research study.

4.3   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher took the different possible limitations of this research study into account. The fact that a non-probability purposive sampling method was applied can in itself be seen as a limitation, as the findings cannot be generalised to the greater population. It would therefore be advisable for future researchers to select a more representative sample. Similarly, the sample was drawn from consumers living in the Tshwane area and was therefore not geographically representative. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the main aim was not to be representative, but rather to be able to use the research findings for other research studies and also to provide the apparel retail industry in Tshwane with more and better knowledge regarding the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour.

4.4   STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ENSURE DATA QUALITY

In qualitative designs, validity and reliability are described through strategies for trustworthiness. This research operationalised the strategies of credibility, applicability, dependability and confirmability as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985); which is derived from a classic publication of the topic. Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checking. An intense description of the background information and purposeful sampling ensured the transferability of the research. Dependability was maintained through code-recode procedures. Confirmability was established through triangulation and reflectivity.

4.5   ETHICS

In conducting the research, the following ethical considerations were taken into account: The researcher had obtained internal ethical clearance from the ethical committee of the University of South Africa (Unisa). The researcher declared that she had read the Policy on Research Ethics of Unisa and that the contents

of this research study were a true and accurate reflection of the methodological and ethical implications. She also declared that the confidentiality of all the data collected from the research participants would be maintained and kept safe and secure, thereby not harming any of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants by means of a letter communicating the necessary information pertaining to the research. Confidentiality was maintained through the anonymity of responses and their participation was voluntary.

4.6   SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to explore whether store atmospherics influences consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. This chapter focused on the research methodology that was applied in collecting and analysing the required data that was needed to achieve the primary objective of the research study. The study started with a literature study on store atmospherics and consumer buying behaviour to establish a problem statement. Thereafter, the research objectives were described and the research design was created. Primary data was collected in two ways, mainly by means of naïve sketches and focus group interviews to ensure that the collected data reached a point of saturation. The data was then coded and analysed by means of thematic analysis, where repeated patterns was identified and described in terms of themes and categories. The main research findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5:   FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the exploratory study as described in chapter 4. The findings that were obtained from both the focus group interviews and the naïve sketches are discussed in a clear and meaningful way in order to address the research objectives of this study as outlined in chapters 1 and 4. The findings will be presented as themes and categories, and quotes from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches will be used to confirm the findings of the research.

The chapter commences with the research terms, thematic analysis process and naïve sketches. These were covered in detail in chapter 4. The research question and objectives are then set out, followed by the age and gender profile of the participants. The chapter concludes with the research findings.

The research terms that were used throughout this chapter are defined next to facilitate the reader's understanding.

5.2   RESEARCH TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Research terms used in this chapter are defined in the section that follows. These concepts were discussed in detail in chapter 4.

5.2.1   Category

A category is a group of things that have some qualities in common. The researcher should identify the important words and meanings that a specific group has attached to specific categories and let the group explain the meaning of these words (Welman *et al.,* 2005:212).

The thematic analysis process that was followed by the researcher to analyse the gathered data is discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 Focus group interview

A focus group interview consists of a small number of individuals, eight to twelve members that are drawn together for the purpose of expressing their opinions on a specific set of open-ended questions. The discussion and interaction among the group members are directed by the researcher or moderator in either a structured or unstructured way (Welman *et al.*, 2005:201). For the purpose of this study, two focus group interview sessions were held, both consisting of eight participants. (Refer to chapter 4, section 4.2.5 for a more detailed discussion.)

5.2.3 Naïve sketch

A naïve sketch, according to Hodder (1994:703–716), is an approach that provides non-verbal or mute evidence of an experience. Open-ended questions are asked based on pictures given to participants. Participants have to form and write their own conclusions based on these pictures (Wiid & Diggines, 2009: 97). For the purpose of this study, the participants were asked open-ended questions that related to the research study at hand. Two pictures were given to the participants, who were asked the same seven questions that were asked in the focus group interviews; see Appendix A. The purpose of the pictures was to give the participants a better idea and understanding of what store atmospherics is. (Refer to chapter 4, section 4.2.5 for a more detailed discussion.)

5.2.4 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is an exercise in qualitative research that involves searching through qualitative data to identify any repeated patterns by organising and describing data in detail (Tesch, 1990:113; Braun & Clarke, 2006:82). The thematic analysis process is explained in section 5.3.

5.2.5 Theme

A theme can be described as "umbrella" constructs that are generally identified by the researcher before, during and after the data collection. It can therefore be seen as a cluster of linked categories that express the same meanings. The term "construct" can be defined as "... an image or idea specifically invented for a given research and/or theory-building purpose" (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:37). Ryan and Bernard (in Welman *et al.,* 2005:211) list the following techniques generally used in identifying themes:

- Word analysis – word repetitions, keywords in context and original terms
- Reading for larger units – for example, comparing material and searching for missing information
- Intentional analysis of linguistic features – metaphors, transitions and connectors
- The physical manipulation of text – unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures

5.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

Tesch's inductive descriptive coding technique (thematic analysis) was used to analyse the data that was collected from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches. The thematic analysis process was discussed in detail in chapter 4, section 4.2.9, but for the purpose of clarity the process is summarised below in table 5.1, to make it easier for the reader to understand the discussion of the results. The process that was followed was based on the work of Tesch (1990:113), Aronson (1994:1–3) and Creswell (1994:155–156).

Table 5.1: Thematic analysis process

Steps	Description
Step 1	The coder obtained a sense of the whole by reading through the transcriptions independently. Ideas that came to mind were jotted down.
Step 2	The coder then selected one interview and asked: "what is this about?", thinking about the underlying meaning of the information.
Step 3	When the coder had completed this task for several respondents, each interview was coded separately; thereafter a list was made of all the topics. Similar topics were clustered together and formed into columns that were arranged into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
Step 4	The coder took the list and returned to the data. The topics were abbreviated as codes and the codes were written next to the appropriate segment of the text. The coder tried out a preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerged.
Step 5	The coder found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories. The total list of categories was then reduced by grouping together topics that related to one another.
Step 6	The data belonging to each category was assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis was conducted, followed by a consensus discussion between the researcher and the coder.

Source: Adapted from Tesch (1990), Aronson (1994) and Creswell (1994)

The process was followed to answer the research question as well as achieve the primary and secondary objectives of the study.

5.4   THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. The study will provide apparel retailers in Tshwane insight into the value and importance of atmospherics in their stores.

The research question derived from the preliminary literature was as follows: What is the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region?

From the research question, primary and secondary objectives were derived. The primary research objective that was derived from the preliminary literature review was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region.

From the primary research objective a number of secondary objectives were formulated. These were to explore the influence of:

- sight on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- sound on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- touch on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- scent on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

The above objectives were formulated to address the identified problem.

The age and gender profile of the participants are discussed in the next section.

5.5   AGE AND GENDER PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

As mentioned in chapter 4, participants were invited based on the inclusion criteria as stipulated in the discussion of the research methodology. The study applied a purposive sampling technique, which means that all the members were selected with a particular purpose in mind and were therefore deliberately selected to be non-representative of the population (Bryman & Bell, 2007:197–203). However, the focus group interviews were structured in such a way as to achieve a more diversified and representative sample of the population even though it was not necessary to do this. Participants of various age groups and of both genders were invited to participate. The age and gender distribution of the sample participants are summarised in table 5.2 and illustrated in figure 5.1 below.

Table 5.2: Age profile of participants

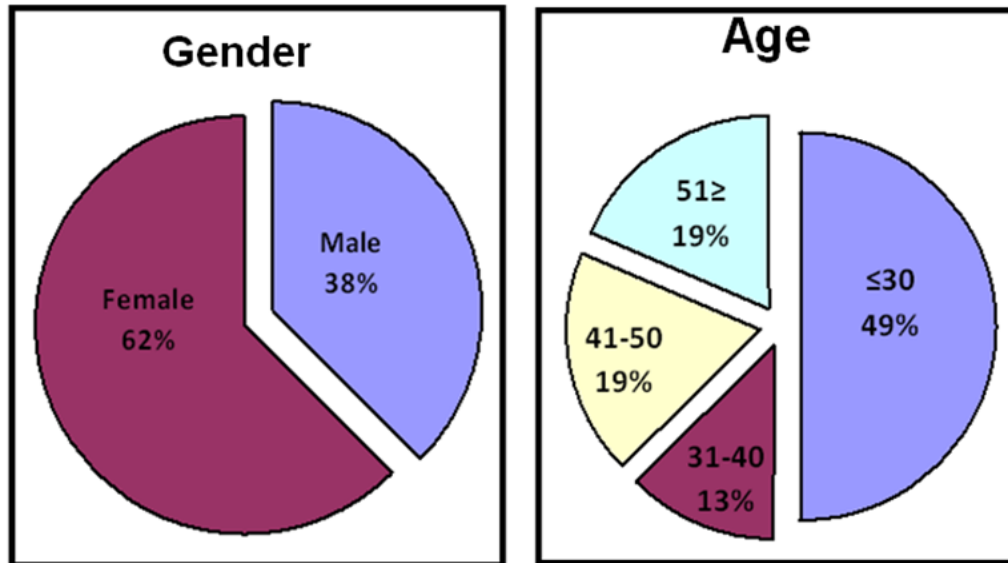| Age	≤30	31–40	41–50	51≥	Total
Unit	8	2	3	3	16
%	49	13	19	19	100

Figure 5.1: Age and gender profile of participants

From table 5.2 and figure 5.1 it is clear that the majority (62%) of the participants where female and the minority (38%) were male. Further on, as shown in figure 5.1, it is clear that the age distribution of the participants was widely spread. The majority of the participants (49%) can be classified as young adults which is 30 years of age and younger and 19% of the participants fell into the aged adult group of 41–50 years and 51 years and older. Only 13% of the participants fell into the middle aged adult group, 34 to 40 years. The age distribution can be seen as representative as all age groups were represented, but given the nature of this study it was not the purpose that the findings had to be representative of the whole population. Rather, the purpose was to explore and to gain more knowledge and understanding of the apparel retail industry.

The research findings of the study are discussed in the next section based on Tesch's model (thematic analysis).

5.6   RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to the Tesch's model the findings are presented as a central storyline that branched into four themes. Each theme consisted of two or three categories, as indicated in figure 5.2 below. The findings were confirmed by obtaining quotes

of the participants from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches. See Appendix E for a summary of the findings of the naïve sketches.
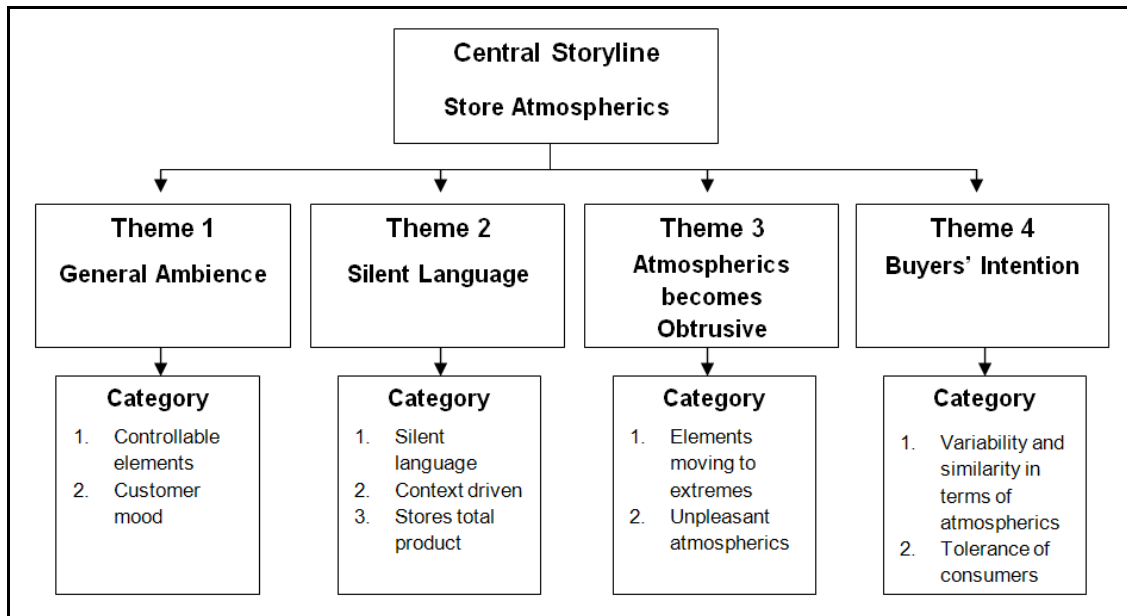
Figure 5.2: Flow of central storyline, themes and categories

The central storyline of the research findings is discussed next. This is done on a theme-by-theme basis.

5.6.1 Central storyline

The participants identified one central storyline termed "store atmospherics". This central storyline consisted of four themes, each with its own categories (see figure 5.2 above). The central storyline, the four themes and their underlying categories are reflected in Appendix D. The four themes that were derived from the central storyline are as follows:

- **Theme 1** (general ambience) explains that consumers display a good understanding and awareness of store atmospherics, the general ambiance it creates and the variety of controllable elements used to do so, as well as the potential it has to influence their moods and in turn their buying behaviour.

- **Theme 2** (silent language) emphasises that store atmospherics speaks a "silent language" to consumers, reinforcing niche/target market appeal and/or merchandise integrity/quality or lack thereof, either enticing them into or repelling them from a store.

- **Theme 3** (atmospherics becomes obtrusive) indicates that elements of store atmospherics that move towards either extreme (for example, too hot or too cold) become salient or obtrusive to consumers, leading to discomfort and limiting or disrupting browsing time and thus lessening the chance that the product will be discovered and bought.

- **Theme 4** (buyers' intention) indicates that personal factors and buyers' intentions do moderate the influence of store atmospherics on buying behaviour.

The research findings based on the central storyline as indicated above, illustrated in figure 5.2 and shown in Appendix D, and are discussed in the next section. The four themes derived from the central storyline are expanded upon, each with its underlying categories. Quotes from the focus group interviews and naïve sketches confirm each category.

5.6.2 Themes and categories

The first theme from the central storyline is as follows:

5.6.2.1 Theme 1: General ambiance

Theme 1 addresses three of the secondary objectives of this research study, namely to explore the influence of *sight*, *sound* and *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. Participants identified a *store's atmosphere as consisting of a variety of controllable elements, such as lighting, music, layout, decor, temperature, smell and staff attitude, all of which create the general ambience* (category 1). It was highlighted that the general ambience of

a store is important, as it creates a general feeling of either being welcome or not the moment a person enters a store.

The participants also indicated that *store atmospherics potentially influenced their mood, and in turn their buying behaviour* (category 2). In the focus group discussion, it was found that if a store managed to use the controllable elements of music, lighting, scent, colours and temperature correctly, the likelihood of the participants buying increased. However, if these controllable characteristics were used incorrectly, the likelihood that participants would rather leave a store was enhanced.

From the first theme, two categories emerged, namely controllable elements and customer mood, and are explained below. Quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to illustrate the participants' views on the two categories of this theme and/or objective.

Category 1: Controllable elements

From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it was clear that the participants understood the term "store atmospherics" (as defined in the literature) as the controllable elements that a store can use to create a general ambience or feeling. General ambience is defined by Dunne and Lusch (2008: 457) as the "overall feeling or mood projected by a store through its aesthetic appeal to human senses". The participants indicated that a pleasant in-store environment was created through attention to detail. They further indicated that store atmospherics could be anything that affected the senses of consumers, such as sight, sound, smell and touch, and that it was important for the temperature in-store to be comfortable. They felt that it should rather be too cold than too hot.

Some of the participants also pointed out that the friendliness of the staff contributed to the atmosphere of a store and that it was important that the staff must be able to help them. Participants also felt irritated if staff started following them in a store immediately and that it was extremely important that the staff be

trained well and act in a professional manner, as their actions would influence the overall in-store atmosphere and behaviour of the consumers.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to confirm the findings regarding the first category of controllable elements:

- "... it's mostly all controllable elements that lead to our likes, it's like the type of music that is playing in the background, the colours, the lighting, the scent that you get when you walk into the store, is something that retail can control ..."
- "The 'general ambiance' of the store created by lighting, music, layout, availability of personnel and paypoints"
- "... includes mostly all the controllable characteristics that a store utilizes in order to entice the customer and influence their moods"
- "Pleasant environment – attention to detail"
- "... the light within the store ..."
- "I consider lighting, music, space, smell and layout to be elements of atmosphere."
- "The temperature in a store, hot, cold ..."
- "Anything that influence the mood of the people in the store, including things that affects the senses, sight, sound, smell and touch"
- "Friendly and helpful sales people"
- "… the temperature should be comfortable"
- "Rather too cold than too hot"
- "Scent is important"
- "Personnel must act professional"
- "... staff must be trained properly"
- "Staff ... are the human element"
- "... what irritates me about staff is when they follow me"

The next category (category 2) as indicated in figure 5.2 of theme 1 is customer mood.

Category 2: Consumers' mood

The second category that was identified from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches was that the controllable elements that create the general ambience in the store influence their mood, which has an influence on their buying behaviour. The participants pointed out that any of the elements previously mentioned (theme 1) could and would influence their mood. If these elements were properly used, this could increase their purchasing intentions. Alternatively, if they were used incorrectly, they could drive the participants out of the store, thus reducing their buying behaviour. The participants also indicated that they wanted to feel comfortable while shopping, but as soon as they noticed that the music was too loud or the temperature was either too hot or too cold, they would rather leave the store.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the findings regarding the second category of customer mood:

- "... all the elements that I feel can influence a person's mood and if used correctly can increase the odds of a consumer purchasing a product, however if used incorrectly, can drive a consumer away"
- "it's something that they use to try to entice the customer to enter the store, to create a certain feeling or mood, as well I think it's all those elements that they try to maybe increase the art of a customer purchasing ..."
- "Anything that influences the mood of the people in the store"
- "Mostly things that influence the way I feel in a store"
- "… far less likely to stay in a store if it is playing loud music"
- "... if a store is nice, it will maybe tempt you to go back if you have time to browse around and that may lead to purchases"
- "... if the music is too loud, it will reduce my buying behaviour, if the music is pleasant and not in your face, it will probably enhance or add to me wanting to stay longer and linger longer in the store..."
- "I want to feel comfortable while I shop..."

- "I would say if the displays are done properly with proper lighting on it, it will highlight the product and you would walk in and say, 'That looks nice!' and you walk in to go and see what there is and so yes, definitely I would say it does" [influence your buying behaviour or how long you stay in a store]

- "... I get hot and cold very easily ... Store's aircon that wasn't working, I would rather go to another Store than go to that one whose aircon is working because if feels stuffy, I am not going to stay there and spend time there"

- "... you should also not be in a shop and feel irritated and sweaty, you just want to get out there because you feel claustrophobic and not able to breathe so, yes, the room temperature is very important, probably just a mild temperature of 21 degrees ..."

- "I get so irritated just walking in and the heat just strikes you in the face, I just turn around and walk out"

Category 2 addresses three of the secondary objectives (secondary objectives 1, 2 and 3): To explore the influence of *sight, sound and touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

Secondary objective 1 was to explore the influence of *sight* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches felt that if the lighting of a store was sufficient, it highlighted the merchandise displays. This enticed the participants to further explore (positive influence on mood) the store offerings and that might influence the time spent in-store and in turn influence their buying behaviour. The participants further pointed out that they got irritated when they could not see what was going on in the store and that the type of lighting in a store influenced their buying behaviour, depending on what they were looking for. Three quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings:

- "I would say if the displays are done properly with proper lighting on it, it will highlight the product and you would walk in and say, 'That looks nice!'

and you walk in to go and see what there is and so yes, definitely I would say it does" [influence your buying behaviour or how long you stay in a store]

- "... lighting influence my buying behaviour depending on what type of clothes I am looking to buy"

- "... if a store is badly lit or the colours are for example shocking and bright I will soon get irritated which will make shorten my time spend in that store"

Secondary objective 2 was to explore the influence of *sound* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants indicated that they were far less likely to stay in a store if the music was too loud, as this had a negative influence on their mood and in turn on their buying behaviour. Three quotes were taken from the focus group interviews to substantiate the above findings.

- "… far less likely to stay in a store if it is playing loud music"

- "... if the music is too loud, it will reduce my buying behaviour, if the music is pleasant and not in your face, it will probably enhance or add to me wanting to stay longer and linger longer in the store ..."

- "... if the music is too loud or not nice then I rather just leaves ..."

Secondary objective 3 was to explore the influence of *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants pointed out in the focus group interviews that temperature was important to them and that it had an influence on their mood, which in turn influenced their buying behaviour. It is clear that the participants felt that the temperature should be right – not too hot and not too cold. Three quotes were taken from the focus group interviews which justify the above findings.

- "... I get hot and cold very easily ... Woolworths aircon that wasn't working, I would rather go to another Woolworths than go to that one whose aircon is working because if feels stuffy, I am not going to stay there and spend time there"

- "... you should also not be in a shop and feel irritated and sweaty, you just want to get out there because you feel claustrophobic and not able to breathe so, yes, the room temperature is very important, probably just a mild temperature of 21 degrees ..."
- "I get so irritated just walking in and the heat just strikes you in the face, I just turn around and walk out"

It is clear that all three secondary objectives (to explore the influence of **sight**, **sound** and **touch** on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane) do have an influence on consumers' mood, which in turn influences their buying behaviour. The second theme (silent language) as indicated in figure 5.2 is discussed next.

5.6.2.2   Theme 2: Silent language

Theme 2 addresses three of the secondary objectives of this research study, namely to explore the influence of *sight, sound* and *scent* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. Participants from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches were of the opinion *that store atmospherics spoke a silent language* (category 1), meaning that the participants did not always recognise the atmospheric elements used in-store, but if they were unpleasant (music too loud, temperature too cold, the lighting too dark or an unpleasant scent) they immediately became aware of it or noticed it. It can therefore be implied that store atmospherics has a subliminal (subconscious) influence on consumers.

The participants further pointed out in both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that *store atmospherics could be context driven and therefore appeal to a specific target market or consumer group* (category 2). The participants said that they would not enter some stores, because they did not feel comfortable in there and these stores did not fit in with their style and personality.

The participants also indicated that *store atmospherics formed part of a store's total product* (category 3) and could therefore reveal something about the quality

or integrity of the product and/or service offered. It is clear that the participants felt that a store that was too dark could portray an image of dirtiness and that the store was hiding something. They further emphasised the importance of the types of atmospheric elements used fitting in with the type of merchandise that the store offered. Three quotes were taken from the focus groups to illustrate the participants' views on all three categories.

- "... Night Club effect and then we would start pushing a lot faster music and your entire clientele changed, whether they intentionally changed it or not, I am saying its subtle, you go where you feel more comfortable in specific okay ..."

- "I mean you walk into the Disney Store, there is a sound of sleigh bells, there is sounds of you know, Chipmunk songs and there is Disney tunes and these kinds of things and they influence how happy the kids are because that is their target audience, is that the kids are just so excited, you know this is a song they just heard on their DVD and here they are and here is the Toy Story and it's just, it influences and I think that we are also influenced by it, you know, if the music is faster, you tend to shop faster, you know ..."

- "I think the music that stores have also have to relate to the merchandise they sell, like Cape Union Mart, I mean if you hear Linken Park or Nora Jones, you are not going to feel as if, okay this is outdoor you know, so the sort of music of water streams or breaking branches or something will just get you in the mood to want to purchase more ..."

Three categories, namely silent language, context driven and store's total product, emerged from the second theme and are explained below. Quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to illustrate the participants' views on the various categories of this theme/objective.

Category 1: Silent language

From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it was clear that the majority of the participants felt that store atmospherics influenced them in a

subtle way, meaning that they did not always recognise if music was playing or if artificial scents were sprayed or the temperature level. However, the moment they recognised that one of these elements was out of place or not right, for instance too loud, too fast, too hot, too cold, too smelly or too dark, they would leave immediately or shorten their time in the store, thus affecting their buying behaviour.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to justify the above findings:

- "... I don't like if it is not nice smelling, I will not spend time there ..."
- "... if it's bad, I will notice it, if it is not bad and it's nice smelling, I will not leave ..."
- "... you can smell quality and that influences how comfortable I feel in that store and how much time and whether I am going to spend you know, more money or less money, so I think yes, I think smell will influence, again, probably its more subtle and you can't put your finger on it but I think it does influence, and specifically I am prepared to spend"
- "Atmosphere too crowded implies cheap while too sparse implies out of my league!"
- "Certain items are spotlighted or highlighted, works because then you feel special, more exclusive … there is something about it that says 'Turrah! Here is the item!'"
- "... the lighting also gives me a feeling of order, here are our products"
- "I think when walking through a store you don't want to walk through a maze"
- "... whether they intentionally changed it or not, I am saying it's subtle, you go where you feel more comfortable in specific ..."
- "... when we walk into a store without aircon ... you pick up on it immediately when you walk in there, I mean you can basically only walk three metres into the store noticing that their aircon is broken or something and that greatly impacts the time that I spend, I am not going to be spending time in there ..."

- "... I tend to not notice music, if it does not irritate me, or sounds, I notice it if it irritates me but if it doesn't irritate me, then no ..."

It is clear from the above quotes that certain atmospheric elements can either entice consumers into a store or repel them from it, thus directly and indirectly affecting their buying behaviour. It furthermore seems that the participants attached certain subconscious feelings to certain atmospheric elements. Category 1 addresses three of the secondary objectives (secondary objectives 1, 2 and 4), namely to explore the influence of **sight, sound** and **scent** on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

Secondary objective 1 was to explore the influence of *sight* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants indicated that lighting that was too dark implied that the store was hiding something. The participants further stated that "warm" lighting portrayed an image of being more homey. It can therefore be inferred from the focus group interviews that when participants had a more positive connotation with the lighting, their chances of staying in the store were higher. Three quotes were taken from the focus group interviews which justify the above findings.

- "... darkness implies they are hiding something. There is negativity to too much darkness that says, okay why? A, it's dirty, you know, they are hiding their quality, they are not proud to stand up and say something, I am just saying from a psychological perspective that is what darkness would imply"
- "Bright lighting conjures up feelings of openness and cleanliness"
- "Warm lighting will be more 'homely'"

Secondary objective 2 was to explore the influence of *sound* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants did not always notice a specific sound or music playing in-store, but when they recognised that the type of sound or music was "out of place", they became annoyed and left the store immediately, thus affecting their buying behaviour negatively. Two quotes were taken from the focus group interviews which justify the above findings.

- "... I tend to not notice music, if it does not irritate me, or sounds, I notice it if it irritates me but if it doesn't irritate me, then no ..."

- "I think a lot of the music has got a lot to do with the subconscious because you are not walking into the store to go and listen to music and if it hits you and now the thing is, all twelve of us can walk into the same store, six will be irritated, two wouldn't even notice it and the other two that likes it, yes"

Secondary objective 4 was to explore the influence of *scent* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants stated that they would notice a bad smell and would leave the store immediately, which would thus have a negative influence on their buying behaviour. It was, however, established that the participants did not necessarily notice a good or a "nice" smell, as it is more subtle and they could not always put their finger on the type of smell. Three quotes were taken from the focus group interviews which support the above findings.

- "... I don't like if it is not nice smelling, I will not spend time there ..."

- "... if it doesn't smell nice in the shop, I will think the clothes are not clean or something like that, I won't even go in there"

- "... I think smell will influence, again, probably its more subtle and you can't put your finger on it but I think it does influence..."

From the above quotes, it would seem that sight, sound and scent do have an influence on consumers' buying behaviour, as these elements will either repel consumers from a store or entice them to enter it. The next category (category 2) as indicated in figure 5.2 of theme 2 is context driven.

Category 2: Context driven

Both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches revealed that the participants felt that the atmosphere of some stores was context driven and that it appealed to a specific niche or target market. When a participant did not feel comfortable

in a store, sometimes due to bad lighting, music that was too loud, or certain smells, they either did not enter the store or they left shortly after entering, as they did not feel welcome there.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings regarding the second category of context driven:

- "Stores like Legit create a younger, more funky vibe which supports their merchandise"
- "... some of the shops I won't even go in because I think on the clothes maybe, you know, when you said it's too young, you know, freak out on too young clothes. So some of the shops I will just never enter, you know, or maybe I will once and I say, 'oh man, this is not my shop' okay, and I will never go there again ..."
- "It projects a certain atmosphere"
- "I will be more likely to buy in a store where I feel comfortable and where I feel I fit in"
- "From a lighting perspective, I think lighting to me personally, will, if I don't know the brand, if I am not familiar with that store at all, and it's very dark, I am going to be less inclined to go inside, but there is now an outside poll of a specific store, like the Marlboro Store or the Kingsley Heath stores or, that are creating a specific look ..."
- "I mean you walk into the Disney Store, there is a sound of sleigh bells, there is sounds of you know, Chipmunk songs and there is Disney tunes and these kinds of things and they influence how happy the kids are because that is their target audience ..."
- "I will not go there when clothes are usually not available in bigger sizes"
- "When I go into a Zoot or one of these, I don't feel welcome anymore, the atmospherics is not right, I get the feeling it's the young people, the young people buy there and I feel that I am not welcome, but that is obviously not true, I just don't feel like the atmosphere is right, the music is too loud, lighting is not what I like, clothes are too cluttered, so I just, you know, me, I personally like the ambience of the stores that I frequent."

Store atmospherics can clearly be context driven and as such appeal to a specific target market, for instance young, old, outdoor, sporty, business etc. The type of apparel store will therefore influence firstly whether consumers enter a specific store, secondly, the time that consumers will spend in that store and thirdly, the likelihood that they will purchase something.

The next category (category 3) as indicated in figure 5.2 of theme 2 is store's total product.

Category 3: Store's total product

It was evident from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that the participants felt that the types of atmospheric elements used formed part of the product and/or service offered by the store. In other words, the participants felt that the type of atmospherics used in a store should fit the type of merchandise offered. The participants further indicated that a dark store projected an image of poor quality and filthiness, whereas a store with proper lighting projected a feeling of cleanliness and good quality. It can therefore be inferred from the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that a more "elegant" store should make use of good lighting in order to emphasise the quality of the merchandise. The participants furthermore pointed out that it was important for the type of music played in a store to fit in with the merchandise and services offered, in order to contribute to the overall atmosphere of the store.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to confirm the above findings regarding the third category of store's total product:

- "too much darkness that says, okay why? ... it's dirty, you know, they are hiding their quality they are not proud to stand up and say something, I am just saying from a psychological perspective that is what darkness would imply"
- "... darkness to me, projects images of poor quality ..."

- "Cluttered, because I associate these modern stores mostly with the … colours, clothing of questionable quality ..."

- "because of the lighting, is that it is clean, I get the feeling its clean, and that they are not hiding anything, that the quality is there"

- "Whereas you know, go to Queenspark and there is some rap or something, it's definitely not going to make you want to buy, so it's definitely, you have to relate it to what you are selling"

- "I think the music that stores have also have to relate to the merchandise they sell"

- "You can smell a Meltz, you can smell those sort of discount effects and at the same time when you walk into a Boutique, you can smell fabric, you can smell, or smell quality, I know it sounds silly but you can smell it, you can smell quality and that influences how comfortable I feel in that store and how much time and whether I am going to spend you know, more money or less money ..."

Whether the types of atmospheric elements used in-store fit in with the merchandise or services the store offers can have a direct or indirect influence on whether consumers will feel comfortable to enter the store or not.

The third theme, atmospherics becomes obtrusive, as indicated in figure 5.2, is discussed next.

5.6.2.3   Theme 3: Atmospherics become obtrusive

Theme 3 aims to address all four secondary objectives, i.e. to explore the influence of *sight*, *sound*, *scent* and *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants stated that certain *atmospheric elements that moved towards the extremes*, for instance either too hot or too cold, *led to discomfort or irritation* (category 1), which affected their spending. It was clear from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that the participants did not enter a store if they could see from a distance that the store was too dark or hear that the music was too loud. If the participants had,

however, entered such a store, they would leave immediately if they recognised unpleasant atmospheric elements, such as too cold or an unpleasant smell.

The participants further indicated that *unpleasant atmospheric elements decreased the likelihood that they would find something to buy* (category 2), as the time spent on browsing was then immediately shortened. The participants stated that a store which was too cold, or where the music was too loud or the lighting was too dark or that had an unpleasant smell would directly influence the amount of time spent in-store, which in turn affected their buying ability. A few quotes taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that relate to the secondary objectives of this study illustrate the participants' views on each of the four secondary objectives.

Secondary objective 1 was to explore the influence of *sight* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. From the focus group interviews and naïve sketches, it was clear that the participants did not want to shop in dark stores, meaning that the lighting should be bright and clear. They further indicated that lighting was a sign of cleanliness and quality and that proper lighting can be used to guide consumers in-store, enabling them to see all the merchandise, which may lead to unplanned purchases. Seven quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to substantiate the above findings.

- "... darkness implies they are hiding something. There is negativity to too much darkness that says, okay why? A, it's dirty, you know, they are hiding their quality, they are not proud to stand up and say something, I am just saying from a psychological perspective that is what darkness would imply"
- "From a lighting perspective, I think lighting to me personally, will, if I don't know the brand, if I am not familiar with that store at all, and it's very dark, I am going to be less inclined to go inside ..."
- "Bright lighting conjures up feelings of openness and cleanliness"
- "... the lighting also gives me a feeling of order, here are our products"
- "Warm lighting will be more 'homely'"

- "I think lighting can also help guide you through a store, different hues of lighting throughout the store can just emphasize things or reduce emphasis onto things so I think it does, it will play a role in your purchasing behaviour because you will see the merchandise a lot more with it ..."
- "If the colours and lighting is unpleasant, it may cause me to decide to leave the store and go shop somewhere else, i.e. if the lights are too bright, flickering or not bright enough"

Secondary objective 2 was to explore the influence of *sound* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it was clear that the use of sound had an effect on the amount of time that the participants spent in a store and it may therefore have subtly influenced their buying behaviour. The participants would not enter stores where the music was too loud, because they did not feel welcome there. Participants also pointed out that they found stores that played a radio station instead of music as very annoying. Eight quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to justify the above findings.

- "I don't like loud music so I won't go there, I would rather look for a better store"
- "... their radio station irritates the life out of me, I just don't spend a lot of time in their"
- "I would agree that a noise can be irritating and it might encourage you to leave or just quickly buy what you need and leave, but I also wouldn't say, if they play a nice song, I am going to buy more, so, if it is good music and its calming and everybody can listen to it, then I feel more people will be inclined to visit the store and look around and buy products but I also won't say that if they play this music you are going to buy, I think you still buy what you need"
- "... if the music is faster, you tend to shop faster, you know"
- "I think no music or subtle music causes you to spend a longer time in a store than you would"
- "I tend to not notice music, if it does not irritate me, or sounds, I notice it if it irritates me ..."

- "... if the music is too loud, it will reduce my buying behaviour, if the music is pleasant and not in your face, it will probably enhance or add to me wanting to stay longer and linger longer in the store but it's not a definitive, you know I will buy because of the music"

- "I don't think that music will entice me to buy more, it will definitely, if it is not to my liking, it will rush me to get out of there and to limit the time in the shop"

Secondary objective 3 was to explore the influence of *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it is clear that temperature plays an important role in the amount of time spent in-store. The participants stated that when a store was either too cold or too hot, they left immediately, which had a negative effect on their buying behaviour. The participants further stated that they tolerated a slightly cooler store than one that was too hot. However, they thought that it was critical for apparel retail stores to ensure that the in-store temperature was comfortable at all times. Eight quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate these findings.

- "Temperature is important when wanting to fit clothes"
- "Cold store on a hot day is pleasant and will increase the time spent in store and the likelihood of buying"
- "Temperature extremes will negatively influence participants buying behaviour as she will limit the time spends in these store"
- "I get so irritated just walking in and the heat just strikes you in the face, I just turn around and walk out"
- "Temperature is more important than the music because I cannot cut out the temperature but I can cut out the music in a way, I can do nothing about the temperature"
- "I am hot already, there is no way that I am going to go into a fitting room that is cluttered and then try and fit something on especially if it is a jacket or, you know, something hot, then I am not going to try it on, I would rather just leave, even if I want it, I am going to leave"

- "you can basically only walk three metres into the store noticing that their aircon is broken or something and that greatly impacts the time that I spend, I am not going to be spending time in there, I will just go to the next one which have an aircon"
- "Stores should bear in mind that people are uncomfortable when it is too cold which negatively influence their shopping experience"

Secondary objective 4 was to explore the influence of *scent* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. From both the naïve sketches and focus group interviews it is clear that scent/smell was important to the participants and that scent is subtle, meaning that the participants did not always notice a specific smell, but as soon as they noticed a bad smell, they left immediately. The same applies to a pleasant smell; the participants did not necessarily recognise a pleasant scent, but it might have subconsciously motivated them to walk around longer (browsing), which can lead to unplanned purchasing. Twelve quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to justify the above findings.

- "When I smell incense it gives me a headache so I skip that store"
- "... I don't even go in, so that kind of smell doesn't work for me"
- "If I am looking for perfume, the smell would influence my buying"
- "I think smell in a retail environment can enhance to some degree your buying behaviour. Retailers can use a smell that brings back memories in a sense, so you would be more inclined to sort of look around, purchase, your store time would be a lot more because you are going back to the memory that you enjoyed in a sense"
- "... unless it is a horrible smell, then you just want to go away"
- "Any overwhelming smell tends to give me a headache so if it is, I think the odourless is good, something fresh is even maybe better but nothing that is too big of a smell, that plays too big a, again, aware of it too much, it should be something contributing towards the whole atmosphere not something overwhelming"
- "... if I smell incense, I think to myself 'cheap'"

- "Smell is important, because I don't like if it is not nice smelling, I will not spend time there, and some of the shops I won't even go in"

- "That's very important to me, if it doesn't smell nice in the shop, I will think the clothes are not clean or something like that, I won't even go in there"

- "... if it's bad, I will notice it, if it is not bad and its nice smelling, it's not noticed"

- "... you can smell fabric, you can smell quality, I know it sounds silly but you can smell it, you can smell quality and that influences how comfortable I feel in that store and how much time and whether I am going to spend you know, more money or less money, so I think yes, I think smell will influence, again, probably its more subtle and you can't put your finger on it but I think it does influence, and specifically on how much I am prepared to spend"

- "I think with me, scent is very important, it's one of the major factors that have an effect on me, I mean if the store smells good, it makes you want to stay more but if I go into a store that really smells bad...I will walk out of there, I cannot stand a store that smells really bad and I will walk out straight away, that's just me"

From the third theme, two categories emerged (as indicated in figure 5.2) which are explained below. Quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to illustrate the participants' views on the various categories of this theme/objective.

Category 1: Elements moving to extremes

The participants of both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches indicated that atmospheric elements that move towards an extreme in either direction, for instance too hot or too cold, led to irritation or discomfort and made them leave the store immediately. The participants would not enter a store if they observed from a distance that the music was too loud or the lighting was too dark. It was also evident from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that the participants left immediately if they noticed an unpleasant or alien smell.

Therefore, unpleasant atmospheric elements will most likely have a negative influence on the buying behaviour of consumers.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to confirm the above findings regarding the first category of elements that move to extremes:

- "Needs to be comfortable, i.e. not too hot or too cold"
- "... and I just couldn't take it, he was, you know, it was too loud"
- "... for some temperature does have an important influence especially if it is too hot, cold"
- "Automatically, I don't even go in, so that kind of smell doesn't work for me"
- "... and what you are asking is that the lighting should be as natural as possible to give you a true reflection of what is indecent lighting"
- "With regards to lighting, I also think that, especially when you go into a store, if there is lights shining in your eyes, you feel uncomfortable, you want to get out of there as soon as possible ..."
- "I cannot make a decision in the dark"
- "I can't see myself with this pair of Cammo pants and it smells like, whatever they call…Poison or whatever"
- "[lighting] influences whether you go into a shop or not, I mean a dark sort of dingy looking shop, you are not going to want to enter into so it starts right at the outside of an appeal"
- "[lighting] must be as close to the real thing as possible"
- "[temperature] shouldn't be too cold so that you feel that you don't want to take off your clothes and try on new clothes and at the same time, you should also not be in a shop and feel irritated and sweaty"

From the above quotes, it is clear that any type of atmospheric element that moves towards an extreme will either prevent consumers from entering the store in the first place or will make them leave the store immediately. These elements therefore have a direct influence on the amount of time spent in-store as well as on buying behaviour.

The next category (category 2) as indicated in figure 5.2 of theme 3 is unpleasant atmospherics.

Category 2: Unpleasant atmospherics

The participants in both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches explained that any unpleasant atmospheric element detected in the store, whether it was too cold or too hot, too dark or too loud or noisy, had a direct influence on the amount of time that they spent browsing in the store, which ultimately influenced the likelihood of purchasing something, most probably in a negative way. The participants made it clear that they would not tolerate any unpleasant atmospheric elements in-store and would therefore leave the store immediately. This would decrease the likelihood of buying something.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings regarding the second category of unpleasant atmospherics:

- "... will influence the time spent browsing and will influence whether I will try stuff on or not"
- "... but if the lighting is not, you know, to my appeal, then I am just going to spend less time there"
- "... I think it greatly has an impact on how long you spend in a store"
- "... I am not going to stay there and spend time there"

The quotes confirm that the consumers do not tolerate any unpleasant atmospherics. This decreases the likelihood that they will find something to buy, as they will leave the store immediately.

The fourth theme (buyers' intention) as indicated in figure 5.2 will be discussed next.

5.6.2.4   Theme 4: Buyers' intentions

Theme 4 aims to address three of the secondary objectives of this research study, i.e. to explore the influence of **sound**, **touch** and **scent** on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants of both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches *liked and disliked some atmospheric elements and said that they would tolerate some of the elements but only to a certain point* (category 1). It was clear from the discussion with the participants that some of them tolerated unlikeable or loud music, especially when they needed something specific, but others did not, even though they might need something specific. The participants further explained that they could not tolerate any unpleasant smell and would leave the store immediately.

The participants furthermore pointed out that they *would endure unpleasant atmospherics if the store had what they were after* (category 2) and if it was difficult to find the product elsewhere. If they urgently needed something specific, they would tolerate the unpleasant atmosphere, whether it was too cold, too hot or too smelly. However, if they did not need something specific, they would not tolerate the unpleasant atmosphere in-store and would either not enter the store in the first place or would just leave the store immediately after entering. A few quotes taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that relate to the secondary objectives of this study illustrate the participants' views on each of the three secondary objectives.

Secondary objective 2 was to explore the influence of *sound* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The majority of the participants found the use of in-store radio stations as highly annoying and could not tolerate it. The participants further indicated that music did not necessarily motivate them to buy more, but it definitely influenced the time that they spent in the store in either a positive or a negative way. This had a direct effect on their buying behaviour. Three quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings.

- "their radio station irritates the life out of me, I just don't spend a lot of time in there"

- [noise] "...it is irritating and it might encourage you to leave or just quickly buy what you need and leave ..."

- "I don't think that music will entice me to buy more, it will definitely, if it is not to my liking, it will rush me to get out of there and to limit the time in the shop, so I don't think there is music enough for my wallet ..."

Secondary objective 3 was to explore the influence of *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants found it difficult to tolerate temperature extremes (too hot or too cold) and they rather left the store, which had a negative effect on their buying behaviour. However, the participants also stated that if they needed something urgently, they would tolerate the unpleasant temperature for a short time and would then leave immediately after they had found what they were looking for. Five quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings.

- [temperature] "So if I don't really have to, you know spend a lot of time, if I don't desperately need something, then I will walk out"

- "... if I need something in a specific store, and it's cold or too warm, I would not leave immediately. The temperature may convince me not to stay and browse, but it usually won't keep me from buying what I need from a store"

- "Temperature extremes will negatively influence participants buying behaviour as she will limit the time spends in these store"

- "I get so irritated just walking in and the heat just strikes you in the face, I just turn around and walk out"

- [temperature] "Well if I have a wedding the afternoon and I haven't bought something then I will have to stick around"

Secondary objective 4 was to explore the influence of *scent* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The participants found any unpleasant or foul smell as extremely difficult to tolerate. If they needed

something urgently they would tolerate the smell, but they would leave immediately after they had made the purchase. It can therefore be implied that an unpleasant scent will shorten the time spent in store and ultimately influence the purchase intentions of consumers in a negative way. Five quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to validate the above findings.

- "I do not like scents of any sort inside a clothing store"
- "... unless it is a horrible smell, then you just want to go away"
- "Smell is important, because I don't like if it is not nice smelling, I will not spend time there, and some of the shops I won't even go in"
- "I think with me, scent is very important, it's one of the major factors that have an effect on me, I mean if the store smells good, it makes you want to stay more but if I go into a store that really smells bad ... I will walk out of there, I cannot stand a store that smells really bad and I will walk out straight away, that's just me"
- "If there is a product like that and I can't find it anywhere else, then I would go in despite the bad atmosphere"

Two categories emerged from the fourth theme and are explained below. Quotes were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to illustrate the participants' views on the various categories of this theme/objective.

Category 1: Variability and similarity in terms of atmospheric

From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it was clear that there were certain atmospheric elements that the participants tolerated, but that there were also elements that they did not tolerate at all. It was interesting to note that for the majority of the participants, stores using their own radio stations were extremely irritating and they preferred silence to the radio station. The participants also stated that the stores that used incense created an image of "cheapness" in their minds. The participants further explained that they did not want to feel claustrophobic in a store and that it was important for them to easily move through the customers and merchandise.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to confirm the above findings regarding the first category of variability and similarity in terms of atmospherics:

- "their radio station irritates the life out of me, I just don't spend a lot of time in there"
- "I think for me, if I go into a store and they play crappy music, it doesn't bother me"
- "I think physical attributes play a role here and with the temperature, some people are more sensitive to temperature"
- "if I smell incense, I think to myself "cheap""
- "Any radio-station tuned music is unacceptable"
- "I do not like scents of any sort inside a clothing store"
- "To move about comfortably between other customers and the merchandise is very important to me and strongly influences my store preferences"
- "... if the lighting is bad it is not going to affect me not to buy the product"
- [noise] "... it is irritating and it might encourage you to leave or just quickly buy what you need and leave, but I also wouldn't say, if they play a nice song, I am going to buy more, so, if it is good music and its calming and everybody can listen to it, then I feel more people will be inclined to visit the store and look around and buy products ..."

From the above quotes, it can be inferred that some consumers will tolerate certain unpleasant atmospheric elements, whereas others will not.

The next category (category 2) of theme 4 is tolerance of consumers.

Category 2: Tolerance of consumers

The participants in the research study would endure unpleasant atmospherics if they knew the store had what that they were after, meaning that the participants had a clear purpose for entering the store. The participants further indicated that sometimes apparel stores were aware of a bad or unpleasant atmospheric

element, such as a broken air-conditioner, and still did not solve the problem, because the stores knew that they had products that the consumers wanted and needed, and despite the broken air-conditioner, the consumers would return.

The following quotes of the participants were taken from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches to confirm the above findings regarding the second category of tolerance of consumers:

- "If there is a product like that and I can't find it anywhere else, then I would go in despite the bad atmosphere"
- "... they didn't have any aircon in the store, a lot of people complained about it, … everyone still came back … because they had something that the consumers wanted"
- "if you need something specific and you know it is at a store you will go there, never mind what the atmospherics is"
- "... something will obviously trigger me to go into the store to look for something but if the lighting is bad it is not going to affect me not to buy the product"
- "... I think when you have to buy something specific and you know where to find it, you just go there and buy it but if a store is nice, it will maybe tempt you to go back if you have time to browse around and that may lead to purchases"
- "I don't think that music will entice me to buy more, it will definitely, if it is not to my liking, it will rush me to get out of there and to limit the time in the shop, so I don't think there is music enough for my wallet..."
- [temperature] "Well if I have a wedding the afternoon and I haven't bought something then I will have to stick around"
- [temperature] "So if I don't really have to, you know spend a lot of time, if I don't desperately need something, then I will walk out"
- "... if I need something in a specific store, and it's cold or too warm, I would not leave immediately. The temperature may convince me not to stay and browse, but it usually won't keep me from buying what I need from a store"

From the above discussion and quotes, it is clear that the participants tolerated an unpleasant atmospheric element if they a) knew that the store had what they needed and b) if they urgently needed a specific garment. The majority of the participants did not tolerate unpleasant atmospheric elements such as music that was too loud or temperature that was too hot/cold and would leave the store immediately. This had a negative effect on their buying behaviour. On the other hand, some participants stated that when the lighting of a store was bad, it would not influence them to not purchase the product. However, if the participants needed something urgent, they would tolerate any unpleasant atmospheric element in order to buy the product, but would leave immediately after they had bought it.

5.7   SUMMARY

The participants described a store's atmosphere as consisting of a variety of controllable elements, such as lighting, music, layout, decor, temperature, smell and staff attitude, which create the general ambience of the store. The general ambience that is created in-store has the potential to influence consumers' mood and in turn their buying behaviour. It was found that if a store manages to use these controllable characteristics, for example music, lighting, scent, colours and temperature, correctly, the likelihood that consumers will buy increases. However, if these controllable characteristics are used incorrectly, the likelihood that consumers will leave a store also increases.

Participants further explained that store atmospherics spoke a silent language to them, in other words they did not always notice it, but if this "language" was unpleasant, they became aware of it or noticed it. They felt that store atmospherics can be context driven and therefore appeals to a specific target market or consumer group. Another aspect that the participants highlighted was that store atmospherics forms part of a store's total product and can therefore reveal something about the quality or integrity of the product and/or service offered. The participants explained that certain atmospheric elements that move towards the extremes, for instance either too hot or too cold, lead to discomfort

or irritation, which will have an influence on consumer spending. Unpleasant atmospherics decreases the likelihood that consumers will find something to buy, because the total amount of time spent on browsing is immediately shortened.

The participants of both the focus groups and naïve sketches agreed that they liked and/or disliked as well as tolerated some atmospheric elements to a certain extent. The participants also stated that they would endure an unpleasant atmosphere if the store had what they were after and if it was difficult to find the product elsewhere.

A detailed conclusion as well as recommendations on the research findings are given in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6:   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the conclusions from the study are drawn and recommendations arising from the conclusions are made. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the information that was derived from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that formed part of the empirical part of the study. The contribution of the study to the apparel retail industry in the Tshwane region is highlighted, followed by the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

6.2   RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. The study will provide apparel retailers in Tshwane insight into the value and importance of atmospherics in their stores.

The research question derived from the preliminary literature was as follow: What is the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region?

From the research question, specific primary and secondary objectives were derived. The primary research objective was to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region.

The secondary objectives were to explore the influence of:

- sight on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- sound on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane

- touch on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane
- scent on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane.

The above objectives were formulated to address the identified research problem. The conclusions that are drawn from the research findings with regard to the research objectives are discussed next.

6.3   CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The conclusions of the study are based on the information that was derived from both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches. They aim to address the research objectives as stipulated above and in chapters 1, 4 and 5. The findings in chapter 5 will be used to address the objectives. For the purpose of this study the type of behaviour experienced by the consumers will be referred to as positive meaning an approach behaviour and negative meaning an avoidance behaviour. After the discussion of the secondary objectives, a discussion of the primary objective of the study will follow. Here the researcher addresses the research question of the study, as stipulated in chapters 1 and 5.

6.3.1   Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the research study are discussed next, based on the research findings.

6.3.1.1   Objective 1: Sight

The first objective as outlined in chapter 1 and discussed in chapter 5 was to explore the influence of *sight* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. This objective was addressed through theme 1 (general ambiance), theme 2 (silent language), theme 3 (atmospherics becomes obtrusive) and theme 4 (buyers' intentions).

The participants indicated that the lighting in a store was an important factor to them when considering entering a store or not and making a decision to purchase a product. It is clear from this that participants preferred a store to be immersed in light and not dark. If the participants observed from a distance that the lighting was too dark or not bright enough, it sometimes prevented them from entering the store, as they became irritated and felt that the quality of the products would not be good. The participants stated that a store that was too dark could easily be regarded as dirty and that the store was hiding something. It is therefore clear that lighting was very important to the participants.

A well-lit store highlights the displayed merchandise better, making it easy for consumers to see and evaluate merchandise. This may influence them to stay longer in the store and improve their chances of buying.

The participants regarded lighting as a sign of cleanliness and quality and felt that correct lighting has the ability to guide consumers' in-store, enabling them to see all the merchandise, which may lead to unplanned purchases. It can be concluded that the type of lighting in a store will influence or at least affect the buying behaviour of consumers, depending on what they are looking for.

In summary, it was established that lighting has both a positive and a negative influence on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. A positive influence means that consumers will stay longer in a store and will most likely spend more money. A negative influence means that consumers will not enter a store or they will reduce the time that they spend in the store, thus influencing the possibility of sales negatively. The reasons for the positive and negative influence that lighting has on consumers' buying behaviour are as follows:

- Consumers will not enter a store when they can observe from a distance that it is too dark. This has a direct negative influence on their buying behaviour.

- If consumers have entered a store and they cannot properly see, they will leave immediately as they get irritated. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.

- If the lighting in-store is good and correct, it will influence the total time spent in-store, which might lead to unplanned purchases. This influences their buying behaviour in a positive manner.

It is therefore critical that apparel retailers should give attention to the use of proper lighting in-store to ensure that the browsing time of consumers is increased.

6.3.1.2   Objective 2: Sound

The second objective as outlined in chapter 1 and discussed in chapter 5 was to explore the influence of *sound* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. This objective was addressed through themes 1, 3 and 4.

Sound (music or noise) was found to have a profound effect on the amount of time that the participants spent in-store. They were far less likely to stay in a store if the music was too loud, and this directly influenced their buying behaviour. Furthermore, participants indicated that they would not enter a store if they could observe (hear) from a distance that the music was too loud, as it made them feel unwelcome and would rather leave. Feeling comfortable at all times while shopping in a specific store was critical to the participants and as soon as they noticed that the music was too loud according to their preference, they were inclined to leave the store immediately, or as soon as possible.

The participants also indicated that they did not always notice sounds (music, noise) in-store. This therefore implies that sound (music) can have a subtle influence on consumers, as they do not always notice it. However, the moment that consumers do recognise any form of sound (music, noise or radio) in-store that they do not like, they will become uneasy (irritated) and possibly leave the store. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour. Additionally, if the in-store music is pleasant and "not in your face", it will most probably enhance

or add to the total time spent in-store, which might have a positive influence on the buying behaviour of consumers (making them inclined to stay longer, thus increasing the likelihood of purchasing).

It was also evident from both the focus group discussions that the participants found stores that had a radio station playing instead of music as very annoying and extremely irritating. They preferred silence rather than the radio station.

In summary, it was established that sound can influence consumers' buying behaviour (in Tshwane) in a positive or a negative way. A positive influence means that the time that consumers spend in-store is increased, which can also increase the likelihood of buying more. A negative influence means that consumers will either not enter a store or will reduce the time spent in-store, thus lessening the possibility of buying. The reasons for the positive and negative influences that sound has on consumers' buying behaviour are as follows:

- Consumers will not enter a store if they can hear from a distance that the music is too loud. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.
- Consumers will leave the store immediately if they notice or recognise an annoying sound or music that is too loud, as they easily become irritated. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.
- Consumers will leave the store immediately if a radio station is playing in the background, as they perceive a radio station as being highly annoying. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.
- Consumers might stay longer in-store if pleasant music is playing, thus having a positive influence on their buying behaviour.

Therefore the amount of time spent in-store is directly influenced by the sound (music or noise) in-store, which can have a direct influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

6.3.1.3 Objective 3: Touch

The third objective as outlined in chapter 1 and discussed in chapter 5 was to explore the influence of *touch* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. This objective was addressed through themes 1 and 3.

It was clear from the focus group discussion that the participants perceived temperature as a very important atmospheric element, as it influenced their mood and in turn their buying behaviour. The participants mentioned that they needed to feel comfortable in-store and that as soon as they felt the temperature was not right, i.e. too hot or too cold, they were not comfortable, started feeling sweaty or freezing and irritated, they would leave the store immediately. The participants preferred the temperature to be rather too cold than too hot, but ideally the temperature should be right (room temperature of 21 degrees), thus not too cold and not too hot.

In summary, it was established that touch (temperature) has a positive and a negative influence on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. A positive influence means that consumers will stay longer in a store and will most likely spend more money. A negative influence means that consumers will not enter a store or they will reduce the time that they spend in the store, thus influencing the possibility of sales negatively. The reasons for the positive and negative influences that touch (temperature) has on consumers' buying behaviour are as follows:

- Consumers will not tolerate a store that is either too cold or too hot. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.
- When a store is either too cold or too hot, consumers will leave immediately. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.
- Consumers will tolerate a slightly cooler store than a store that is too hot. This affects the total time spent in-store which may lead to unplanned purchases, and ultimately affects their behaviour in a positive way.

It is therefore critical that apparel retail stores in Tshwane ensure that the in-store temperature is comfortable at all times, as temperature has a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers are willing to spend in-store and ultimately influences the likelihood of buying.

6.3.1.4 Objective 4: Scent

The fourth objective as outlined in chapter 1 and discussed in chapter 5 was to explore the influence of *scent* on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. This objective was addressed through themes 3 and 4.

The participants indicated in the focus group discussion as well as naïve sketches that scent (smell) was important to them and that it was subtle, meaning that the participants did not always notice a specific smell; however, they did notice a bad or alien smell and were most likely to leave the store when noticing such a smell. The same applies to a pleasant smell. The participants did not necessarily recognise a pleasant smell, but a pleasant smell/scent might subconsciously have motivated them to walk around longer (browsing), which could lead to unplanned purchasing.

It was also evident from the discussion that the participants related certain smells/scents to specific predetermined images. For instance, stores that make use of incense created an image of "cheap" in the participants' minds and they further indicated that they could "smell" quality. This influenced the time spent in-store and ultimately influenced the likelihood of purchasing.

In summary, it was established that scent can influence consumers' buying behaviour (in Tshwane) in a positive or a negative way. A positive influence means that the likelihood of buying more is increased as the consumers spend more time in-store. A negative influence means that consumers will spend less money in-store as they will either not enter a store in the first place or they will leave a store immediately after noticing an unpleasant smell, thus reducing the time spent in-store. The reasons for the positive and negative influences that scent has on consumers' buying behaviour are as follows:

- Consumers will not tolerate any unpleasant smell and will leave the store immediately upon noticing such a smell/scent. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.

- Consumers prefer no scent/smell to an unpleasant scent.

- As soon as consumers notice an unpleasant scent, they will immediately leave the store, thus reducing the time spent in-store. This has a negative influence on their buying behaviour.

- Consumers do not necessarily recognise a pleasant smell, but such a scent/ smell might subconsciously motivate them to walk around longer, thus increasing the time spent browsing in-store. This has a positive influence on their buying behaviour.

It is therefore critical for apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region to ensure that if they use scents in-store, these should be subtle and not too prominent. Scents as an atmospheric element can be very difficult to use as consumers attach certain memories, ideas and images to scent that can have a direct influence on their buying behaviour in either a positive or negative way.

After the researcher answered the secondary objectives of the study, the primary objective and main thrust of the research study needed to be addressed to answer the study's research question.

6.3.2   Primary objective

The primary objective of the study aimed to explore the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region. From the secondary objectives (which were all derived from the primary objective), it is evident that if a store manages to use the controllable atmospheric elements (music, lighting, scent, colours and temperature) correctly, the likelihood that consumers will buy is increased. However, if these controllable elements are used incorrectly, the likelihood that consumers will leave a store is also increased. It was highlighted that the participants perceived the general ambience of a store as being important, as it creates a general feeling of either

being welcome or not as soon as consumers enter a store. The participants furthermore explained that store atmospherics potentially influenced their mood, and in turn their buying behaviour. As soon as they did not feel comfortable while they were in a store due to unpleasant temperature, lighting that was too dark or music that was too loud, they would leave immediately.

It was also indicated by the participants that store atmospherics spoke a "silent language", meaning that they did not always notice a specific smell, sound or temperature, but if any of these aspects were unpleasant, they would become aware of it or notice it. It can therefore be inferred that store atmospherics has a subliminal (subconscious) influence on consumers, for instance lighting that is too dark implies that the store is hiding something, an atmosphere that is too crowded implies cheap and one that is too sparse implies that it is out of the consumer's league. The participants further indicated that they would notice a bad smell and would leave the store immediately, which would have a negative influence on their buying behaviour. However, they would not necessarily notice a pleasant smell, as it is more subtle and they could not always put their finger on the type of smell.

According to the participants, store atmospherics can be context driven and therefore appeal to a specific target market or consumer group. The participants mentioned that there were some stores that they did not even enter, as they did not feel comfortable in the store, mainly due to music that was too loud, the type of lighting, unpleasant temperature and the type of scent that was unique to the store. The moment a participant did not feel comfortable in a store, they would leave immediately.

From both the focus group discussion and naïve sketches it was clear that the participants felt that atmospheric elements that moved towards the extremes, for instance either too hot or too cold, led to discomfort or irritation, which had a negative influence on their spending. The participants would not enter a store if they observed from a distance that the store was too dark or the music was too loud. However, if participants had already entered a store, they would leave

immediately after experiencing an unpleasant atmospheric element, such as too cold or an alien smell.

The participants also stated that any unpleasant atmospheric element decreased the likelihood that they would find something to buy, as the total amount of time spent on browsing was shortened, which in turn influenced their buying behaviour negatively. They furthermore agreed that they liked and/or disliked and tolerated some atmospheric elements to a certain extent. It was clear from the discussion that some of the participants tolerated unlikeable or loud music, especially when they needed something specific, whereas others did not tolerate loud or unlikeable music even though they needed something specific. The participants also explained that they could not tolerate any unpleasant smell and would leave the store immediately in such a case. Therefore any unpleasant atmospheric element that is detected in the store will have a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers spend browsing in the store, which will ultimately influence the likelihood of purchasing something, most probably in a negative way.

The participants indicated that they would endure an unpleasant atmosphere if the store had what they were after and if it was difficult to find the product elsewhere. The participants indicated that if they urgently needed something specific, they would tolerate the unpleasant atmosphere for the time that they needed to be in-store and then leave immediately thereafter. However, if the participants did not need something specific, they would not tolerate any unpleasant atmosphere and would therefore either not enter the store in the first place or would leave the store immediately after entering.

Therefore, it is evident that the research question for this study, namely "What is the influence of store atmospherics on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region?" can be answered by the researcher. Store atmospherics does have a definite impact on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane in either a positive or a negative way. A positive influence means that consumers will stay longer in a store and will most likely spend more money, therefore display an approach behaviour, whereas a negative influence means that consumers will not enter a store or they will reduce the time

that they spend in the store, therefore display an avoidance behaviour which influence the possibility of sales negatively.

It is important that apparel retail stores in the Tshwane region strive to create an in-store atmosphere that will positively influence consumers' buying behaviour. The reason for this, as supported by literature and highlighted by Levy *et al.* (2012:467), is that the store environment, the store design and the presentation and location of merchandise in the store have a huge impact on shopping behaviour. Levy *et al.* (2012:467) further state that the design of a store can draw consumers into a store, increase the time that they spend in the store and increase the amount of merchandise that they purchase (Spies *et al.,* 1997:1). Therefore, to have satisfied consumers that buy more than they planned is critical to any apparel retailer in the Tshwane region. This is due to the fact that consumers are the "life blood" of any organisation that wants to survive and without them, there is no market (Cant *et al.,* 2010:50).

In summary, it was established that store atmospherics has a positive and a negative influence on consumers' buying behaviour in apparel retail stores in Tshwane. The reason for this is that atmospheric elements have the ability to influence consumers either subconsciously or consciously. This has a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers will spend in-store and ultimately influences their buying decisions and behaviour either positively or negatively.

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings that were discussed in chapter 5 and the conclusions that were drawn from the findings, various recommendations can be offered to apparel retailers located in the Tshwane region. These recommendations are as follows:

- The participants indicated that temperature was extremely important to them and that they easily became irritated when the temperature in the store was not acceptable, meaning that it was either too cold or too hot in

the store. They would immediately feel uncomfortable and leave the store. The participants stated that they preferred a temperature that was too cold in-store rather than one that was too hot, especially on a hot summer's day. The recommendation to apparel retailers that they ensure that the in-store temperature is correct at all times.

- From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches it was evident that the participants felt that the friendliness and ability of the staff to help them also contributed towards the atmosphere of a store. The recommendation to apparel retailers is that their staff must be trained well to be able to assist consumers with any type of query. Retailers must also motivate their staff, as highly motivated staff might be more friendly and eager to help consumers.

- The participants reported in both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches that stores that used their own radio station or played any type of radio station were generally irritating and annoying. The recommendation to apparel retailers is that they move away from using in-store radio stations, as consumers rather prefer silence in-store to people talking in the background on a radio station.

- The participants indicated that the layout of a store was quite important to them as they wanted to move freely between all the merchandise in a store. They also wanted to be able to see from outside the store what the store was offering and whether they thought the store was too crowded or not. It was also important to the participants not to feel "claustrophobic" in a store. The recommendation to apparel retailers is to ensure that the layout of the store is not too cramped and confusing, as consumers want to move more freely between the merchandise.

- The participants emphasised that any unpleasant scent would immediately drive them out of the store, which would have a negative influence on their time spent in-store, their buying behaviour and the image that they formed of the store. The recommendation to apparel retailers is that they ensure

that the scents that they use in-store are in line with the type of merchandise that they sell and that they also fit in with the target consumer. It is advisable that if a store wants to use in-store scents, these should be very subtle and soft so that the consumers hardly even recognise them at all.

- From both the focus group interviews and naïve sketches, it is clear that the participants could not tolerate music that was too loud. The recommendation to apparel retailers is that they know their target consumers very well in order to ensure that the type of merchandise offered is in line with the atmospheric elements that they use, and thus provide the consumers with a pleasant experience in-store that might enhance the likelihood of buying.

- It is important that apparel retailers realise the value, benefits as well as the importance of implementing appropriate and effective atmospheric elements in-store. The recommendation to apparel retailers is that they consider hiring outsourcing consultants who are experienced in atmospherics in order to help them create a desirable and pleasant in-store atmosphere that will/can enhance the total time spent in-store by the consumers and ultimately influence their buying behaviour.

It is important for retailers to give attention to the above recommendations to ensure that they do everything they can to increase the amount of time that consumers spend in-store, and thus increase consumer spending. The reason is that consumers are critical to any apparel retailer and that without consumer spending an apparel retail store will not survive. Therefore apparel retailers should at all times ensure that the in-store atmosphere is pleasant and will influence the consumers in such a way that it will motivate them to purchase more merchandise than originally planned.

The study's contribution to the apparel retail industry in the Tshwane region is discussed in the next section.

6.5   CONTRIBUTION TO THE APPAREL RETAIL INDUSTRY IN THE TSHWANE REGION

For apparel retail stores to be successful it is important that they understand how consumers behave (think and act) in a buying situation (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:7). It is also important that apparel retailers determine what influences a consumer's decision to either enter a store or to leave a store without buying. This research study aimed to provide apparel retailers in the Tshwane region with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the use of in-store atmospheric elements.

The results derived from this study could benefit apparel retailers in the Tshwane region because a detailed exploration was made of the influences of atmospheric elements on consumers' buying behaviour. Apparel retailers in the Tshwane region can apply these findings to their retail environments and therefore create an effective and pleasurable in-store atmosphere that will lead to consumers spending more time in-store. This will ultimately influence their buying behaviour in a positive way.

If apparel retailers in the Tshwane region apply the research findings of this study to their in-store atmospheric decisions, the likelihood that consumers will not avoid their stores due to a previously unpleasant experience is decreased. It can also positively influence the time spent in store and ultimately influence the consumers' likelihood of making a purchase.

6.6   LIMITATIONS

The opinions of many consumers outside the sample were not represented and therefore the findings cannot be generalised to the greater population. It would therefore be advisable for future researchers to select a more representative sample of consumers.

The sample was drawn from consumers living in the Tshwane region and was therefore not geographically representative of the entire country (South Africa). Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the main goal was not to be representative, but rather to be able to use the research findings for other research purposes and studies. Given the exploratory nature of the study, the sample size of 16 participants was believed to be sufficient.

6.7   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the researcher has made a few suggestions for future research.

- As indicated, this research study only focused on one area or province in South Africa and it may therefore be interesting to see what the influence of store atmospherics will be on consumers' buying behaviour in other parts of South Africa.

- This study used an exploratory qualitative research design and it may be interesting to see what the outcomes would be if a similar study used a quantitative research design where the consumers' buying behaviour in terms of store atmospherics is tested in the nine provinces of South Africa.

- This study only focused on the apparel retail industry. Store atmospherics could have an influence on consumers' buying behaviour in other retail industries, more specifically the grocery (consumer goods) industry, the do-it-yourself (DIY) industry and the safari and outdoor industry, where clothing and outdoor accessories are sold.

- In this research study, the viewpoints of both male and female consumers were used together. There might be a difference between male and female consumers regarding the influence of store atmospherics on their buying behaviour, as well as between the different age groups for example young generation versus older generation.

- In this research study the influence of all four atmospheric elements was tested. An interesting study would be to determine the influence of each element in more detail. For example, the influence of a specific type of music (fast, slow, classical, metal etc.) or a specific type of scent (floral, vanilla, sweet, spicy etc.) on consumers' buying behaviour could be determined.

6.8   SUMMARY

In this chapter the conclusions from the research study were drawn and the recommendations derived from the conclusions were made. The primary conclusion as derived from the secondary objectives is that store atmospheric elements can influence consumers either subconsciously or consciously, and have a direct influence on the amount of time that consumers will spend in-store. This ultimately influences their buying behaviour either positively or negatively. It was further indicated that unpleasant atmospherics as well as atmospheric elements that move towards an extreme (too hot, too loud, too cold, too dark etc.) will reduce the time spent in-store and will ultimately have a negative influence on consumers' buying behaviour. Therefore it can be summarised that all four atmospheric elements (affecting sight, sound, touch and scent) are important and that when one of these elements is out of place (too loud, too hot/cold, too dark, too smelly), the time spent in-store is influenced negatively, which has a negative influence on consumers' buying behaviour.

A few recommendations were made, the most prominent and important one emphasising that the in-store temperature should be correct and acceptable, and therefore not too hot and not too cold. It was further suggested that retailers should stay away from in-store radio stations, because these have a negative influence on the moods of consumers, immediately resulting in irritation. The staff plays an important role, as their friendliness, eagerness and competency levels to assist consumers also contribute to the overall in-store atmosphere. It is critical that apparel retailers be aware of these research findings as the findings could help them to better satisfy the needs of their consumers, which might result in increased consumer spending.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D.A., Kumar, V., Day, G.S. & Leone, R.P. 2011. *Marketing research*. 10th ed. Asia: John Wiley & Sons.

ACP Connections. [n.d.]. *Music and consumer behaviour*. [Online] Available from: http://www.queenslandnewsagents.com.au/assets/images/MusicConsumer Behaviour.pdf [Accessed: 11-10-2011].

AR Dictionary. 2010. *Sight.* [Online] Available from: http://ardictionary.com/Sight/ 7431 [Accessed on: 30-05-2012].

Aronson, J. 1994. A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 2(1). [Online] Available from: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/BackIssues/QR2-1/aronson.html [Accessed on: 01-09-2012].

Bell, J. & Ternus, K. 2006. *Silent selling. Best practice and effective strategies in visual merchandising.* 3rd ed. New York: Fairchild.

Berman, B. & Evans, J.R. 1998. *Retail management: A strategic approach.* 7th ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Berman, B. & Evans, J.R. 2010. *Retail management: A strategic approach*. 11th ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Berndt, A. & Petzer, D. 2011. *Marketing research*. Pinelands, Cape Town: Pearson Education.

Binggeli, C. 2010. *Building systems for interior designers.* 2nd ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Bradley, N. 2010. *Marketing research: Tools and techniques.* 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:77–101.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. 2007. *Business research methods.* 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Burns, E. 2012. *Ehow: What is the definition of retail design?* [Online] Available from: http://www.ehow.com/facts_7173197_definition-retail-design_.html [Accessed on: 7-05-2012].

Cant, M.C. 2010. *Marketing: An introduction.* Cape Town: Juta.

Cant, M.C., Brink, A. & Brijball, S. 2006. *Consumer behaviour.* Cape Town: Juta.

Cant, M.C., Van Heerden, C.H. & Ngambi, H.C. 2010. *Marketing management: A South African perspective.* Cape Town: Juta.

Chebat, J.C. & Michon, R. 2003. Impact of ambient odors on mall shoppers' emotions, cognition, and spending: A test of competitive causal theories. *Journal of Business Research,* 56 (2003):529–539.

Cohen, J. 2011. *Colour wheels are wrong, how colour vision actually works.* [Online] Available from: http://blog.asmartbear.com/color-wheels.html [Accessed: 26-11-2011].

Collins. 2012. English Dictionary: Lighting. [Online] Available from: http://www. collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/lighting [Accessed: 05-12-2012].

Cooper, D.R & Schindler, P.S. 2008. *Business research methods.* 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Creswell, J.W. 1994. *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Daye, D. & VanAuken, B. 2010. *Branding strategy: Building brands with sound*. [Online] Available from: http://www.brandingstrategyinsider.com/2010/08/building-brands-with-sound.html#more [Accessed on: 12-03-2012].

Deccan Chronicle. 2011. *Busy lifestyles making us forget five things every day*. [Online] Available from: http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/lifestyle/stress/busy-lifestyles-making-us-forget-five-things-every-day-535 [Accessed: 08/11/2011].

Dictonary.com. 2011. *Apparel.* [Online] Available from: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/apparel [Accessed on: 20-09-2011].

Dictionary.com. 2012. *Sound.* [Online] Available from: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sound [Accessed on: 30-05-2012].

Dunne, P.M. & Lusch, R.F. 2008. *Retailing*. 6th ed. USA: Thomson South-Western.

Du Plessis, F. & Rousseau, D. 2007. *Buying behaviour: Understanding consumer psychology and marketing*. 4th ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Eicar. [n.d.]. Glossary: Lighting. [Online] Available from: http://www.eicar-international.com/definition-lighting.html [Accessed: 05-12-2012].

Esaak, S. 2012. Art History: Colour. [Online] Available from: http://arthistory.about.com/cs/glossaries/g/c_color.htm [Accessed: 2012-04-12].

Evans, M., Jamal, A. & Foxall, G. 2010. *Consumer behaviour*. 2nd ed. England: John Wiley and Sons.

Fiore, A.M., Yah, X. & Yoh, E. 2000. Effect of a product display and environmental fragrancing on approach responses and pleasurable experiences. *Psychology & Marketing,* 17(1):27–54.

Freewebs. 2008. *Abercrombie & Fitch*. [Online] Available from: http://www.free webs.com/chuckd23/agespecificretail.htm [Accessed: 23-10-2012].

Giraldi, J.E., Spinelli, P.B. & Merlo, E.M. 2003. Retail store image: *A*nalysis of the implications for store positioning. *Read Special Issue* 36, 9(6):1–17.

Gobé, M. 2009. *Emotional branding: The new paradigm for connecting brands to people.* New York: Allworth Press.

Gupta, S. & Randhawa, G. 2008. *Retail management.* New Delhi: Atlantic.

Hair, J.F., Bush, R.P. & Ortinau, D.J. 2009. *Marketing research: In a digital information environment.* 4th ed. Singapore: McGraw Hill.

Haque, A., Khatibi, A. & Rahman, S. 2009. Factors influencing buying behaviour of piracy products and its impact to Malaysian market. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 5(2):383–401. [Online] Available from: http:// www.bizresearchpapers.com/29[1].%20Ahasanul.pdf [Accessed: 17-02-2012].

Hawkins, D.I. & Mothersbaugh, D.L. 2010. *Consumer behaviour: Building marketing strategies.* 11th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hodder, I. 1994. The interpretation of documents and material culture. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (703–716). California: Sage.

Hultén, B. 2011. Sensory marketing: The multi-sensory brand-experience concept. *European Business Review*, 23(3):256–273.

Hultén, B., Broweus, N. & Van Dijk, M. 2009. *Sensory marketing.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hunter, R. & Mukerji, B. 2011. The role of atmospherics in influencing consumer behaviour in the online environment. *International Journal of Business and a Social Science,* 2(9):118–125.

Iacobucci, D. & Churchill, G.A. 2010. *Marketing research methodological foundations*. 10th ed. Canada: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Jang, S.S. & Namkung, Y. 2009. Perceived quality, emotions and behavioural intentions: Application of an extended Mehrabian-Russell model to restaurants. *Journal of Business Research,* 62:451–460.

Kang, E., Boger, C.A., Back, K.J. & Madera, J. 2011. *The impact of sensory environments on spagoer's emotion and behavioural intention*. [Online] Available from: http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1115 &context=gradconf_hospitality [Accessed on: 10-07-2011].

Kapoor, A. & Kulshrestha, C. 2010. *Marketing research*. New Delhi: Excel Books.

Kardes, F.R., Cline, T.W. & Cronley, M.L. 2011. *Consumer behaviour: Science and practise*. China: South-Western Cengage Learning.

Kerfoot, S., Davies, B. & Ward, P. 2003. Visual merchandising and the creation of discernible retail brands. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 31(3):143–152.

Koekemoer, L. 2011. *Introduction to integrated marketing communications*. Cape Town: Juta.

Kotler, P. 2001. Atmospherics as a marketing tool. *Journal of Retailing*, 49(4): 48–64.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. 2006. *Marketing management*. 12th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kotler, P. & Keller, K.L. 2009. A *framework for marketing management integrated with pharmaSim simulation experience*. 4th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Krishna, A. 2010. *Sensory marketing: Research on the sensuality of products*. New York: Routledge.

Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2010. *Practical research: Planning and design*. 9th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Levy, M., Weitz, B.A. & Beitelspacher, L.S. 2012. *Retailing management*. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Liao, Y. & Liaw, G. [n.d.]. *How cues in the multiple store environment influence shopping mood and patronage satisfaction.* [Online] Available from: http://www.jimsjournal.org/8%20Yen-Yi%20Liao.pdf [Accessed on: 10-07-2011].

Liaw, G. 2007. The influence of multiple store environment cues on shopping mood and patronage satisfaction. *7th Global Conference on Business & Economics*, ISBN: 978-0-9742114-9-4:1–21.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. London: Sage.

Liu, Y. & Jang, S.S. 2009. The effects of dining atmospherics: An extended Mehrabian-Russell model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 28:494–503.

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K.M., Guest, G. & Namely, E. 2005. *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide.* USA: Family Health International.

Macmillan Dictionary. 2012. *Scent*. [Online] Available from: http://www.macmillan dictionary.com/thesaurus/british/scent#scent_10 [Accessed on: 31-05-2012].

Made in China.com. 2012. *Fashion female mannequins*. [Online] Available from: http://www.made-in-china.com/showroom/garymannequins/product-detailXe UJQYmVqAcN/China-Fashion-Female-Mannequins-CFWW-299-300-.html [Accessed on: 30-05-2012].

Malhotra, N.K. 2010. *Marketing research: An applied orientation.* 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

McDaniel, C. & Gates, R. 2010. *Marketing research essentials.* 7th ed. United States of America: John Wiley & Sons.

Mehrabian, A. & Russell, J.A. 1974. *An approach to environmental psychology.* USA: The Colonial Press.

Mittal, B., Holbrook, M.B., Raghbir, S.B. & Woodside, A.G. 2008. *Consumer behaviour.* China: Open Mentis.

Morgan, T. 2008. *Visual merchandising: Window and in-store displays for retail.* China: Laurence King.

Ogden-Barnes, S. & Barclay, D. [n.d.]. *Store sense: Reclaiming the four walls with sensory engagement. The retail acumen series.* [Online] Available from: http://www.deakin.edu.au/buslaw/gsb/retail [Accessed: 11-10-2011].

Oxford Dictionaries Online. 2012. [Online] Available from: http://oxforddictionaries.com/ [Accessed on: 14-08-2012].

Parumasur, S.B. & Roberts-Lombard, M. 2012. *Consumer behaviour.* 2nd ed. Cape Town: Juta.

Pegler, M.M. 2010. *Visual merchandising and display.* 5th ed. China:Fairchild.

Pradhan, S. 2007. *Retailing management: Text and cases.* 2nd ed. Nagar, New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.

Rodrigues, C., Hultén, B. & Brito, C. 2011. Sensorial brand strategies for value co-creation. *Innovative Marketing,* 7(2):40–47.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2009. *Research methods for business students*. 5th ed. England: Pearson Education.

Schiffman, L.G. & Kanuk, L.L. 2004. *Consumer behaviour*. 8th ed. USA: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Shah, A. 2010. *Factors affecting consumer behaviour*. [Online] Available from: http://www.aipmm.com/html/newsletter/archives/000434.php [Accessed: 17-02-2012].

Spies, K., Hesse, F. & Loesch, K. 1997. Store atmosphere, mood and purchasing behaviour. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 14:1–17.

Tan, N. 2011. *Do and don't: Access to the store.* [Online] Available from: http://natalietanretail.blogspot.com/2011_05_01_archive.html [Accessed: 23-10-2012].

Tesch, R. 1990. *Qualitative research analysis tapes and software tools*. New York: Wordsworth.

The Free Dictionary. 2012. Lighting. [Online] Available from: http://www.thefree dictionary.com/lighting [Accessed: 05-12-2012].

Tustin, D.H., Ligthelm, A.A., Martins, J.H. & Van Wyk, H. de J. 2005. *Marketing research in practice.* Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Visagie, R.G. & Maritz, J. 2009. Diversifying business coaching in a South African higher education context to facilitate research output. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities & Nations,* 9(3):1–13.

Wanninayake, W.M.C.B. & Randiwela, P. 2007. The impact of visual merchandising on consumer store choice decisions in Sri Lankan supermarkets. *7th Global Conference on Business & Economics*, ISBN: 978-0-9742114-9-4:1–16.

Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. 2005. *Research methodology*. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Wiid, J.A. & Diggines, C. 2009. *Marketing research*. Cape Town: Juta.

Yalch, R.F. & Spangenberg, E.R. 2000. The effects of music in a retail setting on real and perceived shopping times. *Journal of Business Research,* 49:139–147.

Zainbooks. 2008. *Consumer buying behaviour.* [Online] Available from: http://www.zainbooks.com/books/marketing/principles-of-marketing_15_consumer-buying-behavior.html [Accessed: 11-12-2011].

Zikmund, W.G. & Babin, B.J. 2007. *Exploring marketing research*. 3rd ed. Mason: Thomson South-Western.

Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C. & Griffin, M. 2010. *Business researched methods*. 8th ed. Canada: South-Western Cengage Learning.

APPENDIX A

– Naïve Sketches –

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF STORE ATMOSPHERICS ON CONSUMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN APPAREL RETAIL STORES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN TSHWANE

Naïve Sketches

Dear Participant,

Please complete these naive sketches a thorough as possible. There are seven questions that you need to complete regarding a clothing store's atmosphere and the influence thereof on your buying behaviour.

In other words, will the atmosphere of a clothing store influence you in such a way that you will walk out of the store or will it influence you to buy more than you have originally planned.

I have added a picture (on the last page) to give you an illustration of a store's atmosphere.

This will not take you longer than 20 minutes.

Thank you for participating

1. What do you understand about a clothing retail store's atmosphere?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of the **colours and lighting** (what you can **see**) used in-store on your buying behaviour? Discuss.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____

_____

3. When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of **sound** (what you can **hear** – music) used in-store on your buying behaviour? Discuss.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of the **temperature** (what you can **feel** – air-conditioning) in-store on your buying behaviour? Discuss.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. When you walk into a clothing store, what is the influence of **scents** (what you can **smell** – fragrances) used in-store on your buying behaviour? Discuss.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What other atmospheric elements do have an influence on your buying behaviour? Please explain and discuss.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What is the **most important** atmospheric element to you that influence your buying behaviour?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Examples of a clothing store's atmosphere:

Thank you for participating in this study

APPENDIX B

– Demographic Profile –

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Please provide us with the following information. All personal information will be kept confidentially.

Name and Surname: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Home Language: _____

Occupation: _____

Location: _____

Where do you prefer to buy clothing? _____

_____

APPENDIX C

– Letter of Consent –

INFORMATION SHEET

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF STORE ATMOSPHERICS ON CONSUMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN APPAREL RETAIL STORES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN TSHWANE

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study is being conducted as part of the research requirement for a Master of Business Management degree. The intention is to explore and describe the influence that store atmospherics have on consumers' buying behaviour.

Why are you being invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate in this study as your experience and views related to this topic is of value and importance and would assist the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of in-store atmospheric elements and the influence thereof on consumers buying behaviour.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. Should you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
The data collection will be done by means of a focus group interview and as well as with the use of naive sketches. All that is required by you is approximately one hour of your time.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?
The benefit of participating is that your opinion regarding the influence of in-store atmospherics on consumers buying behaviour will be used in order to support the objectives and it might be used in the industry by apparel retailers in order to improve on their overall in-store atmosphere.

Will what I say be kept confidential?
The focus groups will be tape recorded and transcribed for data analysis, as well as the naive sketches. The transcribed interviews will be anonymous and will not reflect your name or link back to you. All data will be strictly confidential and the recording destroyed after publication of the research findings.

Contact information
Should you require any further information you may contact Corinne Nell at 083 316 5557. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor, Dr. J.A. Wiid, Senior Lecturer at the University of South Africa on 012 429-3939.

**Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet
and for participating in this study.**

**EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF STORE ATMOSPHERICS ON
CONSUMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN APPAREL RETAIL STORES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN TSHWANE**

Researcher: Corinne Nell, M.Com student at the University of South Africa

I, _____ (participant name),

1. confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

3. agree to the recording of the focus group interview.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX D

– Coding Example and Report –

CODING EXAMPLE

This is an example of how the focus group data was coded. The white text is the transcribed discussion between the interviewer and the participant, and the blue highlighted parts are the researcher's and/or coders' notes, topics and categories that they identified.

atmospherics, all the elements of the atmospherics, that is very, that is important to me, is the ambience, the feeling of being welcome or not. When I go into a Zoot or one of these, I don't feel welcome anymore, the atmospherics is not right, I get the feeling it's the young people, the young people buy there and I feel that I am not welcome, but that is obviously not true, I just don't feel like the atmosphere is right, the music is too loud, lighting is not what I like, clothes are too cluttered, so I just, you know, me, I personally like the ambience of the stores that I frequent.

Comment [J3]: Feeling of being welcome

Comment [J4]: Aimed at younger market, feels unwelcome, out of place

And how does the concept ambience make sense to the rest of you?

Can I ask one question, how do you see a difference between, I mean all the elements you mentioned define atmosphere, how do you see a difference between atmosphere and ambience?

I think just, you know just the general feeling, going in there, is what I call ambience which is obviously supported by all these elements, lighting, store layout, things like that, just the general feeling.

So you have mentioned lighting, store layout, what else would form part of the store atmospherics?

I think for me its mostly all controllable elements that lead to our to our likes, its like the type of music that is playing in the background, the colours, the lighting, the scent that you get when you walk into the store, is something that retail can control, they can decide what type of music they want to play, the can decide what, if there is a bad scent, they can spray something or, you know its something that they use to try to entice the customer to enter the store, to create a certain feeling or mood. As well I think it's all those elements that they try to maybe increase the art of a customer purchasing but that's basically all that, lighting, color, sound

Comment [J5]: Controllable elements

Comment [J6]: Entice, affect mood

Scent?

Scent

Yes the smell is important, because I don't like if it is not nice smelling, I will, I wont spend time there, and some of the shops I wont even go in because I think on the clothes maybe, you know, when you said its too young, you know, freak out on too young clothes. So some of the shops I will just never enter, you know, or maybe I will once and I say, "oh man, this is not my shop", okay, and I will never go there again, although it is

Comment [J7]: Smell influences amount of time likely to be spent in a shop – if smell = unpleasant less time likely to be spent in shop

Comment [J8]: Discern according to age appropriate merchandise

CODING REPORT

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Central Storyline – Store Atmospherics</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Consumers display a good understanding and awareness of store atmospherics, the "<i>general ambiance</i>" it creates and the variety of "<i>controllable</i>" elements used to do so as well as the potential it has to influence their moods and in turn their buying behaviour. Store atmospherics speak a 'silent language' to consumers, reinforcing niche/target market appeal and/or merchandise integrity/quality or lack thereof, either enticing or repelling them from a store. Elements of store atmospherics moving toward either extreme (for example, too hot or too cold) become salient or obtrusive to consumers leading to discomfort and limit or disrupt 'browsing time' thereby lessening the chance that the product will be discovered and bought. Personal factor's and buyers intentions do however moderate the influence of store atmospherics on buying behaviour.</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Theme</td><td align="center">Category</td></tr>
<tr><td>Theme 1

Store atmospherics create the "<i>general ambiance</i>" of a store through a variety of "<i>controllable</i>" elements merging to form part of the store's 'total product' and potentially influencing a customer's mood and in turn their behaviour.</td><td>1.1 Customers define store atmospherics as the merging of a variety "<i>controllable</i>" elements [which create the "<i>general ambiance</i>" of the store] such as:
• Lighting
• Music
• Layout/space
• Décor
• Temperature
• Smell
• Staff attitude

1.2 Store atmospherics potentially influence customers' mood and in turn their buying behaviour.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Theme 2:

Store atmospherics speak a 'silent language' reinforcing niche/target market appeal and merchandise integrity or lack thereof.</td><td>2.1 The 'silent language' of store atmospherics that can "<i>entice</i>" customers into or repel them from a store.

2.2 Store atmospherics can be context driven [and as such appeal to a niche/target market.

2.3 Store atmospherics form part of a stores 'total product' [and as such reveal something of the quality/ integrity of the service and product on offer].</td></tr>
</table>

Theme	Category
Theme 3: Elements of **atmospherics** moving toward either extremes **become salient or obtrusive** to the consumer leading to discomfort and limit or disrupt 'browsing time', therefore lessening the chance that product will be discovered.	3.1 Elements moving towards extremes [in either direction, i.e. very hot or very cold] leads to discomfort or irritation. 3.2 "*Unpleasant*" atmospherics decreases the likelihood that a consumer will find something to buy [by shortening browsing time].
Theme 4: Personal factor's and **buyers intentions** moderate the influence of store atmospherics on buying behaviour.	4.1 Variability and similarity in terms of which atmospheric elements are liked/disliked tolerable/intolerable 4.2 Tolerance of consumers to endure "unpleasant" atmospherics [if they know the store has what it is they are after i.e. if they have clear intention for entering into the store]

APPENDIX E

– Findings of Naïve Sketches –

PART	QUESTION 1
	What do you see as the elements/components of a store's atmosphere? Discuss.
A1	Various elements that combine to make shopping experience "pleasant/unpleasant".
A2	Smell, lighting, cleanliness.
A3	*"Controllable characteristics"* used to "entice" customers and "influence mood". If used correctly, can increase likelihood of customer buying and if used incorrectly "drive a customer away". Examples: music, lighting, scent, colours, temperature.
A4	*"Anything that influences the mood of the people in the store."* This includes things that affect the senses like sight, sound, smell, touch.
A5	The *"general ambiance"* of the store created by lighting, music, layout, availability of personnel and pay points.
A6	*"Mostly things that influence the way I feel in a store"* like lighting, space, smell, space.
A7	Elements contributing to atmosphere include music type and volume level, lighting, temperature, smell and décor.
A8	The branding colour of the company, the lighting within the store and layout of merchandise, i.e. shelves too fully stocked make store feel cluttered and uncomfortable
L1	NO ANSWER
L2	Colour – store's window dressing; Lighting – bright and well lit; Music – calm, relaxing music, not loud; Layout – manoeuvrability of trolley, etc.
L3	Lighting – bright lights; Order – neat and uncluttered; Colour – bright colours; Smells – vary between male and female sections; Access – wide uncluttered shop fronts.
L4	Appearance – displays in windows; Personnel – pleasant, friendly, helpful; Display of goods – neat and tidy – clear price; Interior – floors clean and not slippery; Availability of stock; Music and Safety.
L5	*"Lighting, smell, temperature, layout art, music and cleanliness."*
L6	Store atmospherics anything that creates "environment" Music, brightness, smell and touch
L7	Relate store elements to "*five senses, i.e. sight, sound, touch, smell and sixth sense – visceral."* How it makes you *"feel on an unconscious level".*
L8	Sales personnel – most NB good service, Location, Layout, Background music
PART	QUESTION 2
	When buying clothes, how does the colours and lighting (what you can see used in-store influence your buying behaviour? Discuss.
A1	Darkness limits visibility, is off-putting and prevents shopping. Colour draws both positive and negative attention – but style the biggest draw card.
A2	Will spend more time in a store where items are fresh, clean colours and lighting pleasant.
A3	Respondent has personal preference for bright colours and is positively influenced by them. Poor lighting makes it difficult to discern true colour of garment.
A4	Finds lighting that is too bright, flickering or too dim "unpleasant" and may respondent may leave store as a result – although "pleasant" lighting not likely to make respondent buy something.
A5	Lighting projects a *"certain atmosphere"* i.e. Bright light implies *"openness and cleanliness", warm light homeliness and dim light modern and possibly poor quality clothing.*
A6	Prefers colours and lighting that create context for the clothing.
A7	Lighting and colour influence respondents buying behaviour depending on what she is looking for. Brighter more colourful stores for everyday wear and dimmer more subdued stores for formal wear.
A8	Has an *"indirect"* influence on respondent's behaviour. Bright colours and "bad" lighting is an irritant to respondent and limits the time he will spend in a store.
L1	Sometimes influence to enter store
L2	Bright lighting essential. Colour dependent on season favourite colours have more influence.
L3	Colours attract the eye – clothes arranged that they complement each other Lighting – bright lights give impression of cleanliness & add to space.
L4	Natural lighting – not florescent Colours used determined by age group, male/female, easy on eye, welcoming, not overwhelming".
L5	Simplicity – not too vibrant colours or too dark Bright white light – not warm white Spotlights on displays
L6	Not too bright or flashing lights. Lighting NB since you get representation of items.
L7	Lighting NB – not extremes. No harsh lighting in fitting rooms. Like well lit, natural lighting.
L8	Not too bright, but good lighting should complement clothing colours. Create warm, formal and welcoming feel.

PART	QUESTION 3
	When buying clothes, how does the sound (what you can hear – music) used in-store influence your buying behaviour? Discuss.
A1	Music affects mood and must "fit" store. Will not influence buying behaviour though.
A2	Respondent has strong reaction to loud music and will leave store. Softly played, pleasant music will enhance mood and increase likelihood of buying.
A3	"*Horrible music*" will not deter respondent from buying from a particular store however if music is to the respondents taste, she is likely to remain in the store which will in turn increase the likelihood of her finding and buying an item/s.
A4	Respondent will leave store if music too loud or not to her liking unless she is shopping with specific intention. "Pleasant" music is likely to make respondent return to a store.
A5	Music affects respondent mood, soft, well known songs positively and "loud rock music" negatively.
A6	Music also important in terms of context and supports type of merchandise sold and market being targeted. In-store radio stations do not appeal to respondent.
A7	Only notices music when it irritates me and then it will make respondent feel unwelcome and cause her to leave store.
A8	Respondent strongly affected by "annoying" music and will leave store almost immediately as a result. In-store radio stations are a strong irritant.
L1	Softer music more appealing. Tune to sing along to.
L2	No loud, upbeat music – irritating. Classical, light, instrumental more calming – will spend more time browsing.
L3	Upbeat, light music that trigger sing-along Should make you relaxed & stimulate senses
L4	*"Music extremely important"; "Not too loud"; "Depends on kind of store"; "Comforting – not disturbing"*
L5	Don't want to hear the music. Only light classical music. No radio stations. Prefer quiet environment. Will leave if music is disturbing.
L6	Most important element – softer music "music plays a vital role in my purchase behaviour".
L7	*"Far less likely to stay in a store if it is playing loud music."* No in-store radio stations.
L8	Fast and lively music in sports store. Prefer shops with modern, up to date music, Not too loud.
PART	**QUESTION 4**
	When buying clothes, how does the temperature (what you can feel – air-conditioning) used in-store influence your buying behaviour? Discuss.
A1	Lack of ventilation will prevent respondent from fitting on garments and causes respondent to feel claustrophobic. Respondent will leave store if temperature uncomfortable.
A2	Temperature important if wanting to fit clothes. Cool store on hot day pleasant and will increase time spent in store and likelihood of buying
A3	Respondent feels strongly about the temperature of the store and will not remain in store that is too cold.
A4	Respondent feels strongly about temperature extremes. Although this will not deter her from buying an item that she needs/wants. It may deter her from browsing which may in turn decrease the likelihood of her finding an item/s to buy.
A5	Temperature usually well controlled in stores. A store that is too cold will make respondent leave though.
A6	Temperature must be moderate. Temperatures of either extreme will influence length of time spent in shop and whether or not he fits on clothes.
A7	Temperature extremes will negatively influence respondents buying behaviour as she will limit the time she spends in these stores.
A8	Temperature important to respondent and he is likely to leave if too extreme, especially if too hot.
L1	Very important – will walk out if not right.
L2	Working air-con essential especially to fit garments – important.
L3	*"21°C is perfect."* Too hot/too cold leads to discomfort.
L4	*"Don't want to sweat while fitting."* Not too cold.
L5	*"Air-con should be used in all stores." "Rather too cold than too hot."*
L6	Good temperature important. "I want to feel comfortable while I shop."
L7	Not too hot. "It makes me flustered and ill-tempered."
L8	*"Very important factor."* Preferably between 20–24°C. Should feel comfortable.

PART	QUESTION 5
	When buying clothes, how does the scents (what you can smell – fragrances) used in- store influence your buying behaviour? Discuss.
A1	Will notice scent but won't be affected by it.
A2	Clean smell will increase time spent in shop. Food smells off-putting.
A3	"*Scent is a very big influence*" on respondents purchase decision. The smell of fragrances lures whilst a "horrible smell" repels the respondent.
A4	Respondent likes *"pleasant scents"* and is likely browse for longer in a store that smells pleasant as well as return to that store more frequently, i.e. encourages store loyalty and increases the likelihood of respondent finding something to purchase. A pleasant smell will not however convince respondent to buy something she does not need.
A5	Can't smell so no influence.
A6	Scent creates context. Stores with overpowering smells are off-putting although fragrance smells imply quality.
A7	Foul and out of place smells are off-putting to respondent and will cause her to leave the store. Pleasant smells will not however affect buying behaviour positively although may increase time in spent in store.
A8	Respondent cannot tolerate the smell of perfume or overwhelming smells. The smell of "new product" is favourable to him.
L1	Bad smell will lead to walk-out.
L2	No real influence. Positive reaction to subtle, gentle flowery scents, no incense.
L3	Floral scents a turn-off in men section. Manly scents in male section.
L4	*"Dangerous, because taste differs". Natural, pleasant scents.*
L5	*"Odourless!" No scents of any kind in clothing store.*
L6	*"Scent is important." Pleasant scent might make her linger.*
L7	Not greatly affected by scent unless it is noticeably unpleasant.
L8	Fresh smell important.
PART	QUESTION 6
	What other elements has an influence on your buying behaviour, except for these above? Please explain and discuss.
A1	Neatness, visibility of merchandise, i.e. item displays.
A2	Ease of access, free parking, friendly and helpful sales assistants.
A3	An over-crowded store and long queues will cause respondent to leave without making a purchase – with the chance of returning at another less busy time.
A4	Store layout important to respondent, specifically the ease of access to products. Having to search through items is off-putting and a deterrent to respondent. A "positive experience" is enhanced by friendly and helpful staff and is likely to lead to word-of-mouth referrals and return visits to the store.
A5	Each person has personal preference (own frame of reference).
A6	Layout of merchandise. Stores that are too crowded imply cheap and stores that are empty imply too exclusive. Respondent values the ability to touch the clothing. Windows that insulate shoppers from the outside implies exclusivity and respondent willing to spend more in this type of store.
A7	How busy the store, i.e. long queues at fitting rooms and pay points are a deterrent. The degree it which respondent feels she "fits in" at the store and the attitude of the staff.
A8	Respondent did not answer this question.
L1	NO ANSWER
L2	Layout of shop; Availability of bigger sizes essential; Doesn't like clutter of sale items piled together.
L3	View – uncluttered; Options – proximity of clothing to one another; Access – open allowing visual shopping from a distance.
L4	My mood. "Personnel must act professional"; Available finances; Special offers – clearly promoted; Knowledgeable staff.
L5	*"Staff! They are the human element"; "Sounds from outside the store".*
L6	*"Employee noise"; Good flow of merchandise important.*
L7	*"Staff attitudes also influence a stores atmosphere."*

PART	QUESTION 7
	In your opinion, what is the most important element that influences your buying behaviour? Please explain and discuss.
A1	Lighting and temperature – but price and fit will determine final decision.
A2	Smell, cleanliness and display of clothes.
A3	Smell – respondent won't stay in a store that smells "really bad",
A4	Sight – the store must be *"visually pleasing"*.
A5	Layout, i.e. space, lack of clutter, and how welcoming store feels also pricing and quality.
A6	The *"right"* lighting and music influences the respondent's mood and encourages spending.
A7	General element is the amount of money respondent has to spend and atmospheric element is the temperature of the store.
A8	Sound and with further reflection, temperature as well.
L1	Quality is most NB thing;
L2	Personal mood; Finances; "Need to have something new"; Changes of season.
L3	Easily accessible product; Easy access; Fitting of garments; Neatness.
L4	*"Pleasant environment – attention to detail."*
L5	*"Light. I cannot make a decision in the dark."*
L6	*"Definitely smell"; "Lighting also is a big determining factor".*
L7	Appearance of shop. Sight, lighting and layout.
L8	*"Lighting and order."*