

**STORE LAYOUT AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR  
AT CONVENIENCE STORES IN KWA MASHU**

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*“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs, 3: 5-6).*

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This project is also in memory of my late uncle, Mmadijo Tlapana who passed on during the initial stages of this project. May your soul rest in peace Letebele; you will forever be in our hearts.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Tshepo Peter Tlapana, hereby declare that the work in this dissertation represents my own work and findings except where indicated, and that all references, to the best of my knowledge, are accurately reported.

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Tshepo Peter Tlapana

## **ABSTRACT**

Store layout is an important factor affecting consumer behaviour and a critical determinant towards the creation of store image. Well designed layouts are extremely important because they strongly influence in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency (Vrechopoulos et al., 2004: 13). When an inconsistency occurs, some consumers will abandon that establishment in search of another one which offers fast, convenient and better services (Andersen, 1997: 118). Taking a more strategic approach to store layout can reap big rewards by boosting sales, increasing customer loyalty and ultimately increasing turnover (Clark, 2003: 42).

The overall aim of the study was to ascertain if independent convenience stores in Kwa Mashu are aware of the impact of store layout on purchasing patterns of consumers. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, a quantitative study was conducted at the convenience stores at Kwa Mashu by means of self-administered questionnaires. A sample of 400 respondents was asked questions pertaining to the study. The respondents were selected through non-probability sampling within which convenience sampling was applied. Conclusions and recommendations were thereafter drawn from the literature and the findings of the study.

The results of this study show that consumers experience problems with store layout. It was found that appearance of the store, merchandise display, store atmosphere, in-store service and accessibility are the major causes of this discomfort. Therefore, it is recommended that convenience retail owners in Kwa Mashu attend to those areas and see to it that necessary strategies are implemented to help customers where there is a need.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Store layout is a critical factor driving consumer elaboration and response in retailing. While considerable attention has focused on store layout in relation to brick and mortar retailing, store layout has been virtually ignored in the study of retailing. The layout of a retail store has been found to significantly impact a retailer's overall performance through its influence on information processing, purchase intentions and attitude towards the retail establishment. Retailers' store layout results in greater consumer elaboration and more positive consumer outcomes (Griffith, 2005: 1391). The retail environment is changing more than ever before. It is characterised by intensifying competition and more sophisticated and demanding customers who have greater expectations related to their consumption experiences. A retail store experience involves more than a nonretail services experience in terms of customers negotiating their way through a store, finding the merchandising they want, interacting with several store personnel along the way, and returning merchandise, all of which influence customers' evaluations of service quality (Dabholkar *et al.*, 1996: 3).

This chapter will provide a brief background about store layout and its impact on purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. It will discuss the research problem of the study, the goals and objectives of the study, rationale of the study, research methodology, limitations and overview of the study.

## 1.2 DEFINING CORE CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

It is necessary to define the core concepts and terminology of this research in order to facilitate as wide an understanding of the issues as possible. The explanation of core concepts and terms in the present context is systematically presented and aligned to the logical progression of the thesis. Store layout, consumer purchasing behaviour and convenience stores are defined within the context of marketing and retailing.

**Store layout** is ease of user movement through the store to provide maximum exposure of goods and attractive display (Marketing Glossary, 2007). This includes doors, merchandise placement, shelf orientation, music, check-out counters, interior decorating, staff attitude, lighting and location of the loading facilities (Levy *et al.*, 1995: 6).

**Consumer purchasing behaviour** is the process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods and services to satisfy their needs and wants. This process is influenced by the social and cultural environment (Consumer buying behaviour, 2007).

**Convenience store** is a small retail self-service store selling a limited line of fast-moving food and nonfood items, usually with extended hours of operation (Glencoe Online, 2004).

### **1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

A Short History of the Convenience Store Industry (2009) states that convenience stores evolved from a variety of sources early in the twentieth century. They drew upon characteristics of many types of retail establishments in existence at the time: the "mom-and-pop" neighbourhood grocery store, the "ice-house" (from pre-refrigerator days), the dairy store, the supermarket and the delicatessen. Convenience stores grew rapidly after the Second World War alongside the idea of the "American dream". More families had more cars and lived in more suburbs, further away from shopping centres and large grocery stores. So, more convenience stores came into existence (The origin of the convenience store, 2007).

ACNielsen (2006) reports that in today's time pressured world, convenience becomes increasingly important to South African consumers. Shopper habits are constantly evolving, along with developments in retail offerings. In recent years, the convenience store industry stands as an economic powerhouse, a vibrant channel of retail trade, and an anchor business for the neighborhoods (Today's Convenience Stores, 2001).

In South Africa, the convenience store format is growing by approximately 14% annually, making it the fastest growth segment in the market. International experience shows that small stores, such as convenience stores, can be a growth engine for business (I-Net Bridge, 2008). There has been a steep increase in the number of convenience stores and centres popping up all over the country in the last few years, and the main reason for this increase is the rapid rate of urban housing development. These days, a new housing complex seems to come standard with a convenience store or centre in the vicinity. Usually, these stores are fairly busy at any given time, day or night, so it is clear that the convenience aspect has huge a consumer appeal (Lauren, 2007).

Many factors affect the store patronage decision, e.g. location, service levels, pricing policies, merchandise assortment, store environment and store image. However, very little research has been conducted on the actual determinants of a good store layout. The increase in dual income families and longer working hours are making general shopping a more stressful activity for many families because of time pressure and lack of response by retailers (Avlott and Mitchell, 1999: 683).

Therefore, this exploratory research hopes to investigate if more consumers in small convenience stores are experiencing problems with different merchandise displays, narrow flow space, absence of price tags on products and absence of direction arrows and signs showing where the merchandise is being displayed. As a result of the above-mentioned factors, Aylott and Mitchell (1999: 683) contend that customers spent more time in a store and only purchase fewer items than intended.

There appears to be lack of knowledge of the main issues around convenience stores such as crowd density, staff attitude and training, store layout, impulse purchasing pressure, location, product assortment, music and lighting.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Notwithstanding the commercial and academic research that has taken place, there are still many uncertainties about the behaviours and rituals of customers pertaining to store layout (Newman and Foxall, 2003: 591).

Today's customers are more sensitive and demanding than ever. They want fast, friendly service on their terms every time they come to a store (Andersen, 1997: 118). If they do not get fast and friendly service, they will abandon that establishment in search of another one which offers fast, convenient and better services.

A front that does not have a positive store image loses potential customers who shy away from it and go to stores they understand. Such a negative front also brings in a certain number of people who think it might be their kind of store and are disappointed and angry when they discover that they misjudged it. A non-descript front not only loses sales, but it also increases expenses (Shaffer and Greenwald, 1996: 242).

Based on the views of Shaffer and Greenwald (1996: 242), a well defined, attractive and friendly store layout will attract potential customers to the store and, at the same time, discourage those who are not interested in the merchandise from entering the store.

As a result, the study investigates the impact of store layout on consumer purchasing behaviour and intends to present suggestions to improve the quality of service delivery in Kwa Mashu.

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of the study is to investigate the impact of store layout on consumer purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

### **Research objectives**

The following objectives are drawn from the overall aim of the study:

- ❖ To determine the essential characteristics of layout of convenience stores;
- ❖ To establish if problems are encountered by consumers with regard to different store settings while shopping around independent convenience stores;
- ❖ To investigate whether consumers are satisfied with the level of service they get from convenience stores in Kwa Mashu in terms of accessibility, quality of merchandise and general appearance; and
- ❖ To make recommendations to improve store layout in independent convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

## **1.6 RATIONALE**

This study should contribute to the development of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu by adhering to the needs and wants of consumers. The study is also intended to measure and assess the merchandise display and assortment in stores, traffic flow and crowd density, service levels, pricing policies, store environment and store image, staff attitude and training, impulse purchasing pressure, and the impact of store layout and problems associated with merchandise display.

The real value of this study, however, lies in the hope that the retailer's commitment to providing efficient and improved customer service will eventually allow both the retailers and consumers to successfully uncover the mechanics of good store layout.

The consumers of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu will benefit by providing the required information on store layout to the researcher.

## 1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data will be collected by means of self-administered questionnaires given to the sample population to ascertain consumers' views about the impact of store layout and their purchasing behaviour in convenience stores at Kwa Mashu. The study is quantitative in nature. Convenience sampling was applied to facilitate the collection of data. This approach was practised because almost everybody is a grocery customer, and samples are easier to setup, cheaper in financial terms, and are adequate in their representativeness within the scope of the defined research (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 102).

The sampling population for the study was taken from convenience stores' customers from different sections of Kwa Mashu location. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to four hundred respondents in Kwa Mashu Township outside the following convenience stores:

<b>NAME OF STORE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Shenge Supermarket	A section
Mkhulushane Supermarket	B section
Zamaokuhle Supermarket	C section
Africa Supermarket	D section
Kwa Magwaza store	E section
Kwa Nkabinde Supermarket	F section
Kwa Maphumulo Supermarket	G section
Kwa Mhlongo Supermarket	H section
Kwa Mavundla Supermarket	L section
Kwa Nozaza convenience store	Ntuzuma (Kwa Mashu extension)

In Kwa Mashu, the term convenience and supermarket are used interchangeably. Therefore, some convenience stores are known as supermarkets. The data was analyzed by means of frequencies, and chi square tests using the statistical programme SPSS version 15.0.



## **1.8 LIMITATIONS**

The study was limited to a review of literature pertaining to store appearance, merchandise display and other attributes of a good store layout. Due to time and cost constraints, the study was confined to only convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

The research was done in Kwa Mashu area and, therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to all convenience stores in Kwa Zulu-Natal or in the whole of South Africa.

## **1.9 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

The report on this study is made up of five chapters. These chapters cover the following areas:

### **1.9.1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the study and provides an overview of the research problem, the research objectives, the rationale behind the study and the research methodology and limitations thereof.

### **1.9.2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review gives an overview of store layout theory. It also discusses consumer buying behaviours and perceptions and what retailers can do to help their customers to better overcome this phenomenon.

The chapter will examine various concepts or characteristics relating to store layout which include: crowd density, staff attitude and training, store layout, impulse purchasing pressure, location, product assortment, music, and lighting.

### **1.9.3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology chapter shows how the data has been collected and gathered. It provides insight into the sampling methods used, the questionnaire, and various other techniques used to analyze the results. It also contains a review of the

validity and reliability of the research investigation, indicating areas where errors might have occurred.

#### **1.9.4 CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the statistical analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaires. The data has been processed into meaningful results that the reader is able to interpret and understand.

#### **1.9.5 CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This final chapter of the dissertation contains the conclusions that are drawn from the findings in chapter four and also from chapter two. Recommendations and suggestions for further research in the field are made.

#### **1.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a brief background about store layout and its impact on purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. It discussed the research problem of the study, the goals and objectives of the study, rationale of the study, research methodology, limitations and overview of the study.

The next chapter will review the literature in more detail and cover the theme of the important aspects pertaining to this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The second chapter commences with a comprehensive overview of characteristics of store layout and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. As suggested by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003: 371), most convenience stores are poorly perceived with respect to in-store displays and external appearance. The outside store appearance affects consumers' choice of a store. Therefore, stores should pay attention to external appearance; if the external appearance is not attractive, customers will not want to enter. Both service and merchandise quality exert a significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction (Babakus *et al.*, 2004: 713).

The aims of the literature review are much more than a mere survey of the information that results in a list of items representing some literature on the area of study. It is understood that the literature review is more of a “research facilitator”, because it influences the research at many stages of its development, from its inception to the conclusions. The literature review provides a conceptual framework to be built in which facts, relationships and findings of this research study can be placed and it helps to refine and introduce ideas that are relevant to the scope of the study. It should also be noted that the literature examined relates to studies done in other countries other than South Africa, and it can be used because it relates to the study undertaken.

#### **2.2 STORE APPEARANCE AND IMAGE**

Developing a strong positive appearance has become essential to the maintenance of sustained competitive advantage. Research into store appearance has allowed retailers to create positioning strategies and enabled them to differentiate their stores in terms of the products and prices or services on offer (Birtwistle and Shearer, 2001: 9).

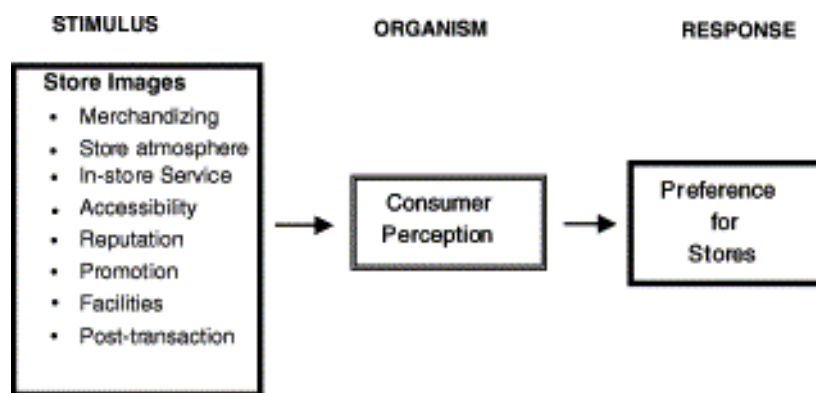
The significant role played by store appearance within food retailing is unquestionable and many authors have long advocated that a desirable store appearance, facilitated by an effective positioning strategy, can be considered a core element of the retail mix and can be integral in influencing store choice. Consumer loyalty will be more likely when the consumer perceives the appearance of a store to be desirable. A wide belief exists that consumers perceive store appearance to be desirable when the store image is congruent with their self-image or the image to which they aspire (Devlin *et al.*, 2003: 653).

Estelami and Bergstein (2006: 169) are also of the same opinion that consumers typically form an overall impression of a retail store through various information processing mechanisms, such as advertising, word-of-mouth, or personal experience. The resulting store appearance helps create consumer expectations that may subsequently influence a consumer's assessment of the behaviours and actions of the retailer in future transactions. As a result, consumer assessment of critical retailer characteristics, such as value perceptions, evaluations of employee behaviour, and satisfaction judgments may be influenced by the appearance associated with the store. Store appearance provides the consumer with a series of standards by which they can evaluate the retailer.

The determinants of a good store layout are scarce because they mainly rely on delivering of services and the quality of services being provided. However, there are six major dimensions that should be considered when determining a good store appearance, namely: personal interaction, policy, physical appearance, premises, problem solving and the convenience of a store. The findings reveal that the impact of physical appearance and convenience are the most basic marketing tool for retailers to create competitive advantages and to enhance customers' shopping experience. The physical appearance of a store has the greatest impact on the overall service quality, higher customer retention and higher future consumption, respectively (Siu and Cheung, 2001: 88).

Thang and Tan (2003: 193) further assert that attributes of store image and appearance affect consumers' preference for the stores. The stimuli that pertain to store attributes include merchandising, store atmosphere, in-store service, accessibility, reputation, promotion, facilities and post-transaction service. Consumers' preference is based on their post-visit ranking of the stores. To a certain extent, consumers' visits to retail stores often take the form of a recreational activity whose worthiness is reinforced by the level of service provision within the store. Hence, the quality of in-store services is likely to have a strong impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour and, if not liked or incompatible with the values or the beliefs sought by the target consumers, might inhibit attraction. Below is a diagram with components of a good store appearance.

**Figure 2.1** A S–O–R Model of consumer retail purchase behaviour



**Source:** Thang and Tan (2003: 193)

As shown in Figure 2.1, the stimuli that pertain to store attributes include merchandising, store atmosphere, in-store service, accessibility, reputation, promotion, facilities and transaction service. The A S–O–R Model of consumer retail purchase behaviour focuses on the most important elements to succeed with store appearance and image. In becoming a customer oriented business, management needs to be familiar with each of the elements in the model (Thang and Tan, 2003: 193).

Memery *et al.* (2005: 399) note that store appearance is acquired through experience and thus learnt, and found retail store appearance to be the total conceptualised or

expected reinforcement that a person associates with shopping at a particular store. While many different approaches have been used by researchers to measure the construct of store appearance and establish how it is placed in consumers' minds, most have focused on parts of the image, rather than the whole appearance of a store. Such retail image factors are intrinsic to store and product choice decisions, and, therefore, need to be explored in conjunction with other store layout factors.

Vrechopoulos *et al.* (2004: 13) found that store layout is an important factor affecting consumer behaviour and a critical determinant towards the creation of store image. Well designed layouts are extremely important because they strongly influence in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency.

Most important for customer satisfaction is the store as a brand. Retailers must be good at retailing. Customers are satisfied when the store is neat and pleasant and when they feel that the store understands their needs. Only certain customer segments are interested in store brands. Satisfied customers are loyal. Several studies demonstrate that store appearance affects consumer product judgments and responses. Strong store appearance offers recognition, familiarity, confidence, and other associations that make it easier for consumers to make shopping decisions (Martenson, 2007: 544).

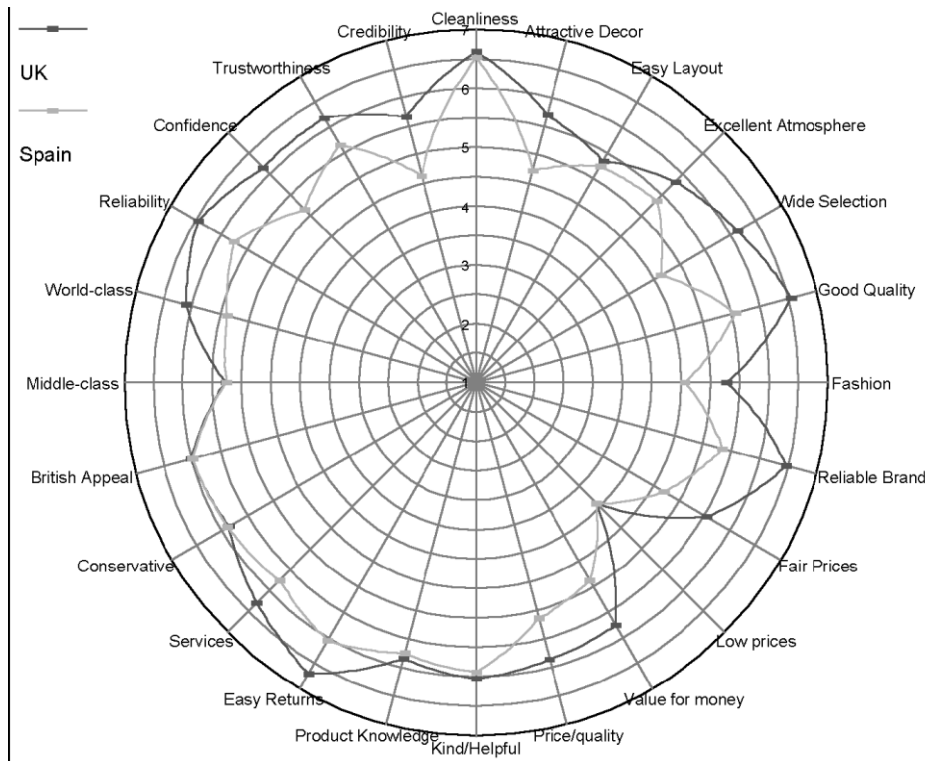
According to Hu and Jasper (2006: 25), the holistic view defines store appearance as the total impression a store makes on the minds of its customers. In the past, store displays were mainly used for promotional purposes. However, as consumers became more sophisticated, retailers have discovered new roles for effective appearances: communicating product information and store image, assisting consumers in making purchase decisions, and creating an exciting shopping environment. As a result of the above mentioned factors, consumers had a more favourable attitude toward merchandise and service quality and felt more aroused or pleased with a store where more appearance cues were present. They also had a more favourable perception of store image when high-personalized service was provided. Consumers perceived that

they would be more likely to shop in a store that had more in-store displays of graphics with user-friendly meaning.

Whilst all dimensions of store appearance inevitably contain both tangible and intangible elements, "physical characteristics", "pricing policy" and "product range" were felt to be the more tangible dimensions, presenting customers with a higher proportion of primarily physical and immediate clues on which to base their perceptions - such as store cleanliness, decor, range, product quality and price. From a management perspective, it was felt that this higher degree of tangibility would enable more rapid adaptation of these dimensions to host market conditions, if need arose. The dimensions termed customer service, character and store reputation were felt to represent less tangible dimensions of store appearance, more reliant on customers' experience-based perceptions of staff helpfulness, kindness, trust, store appeal and position. As such, any adaptation or change necessary in response to the host market would require a longer-term view (Burt and Carralero-Encina, 2000: 433).

Below is a diagram to show the inter link between these perceptions from studies done in the United Kingdom (UK) and Spain.

**Figure 2.2** Perceptions of store image attributes



**Source:** Burt and Carralero-Encina (2000: 433).

Figure 2.2 reflects the image attributes from previous studies in the UK and Spain. Customer perceptions do not take place in a vacuum. It must be recognised that these retail elements may be suitable for different markets and by no means an end of image enhancement and customer service development (Burt and Carralero-Encina, 2000: 433).

Store appearance and visual merchandising are factors that contribute to the uniqueness of a store. The exterior and interior of a store convey several messages about the store to the consumers. The building that houses a retail store, (whether new or old) and the exterior design of the store are important aspects of the design of the store. Managing space is the first and foremost concern of almost every retailer, when it comes to designing the store's interior. Space is always an expensive and scarce resource. Allocating space to various merchandise categories in a store is very important (Anonymous, 2007).



Store appearance influences people to make perceptions and judgments about the store with regard to the information and evidence put before them. The theory of affordances suggests that people perceive store appearance as a meaningful entity and that such a perception conveys information directly to them. These theories together imply that consumers attend to design, social and ambient environment when evaluating stores, as they believe that these factors offer reliable information about product-related attributes such as quality, price, and the overall shopping experience. Empirical evidence supports the idea that information from store layout influences consumers' perceptions of service providers and helps consumers to categorize service firms (Baker *et al.*, 2002: 120).

Another important characteristic of store layout is store traffic flow and crowd density.

### **2.3 STORE TRAFFIC FLOW AND CROWD DENSITY**

The store layout is the foundation for operations. Therefore, conducting a traffic flow analysis is a good step to take when the goal is to improve store performance. This tool is useful when planning a major remodel or a simpler reorganization of the current arrangement. The analysis is also useful when the motive is to fine tune after a remodel. By establishing customers' shopping patterns, a retailer can examine the strengths and weaknesses of the layout. The analysis is easy to conduct and can be done on a large or small scale, encompassing the whole store or one department. The results will be very clear and make decisions easier to come by. The overall objective of conducting a traffic flow analysis is to determine ways to make shopping and running the store easier, using layout and merchandising techniques to improve sales, enhance the store's appearance and make shopping more fun (Quinn and Stewart, 2007).

Shopping is one of the most exciting activities in life. As the taste and the preference of shoppers change constantly, retail facilities have evolved in response. It is universally accepted that in-store traffic flow plays an important role in the success of a retail facility (Hui *et al.*, 2007: 136). Many small retailers find difficulties in competing with modern

retail developments in the town centre and off-centre locations, and are in decline as a result of congestions and heavy traffic flow in stores. Traders recognize that most of the shops serve the local community, and the high residential density of the surrounding area means that there is a sizeable population living within easy walking distance. However, much of this potential for locally based stores has been lost to large supermarkets and other stores due to less attention being devoted to the problems of congestions and heavy traffic flow in stores (Guy and Duckett, 2003: 401).

Pan *et al.* (2008: 95) maintain that research on store context evidenced that the atmosphere of a store is the key element in consumers' purchasing attitudes in the consumer decision process, particularly for unplanned shopping. In other words, unique store cues eventually induce positive influences on the consumption context, which, in turn, generate favourable customer perception towards the store and the products displayed, eventually affecting the purchasing intention, and actual buying actions. Generally store atmosphere is defined as designing the retail space to affect consumer emotions and, accordingly, to appeal to consumer purchasing behaviour. This definition includes physical products on display, sales procedures, after sales services, and most importantly the aggregate atmosphere of this space. Elements contributing to the atmosphere could be either tangible or intangible. Tangible elements may include colouring, lighting, background music, goods display, point-of-sale-posters, employees and visitors. Exterior cues include location, exterior lighting, and exterior colouring. Intangibles may include scent, odours, and temperature, and other social factors such as gestures, attitudes, and behaviour of service employees and the visitors as well as personal buying readiness and past experience. These elements will result in favourable consumer perception (or sometimes may act as irritating factors and, subsequently, ignite (or extinguish) the consumer's perception of value as well as other in-store or shopping behaviours in a broad sense.

When it comes to traffic patterns, nothing says it better than a correctly designed store. Wide aisles encourage customers to "power walk" to the merchandise they have come into the store to buy. While this facility might be great for very large stores, it's not so

good for specialty retailers. Since a customer spends an average of eight minutes shopping in a store, it's impossible to see a large number of stock-keeping units in the average store in so short a time. Retailers have to slow customers down to get them to see more merchandise, yet not create traffic jams in the store and lose them altogether. The best strategy is to establish aisles that are narrow enough to force customers to slow down, which gives them enough time to notice the products displayed, but not so narrow that they create a traffic jam. Therefore, the best place for customers to linger is at the rear of the store. To achieve this, lower density fixtures should be positioned at the front of the store, and higher density fixtures in the back - the higher the density, the longer a customer is likely to stay to look at merchandise. Increasing merchandise density to the rear of the store encourages customers to stay and browse (Traffic Flow: Make it Work to Maximize Sales, 2008).

Dion (2004: 250) states that crowding is not simply a matter of density in a given space. Crowding appears to arise through the juxtaposition of density with certain social and personal circumstances which sensitize the individual to the potential constraints of limited space. The perception of such constraints leads to a recognized disparity between the amount of space demanded, or considered to be adequate, by the individual, and the amount of space available to them. To provide high quality services under conditions of crowding, it is important to understand the relationships between crowding and personal control. The introduction of the distinction between cognitive and affective crowding would provide a better understanding of retail crowding since they could have different consequences. Differentiating between crowding and personal control might allow one to better understand the role of personal control in the crowding process.

Emberson *et al.* (2006: 467) are of the opinion that recent initiatives, such as efficient consumer response, have raised the profile of in-store merchandising as a possible solution. Improving on customer traffic flow and on-shelf availability has become something of a mantra within retailing. If the product is not on the shelf when the shoppers arrive to make their selection, the sale (and potentially also the customer) may

be lost to the store. Store visits suggest that variations might exist between merchandisers' working practices, due to different store group practices. Store group stocking policies, stock control, staffing levels and the volume of customer traffic were identified by merchandisers as affecting their activities.

Feinberg *et al.* (2002: 470) suggest that, given that most retailers have very limited resources, it would seem prudent to identify which small set of features really do make a difference in customer satisfaction and store traffic. Retailing should, by virtue of the nature of the business, be at the cutting edge of store traffic flow. It is, therefore, no surprise that store traffic flow is an important topic of conversation in the academic and business arenas. Store traffic flow automates and centralizes customer contacts. The investment in store traffic flow has generally led to increase in customer satisfaction, sales, or loyalty. A business that does not consider a customer important should try to do without them for 30 days. A satisfied customer buys more, is more loyal, and more profitable over his/her lifetime. There is clear logic to store traffic flow being the central focus for business. A dissatisfied customer causes market damage because he/she is more likely to defect to competition and more likely to persuade others to defect.

Cottet *et al.* (2006: 219) strongly suggest that utilitarian value of shopping is essentially obtained through easy access to products or information. The utilitarian value depends on the way the consumption need, leading to the shopping act, has been fulfilled. Hedonic values have an influence on satisfaction; they tend to indicate that the utilitarian value is related to product availability, while the hedonic value is influenced by such elements as atmosphere, relations with store employees, as well as crowding and other peripheral services. For the retailer, it is important to know whether the value of shopping has an impact on consumer satisfaction. If such is the case, measures and typologies to avoid crowding have to be developed (Dion, 2004: 250).

Merchandise display, which is discussed below, is another important characteristic of store layout.

## 2.4 MERCHANDISE DISPLAY

Merchandise display, according to Zentes *et al.* (2007: 209), is a term frequently used in the context of in-store marketing. It refers to the way products are presented in a retail outlet. While this expression has been used with a focus on merchandise display (e.g. the choice of fixtures to be used and the method of product presentation), it relates to overall store design, store layout and other facets of the store environment. Therefore, it is often used synonymously with the design component of in-store marketing.

Two basic objectives of in-store marketing are:

- ❖ to facilitate the search process for customers, i.e. to design the store for easy internal orientation; and
- ❖ to create a positive store atmosphere, *i.e.* to evoke a positive emotional state of mind in consumers while visiting the store.

Both aspects are important to different degrees in different stores and for different consumer segments. The retailer's focus is mainly on easy orientation and supporting the consumer search process. When approaching shoppers, the efforts are shifted towards merchandise display as it facilitates shopping and easy orientation, because consumers should not be confused but feel secure and self-confident in the shopping situation (Zentes *et al.*, 2007: 209)

McIntosh (2007) illustrates that merchandising is more than simply the arrangement of products on the shelf. It is an integral component of the business image. It should be considered when designing the retail mix. Opinions suggest that merchandising and display are frivolous extra expenses for the small business owner who is just starting up. The implication is that expenses such as marketing, rent, inventory, utilities and staffing are serious expenses, while merchandising and display are frills. Merchandising and display are an important part of the retail environment, and should have a reasonable budget allocated even for a retailer operating on a shoestring. In today's competitive retail environment, a retailer cannot afford to consider merchandising as a frill. Everyone is competing for the customers' rand. There are more

choices out there for consumers than ever before. By rotating merchandise and changing displays, the customers feel that there is always something new for them to see or experience. Including merchandising in the retailing plan and budget makes sense. It can make the difference between selling a product and having it sit on the shelf.

Appealing displays by retailers can lead shoppers to sacrifice the time and effort required to go further to more distant stores. This technique suggests that consumers shop at the stores where they can maximize their satisfaction (i.e. efficiency), considering both retail attributes and shopping costs. Pleasant shopping atmosphere positively affects the shopping time and the money that customers spend in a store as well as the emotion of shopping (Kim and Jin, 2001: 236).

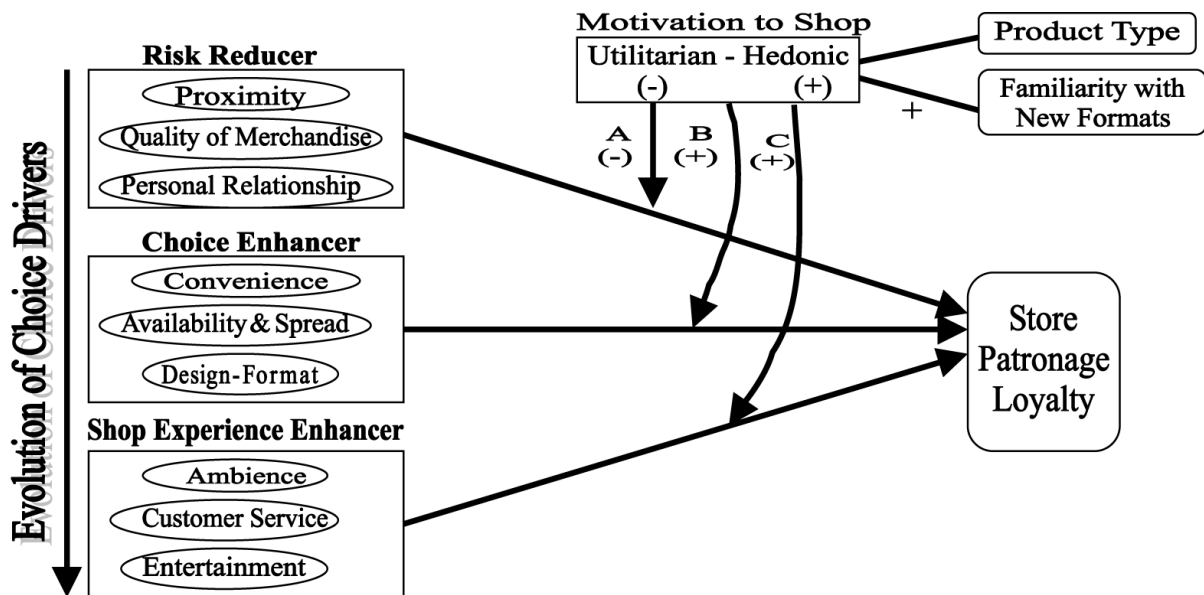
Laroche *et al.* (2005: 157) state that, in a shopping environment, consumers not only evaluate merchandise quality, but also consider service quality. A store environment can serve as an important basis for consumers' evaluations of merchandise products. The store atmosphere has been found to shape consumers' merchandise value perceptions, which, in turn, influence store patronage intentions. However, little attention has been paid to how these relationships may be influenced by the consumers' shopping environment and merchandise value perceptions. These authors found that service quality perceptions contribute to purchase intentions. There is no doubt that consumers, who are in a good mood, are more likely to want to affiliate with store employees, stay longer in the shopping environment, and make more purchases there. Therefore, pleasure is expected to influence service quality perception positively.

According to the research performed by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), product placement at eye-level or slightly below seems to have the most selling success. Eye-level is described to be at around 13 centimetres from the floor. Therefore, companies opt to place their product at eye-level or in children's reach. Many leading brands or high draw items are placed on the eye-level shelves. Also, new products are often displayed on the best shelves to promote their new product and generate enough

interest so that customers will want to try them. Otherwise, items, depending on their size and weight, are put above or below. Generally, products that are heavier are placed on the bottom shelves (Aghazadeh, 2005: 31).

Sinha and Banerjee (2004: 482) contend that convenient stores' shoppers attach more importance to merchandise display. These shoppers prefer to visit those stores that have depth and width of products. The importance of relationship/comfort level with the retailer is stressed with regard to grocery stores. The shopper is willing to trade-off the extra travel effort with the experience. Such an experience can be provided through services and merchandise. A good display of products, so that the shoppers can look around and touch and feel the products, becomes an important consideration to consumers. It is, therefore, imperative for convenience stores to stock and display at least a minimum required number of brands and models to ensure visits by shoppers. Given the size of stores currently in Kwa Mashu, this is a challenge for the stores as well as for brands that have smaller market shares.

**Figure 2.3** Framework for examining store preferences in an evolving market



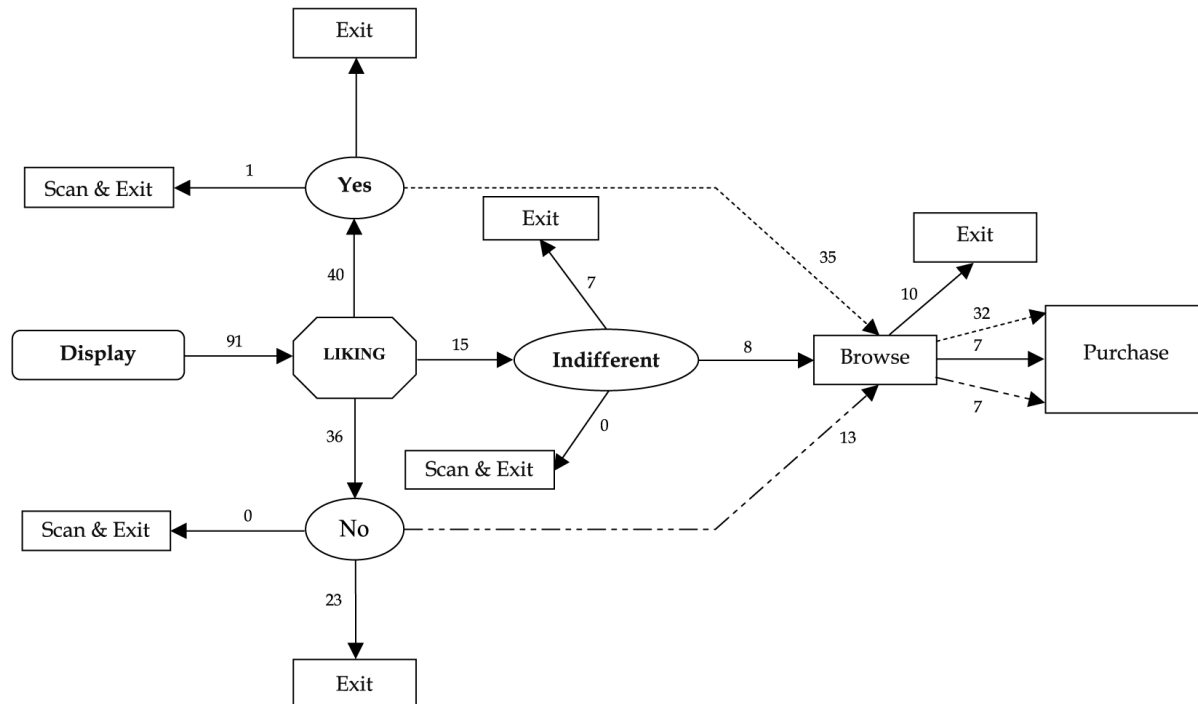
Source: Sinha and Banerjee (2004: 482)

The tested framework (Figure 2.3) demonstrates that the basic drivers of store loyalty (an antecedent of store choice) can be categorised into three broad groups – utilitarian dimensions also termed as “Risk Reducers”, “Choice Enhancers” and “Shopping Experience Enhancers”. It shows how store loyalty can be achieved through these three main drivers (Sinha and Banerjee, 2004: 482).

Kerfoot *et al.* (2003: 143) maintain that initial findings in Figure 2.4 suggest that liking of display does not totally determine purchase, but does make it four times more likely. Visual stimulation and communication have also been considered important aspects of retailing by practitioners. Merchandise display is, therefore, concerned with both how the product and/or brand is visually communicated to the customer. The themes that linked most strongly to purchase intention are: merchandise colours, presentation style, awareness of fixtures, path finding, sensory qualities of materials and lighting. The importance of attaining appropriate merchandise display has meant that within the retail environment, numerous methods have been used to display merchandise and communicate product and retailer brand. This diversity in merchandise display methods has also stemmed from the vast array of goods and services that are sold by retailers.



**Figure 2.4** Behavioural processes from display to consumption



**Source:** Kerfoot et al. (2003: 143)

Favourable merchandise display entices consumers to browse through the store and results in purchasing. This pattern is supported in previous research studies with results showing that merchandise display results in increasing purchasing patterns. The themes that linked most strongly to purchase intention are: merchandise colours, presentation style, awareness of fixtures, path finding, sensory qualities of materials and lighting (Kerfoot *et al.*, 2003: 143).

According to Merchandising (2008), the way that products are displayed or merchandised can have a significant effect on retail sales. In self-service stores, staple products tend to be merchandised strategically so that customers, looking for these items, are required to walk past higher profit items such as luxury goods. This display can often result in higher sales and higher profits.

Merchandising consists of the following elements:

- Correct strategic placement in the store;
- Eye-catching and appealing display;

- Appropriate point of sale support media (e.g. labels, signs); and
- Legal requirements satisfied.

Krishnan *et al.* (2002: 54) comment that the availability of consumers' most preferred merchandise in an assortment positively influences consumers' perceptions of assortment size. This finding points to the impact of a hitherto unexplored retail strategic dimension and commitment to assortment consistency. What is meant by consistency in assortment is the tacit promise made by a retailer to carry a given set of brands, sizes, flavours and colours from one period to the next, so that a consumer, who looks for his/her preferred brand, will be able to find that brand at that retail store. While it is obvious that the mere existence of the consumer segment that looks for consistent assortments will drive some retailers to adopt such commitments to consistent assortments, what is less obvious is that this strategy is affected (negatively) by supply side factors such as the availability of trade deals. It is important to note that although consumers may seek particular brands, their final choice of a retailer is also affected by merchandise display and location of the retailers. Thus, it is not clear how a retailer would react in a competitive environment even if a sizable segment of the market seeks consistent merchandise assortment.

Azuma and Fernie (2001: 282) propose that in order to meet the adamant needs of the consumers and respond to the sudden changes in trends and consumption patterns, retailers need to have the "leanest" and the most "agile" ways to get the right product in the right place at the right time in smaller consignment sizes with increasing frequency. Good merchandise display leads to the delight of customers and remain profitable simultaneously. As a result, retailers with efficient merchandise displays achieve higher levels of distribution.

Mitchell and Ingram (2002) contend that merchandise display is at a premium in most retail outlets, particularly those that depend on high sales volume. Such outlets attempt to optimize the display space used and allocate cost (a fraction of rent) for product lines according to the contribution to sales and profitability. The determination of the best

product mix and layout is a central problem in retailing, where increasingly the number of products and categories available to the retail buyer is plentiful but retail shelf space is finite and fixed.

The determination of the optimal product display assortment requires information about factors such as:

- How much value the market places on each available product, including which products are viewed as completely unacceptable; and
- How the market assesses the sustainability across products based on price.

Below is a discussion about product assortment which is also a key element in store layout.

## **2.5 PRODUCT ASSORTMENT**

Effective merchandising strategies can reap big rewards in today's marketplace. Effective category management is essential for retailing. It is critical that stores improve their service by providing customers with the products they want, in a position that is sensible and simple to find. Taking a more strategic approach to merchandising can reap big rewards by boosting sales, increasing footfall and ultimately increasing turnover (Clark, 2003: 42).

Levy and Weitz (2007: 512) found that a good merchandise assortment should entice customers to move around the store to purchase more merchandise than they may have planned originally. One method is to expose customers to a layout that facilitates a specific traffic pattern. Another method of helping customers move through the store is to provide variety; the store should be filled with little nooks and crannies that entice shoppers to wander around. A good layout should provide a balance between giving customers adequate space in which to shop. The breadth and depth of the assortment in a merchandise category can affect the retailer's brand image. In general, retailers need to display their merchandise effectively in order to satisfy the customer's need and

maintain their brand image with respect to merchandise category. There is a belief that customers actually buy more if there are improvements in assortment.

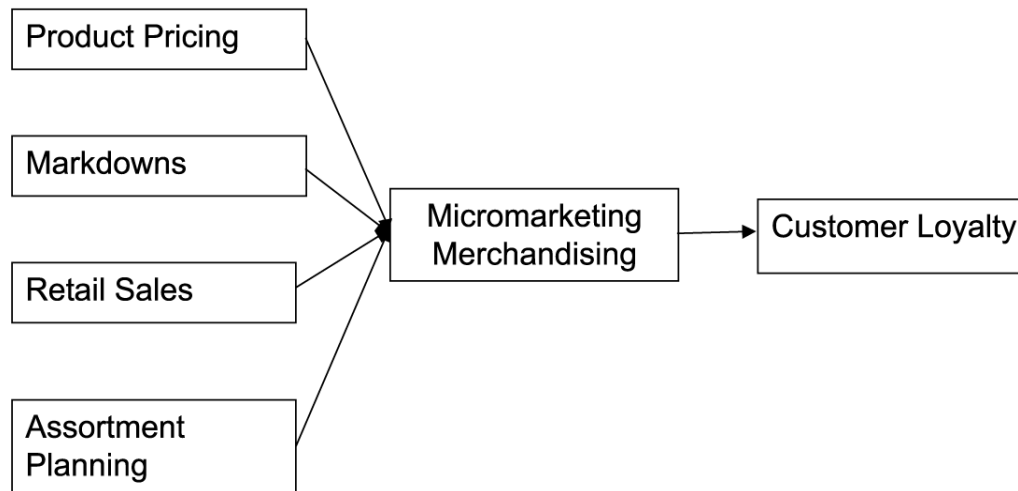
Findings reveal that consumers' perceptions of the assortment range stems from the combination of few indicators, mainly the number of stock-keeping units proposed and the availability of the favourite brands. Findings further demonstrate that consumers' evaluation of the overall store assortment draws on the perceived choice within the product categories where they are highly sensitive to the assortment range. For convenience stores to reach their prime goal of building an efficient assortment, retailers need, beside increasing the outlet's cost-efficiency, to evaluate shoppers' assortment perceptions so that what the store actually offers can be tailored to meet customers' needs and expectations (Amine and Cadenat, 2003: 486).

Boatwright and Nunes (2001: 50) contend that most retailers realize that consumers often prefer stores that carry large assortments of products for several reasons. For one, the larger the selection, the more likely consumers are to find a product that matches their exact specifications. In addition, more products mean more flexibility, which is important if the consumer has uncertain preferences. Moreover, recent research suggests that consumer choice is affected by the perception of variety among a selection which depends on more than just the number of distinct products on the shelves. The consumer's perception of variety can be influenced by the space devoted to the category, the presence or absence of the consumer's favourite item, the arrangement of an assortment and the repetition of items, and the number of acceptable alternatives. Therefore, many observers in industry and academia believe that, if retailers plan merchandise assortment properly, consumers can make a sizeable contribution to the overall retail sales.

Halepete *et al.* (2005: 71) identify that, in the past, when competition was less intense, a store could target a wide range of customers. However, retailing trends indicate that it is becoming more important to satisfy customers' needs. Moreover, assortment planning is one of the most important factors in merchandising. In general, the assortment of

products depends on store location, store size, and the lifestyle of the local consumers. For an organisation to achieve customer loyalty, the following steps in Figure 2.5 need to be followed.

**Figure 2.5** Factors impacting micromarketing merchandising



**Source:** Halepete *et al.* (2005: 71)

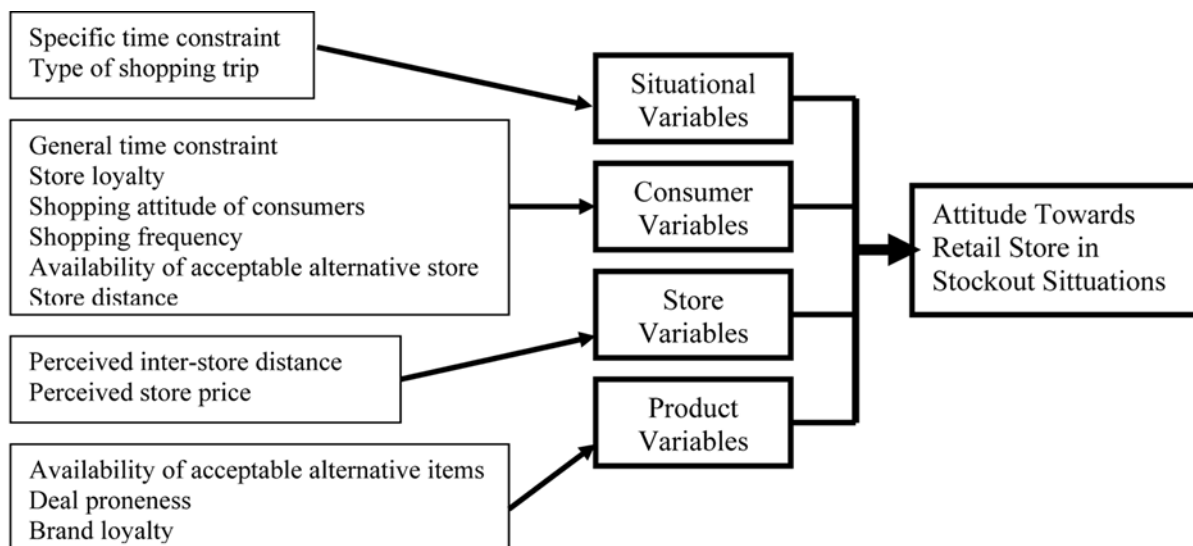
Halepete *et al.* (2005: 71) propose that this model could be used by managers of retail outlets to understand the various variables that need to be considered while merchandising for their stores. Based on the area the store is located in, the importance of each variable can be adjusted to best suit specific stores. Application of the information gained through this model could help to increase sales and, hence, profits to a great extent.

Miranda *et al.* (2005: 220) further support the argument that increased rates of customer retention leads to increased profitability. The strength of allegiance or loyalty of customers to a store is an important indicator of store health. In fact, a study of retailing in the United Kingdom highlighted the importance of developing a corporate retail strategy to manage customer loyalty and prevent shoppers from switching stores. Store satisfaction is a necessary condition for achieving store loyalty. Miranda *et al.* (2005: 220) further indicate that a number of store image studies identified a link between the store attributes and store loyalty. One such study discovered that perceptions of quality

and service provided by the store contributed much to the customer's intention to return to the store.

According to Rani and Velayudhan (2008: 259), there is almost complete lack of understanding about consumers' attitudes towards an out-of-stock store (Figure 2.6). It is more important to understand attitude than behaviour for two reasons. Firstly, attitude towards store influences behaviour (which, in turn, determines profits) importantly and consistently; and, secondly, store attitude can serve as an important measure for effectiveness of retailer strategies and/or practices. An out-of-stock retailer can typically face revenue losses. Consumers choose and patronize a store on the basis of consumer perceptions, images and attitudes towards store experiences, information and consumer needs. Consumers are further influenced primarily by store location and the associated travel costs while choosing a store. Consumers choose a store to minimize total cost in which case they would not want to revisit a store to purchase an out-of-stock item. This visit would mean extra travel expenses, causing higher levels of stress resulting into dissatisfaction which is directly linked to negative attitude towards a store.

**Figure 2.6** Variables towards retail stock out-situations



**Source:** Rani and Velayudhan (2008: 259)

The model in Figure 2.6 implies that the consumer with higher store loyalty within favourable shopping variables would have a more favourable store attitude. Such a consumer already has a positive store attitude, which neutralizes, to some extent, the negative outcome (in terms of satisfaction and attitudes) of out-of-stock (Rani and Velayudhan, 2008: 259).

It is common knowledge that retail consumers are often willing to make substitutions if their initial choice of product is out of stock. That is, they may prefer to buy a different size, colour or brand within a product category rather than go home empty handed. When such behaviour is prevalent in a product category, it makes intuitive sense that a retailer's inventory decisions ought to account for the resulting substitution effects. Yet, most inventory models assume that demand processes for different variants are independent. As a result, demand is independent of inventory levels, though it does depend on the initial choice of variants offered in the assortment. This static substitution model simplifies the resulting inventory and variety analysis, but it is a somewhat unsatisfying assumption, especially for categories such as cigarettes, soft drinks, and grocery items, in which consumers substitute readily when products are out of stock (Mahajan and Van Ryzin, 2001: 334).

According to Lawson (2005: 642), the task of managing the retail mix has grown considerably over the past decade as retailers constantly seek to create and sustain unique trading images that attract and maintain customers. Competition is no longer between products, but encompasses all elements of this mix, including: product offer and positioning, store location, customer service, quality, retail design and store image, retail promotion, retail advertising, price points and other channel members. The successful retailer of the next century will have to adopt core strategies that:

- Build an individual identity for each store product; one that consumers perceive as a brand in its own right. Everything in the store, or connected with the store, has this brand value underlying its philosophy;
- Provide a higher value than any competitor, but at a lower cost; and

- Offer unique products and services as consumers are continually seeking new outlets and demanding more from retailers. Convenience stores are now stocking a complete merchandise assortment for the category in which they compete. Certainly, consumers are increasingly willing to purchase time and convenience and have much higher levels of marketplace sophistication as they navigate various features, prices, labels, products and an assortment of retail formats. Indeed, a retailer needs at least five types of benefit in their bundles: (1) a dominant merchandise assortment, (2) fair prices, (3) respect for customers, (4) time and energy savings, and (5) fun.

Despite massive efforts of suppliers and retailers in the fast-moving-consumer-goods (FMCG) channel to adopt the efficient consumer response practices, many of the expected benefits have not been realized. For these traditional retailers, the massive inefficiencies that had accumulated in the FMCG channel led to higher prices, assortments that did not address the needs of shoppers, out-of-stocks, and many undesired new products that took space and retail management attention. This situation resulted in declining store loyalty among customers. The strategic advantage of category management is to have a real assortment that is consumer focused, that has a clear position on the shelf. Most customers will think the store has more products, but in reality, has fewer products. This view offers a real strategic advantage, since the retail outlet can serve the customer better and, on the other hand, create more space for other products and lower costs, and a better performance for all categories. The category could be a profit centre to the retailer, a real attraction for loyal customers, and strengthen customer loyalty. Category management will increase customer loyalty to the retailer and to the brand, because the target customer will be able to easily find their desired brands at a fair price in one outlet during each shopping trip (Dupre and Gruen, 2004: 444).

Store floor space is another consideration of store layout.



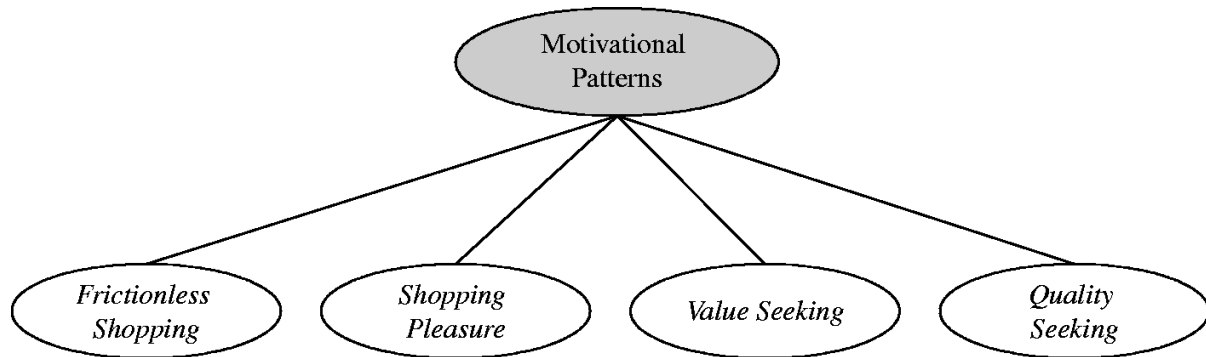
## 2.6 STORE FLOOR SPACE

Floor space shows how store design and in-store communications can make shopping trips easier and more fun for both parents and children. The core requirements are enough space to move around the store, ease of access from outside the store and clear navigation and displays. Stores can also improve the communication of their values by memorable window displays, strong departments using better point of sale (POS), personal touches to encourage customer loyalty, graphics, highlighting prices and age ranges in busy areas (Cowles, 2002: 41).

Michon *et al.* (2008: 456) further substantiate that the environmental psychology theory suggests that floor space should influence shoppers' mood and behavioural intentions. The theory rests on suggestions that a well designed floor space is a desire to stay longer, explore the premises, and affiliate with other shoppers and/or sales associates. Shopping value involves an interaction between a consumer and a product or service that pertains not only to the object itself, but also to the consumption experience. It involves the intrinsic and extrinsic values of the object. Shopping goes way beyond functional utility and task orientation, and provides other experiential benefits and gratifications. Well designed floor space was found to have a positive impact on perceived shopping value, which, in turn, positively influences a consumer's consistent repeat purchase behaviour.

Consumers' substantial desire for shopping pleasure expresses their pursuit of social and experiential value provided by retail environments and store employees. In particular, the motivational pattern referring to shopping pleasure centres around the desired fun to shop, feeling comfortable inside stores, and human contact. Consumers anticipate that space inside a store leads to experience of shopping pleasure, as shown in Figure 2.7 (Wagner, 2007: 569).

**Figure 2.7** Dominant motivational patterns behind shopping



**Source:** Wagner (2007: 569)

Figure 2.7 reflects several cognitive clusters have emerged on consumers' mental associations. In particular, four dominant motivational patterns emerged which subsume frictionless shopping, shopping pleasure, value seeking, and quality seeking. These motivational patterns can be ascribed a dominant role because they account for the very majority of cognitive links. Moreover, the respective functional consequences represent the most highly desired shopping benefits from the consumers' point of view: finding the right products easily, fast shopping, fun to shop, shopping convenience and inexpensive shopping (Wagner, 2007: 569).

The relationship between creativity and retailing has not always been a strong one. Creativity has been most evident in the products sold by retailers, rather than in the retailers themselves, and the ability to bring new products and services to the market has become an increasingly significant success factor. However, creativity has taken on a broader meaning for retailing. As more retailers have developed their brand, so creativity has become more of a required organisational resource and a desirable core competence. An approach to selling space, with an aim of maximising sales, profits and trading efficiencies, has become part of everyday retailing. Nowadays, stores serve not only as a place for purchasing goods, but also as a place for socialising and leisure. The concept of retail space, as serving a more abstract social purpose, concerns the use and design of retail spaces in the store itself and their extension into the wider

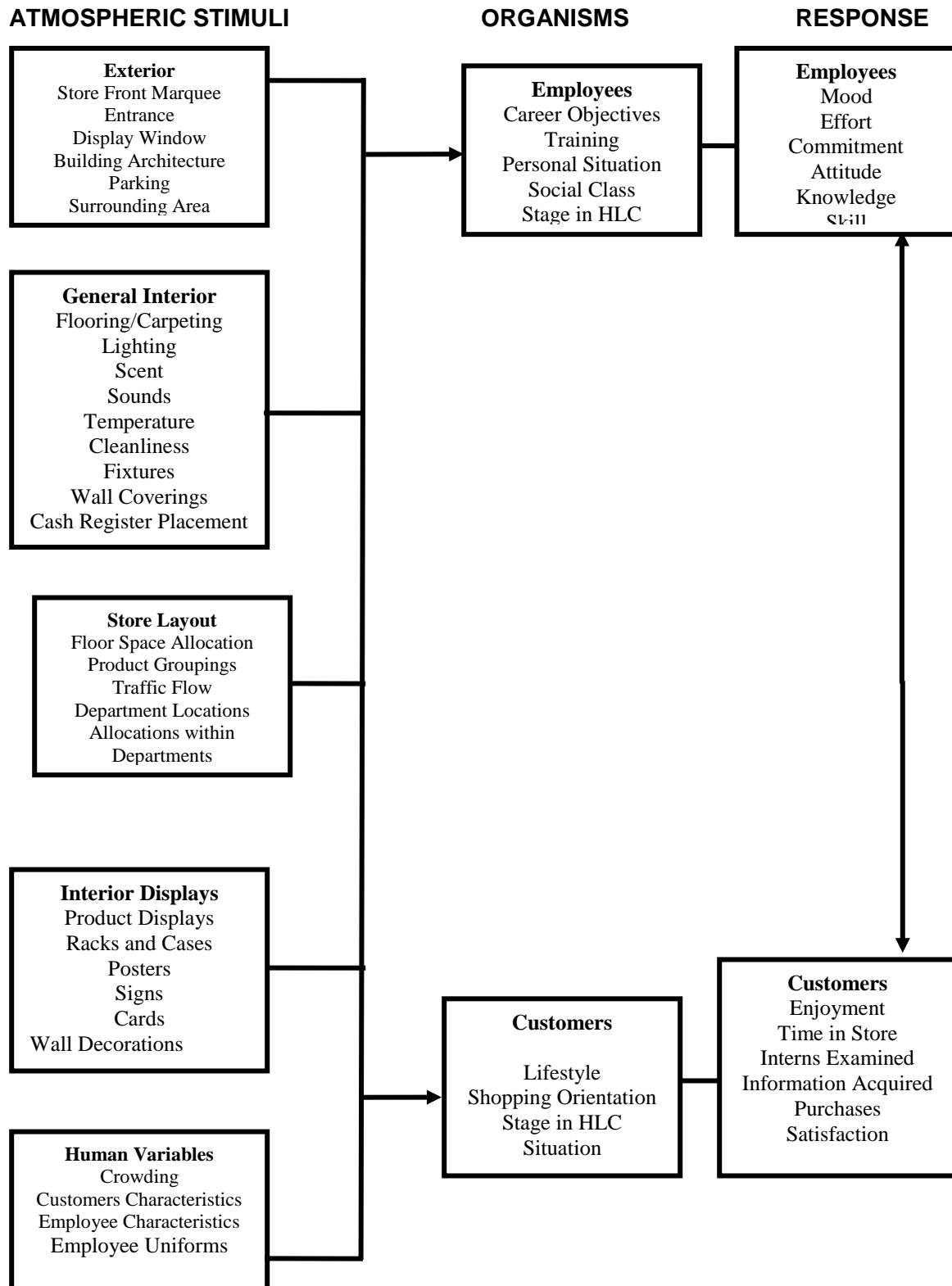
shopping environment resulting in increased turnover, if effectively carried out (Kent, 2007: 734).

The hyper-competitive business environment of the new millennium has forced organizations to increase their emphasis on in-store floor space. This basic principle of internal customer service posits that every department in an organization exists to serve someone, whether that is the external customer or another department. The organization consists of an interdependent chain of individuals and functional units, each taking inputs from one another and turning them out into external customer service. The basic assumption is that if every retailer strives to provide their “internal customer” with better in-store shopping space, then the end customer will receive higher quality service. A typical process management approach involves examining all organizational activities in the sequence that they occur (Farner *et al.*, 2001: 350).

According to Griffith (2005: 1391), store floor space is a critical factor driving consumer elaboration and response in retailing. The floor space of a retail store has been found to significantly impact on retailer's overall performance through its influence on information processing, purchase intentions, and attitude towards the retail establishment. Retailers' floor space results in greater consumer elaboration and more positive consumer outcomes.

Turley and Milliman (2000: 193) suggest, in the figure below, that the floor space offered by a store can influence consumers' decisions to visit the store and the retail environment can guide consumers' inferences about merchandise, service quality, and enjoyment at the store. The prestige store ambience is described as the store that has an open layout with discreet signs, clean wide aisles, decorative ceiling, classic colours, decorated fixtures; textures wall coverings, pile carpeting, soft/dim lighting, and soft classical music.

**Figure 2.8** The influence of retail atmospherics



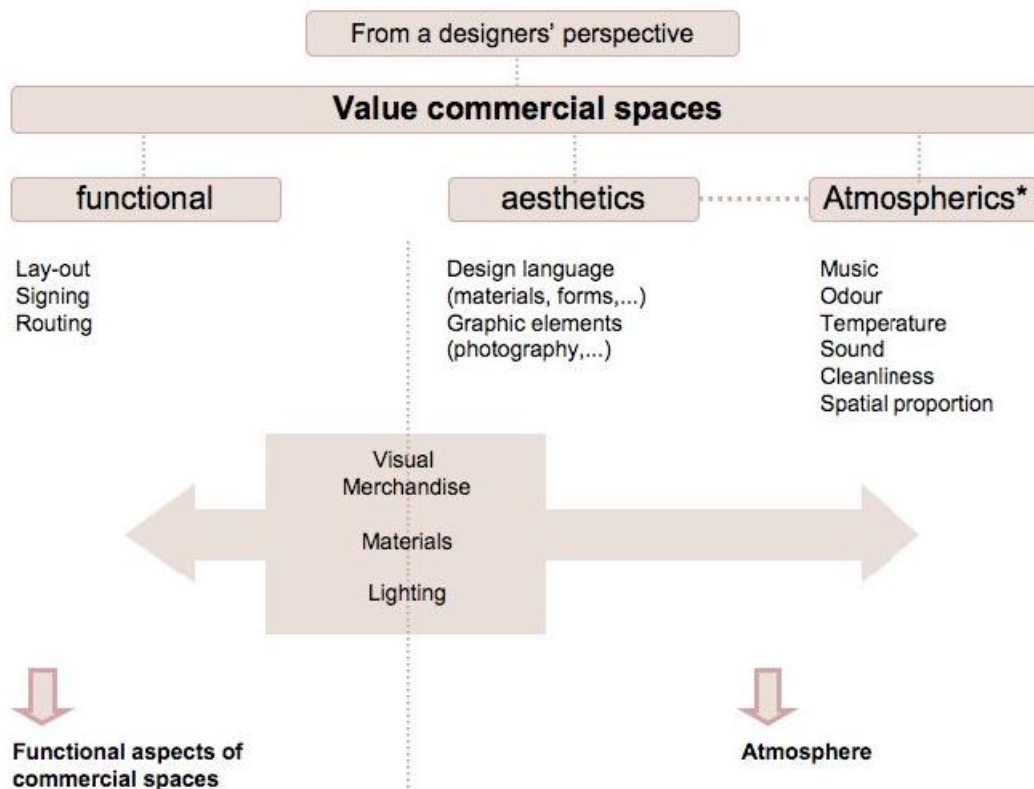
**Source:** Turley and Milliman (2000: 193)

According to Quartier (2008: 4), this model can be applied for atmospheric stimuli, organisms and response. Atmospheric stimuli can be seen as a key component of the shopping environment. The emotional factor in this model contains all feelings elicited by the environment, e.g. enjoyment, time in store, information acquired and purchases satisfaction.

Anonymous (2007) reports that store floor space and visual merchandising are factors that contribute to the uniqueness of a store. The exterior and interior of a store convey several messages about the store to the consumers. The building that houses the retail store (whether new or old) and the exterior design of the store are important aspects of the design of the store. Managing space is the first and foremost concern of almost every retailer, when it comes to designing the store's interior. Space is always an expensive and scarce resource. Allocating space to various merchandise categories in a store is very important. Furthermore, the store floor space efficiency may be assessed on the basis of the share of usable floor area of retail space in the gross external floor area. The main drivers are the shares of consumer shopping space, areas for storage, distribution and retail. These drivers must be taken into consideration when assessing the store floor space (Stoy and Kytzia, 2005: 16).

Below is a diagram illustrating the components important for commercial spaces.

**Figure 2.9** Illustrations of the components important for commercial spaces



**Source:** Quartier (2008:4)

Figure 2.8 illustrates the different aspects of a retail space, developed from a designers' perspective, enhanced with a scientific perspective (Quartier, 2008:4)

## 2.7 STORE VENTILATION SYSTEM

Ventilation of buildings depends significantly on the used criteria for the indoor environment, which also affects health, productivity and comfort of the retail consumers. First of all, store ventilation measures should not sacrifice peoples' comfort and health while shopping. There is, therefore, a need for ventilation for the indoor environment for retail design, and to improve shopping conditions (Olesen, 2006: 445).

According to Hayter *et al.* (2000: 3), the retail sector has been slow to adopt sustainable building practices for a variety of reasons. These reasons include a desire to construct

retail spaces quickly (allowing little time to design the building) and the uncertainty of how non-traditional building envelopes and systems will affect sales. Retailers have significant experience in controlling lighting levels and other store related elements to ensure that stores remain profitable. Due to the risk of reduced profits, most retailers are reluctant to incorporate ventilation systems into their stores. Improving the ventilation systems provided the greatest opportunities to reduce energy costs and results in improved shopping morale.

Kotzab and Teller (2005: 594) have observed that today's retailers have to perform on an extra-ordinary level by combining different decisions regarding location, assortment, selection of target markets, negotiations with suppliers, motivation of staff and other typical retail decisions, such as store ventilation and merchandising are all done in a very competitive and global environment. Since the 1990s, there has been an increasing importance of store ventilation, which was recognized to generate competitive advantages by increasing in-store traffic and enjoyment of shopping. The ultimate goal of store ventilation is efficiency, which means offering the best shopping atmosphere.

## **2.8 STORE ENTRANCES**

Retail sector companies often overlook the positive contribution that store entrances and exit points could make to their success. At a time when more decisions than ever are made in-store, any media must provide a pathway to the purchase that is subconsciously triggered. Therefore, it would be a wise move to spend more on below-the-line and through-the-line strategies. A key challenge is to create an environment where the shopper perceives a one-to-one relationship with the store; to optimize the shopper's time; to make it appear as if the ranging and categorisation of products have been personalised just for them; and by giving attention to this, retailers will deliver an experience the shopper will want to repeat (Soars, 2003: 628).

Noad and Rogers (2008: 1002) further support the argument that a number of studies have explored the impact of store entrances on consumer behaviour. The findings

indicate that store entrances are relevant to retailing, although there are differences in the levels of importance attached to various retailing elements. Also, the level of importance of the elements varies with customers depending on whether they are participating in a planned purchase, an alternative/substitute purchase (when the planned purchase is not possible), or an impulse purchase. Store entrances can improve a retail outlet's performance by causing the consumer to undertake unplanned or impulse purchases buying intention prior to entering the store. Efficient and well planned store entrances can generate positive consumer behaviour towards the store and this behaviour can be linked to increased levels of browsing and increased levels of consumer spend in store.

According to Wilson and Boyle (2004: 299), the current wave of shop refurbishment and expansion of store entrances illustrate the increasing managerial emphasis that is being placed on efficiency and effectiveness and operating the shops in the commercial approach. Retail attractions are increasingly under pressure to provide best value for money by generating revenue as well as offering a service. Therefore, emphasis is put on store entrances as they are becoming more important in retail operations. Viewing store entrances holistically becomes clear that they form a concerted effort to optimize the shop's performance despite the various drawbacks that may be encountered.

Koo (2003: 42) asserts that a retail store is considered to be abstract and global image components which influence consumers' satisfaction through:

- Forming the overall attitude is more closely related to in-store services: atmosphere, employee service, after sales service and merchandising, store satisfaction is formed through perceived store atmosphere and value; and
- The overall attitude has strong influence on satisfaction and loyalty and its impact is much stronger on loyalty than on satisfaction, store loyalty is directly affected most significantly by store entrances and exit points, merchandising and after sales service. Satisfaction is not related to customers' committed store revisiting behaviour.



Priluck (2003: 37) notes that relationship marketing is beneficial to firms because it can foster customer loyalty and re-patronage behaviour. Consumers engaged in relational exchanges are more satisfied than those in discreet transactions because of the store entrance ease and psychological comfort of purchasing from a familiar company. Researchers have suggested that developing good store entrances and exit points contributes to the firms' success and practitioners have begun to use the concept of using store entrances in attracting and retaining customers. When an establishment can allow customers to enter the store with ease, it stands a good chance of loyal customers visiting that retail organization, and may be retained even when dissatisfied by other store components.

Retailing is probably more complicated than it can seem at times. The three most important factors for success in retailing are location, location, and location. Store format retailing is still an important channel of distribution and, given the pressures from competing channels of distribution, it is accepted that store entrances have to keep pace with customer change. One way of keeping pace is by focusing on the customer-retailer interface. The store manager is responsible for laying out the entrances in such a way as to entice customers, achieve a suitable return and make best use of the available space (Pal and Byrom, 2003: 518).

Moerloose *et al.* (2005: 472) indicate that findings suggest that retailing can be implemented successfully with up to three easy-to-use entrances to the store allowing for improved in-store traffic flow. In the retail sector, ease-of-use with simple store entrances and inviting appearance are positive factors that promote engagement from consumers.

## **2.9 STORE ACCESSIBILITY**

The most important aspect with regard to the location of a store is that it should be highly accessible to the target market. The target market must be able to visit the store without making any special effort. The store's atmosphere determines, to a large extent, how consumers feel and behave in a shop, and they expect the same

atmosphere to do justice to the products or services which they intend buying (Terblanche, 1998: 105).

Baker *et al.* (2002: 120) are of the opinion that for many shoppers one of the key goals for shopping is convenience, which includes getting in and out of the store quickly and finding the merchandise they seek easily. Layout, product assortment, and lighting are examples of design that may influence customers' expectations of their efficient movement through a store. As customers' perceptions of store design become more favourable, customers will perceive time/effort costs to be lower.

Findlay and Sparks (2008: 375) maintain that to be successful retailers, one has to attract and retain consumer spending profitably. Consumers nearly always have the opportunity to change their shopping behaviour. They assess and reassess the shopping opportunities available to them. As a result, they may change their behaviour by switching between stores or retailers. Consumer store-switching behaviour (defined as the change of the main shop for a main shopping trip, e.g. food) is thus of fundamental importance to retailers. The ability to generate change in behaviour and then to retain the "switched" customer is a critical long-term success factor for retailers. Similarly, the ability to reduce switching to rival retailers by valuable consumers will lead to a competitive advantage.

Moye and Giddings (2002: 259) report that consumer shopping orientations can be used to predict why consumers shop at certain stores. In order to successfully service consumers, retailers must identify their shopping needs and preferences. Evidence suggests that consumers make patronage decisions based on store accessibility. Consumers evaluate stores while shopping and assess whether or not a particular retail store is based on their shopping orientation or experience with the shopping process. Consumers are likely to avoid retail stores that do not present the desired retail store environment and seek a more congenial store to patronize. Store attributes such as accessibility, location, and services influence consumer decisions to patronize or shop at particular retail stores.

Daskalopoulou and Petrou (2005: 24) note that store accessibility exerts both direct and indirect effects on the store's performance through constructing consumers' perceptions over good/poor service quality. The higher the store accessibility, the higher the probability that a positive outcome will result in terms of sales, word-of-mouth and future intention to purchase/repurchase. Store size, product variety, location and belonging to chain variables exert the largest positive effect upon the probability that a store experiences above-average performance. Consequently, service quality is an important determinant of a store's performance. High service quality induces future encounters through positively affecting consumers' behavioural intentions and that, in turn, enhances stores' performance.

Location selection plays a very prominent role in retailing due to its high and long-term investments. It is very difficult to make up once an inappropriate convenience store location has been established. The conventional approaches to location selection can only provide a set of systematic steps for problem-solving without considering the relationships between the decision factors globally (Kuo *et al.*, 2002: 199).

According to Jones *et al.* (2003: 701), store accessibility has long been touted as an important competitive factor in retailing and services. For retailers and service providers, the location is the point of contact where customers access the desired goods and services. A common conclusion based on previous location theory research has been that to ensure success, retailers and services should select convenient locations that allow easy access and that attract the largest number of customers.

Store accessibility and location have long been a mantra for retailers and service providers. It is widely believed that the choice of a location is the single most important decision facing retailers and service providers. In fact, it has been argued that poor location may be an insurmountable obstacle for even the best retailers. Researchers have developed store choice models which generally assume that consumer utility for a given retailer decreases as the distance to the retailer increases, thereby reducing the

likelihood that the store will be chosen. Convenient location is critical and it is an important strategic factor in minimizing defection when satisfaction with the core service drops (Jones *et al.*, 2003: 701).

## **2.10 MUSIC AND LIGHTING**

Retailers use background music in order to enhance the atmosphere of their stores. The effects of music on attitudes toward the store, the salesperson, and the visit to the store are moderated by cognitive processes (number of thoughts and depth of information processing). Soothing music (i.e., both pleasant and low arousing) is shown, as predicted, to increase cognitive activity when other cognitive stimulation is low (mainly when sales arguments are weak). However, retailers are warned that enhancing cognitive activity is no panacea since it is found here that higher cognitive activity is associated with lower attitudes. It is proposed that music fit with the store may explain such results. Music fit and cognitive processes triggered by store music are strongly suggested as avenues of store atmospherics (Chebat *et al.*, 2001: 115).

Hoyle (2003:149) substantiates that lighting for any retail environment has the potential to dramatically affect sales. Lighting can increase floor traffic, create visual interest and direct people through the store-either deeper, where there are fewer distractions from other mall competitors, or to areas of product that the store manager is trying to promote. Store lighting generally requires high ambient-light levels to help create a comfortable environment that allows customers to evaluate merchandise, further compounding the problem of display lighting. One of the most popular methods of display lighting is to add track lights to a store layout, allowing extra light to be focused on mannequins and feature items. The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) states that accent lighting in a store should be a minimum of three times brighter than ambient-light levels, and, depending on the colour of objects being shown, remembering that darker colours require more light than brighter colours, a ratio of 10- or even 15-to-1 should be considered.

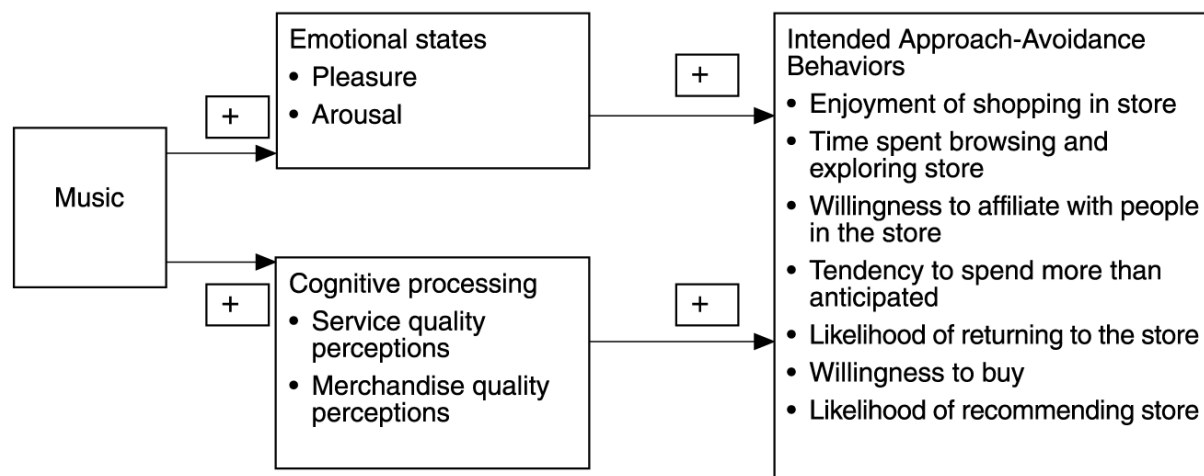
If a typical department store has an ambient-light level of 30 to 60 foot-candles, accent lighting could demand as much as 300 to 600 foot-candles. Displays are rarely static and often change with the season, trends and fashion. Track lighting can offer the solution, as the system is very flexible. While the track itself is permanently mounted, the lights that connect to them can be easily moved and adjusted. A variety of styles are available so that stores can pick a track head that complements their interior (Hoyle, 2003:149).

Levy and Weitz (2007: 530) note that good lighting in a store involves more than simply illuminating space. Lighting can highlight merchandise, sculpt space, and capture a mood or feeling that enhances the store's image. Having the appropriate lighting has been shown to positively influence customer shopping behaviour. A good lighting system helps create a sense of excitement in the store. These authors further note that, like colour and lighting, music can either add or detract from a retailer's total atmospheric package. Unlike other atmospheric elements, however, music can be easily changed. Retailers also can use music to affect consumer behaviour. Music can control the pace of store traffic, create an image, and attract or direct consumers' attention. In general though, slow music is good. A mix of classical or otherwise soothing music encourages shoppers to slow down, relax, and take a good look at the merchandise.

Retail shoppers themselves have also acknowledged the importance of music as an atmospheric variable. Atmospherics, including music and lighting, have received considerable attention in the retail/services literature since used in the designing of space in store environments to create certain effects on buyers. Positively valence (happy) music should lead to positive moods which should encourage positive evaluations and behaviours. The music element does influence consumers' retail patronage intentions. Retail managers need to make informed music and lighting choices involving their store types and target markets. It is important that retail managers know the music that their target market likes and play happy selections in that genre or by those liked artists (Broekemier *et al.*, 2008: 59).

According to Sweeney and Wyber (2002: 51), music and lighting have been known for centuries to have a powerful effect on human responses. In the social science context, music is particularly known for its effectiveness in triggering moods. In the marketing domain, music has been shown to affect consumer behaviours, particularly shopper behaviour, as well as emotional responses. Retailers realize the importance of music and also that playing music is, in itself, not enough, that music needs to be used to differentiate the store from competitors and to maximize store image rather than serving as a distraction to shoppers. Music has an expanded role in the marketing strategy of many retailers, especially with the convenient stores. Consumers also use environmental cues, such as music, in cognitive processing, when predicting or evaluating the value of an offering by both goods and service retailers. While it is well known that the consumers infer merchandise quality based on the retail store environment, including music, using the retail environment to infer service quality is far less discussed. Besides heat and light, music is the only thing that impacts consumers 100 percent of the time while they are in the store. In addition, music, noted as the ultimate marketing tool which leaves a lasting impression on the consumer, is a relatively easy store characteristic to manipulate. Retailers recognize the importance of music and that it is a fast way to create a store identity, particularly with merchandise becoming so standardized.

**Figure 2.10** Model of the relationship between music, cognitive processing, emotional states and approach-avoidance behaviour.



**Source:** Sweeney and Wyber (2002: 51)

The model (Figure 2.9) reflects the manner in which music affects consumer responses or reactions and subsequently intended behaviours in a retailing context. The model proposes that music affects behaviour through its effect on cognitive processing as well as emotional states (Sweeney and Wyber, 2002: 51).

Oakes (2000: 539) proposes that music is just one of a range of physical environmental dimensions influencing the behaviour of customers and employees within a service environment context. This dimension ultimately impacts on behavioural responses such as duration of stay, amount purchased, exploration of the store environment, and likelihood of return. If background music can make perceived waiting time seem shorter (e.g. in restaurant and supermarket queues), it may result in fewer dissatisfied customers. In addition, if perceived shopping times are shorter than actual or anticipated shopping times, it could result in more time being spent in the store, and a greater likelihood of unplanned purchases. It has been suggested that playing the right type of background music may even influence shoppers to buy more expensive brands.

Aside from the obvious commercial issues, the role of music in consumer research is of considerable theoretical interest. Music is capable of evoking complex affective and behavioural responses in consumers. Although the impact of music on consumer emotions and shopping behaviour has attracted considerable attention among marketing researchers, empirical evidence of the impact of the physical characteristics of music is mixed (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001:273).

Varley (2006: 263) reports that a great contributor to the general atmosphere in store is the lighting used. The overall level of ambient light needs to be such that customers can see the merchandise clearly and the store looks bright and inviting, however, lighting can be used to create interest in the store design itself. Lighting is an integral part of any feature display, and enormously enhances the dramatic effect, with product areas being accentuated by suspended lighting and pin spots. Lighting can also affect the colour of merchandise. This can be used positively to highlight products. Lighting can

also create problems when it comes to colour matching, and so buyers should ensure that they use both store lighting and natural lighting when approving colour matches.

Staff attitude and training, being part of store selecting attributes, is discussed below.

## **2.11 STAFF ATTITUDE AND TRAINING**

According to Sahinidis and Bouris (2008: 63), training is defined as the planned intervention that is designed to enhance the determinants of individual job performance. Hawkins, *et al.* (2001:394) define attitude as follows: “an attitude is an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of our environment”. Attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object. Thus, an attitude is the way one thinks, feels, and acts toward some aspect of one’s environment such as a retail store, television programme or product. Employee attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement) have a positive relationship between morale (i.e., aggregated levels of satisfaction) and organisational performance (Schneider *et al.*, 2003: 836).

In retail and other service environments, the interaction between customers and front-line employees is likely to importantly affect customer perceptions of the shopping and consumption experience. High quality interactions with service providers often result in customer satisfaction despite problems with other aspects of service delivery, whereas dissatisfying experiences with service providers have the potential to ruin otherwise pleasant service encounters. Service providers often *are* the organization in customers’ perception, and their attitudes, expressed verbally and non-verbally during customer interactions, may leave a lasting impression that affects satisfaction, repeat buying, and financial performance (Brown and Lam, 2008: 243).

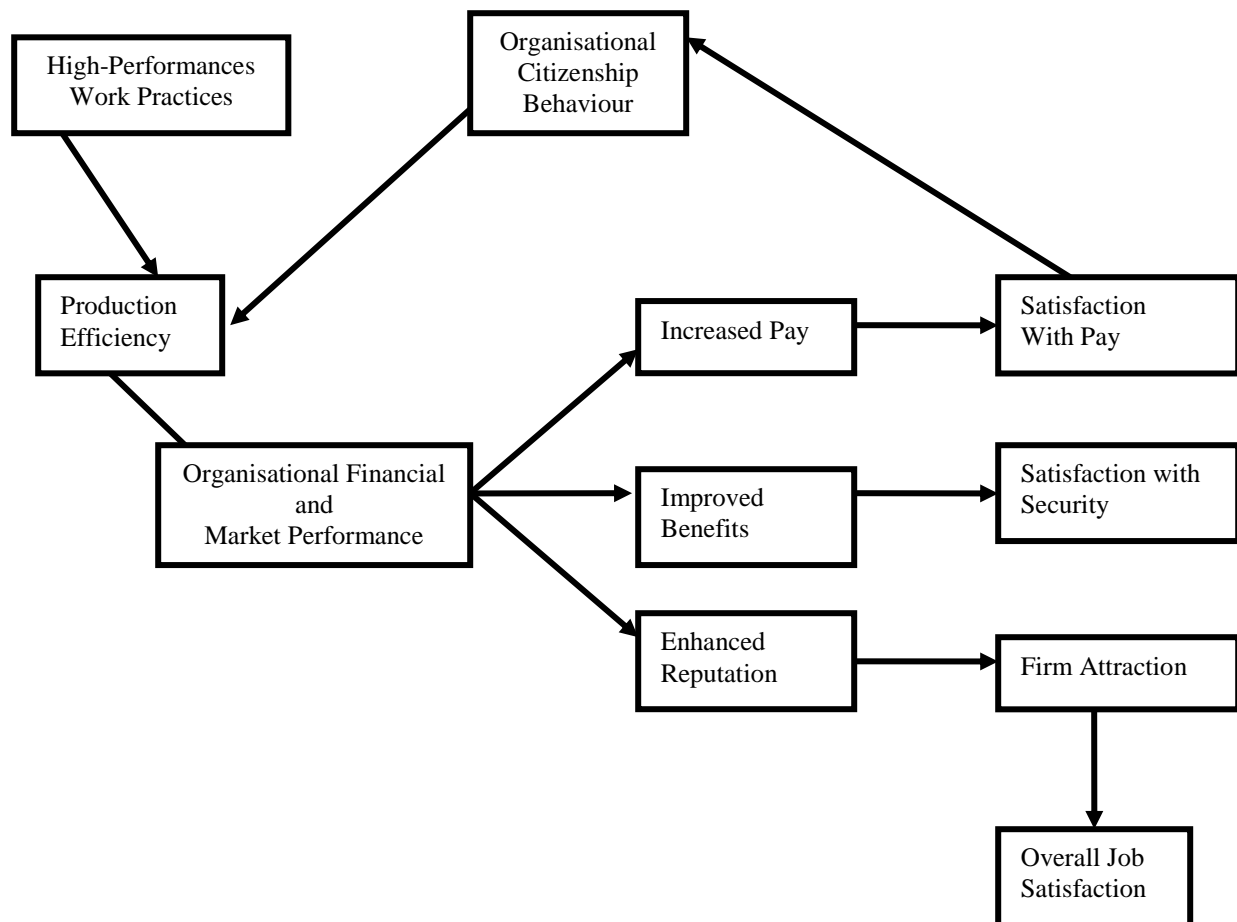
Little and Dean (2006: 460) are of the opinion that staff attitude is defined in terms of employees’ beliefs in the goals and values of the organisation, their willingness to exert effort, and their intention to maintain membership of the organisation. Thus, staff attitude



encapsulates both employees' feelings about the organisation and their desire to remain with it. According to the service profit chain, investing in employee recruitment, training, and retention leads to increased service quality, customer satisfaction and retention which eventually results in profit improvements and employees' service quality (Gerstner and Libai, 2006: 601).

Below is the proposed framework showing that high-performance work practices yield increased levels of satisfaction with overall job satisfaction (Schneider *et al.*, 2003: 836).

**Figure 2.11** Framework for integrating high-performance work practices



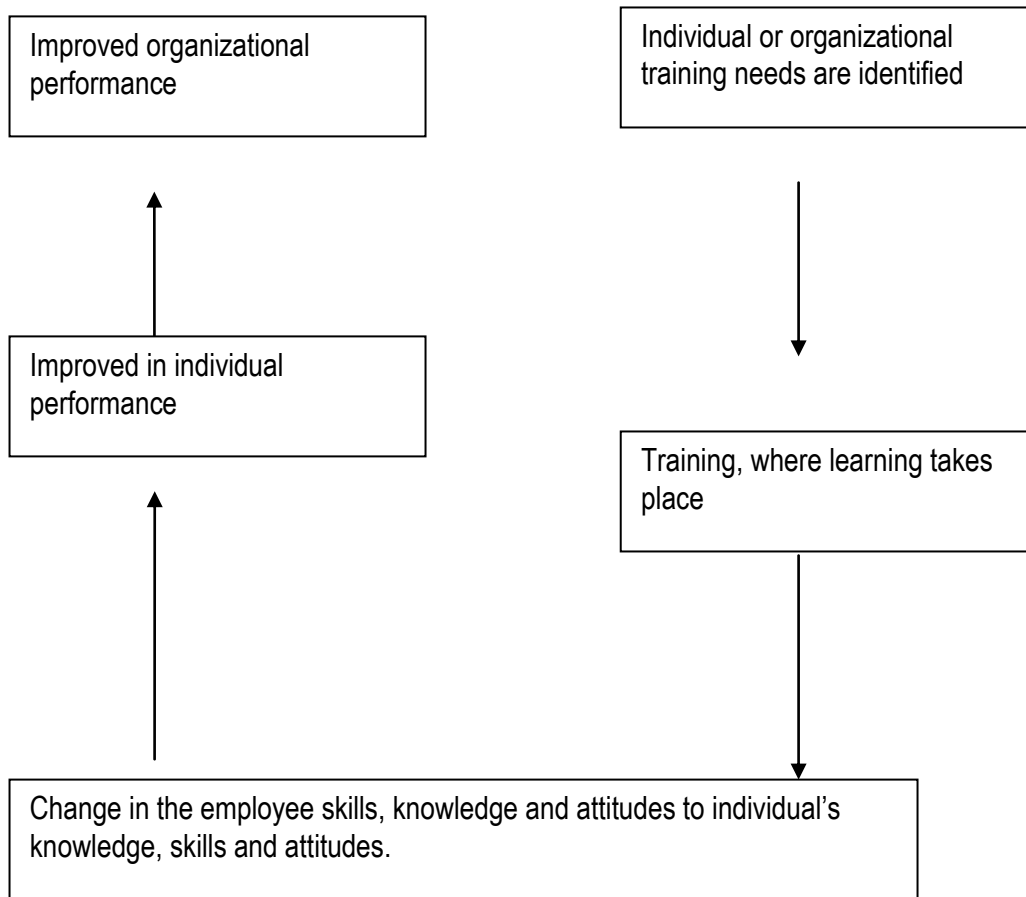
**Source:** Schneider *et al.* (2003: 836)

Gerstner and Libai (2006: 601) state that recent reports in the popular media suggest that service quality and customer satisfaction are declining. Poor service results from poor selection of employees, lack of training, service process failures, or misalignment of incentives and, more generally, gaps in organizational knowledge and perceptions. Service providers, who apply customer relationship management, view customers as assets. Poor service also results when retailers have employees with negative attitude towards shoppers. An alternative to increasing customer retention and profits is improving customer satisfaction and improving staff morale which leads to improve staff attitude towards customers.

Offering training programmes to one's employees may have an effect, direct or indirect, on both employee motivation and organisational commitment. The training programme content must be perceived as effective and of value to those participating in it. This will have a positive effect to employee attitudes and organisational performance outcomes including productivity, turnover and absenteeism (Sahinidis and Bouris, 2008: 63).

Based on the views of Yoo and Park (2007: 908), the quality of service is of fundamental importance to a number of firms as customers expect high-quality services and are willing to pay a premium for them. Since services have the multiplicity of tangible and intangible elements, and the subjectivity of customer evaluations in nature, its concept is more evasive than that of product quality. Therefore, to achieve effectiveness in service firms, employees have been trained to practise courtesy, empathy, responsiveness commitment, satisfaction, vision and motivation. Employees need to have the capability of interpreting customer needs quickly, adjusting their behaviours timely, and alleviating customer complaints appropriately. Training enables employees to better understand their responsibility, monitor their work performance, and adapt work routines in response to a variety of circumstances. Training in skill, leadership, customization, information-sharing, and the process of development and performance management will provide better problem-solving capability and improve service quality to a number of customers.

**Figure 2.12** Bramley's individual model of training



**Source:** Swart *et al.* (2005: 192)

According to Swart *et al.* (2005: 192), the model illustrates that employee knowledge, skills and attitudes will change by the adoption of a training programme, but this does not always end in that way. If the employee believes that there is an improvement in his/her knowledge and skills; it may be safe to also assume that there will be an increase in the person's individual performance. Through training, the person's competencies will be reinforced and will enable him or her to execute the tasks assigned effectively and efficiently. As a result, according to the model, there will be an increase in the overall performance of the organization.

As proposed by Daniels (2003: 39), employee training represents a significant expenditure for most organizations, yet, for the majority, it fails to achieve the best

possible results. Training too, often, is viewed tactically rather than strategically. The organization's leaders are often not clear about what they want from training and, therefore, fail to connect training with the overall organizational goals and strategy. Training should not be regarded as a luxury to be undertaken when time and budgets allow. Nor is it wise to think of training as remedial, as a matter of shoring up weak employees or fixing problems. In a successful programme, the training unit acts not like a group of physicians who minister to organizational ills, but rather as an agent of change. Senior management recognizes that the training function has valuable intelligence about employees' core skills. The training unit, in a successful programme, understands the organization's strategic direction and can design and implement a creative way of moving people in that direction.

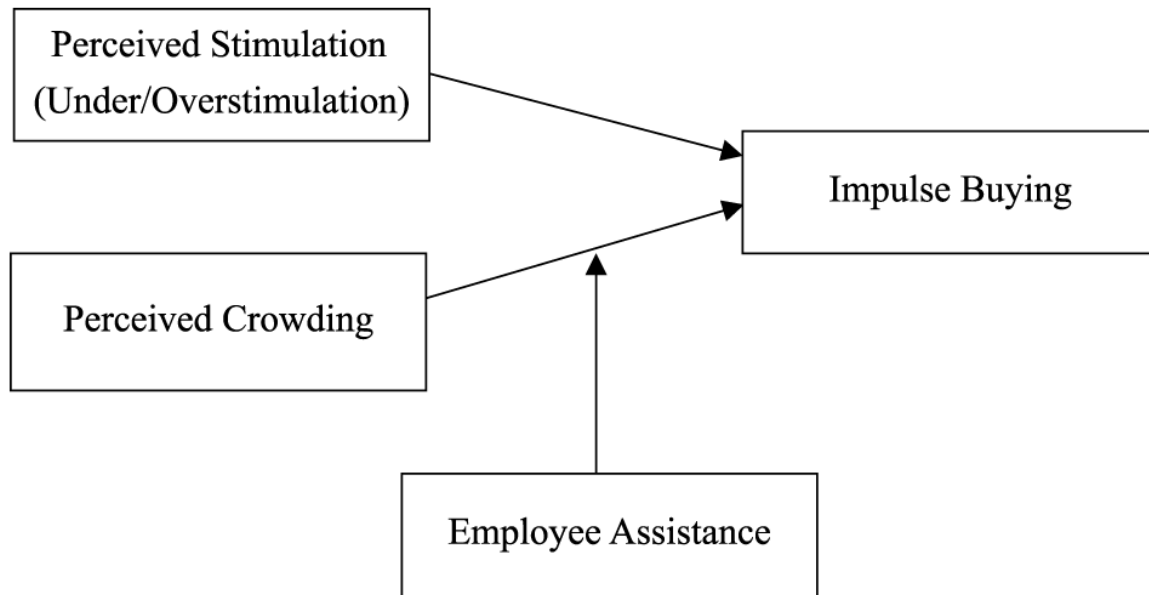
Good training is based on having fully answered the following questions:

- Is there actually a need for training? What is the need?
- Who needs to be trained?
- Who will provide the training?
- What form will the training take?
- How will the training be transferred from the session to the job?
- How will the training be evaluated?

## **2.12 IMPULSE PURCHASING PRESSURE**

Impulse buying pressure can be defined as an immediate purchase with no pre-shopping intentions. There has been a link of unplanned purchases to consumer moods and pleasant environments and that shows that employee behaviours predict customer evaluations. Moreover, prior work indicates that helpfulness of salespeople in assisting customers influences consumers' willingness to buy. A high level of excitement in a store enhances the loss of self-control, and high arousal reduces people's ability to think through the implications of their actions. It's also likely that many people's ability to resist temptation is at its lowest level at the end of the day, resulting into increased impulse purchases (Mattila and Wirtz, 2008: 562). Below is a diagram showing environmental stimulation on impulse purchasing.

**Figure 2.13** Environmental stimulation on impulse purchasing.



**Source:** Mattila and Wirtz (2008: 562)

Mattila and Wirtz (2008: 562) suggest that consumers hold arousal-level expectations. Level of stimulation (i.e. both over- and under-stimulation) lead to lower in-store approach behaviours (including spending time and money). Strongly held arousal-level expectations results in impulse buying. From a managerial perspective, it is better to stimulate and excite customers in a store environment to the extent to over-stimulation to increase impulse purchases. Store managers can look at a number of environmental design variables to increase stimulation in their shops.

According to Silvera *et al.* (2008: 23), impulse buying refers to making unplanned and sudden purchases. Impulse buying behaviour is frequently based on the presence of an immediate stimulus object and is often accompanied by feelings of excitement and pleasure or a powerful urge to buy. As impulse buying behaviour consists of unplanned and sudden purchases, the cognitive and affective forces guiding the purchase are typically initiated at the time and place of purchase. Impulse buying is often accompanied by strong affective reactions such as a powerful urge to buy or feelings of pleasure and excitement. Superficially, impulse buying seems to serve hedonic motives.

Compared to non-impulsive buyers, impulse buyers exhibit hedonic rather than utilitarian considerations for their purchases, and the shopping experiences of impulse buyers tend to be driven by high-arousal emotions such as excitement and pleasure.

Hausman (2000: 403) concedes that impulse buying behaviour is an enigma in the marketing world, it is a behaviour which the literature and consumers both state is normatively wrong, yet which accounts for a substantial volume of the goods sold every year across a broad range of product categories. Unplanned buying refers to all purchases made without such advance planning and includes impulse buying, which is distinguished by the relative speed with which buying “decisions” occur. Impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately. The impulse to buy is hedonically complex and may stimulate emotional conflict. Also, impulse buying is prone to occur with diminished regard for its consequences. To avoid buying on impulse, consumers should be more aware of retailers’ efforts to manipulate their moods to influence their buying decisions. Moreover, they can reduce enablers by only shopping when they need specific purchases and only carrying enough cash or credit for necessary purchases.

### **2.13 CONCLUSION**

In summary, retailers should seek to sell products that satisfy the buyer’s needs and provide store layouts that entice customers to move around the store to purchase more merchandise than they may have planned originally (Levy and Weitz, 2007: 512). In so doing, it should be remembered that the sale is made only when the actual purchase is complete and retailers should continue to reinforce the buyer’s positive attitudes about their stores at all times, even after the sale. This practice reduces the perceived risk of making a bad buy, which allows buyers to listen to and trust sellers’ sales messages even though some of retailers’ proposals may be out of line with their purchase plans. It also can increase rates of customer retention which leads to increased profitability and store loyalty (Miranda *et al.*, 2005: 220).

The chapter reviewed literature on store appearance and image, store traffic and crowd density, merchandise display, product assortment, floor space, ventilation system, store entrances, store accessibility, music and lighting, staff attitude and training and impulse purchasing pressure.

The review shows that consumers are faced with many complex situations while shopping around for convenience goods. Babakus *et al.* (2004: 713) suggest that both service and merchandise quality exert a significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology employed in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed to collect the primary data. Research design is covered in the first part of this chapter followed by the sampling method, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability testing. Exploratory research was used to conduct the study and quantitative data were collected in order to gain an insight into the elements of store layout and consumer purchasing behaviour.

#### **3.2 STUDY TYPE**

Primary data were collected through the survey method. A questionnaire was designed and pre-tested in order to obtain the necessary information. The data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. A closed-ended questionnaire, in which a number of alternative choices are provided for respondents, was used to collect primary data.

#### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Burns and Bush (2002: 204), the study was quantitative in nature, as it was researched involving the use of structured questions in which the response options had been predetermined and a large number of respondents were involved. Glencoe Online (2004) further substantiates that the study is quantitative because it is a research technique in which scientific, concrete, and projectable numerical data can be statistically analyzed from large samples.

In essence, exploratory research was carried out to better comprehend the nature of the problem since very few studies had been conducted on store layout. Sekaran (2003: 119) supports the argument that exploratory research is undertaken when not much is known about the situation at hand, or no information is available on how similar problems or research issues have been solved in the past.



Cross sectional research was undertaken as it measures units from a sample of the population at only one point in time (Burns and Bush, 2002: 125). The major advantage of cross-sectional research is that data can be collected on many different kinds of people in a relatively short period of time (Cross sectional research, 2008).

### **3.4 POPULATION**

Population is the total number of all possible subjects or elements which could be included in a study. If the data are valid, the results of research on a sample of subjects drawn from a much larger population can then be generalised to the population (Statistics: Glossary, 2008). Properly defining the study population is crucial in the design of the research project.

The target population in this research was all customers who shop at convenience stores in the Kwa Mashu area. A comparison amongst various educational levels, age, and gender were also considered since the researcher believes that these factors could influence the research results.

### **3.5 SAMPLE SIZE**

Sample size is defined as the number of elements to be included in a study. In this case the sample size was 400 respondents as they were considered to provide sufficient input to ascertain findings. The consumer population of Kwa Mashu exceeds 1 000 000. In support of this sample size, Sekaran (2003: 294) points out that if the population size is 1 000 000, a sample size of 384 should be adequate to support the research findings.

There are forty convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. Ten stores were selected in terms of their convenience and accessibility. Forty questionnaires were administered at each of the ten selected stores through the help of graduate assistants. The ten stores chosen were:

<b>NAME OF STORE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Shenge Supermarket	A section
Mkhulushane Supermarket	B section
Zamaokuhle Supermarket	C section
Africa Supermarket	D section
Kwa Magwaza store	E section
Kwa Nkabinde Supermarket	F section
Kwa Maphumulo Supermarket	G section
Kwa Mhlongo Supermarket	H section
Kwa Mavundla Supermarket	L section
Kwa Nozaza convenience store	Ntuzuma (Kwa Mashu extension)

### **3.6 SAMPLING METHOD**

Non-probability samples include elements from the population selected in a non-statistical manner (Schmidt and Hollensen, 2006: 166). Therefore, convenience sampling was used whereby a non-statistical approach was used primarily because it is easy to collect data. This approach is practised because almost everybody is a grocery customer, and samples are easier to setup, cheaper in financial terms, and are adequate in their representativeness within the scope of the defined research (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 102).

### **3.7 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

The questionnaire was in the form of closed-ended (or structured) questions in which respondents were asked to make one or more choices from a list of possible responses and also a rating scale where the respondents were given a continuum of labelled categories that represented the range of responses. The questions were designed in a manner that provided answers to the objectives of the study.

The Likert scale was used to structure some of the questions and the other questions were in the form of multiple choices. Likert scales and multiple choices are easy to code and easy to analyse. Clear and simple words were used to construct the

questions, in an effort to make them easier to understand and answer. The questionnaire consisted of questions developed from reviewing the relevant literature on this research area.

The questionnaire was pre-tested before it was used to gather information in order to determine if the content and sequencing of questions were correct. Any alterations that needed to be made were then done before the research was conducted. Secondary information was gathered from books, journals, and the internet before the questionnaire was designed, and also to determine what questions needed to be asked.

### **3.7.1 Questionnaire content**

The questionnaire (Annexure C) consisted of two pages. The questions followed an introduction section on the first page, explaining the purpose and the importance of the study. This section further assured respondents of their anonymity and the fact that the questionnaire would not be too time consuming to complete.

### **3.7.2 Types of questions**

A questionnaire was constructed and kept deliberately short to suit the face-to-face method and to improve the response rate. The questionnaire was edited to ensure that it was grammatically correct.

Closed-ended questions were used because they limit respondents' answers to the survey. The participants were allowed to choose from a pre-existing set of answers. Close-ended questions are also easy to administer and usually evoke rapid response (Schmidt and Hollensen, 2006: 151). Clear and simple words were used to construct the questions in an effort to make them easier to understand and answer. The questionnaire consisted of questions developed from reviewing the relevant literature on this research area.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION**

The method of data collection was the survey method. Hawkins *et al.* (2007: 750) suggest that surveys are systematic ways of gathering information from a large number of people through the use of questionnaires. Therefore, personal interviews were done whereby questionnaires were administered to the selected sample in order to extract detailed information on the topic and clarify complex questions (Hawkins *et al.*, 2007: 750). Graduate assistants were used to administer the questionnaires. These assistants were given information on the subject matter so that they were able to clarify questions that arose from the respondents.

The structure of the questionnaire was kept simple and easy for the respondents to complete with closed-ended questions and Likert scale questions.

### **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were coded and edited to reduce errors, thus making it easier to capture the data into the SPSS computer package. The questionnaires were counted and re-counted to ensure that all the respondents had answered and completed the questions satisfactorily. The data captured were double checked in order to ensure that there were no capturing errors. Once the data had been captured, a number of analyses were run on the data. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages were computed from the variables. The results were graphically represented using bar and pie charts. The analysis was broken down into descriptive statistics whereby frequencies and inferential statistics were used in order to test the chi-square, and also to explain the relationship between data, as well as to identify the significance of the relationships. The statistical analysis computer programme, SPSS Version 15, was applied to describe and interpret the data that were obtained from the questionnaire.

#### **3.9.1 Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the data in the study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with

simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. Descriptive statistics describe what the data shows (Descriptive Statistics, 2006).

Frequencies, percentages and Chi-squares were used to analyse the data since Naidoo (2009) recommends that the data from the questionnaires was mainly categorical in nature. Therefore, frequencies and percentages and Chi-square are appropriate (Annexure B).

### **3.9.2 Frequencies and Percentages**

According to Malhotra and Birks (2006: 448), frequencies refer to a mathematical distribution whose objective is to obtain a count of the number of responses associated with different values of one variable and to express these counts in percentage form. Therefore, in this study frequencies are used to obtain a profile of the sample. Percentages serve two purposes in data presentation. They simplify data by reducing all numbers to a range from 0 to 100. Secondly, they translate the data into standard form with a base for relative comparisons (McDaniel and Gates, 2002:491).

### **3.9.3 Inferential statistics**

Inferential statistics is concerned with drawing conclusions about a population from a sample, followed by inferences made about central tendency, or any of a number of other aspects of a distribution (Inferential Statistics, 2006).

One-sample chi-square (with Binomial tests for dichotomous questions) was used to compare differences in proportions for individual questions. Two-sample chi-square was used for comparisons between pairs of questions.

### **3.9.5 Chi-square test**

Chi-square test is used to test the statistical significance of the observed association in a cross tabulation. It assists in determining whether a systematic association exists between two variables (Malhotra and Birks, 2006: 463).

### **3.10 VALIDITY**

In an ideal situation, the observed score should correspond perfectly with the true score. However, because research does not occur in a perfect situation, measurement error is not usually zero. The real issue is not whether there is error, rather the issue is what potential is there for error, and what has the researcher done to reduce error in the study, and, therefore, to increase the validity and reliability of the findings.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 31), validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. In addition, Hair *et al.* (2003: 303) state that validity, in its simplest form, refers to the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the experiment are true. However, because research does not occur in a perfect situation, measurement error is not usually zero.

When conducting a research study, the results might appear to be accurate, but may contain errors. Therefore, it is important that, while conducting research, precautions should be taken to minimize the possibilities of errors. Numbers were used to code the data in order to eliminate errors while recording data into the computer. The questionnaire was designed to be brief and easy so that the questions were easy to understand to avoid errors. The interviewers were well briefed about the aim of the study and it was made sure that they understood the questionnaire and were able to explain any questions for clarity.

### **3.11 RELIABILITY**

Sekaran (2003: 203) states that the reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which it is without bias (error free) and, hence, ensures consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument. In other words, reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the goodness of a measure. Reliability of data refers to data structures that are consistent across observations or interviews. In addition, Cant (2003: 123) states that reliability is the extent to which the measurement process is free from random errors. Reliability is concerned with the consistency, accuracy, and

predictability of the research findings. However, if a measure is not reliable, it cannot be valid, and if it is reliable, then it may or may not be valid. Reliability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for validity. Consequently, the validity of a measure is of main concern since it deals with both systematic and random errors (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 277).

In order to increase the reliability of the findings, the sample was fairly large with 400 respondents participating. In order to standardise the conditions under which the questionnaire was conducted, the interviewers were well trained and briefed on the topic. To increase all respondents' abilities to answer the questionnaire, a number of instructions were written throughout the questionnaire and the interviewers were at hand to explain any parts of the questionnaire that the respondents did not understand. To prevent inconsistency in coding, all questionnaires were pre-coded.

It was very important to select a sample that would not bias the results of the study and that was representative of the population with respect to the characteristics or variables of interest. Each respondent was presented with an introduction to the research and the questionnaire. The same order of questions was used for each respondent.

### **3.12 PILOT SURVEY**

A pilot study is a trial run of a larger study that is conducted in preparation for that study; it can involve pre-testing or 'trying out' a research tool (Anonymous, 2007: 17). According to Aaker *et al.* (2003: 327), the purpose of a pre-test is to ensure that the questionnaire meets the researcher's expectations in terms of the information that will be obtained. Therefore, pre-tests were administered to a sample of 20 respondents, under field conditions, in order to identify questions that may not be useful and also to reveal any problems in questionnaire design, hence enabling the researcher to correct errors before conducting the field work.

The respondents were very satisfied with the questionnaire design. Consequently, there were no amendments made to the questionnaire.

### **3.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the methodology adopted during the study as well as the aspects of reliability and validity of data. For the study to be reliable and valid, information gathered must be related to the objectives of the study. All attempts were made to ensure that errors were minimized and that the appropriate sample was obtained by the interviewers.

The researcher also took part in conducting the interviews, which helped to determine if there were any problems arising from the interviews.

Chapter four will provide an in depth summation and discussion on the research results.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter commences with a detailed analysis of data that provides an insight into the findings of the study, accompanied by numerical and graphical representations of the data and interpretation of the results. The presentation of the detailed analysis and the findings, that were taken from questionnaires administered to customers of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu, will be discussed in this chapter.

The analysis of data entails the use of descriptive analysis in the form of frequencies and bi-variate analysis in the form of Chi-square tests. The descriptive statistics, that is frequencies and percentages, provide an initial general overview of the results and are illustrated by bar charts and pie charts. Chi-square tests were used to provide a more precise analysis of each objective as a researcher wishes to see if the frequency of cases possessing some quality varies among levels of a given factor or among combinations of levels of two or more factors (Preacher, 2001).

The graphs presented in this section are extracted from Microsoft Excel to further clarify the findings.

#### **4.2 RESPONSE RATE**

The questionnaires were administered outside of the ten convenience stores that participated in the study. The total number of respondents that completed valid questionnaires as part of the survey was 400. Table 4.1 depicts the break down of responses from the ten convenience stores selected.

**Table 4.1 Response Rate**

<b>NAME OF STORE</b>	<b>PLANNED SAMPLE</b>	<b>ACHIEVED SAMPLE</b>	<b>RESPONSE RATE</b>
Shenge Supermarket	40	42	105%
Mkhulushane Supermarket	40	40	100%
Zamaokuhle Supermarket	40	38	95%
Africa Supermarket	40	43	107.5%
Kwa Magwaza store	40	37	92.5%
Kwa Nkabinde Supermarket	40	41	102.5%
Kwa Maphumulo Supermarket	40	39	97.5%
Kwa Mhlongo Supermarket	40	41	102.5%
Kwa Mavundla Supermarket	40	39	97.5%
Kwa Nozaza convenience store	40	40	100%
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table 4.1, it is clear that the overall response rate for the study was high as the desired (100%) response rate was achieved. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, all 400 were completed. The average number of questionnaires completed by respondents of each store was 40, with the response rate ranging between 95% and 107.5%.

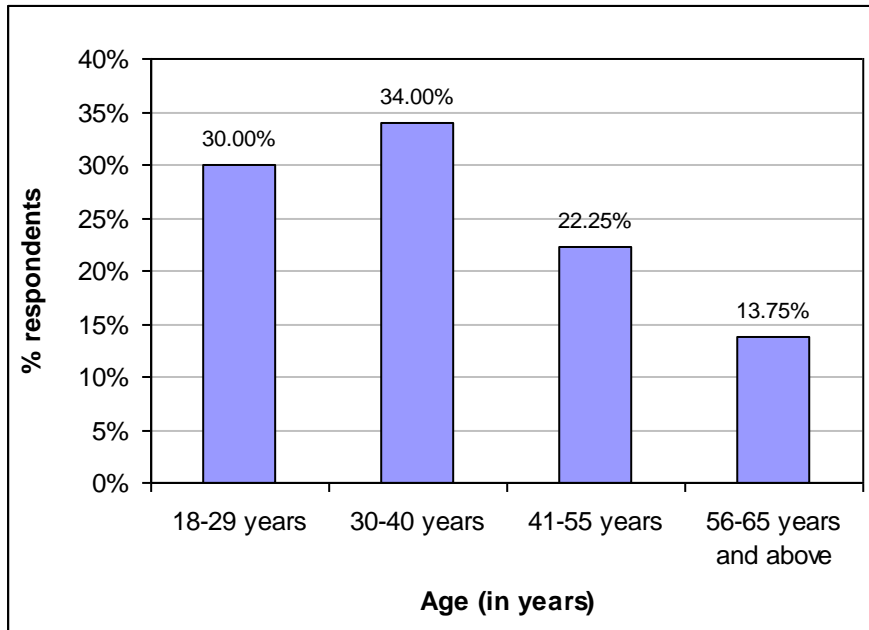
### **4.3 FREQUENCIES**

According to Malhotra and Birks (2006: 448), a frequency distribution refers to a mathematical distribution whose objective is to obtain a count of the number of responses associated with different values of one variable and to express these counts in percentage terms. A frequency table is easy to read and provides basic information; therefore, frequencies in this section will be presented in the form of bar charts and pie charts.

### 4.3.1 Age of respondents

Figure 4.1 reveals the age dispersion of the respondents from the sample.

Figure 4.1: The percentages of respondents by age

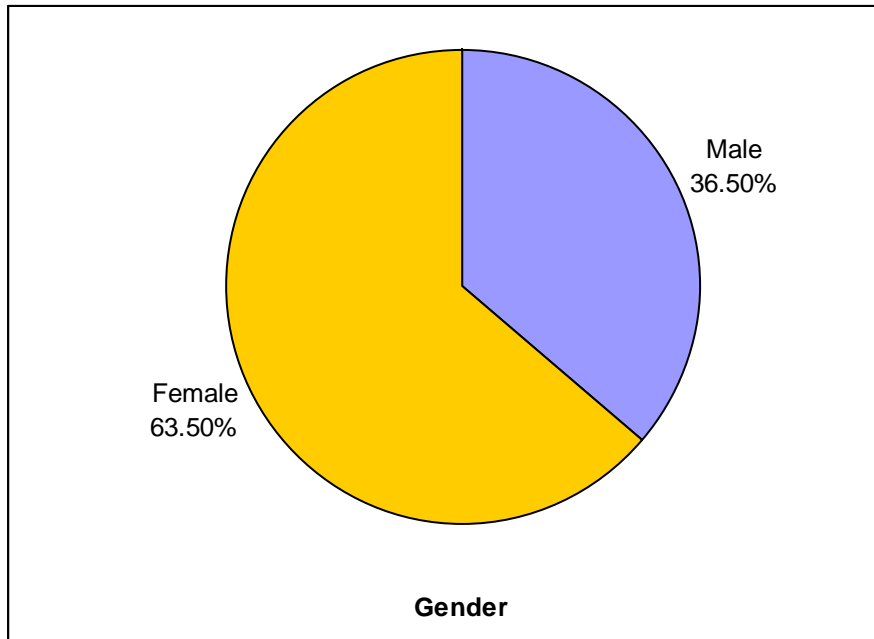


According to Figure 4.1, 30% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29, 34% of the respondents were between the ages of 30 and 40, 22.25% of the respondents were aged 41 and 55. 13.75% of the respondents were 56 years and above. Therefore, the majority (64%) of the shoppers are between 18-40 years (young and middle aged). Senior citizens constitute a small portion of shoppers at convenience stores. The present data analysis suggests that the age 18-40 group has an impact on convenience stores.

### 4.3.2 Gender of respondents

Figure 4.2 below shows the gender dispersion of the respondents in this study.

Figure 4.2: The number of respondents by gender



From the selected sample, 36.5% were male and 63.5% were female respondents who participated in the study. The results reveal that women are the predominant shoppers.

### 4.3.3 Educational Level of respondents

Figure 4.3 depicts the educational levels of the respondents.

Figure 4.3: The educational level of respondents

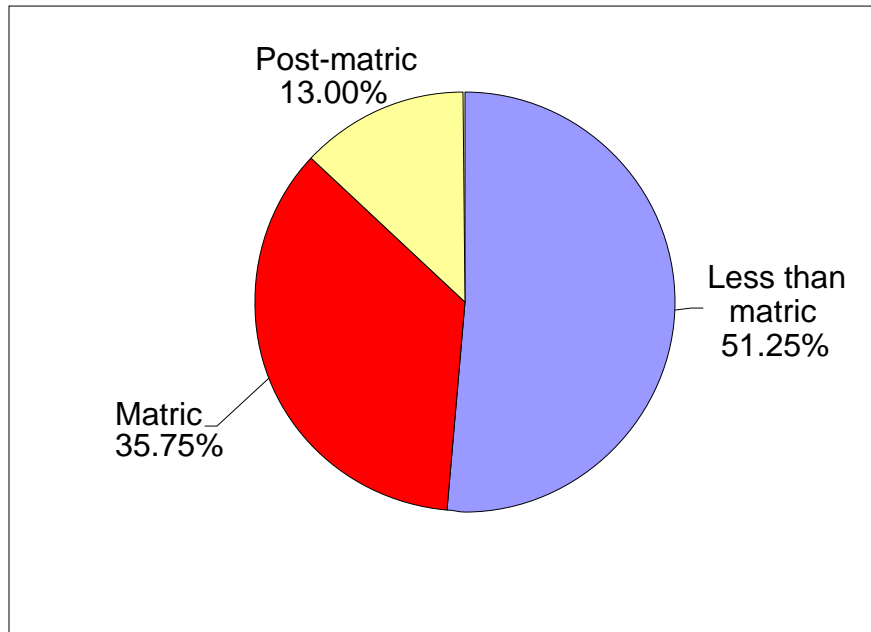


Figure 4.3 reveals that 51.25 % of the respondents have less than a Matriculation certificate, while 35.75% of respondents do hold a Matriculation certificate and 13% of the respondents had post matriculated. Therefore, the majority (51.25%) of the shoppers have less than a Matriculation certificate and constitute a bigger portion of shoppers at convenience stores. This finding implies that educational levels have a major impact on shoppers of convenience stores' lifestyle patterns.

#### 4.3.4 Frequency of shopping

Figure 4.4 portrays the frequency of shopping by Kwa Mashu shoppers.

Figure 4.4 Frequency of shopping in a month

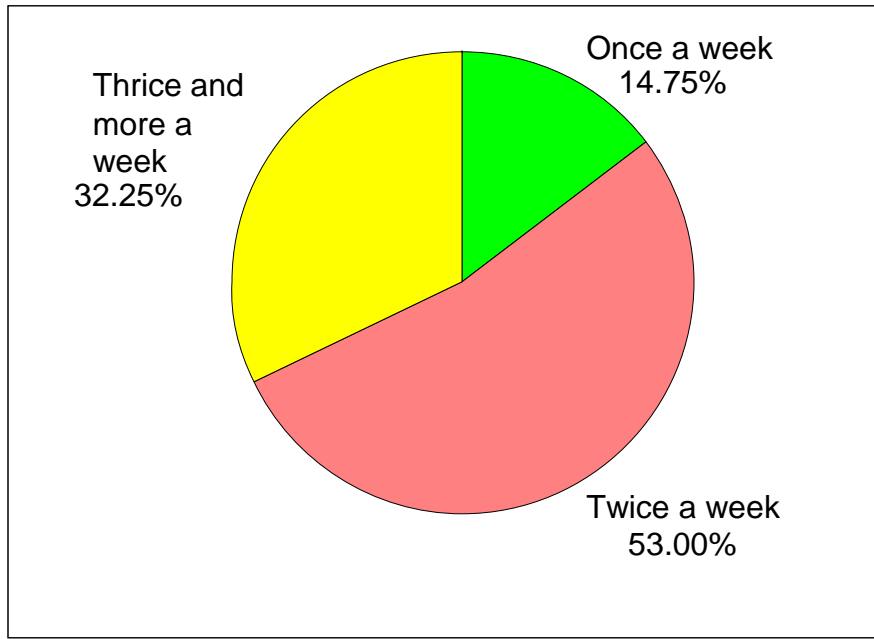


Figure 4.4 reflects that 14.75% of respondents indicated that they did their shopping once in a week, 53% of them did their shopping twice in a week and 32.25% did shopping thrice and more in a week. The results illustrates that a significant portion (85.25%) of respondents did shopping twice and more in a week. The results show consumers shop often.

Dahlén and Lange (2002: 341) also observed the similar trend that grocery store patronage is intensive. Eighty-four per cent of the shoppers in one study visited physical retail stores twice or more each week. The findings are further supported by Darley and Lim (1999: 311) that consumers, who frequently shop, are more favourably inclined toward that specific store and its merchandise quality. Shoppers reported more favourable responses for availability of products and store image.

Vrechopoulos *et al.* (2004:13) further contend that shopping is habitual to customers. Good floor layouts are extremely important because they strongly increase store visits, in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour and operational efficiency. A well designed store layout encourages shoppers to visit stores regularly and creates a shopping atmosphere that contributes towards shopping efficiency (Lewison, 1997: 277). Therefore, the results tend to agree with the literature.

#### 4.3.5 Adequacy of product assortment at convenience stores

Figure 4.5 reflects the adequacy of product assortment at convenience store in Kwa Mashu.

Figure 4.5 Adequacy of product assortment at convenience stores



Figure 4.5 reveals that 21.25% of respondents in Kwa Mashu strongly disagreed that they found product assortment of convenience stores in their area adequate, 47.5% disagreed, 9.25% were uncertain, 15.5% agreed and 6.5% strongly agreed. The results, therefore, indicate that 68.75% of the respondents from convenience stores in Kwa Mashu found product assortment inadequate. Therefore, attitude towards product

assortment at convenience stores is highly dependent upon the product offering. According to Clark (2003: 42), effective product assortment strategies can reap big rewards in today's marketplace by boosting sales, increasing footfall and ultimately increasing turnover.

#### 4.3.6 Encountering problems with merchandise display in stores

Figure 4.6 displays responses from Kwa Mashu shoppers on encountering problems associated with merchandise display in convenience stores.

Figure 4.6 Encountering problems with merchandise display in stores

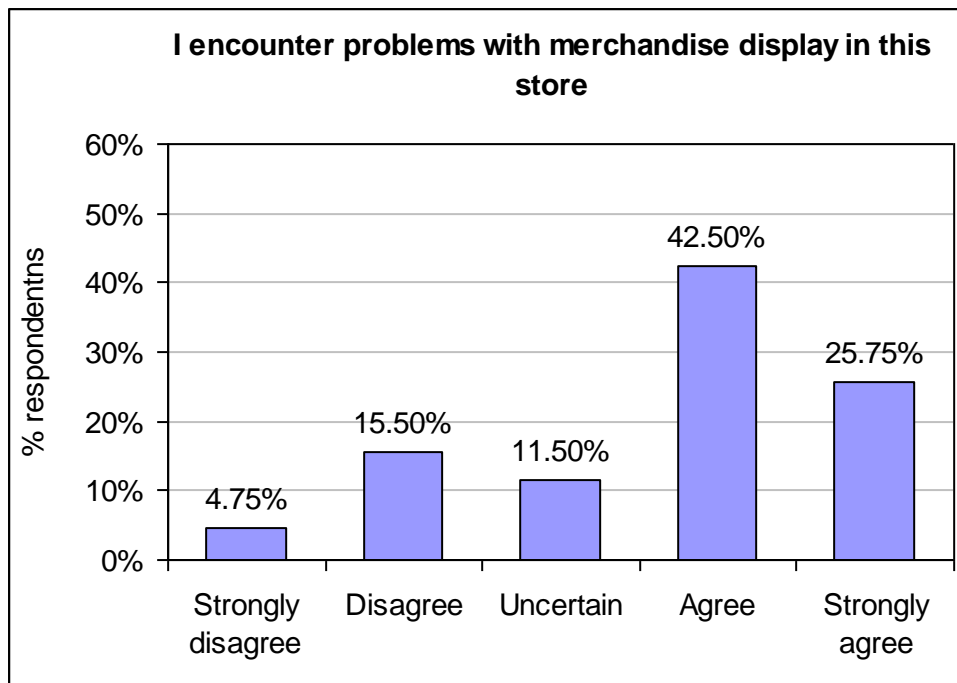


Figure 4.6 reflects that 4.75% of respondents from the convenience stores in Kwa Mashu strongly disagreed that they encountered problems with merchandise display in stores, 15.5% disagreed, 11.5% were uncertain, 42.5% agreed and 25.75% strongly agreed. Therefore, the majority (68.25%) of the respondents encountered problems with merchandise display in convenience stores. Therefore, it can be assumed that, since Kwa Mashu customers encounter problems with merchandise display, patronage of convenience stores would be negatively impacted. The results tie in with trends



observed by Paulins and Geistfeld (2003: 371) that most convenience stores are poorly perceived with respect to in-store displays and external appearance. Hence, the result concurs with the literature review and suggests that encountering problems with merchandise display in stores is an important factor in influencing shopping at convenience stores.

#### 4.3.7 Adequacy of the aisle width

Figure 4.7 illustrates responses on adequacy of aisle widths from respondents in Kwa Mashu.

Figure 4.7 Adequacy of the aisle width

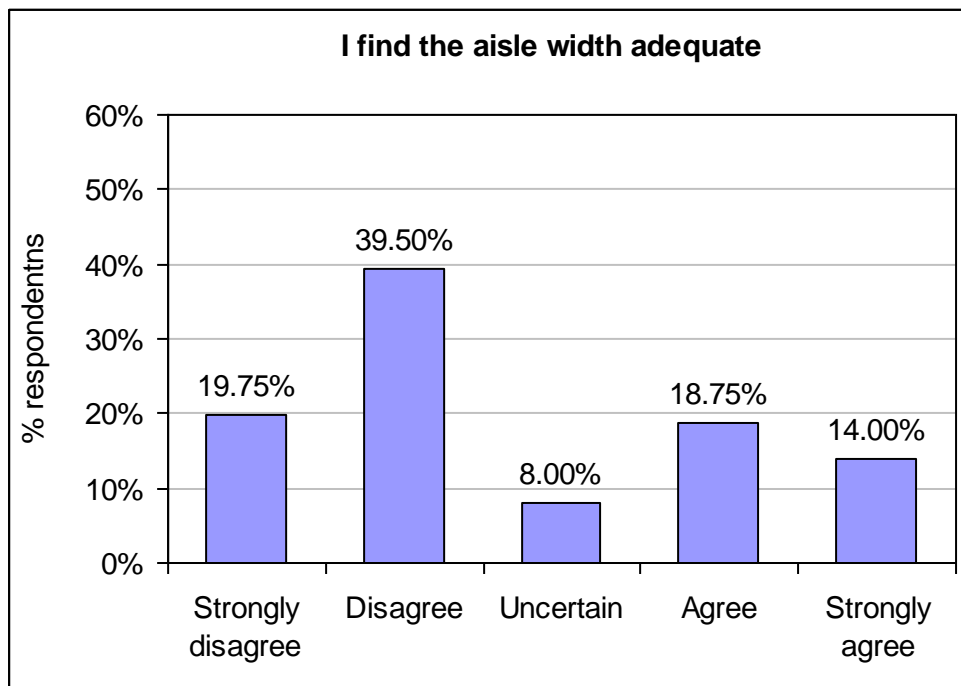


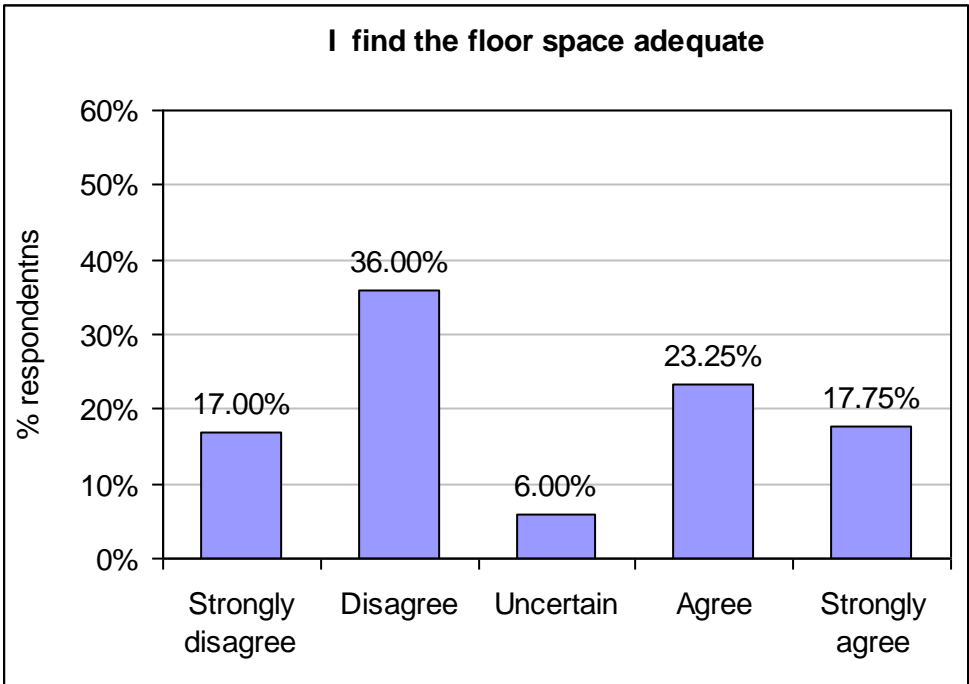
Figure 4.6 shows that 19.75% of respondents from the convenience store in Kwa Mashu strongly disagreed that they found the aisle width in stores adequate, 39.50% disagreed, 8% were uncertain, 18.75% agreed, and 14 % strongly agreed. The results, therefore, indicate that 59.25% of the respondents did not find the aisle width at convenience store adequate. Therefore, the results may have an impact on store layout, design, traffic and merchandise display. Byron (2007: B1) supports the results

by emphasizing that well designed aisles help better understand consumer behaviour and make the testing of new products faster, more convenient and more precise. This finding is an indication that aisle width plays an important part in the customer shopping process.

### 4.3.8 Adequacy of the floor space

Figure 4.8 illustrates responses on adequacy of the floor space.

Figure 4.8 Adequacy of the floor space



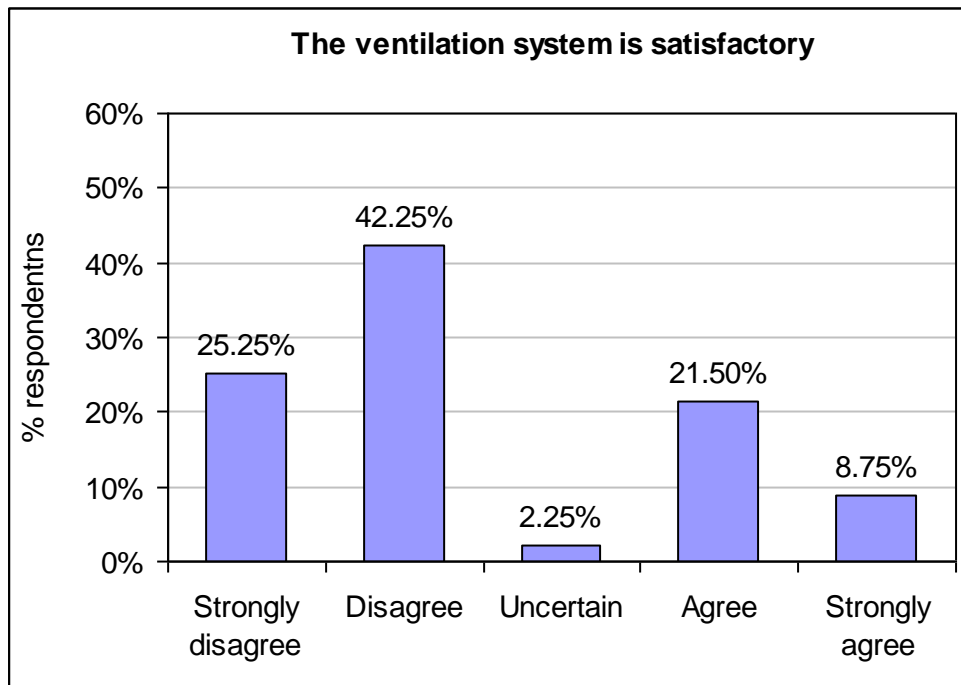
Illustrated by Figure 4.6, 17% of respondents from the convenience stores in Kwa Mashu strongly disagreed that they found floor space adequate in convenience stores, 36% disagreed, 6 % were uncertain, 23.25% agreed, and 17.75% strongly agreed. The results, therefore, indicate that a significant portion (53%) of the respondents found the floor space of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu inadequate. As noted in the literature study, Floor Ideas (2008) substantiates that the look and feel of a store can actually influence the amount of time a customer spends browsing and even the urge to purchase. Floor space has been proven to directly affect moods, especially when it

comes to shopping space, which will have a big impact due to the sheer surface area it covers. Therefore, it is suggested that floor space of convenience stores has an impact on store layout and design.

#### 4.3.9 Level of satisfaction about store ventilation systems

Figure 4.9 depicts responses on satisfaction level about store ventilation systems.

Figure 4.9 Satisfaction about store ventilation systems



Illustrated by Figure 4.9, 25.25% of respondents from convenience stores in Kwa Mashu strongly disagreed that they were satisfied with the ventilation systems of convenience stores, 42.25% disagreed, 2.25% were uncertain, 21.50% agreed and 8.75% strongly agreed. From the results, it appears that most consumers (64.5%) were not satisfied with the ventilation systems of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

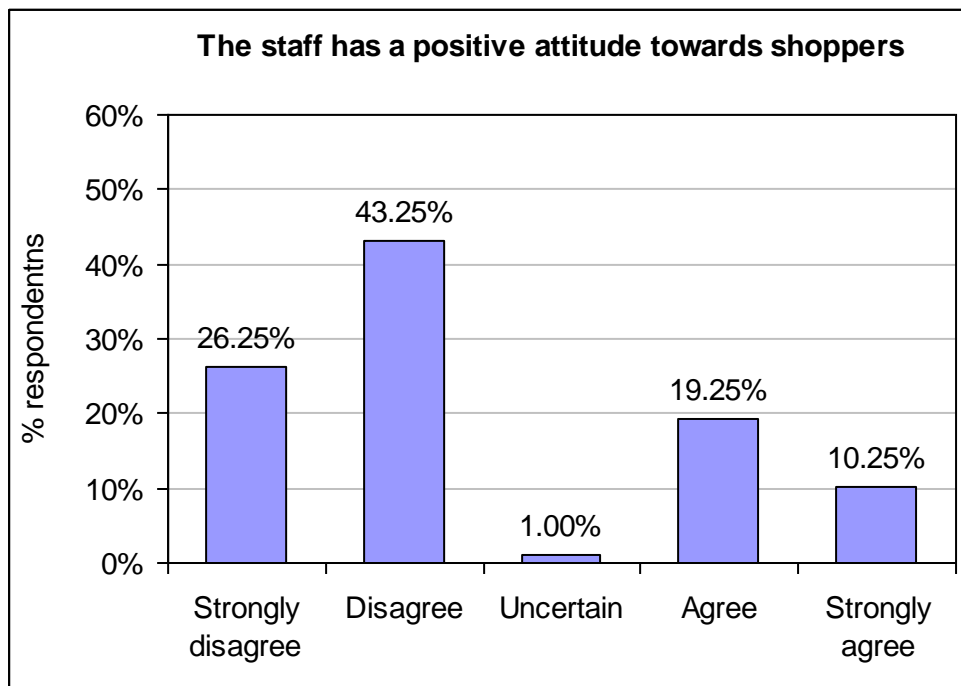
Moreover, literature by Miranda *et al.* (2005:220) suggests that a number of store image studies concluded that store ventilation systems and service provided by the store contributed much to the customer's intention to return to the store. Pan *et al.* (2008: 95)

further contend that well-functioning air-conditioning and comfortable lighting may simply act as hygiene factors that are essential and motivate customer satisfaction. The overall results state that most of the respondents are not satisfied with the store ventilation systems. Therefore, convenience stores still need to do more to improve customer satisfaction with efficient ventilation systems.

#### 4.3.10 Staff attitude towards shoppers

Figure 4.10 below shows the outcomes from respondents about staff attitude towards shoppers

Figure 4.10 Staff attitude towards shoppers



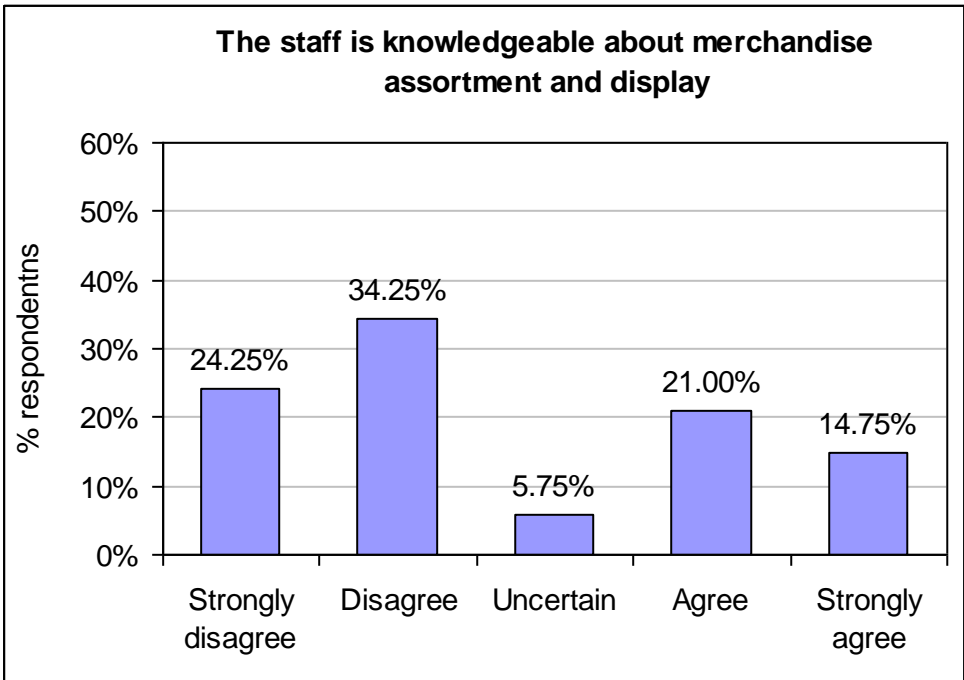
A total of 26.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the staff of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu had a positive attitude towards shoppers and 43.25% of the respondents disagreed, one percent of respondents were uncertain. 19.25% agreed that the staff of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu had a positive attitude towards shoppers and 10.25% of respondents strongly agreed. In general, the results reveal that 69.5% of the respondents felt that the staff of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu did not have a positive attitude towards shoppers. This finding indicates that, since Kwa

Mashu customers are dissatisfied with staff attitude towards shoppers, patronage of convenience stores will be negatively impacted. Therefore, more emphasis should be placed on having positive attitude towards shoppers, staff training and development.

**4.3.11 Staff knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display**

Figure 4.11 illustrates responses on staff knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display from respondents in Kwa Mashu.

Figure 4.11 Staff knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display



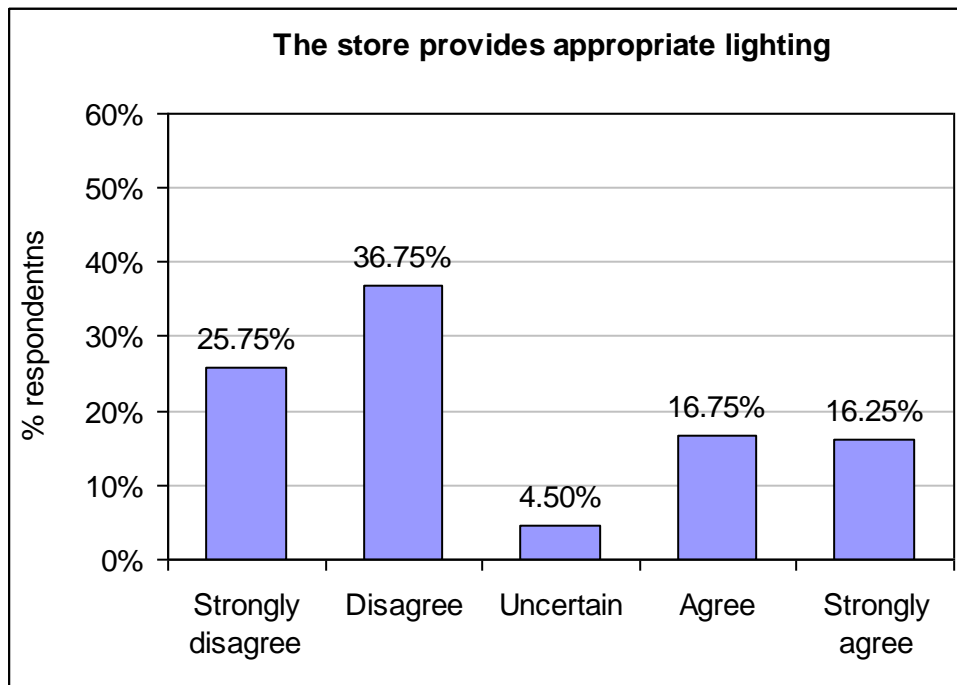
Of the 400 respondents interviewed, 24.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the staff of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu were knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display. 34.25% of the respondents disagreed, 5.75% of these respondents were uncertain. 21% of these respondents agreed and 14.75% of these respondents strongly agreed. The findings show that the majority (58.5%) of the respondents found that the staff of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu were not knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display. Darley and Lim (1999: 311) support the above findings that retail store patronage is impacted by perceptions of

store convenience including merchandise assortment strategies. Knowledge of store merchandise facilitates shopping and can influence purchase behaviour of consumers. This finding is consistent with the literature review.

#### 4.3.12 Perceptions about store lighting

Figure 4.12 depicts the perceptions about store lighting from the respondents.

Figure 4.12 Perceptions about store lighting



Of the 400 respondents interviewed, 25.75% strongly disagreed that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu provide appropriate lighting, while 36.75% of the respondents disagreed, 4.5% were uncertain, 16.75% agreed and 16.25% strongly agreed. The results, therefore, imply that a significant portion (62.5%) of the respondents found that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu were not providing appropriate lighting. In support, Hoyle (2003:149) substantiates that lighting for any retail environment has the potential to dramatically affect sales. Lighting can increase floor traffic, create visual interest and direct people through the store. This result confirms the importance of store lighting towards merchandise display and store patronage.

### 4.3.13 Store crowd density

Figure 4.13 below depicts responses on whether convenience stores in Kwa Mashu can handle a lot of customers.

Figure 4.13 Store crowd density



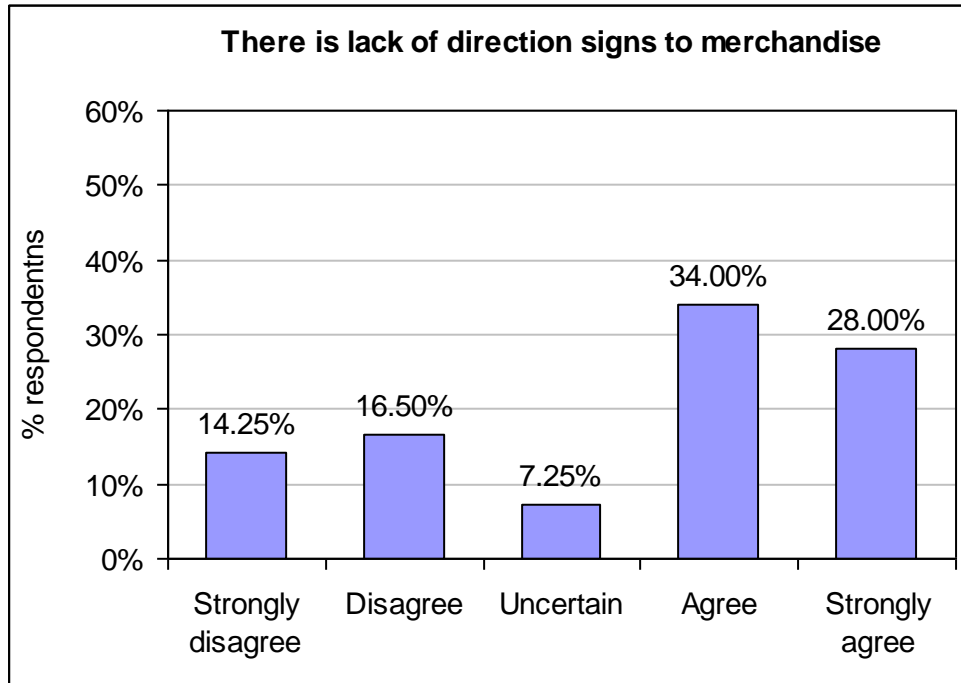
A total of 29.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu can handle a lot of people, while 24.5% of the respondents disagreed, 11% were uncertain, 22% agreed and 13% strongly agreed. The results, therefore suggest that 54 % of the respondents agreed that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu could not handle a crowd of shoppers.

In acknowledgement of the results, Bennett (1998: 78) claims that researchers in the retailing field have justified that customers consistently report great aversion of having to be crowded at supermarkets. Crucially, it has been claimed that longish waits and crowding impacts negatively on customer evaluations of an outlet's quality. Long queues and congestions affect negatively the customer's perceptions of punctuality, efficiency and reliability.

#### 4.3.14 Direction signs to merchandise

Figure 4.14 below portrays responses on whether convenience stores in Kwa Mashu do have direction signs to merchandise.

Figure 4.14 Direction signs to merchandise



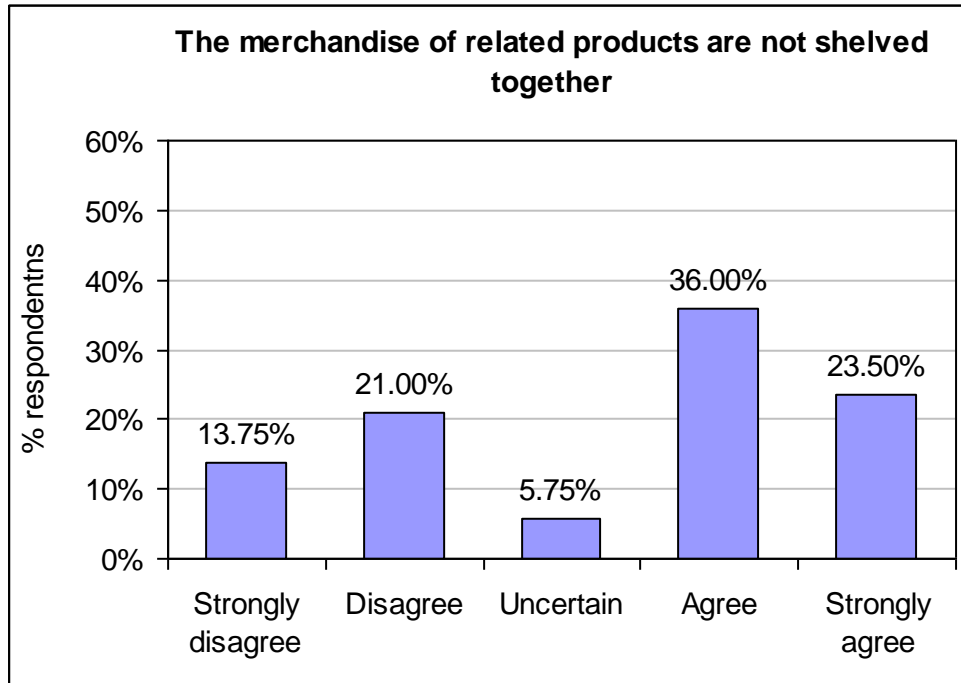
As illustrated by Figure 4.14, 14.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed that there was lack of direction signs to merchandise, 16.5% disagreed, 7.25% were uncertain, 34% of the respondents agreed and 28% strongly agreed. The overall results, therefore, imply that majority (62%) of the respondents felt that there was a lack of direction signs to show merchandise. Therefore, the direction signs have an impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour. To complement the findings, Jones (1999: 225) states that retailers should supply sufficient directional signs to convince the buyer of the wisdom of the selections. Retailers should also provide information about where and how to secure merchandise.



#### 4.3.15 Merchandise of related products shelved together

Figure 4.15 below represents responses on whether merchandise of related products shelved together

Figure 4.15 Merchandise of related products shelved together



Of the 400 respondents, 13.75% strongly disagreed that the merchandise of related products were not shelved together, 21 % disagreed, 5.75% were uncertain, 36% agreed and 23.5% strongly agreed. The results, therefore, indicate that a significant portion (59.5%) of the respondents believed that the merchandise of related products was not shelved together. This result is a positive sign and confirms the importance of shelving closely related merchandise together.

#### 4.3.16 Lack of assistance from staff

Illustrated by Figure 4.16 are responses on whether there is lack of assistance from staff at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

Figure 4.16 Lack of assistance from staff

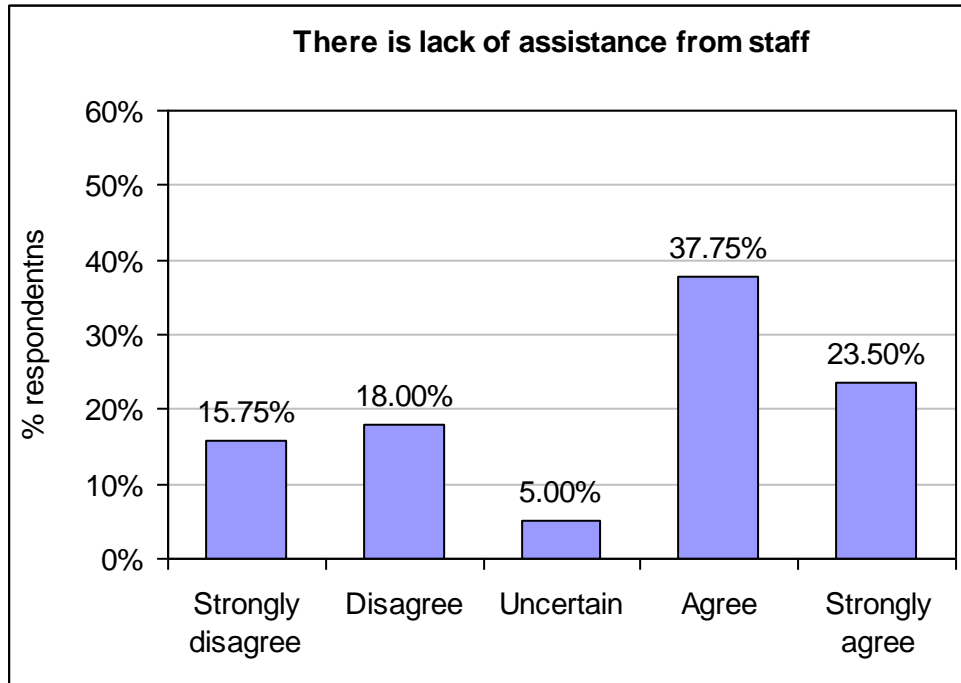


Figure 4.16 reveals the perceptions of respondents about lack of assistance from staff. The responses are as follows: 15.75 % strongly disagreed, 18 % disagreed, 5 % uncertain, 37.75 % agreed, and 23.5 % strongly agreed. The majority of the respondents (61.25%) accept that there is lack of assistance from staff at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.

As noted in chapter 2, for retail and other service industries, the interaction between customers and staff is likely to affect customers' shopping and experience. Assistance from staff may leave a lasting impression that affects satisfaction, repeat buying, and financial performance (Brown and Lam, 2008: 243). The results could show an influence of store patronage and consumers' purchasing behaviour. This result is a positive sign and confirms the importance of staff assistance in providing efficient service.

### 4.3.17 Store is badly designed

Figure 4.17 depicts perceptions on store design.

Figure 4.17 Store is badly designed

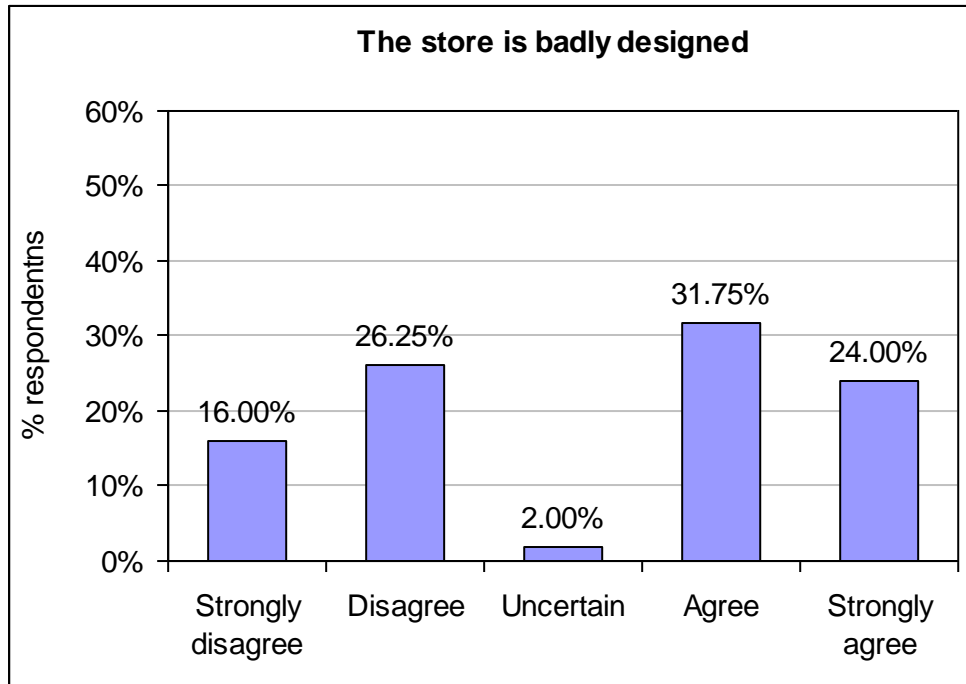


Figure 4.17 reveals that 16% of the respondents strongly disagreed that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu were badly designed, 26.25% of the respondents disagreed, 2% of the respondents were uncertain, 31.75% of the respondents agreed and 24% strongly agreed. The overall findings reflect that a significant portion (55.75%) of the respondents felt that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu were badly designed. Therefore, store design has an impact on store patronage and layout.

#### 4.3.18 Shopping again at convenience stores

Figure 4.18 portrays responses as to whether consumers would shop again from convenience stores.

Figure 4.18 Shopping again from convenience stores

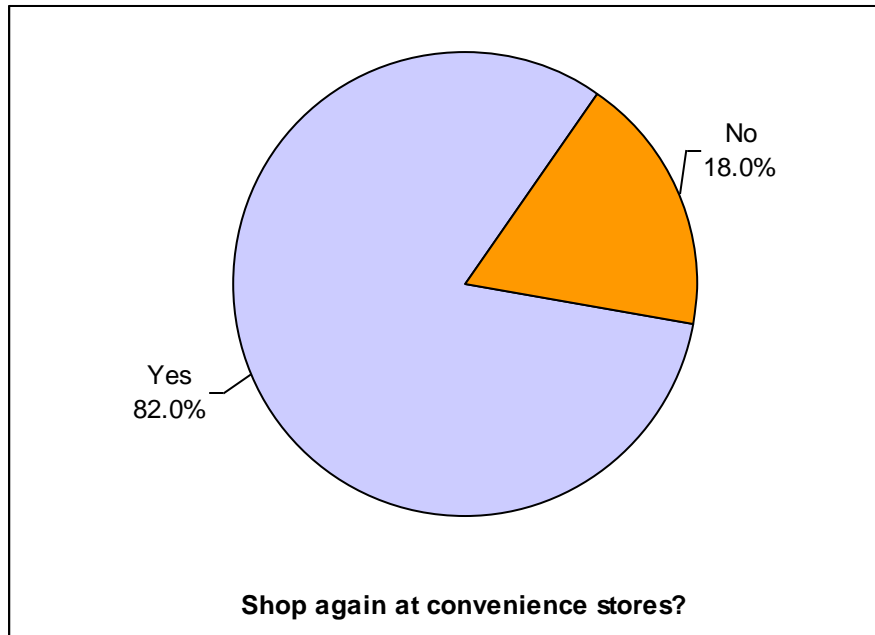
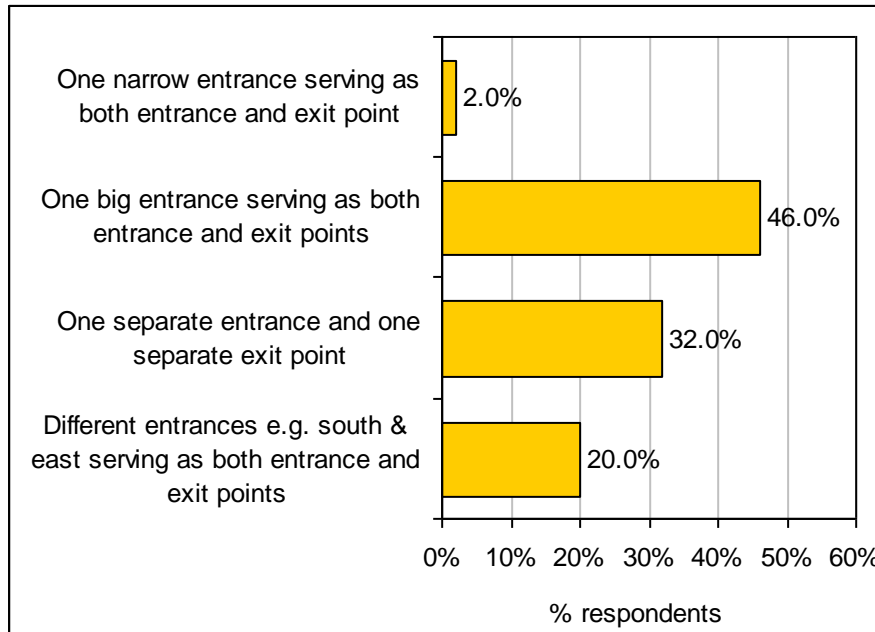


Figure 4.18 reveals the shopping dispersion of the respondents to shop again. From the selected sample, 82% of the respondents indicated that they will definitely buy again from the convenience stores in Kwa Mashu, while 18% of the respondents would not return to convenience stores for the next purchase. Therefore, repeat patronage at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu is high.

### 4.3.19 Preference of store entrance and exit points

Figure 4.19 depicts Preference of store entrance and exit points.

Figure 4.19 Preference of store entrance and exit points



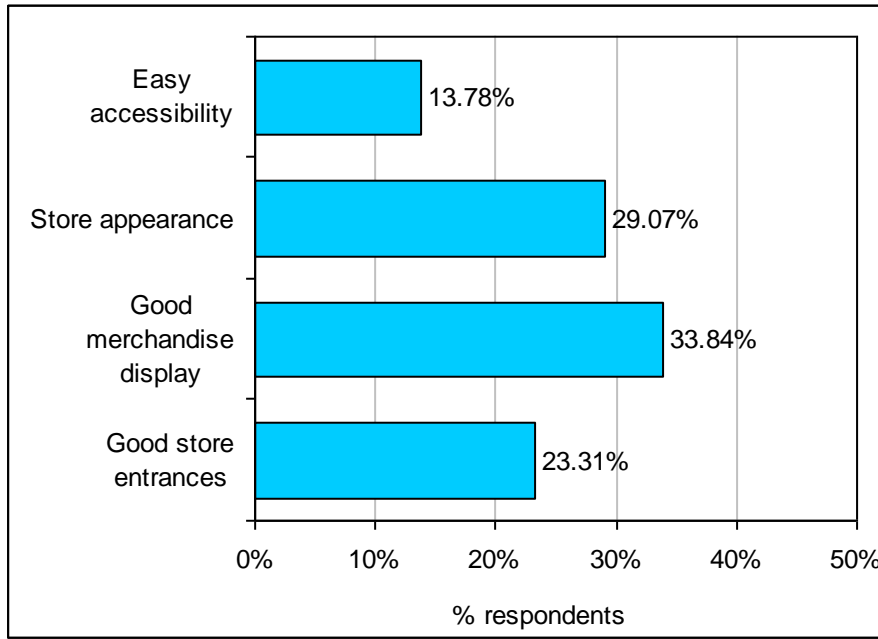
With regard to the store entrance and exit points, 20% preferred different entrances e.g. South and East serving as both entrance and exit points, 32% preferred one separate entrance and one separate exit points, 46% of the respondents preferred one big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points and 2% of the preferred one narrow entrance serving as both entrance and exit points. Therefore, it can be assumed that store traffic is dependent upon store entrances.

As noted in the literature study, store entrances are relevant to retailing, although there are differences in the levels of importance attached to various retailing elements; store entrances can improve a retail outlet's performance by causing the consumer to undertake unplanned or impulse purchases buying intention prior to entering the store. Efficient and well planned store entrances can generate positive consumer behaviour towards the store and this behaviour can be linked to increased levels of browsing and increased time of spend by consumers inside the store (Noad and Rogers, 2008: 1002).

### 4.3.20 Best components of a good store layout

Figure 4.20 below describes the best components of a good store layout.

Figure 4.20 Best components of a good store layout



With regard to the best components of a good store layout, 23.31% of the respondents regarded good store entrances as one of the best components, 33.84% perceived good merchandise display to be the best component, while store appearance accounted for 29.07% and easy accessibility accounted for 13.78%. Good merchandise display was the preferred component of a good store layout.

## 4.4 ASSOCIATIONS AND COMPARISONS

The results of the chi-square tests are presented in tables 4.2 to 4.30.

### 4.4.1 Uni-variate analysis

Tables 4.2 to 4.5 relate to uni-variate analysis.

**Table 4.2: Frequency of shopping**

	Observed N	%	Expected N	One sample Chi-Square	df	p
Once a week	59	14.75	133.33	87.995	2	0.000*
Twice a week	212	53.00	133.33			
Thrice and more	129	32.25	133.33			
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>				

\*significant at the 95% level

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.000**, which is below 0.05. The results of the one-sample chi-square test reflects a **significant difference** between the observed and expected frequencies at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.3: Would you shop again at convenience stores?**

	Observed N	%	Expected N	One sample Chi-Square	df	p
Yes	328	82.0	200.0	163.840	1	0.000*
No	72	18.0	200.0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>				

\*significant at the 95% level

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.000**, which is below 0.05. Therefore, table 4.3, which reflects results of the one-sample Chi-square (x) test, indicates a **significant difference** between the observed and expected frequencies at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results of the binomial test was also **significant** at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.4: Store entrance and exit points**

	Observed N	%	Expected N	One sample Chi-square	df	P
Different entrances e.g. south & east serving as both entrance and exit points	80	20.0%	100.0	167.040	3	0.000*
One separate entrance and one separate exit point	128	32.0%	100.0			
One big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points	184	46.0%	100.0			
One narrow entrance serving as both entrance and exit points	8	2.0%	100.0			
Total	400	100.0%				

\*significant at the 95% level

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.000**, which is below 0.05. The results of the one-sample Chi-square (x) test reflects a **significant difference** between the observed and expected frequencies at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.5: Best component of a good store layout**

	Observed N	%	Expected N	One sample Chi-square	df	P
Good store entrances	93	23.31%	99.8	35.637	3	0.000*
Good merchandise display	135	33.84%	99.8			
Store appearance	116	29.07%	99.8			
Easy accessibility	55	13.78%	99.8			
Total answered	399	100.0%				
Not answered	1					

\*significant at the 95% level

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.000**, which is below 0.05. The results of the one-sample Chi-square (x) test reflects a **significant difference** between the observed and expected frequencies at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ).



#### 4.4.2 Bivariate analysis

Tables 4.6 to 4.30 relate to bivariate analysis.

**Table 4.6: Comparison between frequency of shopping and age**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
Age in years	18-29 years	Count	11	71	38	120
		%	2.75%	17.75%	9.50%	30.00%
	30-40 years	Count	27	72	37	136
		%	6.75%	18.00%	9.25%	34.00%
	41-55 years	Count	9	51	29	89
		%	2.25%	12.75%	7.25%	22.25%
	56-65 years and above	Count	12	18	25	55
		%	3.00%	4.50%	6.25%	13.75%
Total		Count	59	212	129	400
		%	14.75%	53.00%	32.25%	100.00%

**Chi-square=17.597, df=6, p=0.007**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.007**, which is below 0.05. The results reflect a **significant association** between frequency of shopping and age. The association is **significant** at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, frequency of shopping and age are inter-related.

**Table 4.7: Comparison between Frequency of shopping and gender**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
Gender	Male	Count	18	77	51	146
		%	4.50%	19.25%	12.75%	36.50%
	Female	Count	41	135	78	254
		%	10.25%	33.75%	19.50%	63.50%
Total		Count	59	212	129	400
		%	14.75%	53.00%	32.25%	100.00%

**Chi-square=1.429, df=2, p=0.489**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a  $p$  value of **0.489**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and gender. These two variables are **independent** of each other. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, gender is not related to how often respondents shop.

**Table 4.8: Comparison between age and design of store**

			The store is badly designed					Total
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	
Age in years	18-29 years	Count	18	40	1	34	27	<b>120</b>
		%	<b>4.50%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>.25%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>30.00%</b>
	30-40 years	Count	22	37	3	48	26	<b>136</b>
		%	<b>5.50%</b>	<b>9.25%</b>	<b>.75%</b>	<b>12.00%</b>	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>34.00%</b>
	41-55 years	Count	14	15	2	31	27	<b>89</b>
		%	<b>3.50%</b>	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>.50%</b>	<b>7.75%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>22.25%</b>
	56-65 years and above	Count	10	13	2	14	16	<b>55</b>
		%	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>3.25%</b>	<b>.50%</b>	<b>3.50%</b>	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>13.75%</b>
Total		Count	<b>64</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>16.00%</b>	<b>26.25%</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>31.75%</b>	<b>24.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Chi-square=12.810, df=12,p=0.383**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a  $p$  value of **0.383**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between store design and age. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, age is not related to the question that the store is perceived to be badly designed.

**Table 4.9: Comparison between age and future shopping at a convenience store**

			From the responses made in Q3, would you shop again at convenience stores?		Total
			Yes	No	Yes
Age in years	18-29 years	Count	103	17	120
		%	25.75%	4.25%	30.00%
	30-40 years	Count	113	23	136
		%	28.25%	5.75%	34.00%
	41-55 years	Count	71	18	89
		%	17.75%	4.50%	22.25%
	56-65 years and above	Count	41	14	55
		%	10.25%	3.50%	13.75%
	Total	Count	328	72	400
		%	82.00%	18.00%	100.00%
<b>Chi-square =3.673, df=3, p=0.299</b>					

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.299**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between age and future shopping at a convenience store. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Age is not related to whether respondents would shop again at convenience stores.

**Table 4.10: Comparison between gender and future shopping at a convenience store**

			From the responses made in Q3, would you shop again at convenience stores?		Total
			Yes	No	
Gender Male	Count		119	27	146
	%		29.75%	6.75%	36.50%
Female	Count		209	45	254
	%		52.25%	11.25%	63.50%
Total	Count		328	72	400
	%		82.00%	18.00%	100.00%

**Chi-square=0.038, df=1, p=0.846**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.846**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between gender and future shopping at a convenience store. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Gender is not related to whether respondents would shop again at convenience stores.

**Table 4.11: Comparison between educational level and future shopping at a convenience store**

			From the responses made in Q3, would you shop again at convenience stores?		Total
			Yes	No	
Highest educational qualification	Less than matric	Count	166	39	205
		%	41.50%	9.75%	51.25%
	Matric	Count	119	24	143
		%	29.75%	6.00%	35.75%
	Post matric	Count	43	9	52
		%	10.75%	2.25%	13.00%
Total	Count	328	72	400	
	%	82.00%	18.00%	100.00%	

**Chi-square=0.306, df=2, p=0.858**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.858**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between educational level and future shopping at convenience stores. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore,

qualification is not related to whether respondents would shop again at convenience stores.

**Table 4.12: Comparison between age and preference of store entrance and exit points**

			Q5				Total
			Different entrances e.g. south & east serving as both entrance and exit points	One separate entrance and one separate exit point	One big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points	One narrow entrance serving as both entrance and exit point	
Age in years	18-29 years	Count	18	43	55	4	<b>120</b>
		%	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>
	30-40 years	Count	33	42	60	1	<b>136</b>
		%	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>.3%</b>	<b>34.0%</b>
	41-55 years	Count	17	25	45	2	<b>89</b>
		%	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>.5%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>
	56-65 years and above	Count	12	18	24	1	<b>55</b>
		%	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>.3%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>		Count	<b>80</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>46.0%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Chi-square =6.668, df=9, p=0.672**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.672**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between age and preference of store entrance and exit points. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p>0.05$ ). Age is not related to preference of store entrance and exit points.

**Table 4.13: Comparison between gender and store entrances**

			Q5				Total
			Different entrances e.g. south & east serving as both entrance and exit points	One separate entrance and one separate exit point	One big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points	One narrow entrance serving as both entrance and exit point	
Gender	Male	Count	36	33	73	4	<b>146</b>
		%	<b>9.00%</b>	<b>8.25%</b>	<b>18.25%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>36.50%</b>
	Female	Count	44	95	111	4	<b>254</b>
		%	<b>11.00%</b>	<b>23.75%</b>	<b>27.75%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>63.50%</b>
<b>Total</b>		Count	<b>80</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>20.00%</b>	<b>32.00%</b>	<b>46.00%</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Chi-square =10.268, df=3, p=0.016</b>							

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.016**, which is below 0.05. The results reflect a **significant association** between gender and preference of store entrance and exit points. The association **is significant** at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). The majority of females indicated either one separate entrance and one separate exit point (23.8%) or one big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points (27.8%) as compared to majority of the males indicating only one big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points.

**Table 4.14: Comparison between age and best perceived components of a good store layout**

			Q6				Total
			Good store entrances	Good merchandise display	Store appearance	Easy accessibility	
Age in years	18-29 years	Count	17	42	43	17	119
		%	4.261%	10.526%	10.777%	4.261%	29.825%
	30-40 years	Count	33	47	38	18	136
		%	8.271%	11.779%	9.524%	4.511%	34.085%
	41-55 years	Count	27	27	24	11	89
		%	6.767%	6.767%	6.015%	2.757%	22.306%
	56-65 years and above	Count	16	19	11	9	55
		%	4.010%	4.762%	2.757%	2.256%	13.784%
Total		Count	93	135	116	55	399
		%	23.308%	33.835%	29.073%	13.784%	100.000%

**Chi-square =11.553, df=9, p=0.240**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.240**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between age and best perceived components of a good store layout. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, age is not related to the best perceived components of a good store layout.

**Table 4.15: Comparison between gender and best perceived components of a good store layout**

			Q6				Total
			Good store entrances	Good merchandise display	Store appearance	Easy accessibility	
Gender	Male	Count	36	54	43	13	146
		%	9.02%	13.53%	10.78%	3.26%	36.59%
	Female	Count	57	81	73	42	253
		%	14.29%	20.30%	18.30%	10.53%	63.41%
Total		Count	93	135	116	55	399
		%	23.31%	33.83%	29.07%	13.78%	100.00%

**Chi-square =11.306, df=6, p=0.079**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.079**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically**

**significant** relationship between gender and best perceived components of a good store layout. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p>0.05$ ). Gender is not related to the best perceived components of a good store layout.

**Table 4.16: Comparison between shopping again at convenience stores and frequency of shopping**

				How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
				Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
From the responses made in Q3, would you shop again at convenience stores?	Yes	Count	47	170	111	<b>328</b>	
		%	<b>11.75%</b>	<b>42.50%</b>	<b>27.75%</b>	<b>82.00%</b>	
	No	Count	12	42	18	<b>72</b>	
		%	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>10.50%</b>	<b>4.50%</b>	<b>18.00%</b>	
Total		Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
		%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Chi-square =2.121, df=2, p=0.346</b>							

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.346**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between shopping again at convenience stores and frequency of shopping. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p>0.05$ ). Therefore, shopping again at convenience stores is not related to frequency of shopping.



**Table 4.17: Comparison between best perceived components of a good store layout and frequency of shopping**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
Q6	Good store entrances	Count	18	43	32	<b>93</b>
		%	<b>4.51%</b>	<b>10.78%</b>	<b>8.02%</b>	<b>23.31%</b>
	Good merchandise display	Count	23	75	37	<b>135</b>
		%	<b>5.76%</b>	<b>18.80%</b>	<b>9.27%</b>	<b>33.83%</b>
	Store appearance	Count	13	64	39	<b>116</b>
		%	<b>3.26%</b>	<b>16.04%</b>	<b>9.77%</b>	<b>29.07%</b>
	Easy accessibility	Count	5	29	21	<b>55</b>
		%	<b>1.25%</b>	<b>7.27%</b>	<b>5.26%</b>	<b>13.78%</b>
<b>Total</b>		Count	<b>59</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>399</b>
		%	<b>14.79%</b>	<b>52.88%</b>	<b>32.33%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Chi-square =6.840, df=6, p=0.336</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.336**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between best perceived components of a good store layout and frequency of shopping. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Best perceived components of a good store layout are not related to frequency of shopping.

**Table 4.18: Comparison between frequency of shopping and adequacy of product assortment**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
I find the product assortment of this stores adequate	Strongly disagree	Count	7	50	28	<b>85</b>
		%	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>12.50%</b>	<b>7.00%</b>	<b>21.25%</b>
	Disagree	Count	36	97	57	<b>190</b>
		%	<b>9.00%</b>	<b>24.25%</b>	<b>14.25%</b>	<b>47.50%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	5	22	10	<b>37</b>
		%	<b>1.25%</b>	<b>5.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>9.25%</b>
	Agree	Count	8	30	24	<b>62</b>
		%	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>7.50%</b>	<b>6.00%</b>	<b>15.50%</b>
	Strongly agree	Count	3	13	10	<b>26</b>
		%	<b>.75%</b>	<b>3.25%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>6.50%</b>
	Total	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Chi-square =8.080, df=8, p=0.426</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.426**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and adequacy of product assortment. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p>0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and product assortment are not related.

**Table 4.19: Comparison between frequency of shopping and encountering problems with merchandise display in this store**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
I encounter problems with merchandise display in this store	Strongly disagree	Count	6	7	6	19
		%	1.50%	1.75%	1.50%	4.75%
	Disagree	Count	5	41	16	62
		%	1.25%	10.25%	4.00%	15.50%
	Uncertain	Count	5	27	14	46
		%	1.25%	6.75%	3.50%	11.50%
	Agree	Count	22	85	63	170
		%	5.50%	21.25%	15.75%	42.50%
	Strongly agree	Count	21	52	30	103
		%	5.25%	13.00%	7.50%	25.75%
	Total	Count	59	212	129	400
		%	14.75%	53.00%	32.25%	100.00%
<b>Chi-square =14.618, df=8, p=0.067</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.067**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and encountering problems with merchandise display in this store. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and encountering of problems with merchandise display are not related.

**Table 4.20: Comparison between frequency of shopping and adequacy of the aisle width**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
I find the aisle width adequate.	Strongly disagree	Count	9	43	27	<b>79</b>
		%	<b>2.25%</b>	<b>10.75%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>19.75%</b>
	Disagree	Count	26	82	50	<b>158</b>
		%	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>20.50%</b>	<b>12.50%</b>	<b>39.50%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	4	18	10	<b>32</b>
		%	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>4.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>8.00%</b>
	Agree	Count	15	35	25	<b>75</b>
		%	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>8.75%</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	<b>18.75%</b>
	Strongly agree	Count	5	34	17	<b>56</b>
		%	<b>1.25%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>4.25%</b>	<b>14.00%</b>
<b>Total</b>	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**Chi-square=5.249, df=8, p=0.731**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.0731**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and adequacy of the aisle width. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, frequency of shopping and aisle width are not related.

**Table 4.21: Comparison between frequency of shopping and adequacy of floor space**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
I find the floor space adequate	Strongly disagree	Count	7	41	20	<b>68</b>
		%	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>10.25%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>17.00%</b>
	Disagree	Count	17	82	45	<b>144</b>
		%	<b>4.25%</b>	<b>20.50%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>	<b>36.00%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	2	10	12	<b>24</b>
		%	<b>.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>6.00%</b>
	Agree	Count	21	45	27	<b>93</b>
		%	<b>5.25%</b>	<b>11.25%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>23.25%</b>
Strongly agree	Count	12	34	25	<b>71</b>	
	%	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	<b>17.75%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**Chi-square=11.982, df=8, p=0.152**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.152**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and adequacy of space. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and floor space are not related.

**Table 4.22: Comparison between frequency of shopping and satisfactory ventilation systems**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The ventilation system is satisfactory.	Strongly disagree	Count	17	57	31	<b>105</b>
		%	<b>4.25%</b>	<b>14.25%</b>	<b>7.75%</b>	<b>26.25%</b>
	Disagree	Count	28	90	55	<b>173</b>
		%	<b>7.00%</b>	<b>22.50%</b>	<b>13.75%</b>	<b>43.25%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	1	1	2	<b>4</b>
		%	<b>.25%</b>	<b>.25%</b>	<b>.50%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>
	Agree	Count	8	42	27	<b>77</b>
		%	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>10.50%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>19.25%</b>
	Strongly agree	Count	5	22	14	<b>41</b>
		%	<b>1.25%</b>	<b>5.50%</b>	<b>3.50%</b>	<b>10.25%</b>
<b>Total</b>	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

**Chi-square =7.063, df=8, p=0.530**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.530**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and satisfactory ventilation system. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, frequency of shopping and ventilation system are not related.

**Table 4.23: Comparison between frequency of shopping and staff attitude towards shoppers**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The staff has a positive attitude towards shoppers.	Strongly disagree	Count	17	57	31	<b>105</b>
		%	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>
	Disagree	Count	28	90	55	<b>173</b>
		%	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>43.3%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	1	1	2	<b>4</b>
		%	<b>.3%</b>	<b>.3%</b>	<b>.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
	Agree	Count	8	42	27	<b>77</b>
		%	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>
Strongly agree	Count	5	22	14	<b>41</b>	
	%	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Chi-square =3.421, df=8, p=0.905</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.905**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and staff attitude towards shoppers. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and staff attitude towards shoppers are not related.

**Table 4.24: Comparison between frequency of shopping and staff is knowledgeable of merchandise assortment and display**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The staff is knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display	Strongly disagree	Count	15	53	29	<b>97</b>
		%	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>13.25%</b>	<b>7.25%</b>	<b>24.25%</b>
	Disagree	Count	16	70	51	<b>137</b>
		%	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>17.50%</b>	<b>12.75%</b>	<b>34.25%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	2	15	6	<b>23</b>
		%	<b>.50%</b>	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>5.75%</b>
	Agree	Count	16	42	26	<b>84</b>
		%	<b>4.00%</b>	<b>10.50%</b>	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>21.00%</b>
Strongly agree	Count	10	32	17	<b>59</b>	
	%	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>8.00%</b>	<b>4.25%</b>	<b>14.75%</b>	
Total	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Chi-square=5.426, df=8, p=0.711</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.711**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and knowledgeable staff of merchandise assortment and display. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and knowledgeable staff of merchandise assortment and display are not related.



**Table 4.25: Comparison between frequency of shopping and appropriate lighting**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The store provides appropriate lighting	Strongly disagree	Count	15	55	33	<b>103</b>
		%	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>13.75%</b>	<b>8.25%</b>	<b>25.75%</b>
	Disagree	Count	23	73	51	<b>147</b>
		%	<b>5.75%</b>	<b>18.25%</b>	<b>12.75%</b>	<b>36.75%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	2	10	6	<b>18</b>
		%	<b>.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>4.50%</b>
	Agree	Count	7	40	20	<b>67</b>
		%	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>16.75%</b>
Strongly agree	Count	12	34	19	<b>65</b>	
	%	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>4.75%</b>	<b>16.25%</b>	
<b>Total</b>		Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Chi-square=3.184, df=8, p=0.922**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.922**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and stores providing appropriate lighting. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, frequency of shopping and appropriate lighting are not related.

**Table 4.26: Comparison between frequency of shopping and whether the store can handle a lot of people**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The store can handle a lot of people	Strongly disagree	Count	23	53	42	<b>118</b>
		%	<b>5.75%</b>	<b>13.25%</b>	<b>10.50%</b>	<b>29.50%</b>
	Disagree	Count	13	58	27	<b>98</b>
		%	<b>3.25%</b>	<b>14.50%</b>	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>24.50%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	5	19	20	<b>44</b>
		%	<b>1.25%</b>	<b>4.75%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>11.00%</b>
Agree	Count	12	48	28	<b>88</b>	
	%	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>12.00%</b>	<b>7.00%</b>	<b>22.00%</b>	
Strongly agree	Count	6	34	12	<b>52</b>	
	%	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>13.00%</b>	
Total	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>	
	%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Chi-square =12.052, df=8, p=0.149</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.149**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and whether the store can handle a lot of people. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and whether the store can handle a lot of people are not related.

**Table 4.27: Comparison between frequency of shopping and direction signs to merchandise**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
There is lack of direction signs to merchandise	Strongly disagree	Count	5	34	18	57
		%	1.25%	8.50%	4.50%	14.25%
	Disagree	Count	13	33	20	66
		%	3.25%	8.25%	5.00%	16.50%
	Uncertain	Count	8	15	6	29
		%	2.00%	3.75%	1.50%	7.25%
	Agree	Count	15	87	34	136
		%	3.75%	21.75%	8.50%	34.00%
	Strongly agree	Count	18	43	51	112
		%	4.50%	10.75%	12.75%	28.00%
	Total	Count	59	212	129	400
		%	14.75%	53.00%	32.25%	100.00%
<b>Chi-square =24.952, df=8, p=0.002</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test result indicates a **p** value of **0.002**, which is below 0.05. The results reflect a **significant association** between frequency of shopping and direction signs to merchandise. The association **is significant** at the 95% level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and direction signs to merchandise are related.

**Table 4.28: Comparison between frequency of shopping and shelving together of related merchandise**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The merchandise of related products are not shelved together	Strongly disagree	Count	8	30	17	55
		%	2.00%	7.50%	4.25%	13.75%
	Disagree	Count	11	45	28	84
		%	2.75%	11.25%	7.00%	21.00%
	Uncertain	Count	0	14	9	23
		%	.00%	3.50%	2.25%	5.75%
	Agree	Count	25	72	47	144
		%	6.25%	18.00%	11.75%	36.00%
Strongly agree	Count	15	51	28	94	
	%	3.75%	12.75%	7.00%	23.50%	
<b>Total</b>		Count	59	212	129	400
		%	14.75%	53.00%	32.25%	100.00%

**Chi-square =5.462, df=8, p=0.707**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.707**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and shelving together of related merchandise. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and shelving together of related merchandise are not related.

**Table 4.29: Comparison between frequency of shopping and lack of assistance from staff**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
There is lack of assistance from staff	Strongly disagree	Count	7	44	12	<b>63</b>
		%	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>11.00%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>15.75%</b>
	Disagree	Count	8	40	24	<b>72</b>
		%	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>10.00%</b>	<b>6.00%</b>	<b>18.00%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	4	9	7	<b>20</b>
		%	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>2.25%</b>	<b>1.75%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>
	Agree	Count	27	72	52	<b>151</b>
		%	<b>6.75%</b>	<b>18.00%</b>	<b>13.00%</b>	<b>37.75%</b>
	Strongly agree	Count	13	47	34	<b>94</b>
		%	<b>3.25%</b>	<b>11.75%</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>23.50%</b>
<b>Total</b>		Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Chi-square =11.460, df=8, p=0.177**

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square (x) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.177**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and lack of assistance from staff. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and lack of assistance from staff are not related.

**Table 4.30: Comparison between frequency of shopping and a badly designed store**

			How often do you go shopping in a month?			Total
			Once a week	Twice a week	Thrice and more	
The store is badly designed	Strongly disagree	Count	11	33	20	<b>64</b>
		%	<b>2.75%</b>	<b>8.25%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>16.00%</b>
	Disagree	Count	15	59	31	<b>105</b>
		%	<b>3.75%</b>	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>7.75%</b>	<b>26.25%</b>
	Uncertain	Count	1	3	4	<b>8</b>
		%	<b>.25%</b>	<b>.75%</b>	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>2.00%</b>
	Agree	Count	19	70	38	<b>127</b>
		%	<b>4.75%</b>	<b>17.50%</b>	<b>9.50%</b>	<b>31.75%</b>
	Strongly agree	Count	13	47	36	<b>96</b>
		%	<b>3.25%</b>	<b>11.75%</b>	<b>9.00%</b>	<b>24.00%</b>
	Total	Count	<b>59</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>400</b>
		%	<b>14.75%</b>	<b>53.00%</b>	<b>32.25%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Chi-square =3.469, df=8, p=0.902</b>						

**Interpretation:** The above Chi-square ( $\chi$ ) test statistic result indicates a **p** value of **0.177**, which is greater than 0.05. The result reveals that there is **no statistically significant** relationship between frequency of shopping and a badly designed store. The association is **not significant** at the 95% level ( $p > 0.05$ ). Frequency of shopping and badly designed stores are not related.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data gathered in the research study. It has also presented a number of different methods of quantitative analysis applied to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results were presented in the form of charts and tables which help to provide a detailed analysis. Moreover, the results have identified significant relationships and differences between the variables of the study, and also pointed out areas that require further attention.

Briefly the findings of this chapter can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ There are problems experienced with inadequate product assortment;

- ❖ Problems are encountered with merchandise display in stores;
- ❖ Inadequate floor space; and
- ❖ Convenience stores do not provide appropriate lighting.

The next chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Whilst the previous chapter discussed statistical information that resulted from the survey being carried out, a more in-depth discussion of the results is required. This chapter discusses in-depth the results and findings in respect to the objectives of the study. Further recommendations for future studies are also made.

#### **5.10 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL STUDY**

The goal of the research was to investigate the impact of store layout on consumer purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. According to the main problem and sub-problems that arose, the research design and chapter outline was established.

Chapter two gave an overview of the related literature regarding store layout. The literature discussed the characteristics of store layout and their importance to customer purchasing behaviour. It was found that there are problems associated with store layout at convenience stores. The researcher, therefore, believed that investigating store layout and its characteristics at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu is vital and would help to bring changes that would lead to improved customer service by retailers.

#### **5.3 EMPIRICAL STUDY**

Chapter 4 has analyzed, interpreted and presented results of the study undertaken. The study was quantitative in nature as 400 questionnaires were used to extract information from the respondents in Kwa Mashu. From the results, it is noted that there are important aspects of store layout that convenience stores at Kwa Mashu must put in place in order to provide improved customer service and satisfaction.



The reasoning processes against the base of an argument that support the conclusion for this study were done using the scientific research methods of inductive logic. This study was conducted following the logical stages of planning and framing; gathering of primary and secondary data; the analysis of data from respondents and the interpretation of study results as well as report writing.

**Stages followed in carrying out this research are discussed below:**

- **Planning and framing**

The researcher identified the problems, was interested with the topic, set out goals and objectives of the study, developed a formal research proposal and worked out the timetable for the project. Preliminary reading of books, journals and articles enabled the researcher to properly frame the research statement and formulate the questions around the secondary data.

- **Gathering of primary and secondary data**

The researcher investigated the relevant information from journals, internet and books. Coded questionnaires were drawn and administered to customers who shop at convenience stores at Kwa Mashu in order to gather primary data.

- **Analyzing data and interpreting study results**

The research was quantitative in nature, and the data was collected from respondents through the use of questionnaires. The analysis involved summarizing data by means of tables, bar and pie charts so that it could be easier to identify patterns and interpret meanings.

- **Writing a report**

The report was drawn up in alignment with the problem statement, the study findings and the presentations of the findings are also written in a report format.

#### 5.4 ACHIEVEMENTS OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Study objectives serve as the lifeblood of the entire study. The achievement of research objectives are briefly discussed below:

- **To determine the essential characteristics of layout of convenience stores**

Chapter two has researched literature and provided an understanding of the essential characteristics and components of store layout. Therefore, the first objective has been achieved.

- **To establish if problems are encountered by consumers with regard to different store settings while shopping at independent convenience stores.**

The research was able to establish problems encountered by consumers with regard to different store settings while shopping at independent convenience stores. The problems were with floor space, store lighting, direction signs to merchandise, shelving of merchandise, service quality, product assortment, merchandise display and aisle width. Therefore, this objective has been achieved.

- **To investigate whether consumers are satisfied with the level of service they get from convenience stores in Kwa Mashu in terms of accessibility, quality of merchandise and general appearance.**

The satisfaction levels were tested and analysed in chapter four, and indicated that the majority of respondents were not satisfied with the general appearance of convenience stores being; floor space, store lighting, direction signs to merchandise, shelving of merchandise, service quality, product assortment, merchandise display, aisle width and accessibility of convenience stores. Theoretical information in the literature review also suggests that stores should pay attention to external appearance; if the external appearance is not attractive, customers will not want to enter. Both service and merchandise quality exert significant influence on store performance, measured by sales growth and

customer growth, and their impact is mediated by customer satisfaction (Babakus *et al.*, 2004: 713). Therefore, this objective has been achieved.

- **To make recommendations to improve store layout at independent convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.**

In the latter part of chapter five, the recommendations on how to improve store layout are drawn and, therefore, this objective has also been achieved.

## **5.5 RESTRICTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study focused only on one area, being Kwa Mashu, but the findings are much broader in their application. The study was conducted at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu (i.e., Shenge Supermarket, Mkhulushane Supermarket, Zamaokuhle supermarket, Africa supermarket, Kwa Magwaza store, Kwa Nkabinde Supermarket, Kwa Maphumulo Supermarket, Kwa Mhlongo Supermarket, Kwa Mavundla Supermarket and Kwa Nozaza convenience store). There is no substantial amount of data as there are few current publications on store layout at convenience stores in the South African context, but there is an adequate amount of information about store layout around the world.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.6.1 Recommendations based on research design**

- **Sample – Geographical Region**

In this study, respondents were selected from the Kwa Mashu area only. It will be beneficial to extend the study to other convenience stores in Kwa Zulu-Natal and also to other provinces in order to assess the impact of store layout on purchasing behaviours of these respondents in further studies. The opinions of customers in other areas will enable the researcher to compare and contrast the results between geographical regions and thereby better identify the generalisation of these findings.

- **Sampling Technique**

In this study, convenience sampling was used. It would be advisable to use the stratified sampling technique in future studies. McDaniel and Gates (2002: 410) suggest that stratified sampling is the probability sample that is forced to be more representative through simple random sampling of mutually exclusive and exhaustive subsets. Stratified samples are statistically more efficient because one source of variation has been eliminated. This technique will also allow the researcher to compare results across different provinces.

### 5.6.2 Recommendations based on findings

- **Floor space**

It is recommended that convenience stores at Kwa Mashu improve their floor space, as findings indicate that consumers do encounter problems with floor space. Griffith (2005: 1391) also substantiates that floor space is a critical factor driving consumer elaboration and response in retailing. The floor space of a retail store has been found to significantly impact a retailer's overall performance through its influence on information processing, purchase intentions, attitude toward the retail establishment. Retailer's floor space results in greater consumer elaboration and more positive consumer outcomes.

- **Store appearance and image**

Findings show that convenience stores at Kwa Mashu do not have good store appearance and image. Therefore, it is recommended that some effort be made by retailers to ensure that they improve their store appearance and image. Vrechopoulos *et al.* (2004: 13) also found that store layout is an important factor affecting consumer behaviour and a critical determinant towards the creation of store image. Well designed layouts are extremely important because they strongly influence in-store traffic patterns, shopping atmosphere, shopping behaviour, and operational efficiency.

- **Merchandise display and assortment**

It is also recommended that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu should take into consideration the seriousness of merchandise display and assortment as findings indicated that consumers do encounter problems of locating merchandise while shopping. Marketing Communications (2007) reports that store layout and visual merchandising are factors that contribute to the uniqueness of a store. Azuma and Fernie (2001: 282) propose that in order to meet the adamant needs of the consumers and respond to the sudden changes in trends and consumption patterns, retailers need to have the “leanest” and the most “agile” ways to get the right product in the right place at the right time in smaller consignment sizes with increasing frequency.

- **Assisting consumers and staff knowledge**

Assisting consumers and staff knowledge about merchandise display are the most important factors that convenience stores in Kwa Mashu need to improve by hiring employees that are more skilled or by training their existing employees.

- **Store traffic flow and crowd density**

Improving traffic flow is also essential at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu as most of the respondents complained about crowd density and inadequate store traffic flow. Therefore, measures and typologies to avoid crowding have to be developed (Dion, 2004: 250).

- **Store ventilation system**

From the results, it appears that most consumers are not satisfied with the ventilation systems of convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. There is, therefore, a need for ventilation for the indoor environment for retail design, and to improve shopping conditions (Olesen, 2006: 445).

- **Store entrances**

Findings reflect that most of the respondents preferred one big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points, or one separate entrance and one separate exit point. It is, therefore, recommended by Moerloose *et al.* (2005: 472) that retailing can be implemented successfully with up to three easy-to-use entrances to the store allowing for improved in-store traffic flow. In the retail sector, ease-of-use with simple store entrances and inviting appearance are positive factors that promote engagement from consumers.

- **Customer service**

Findings have shown that customer service from staff at convenience stores is one of the crucial factors which has to be improved. It is clear that once the customers are being treated with respect, their level of satisfaction will increase and they will buy more products than originally intended. It is, therefore, imperative that training of employees should be addressed to enhance efficient and effective customer service.

- **Aisle and décor**

In the existing layout, as customers are ready to pay for their items and leave the store, they are currently waiting in lines and go through cramped check out aisles. Another improvement is to in create space in and around these check out lanes. This will help to reduce another congested area of the store. There is also a need for an overall improvement in décor as convenience stores need more added appeal to encourage consumers to return (Aghazadeh, 2005: 42).

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RETAILERS IN GENERAL**

Retailers should have the retail strategy in place; targeting an ideal customer, knowing what products they are buying and what forms of advertising will be most effective in reaching this important target group. Retailers need to understand the location within which the store operates and provide best service levels, pricing policies, merchandise assortment, store environment and store image. Retailers should seek to sell

products/services that satisfy the buyers' needs. A retail strategy can help provide day-to-day operational direction.

The context of consumer buying behaviour implies that the consumer may evaluate their own opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour by comparison with others in the society. Once the consumers have selected the brand and retail outlet, they must complete the transaction. This process involves what is normally called purchasing the product. Convenience stores need to simplify the actual purchase as much as possible. This involves strategies as simple as managing the time spent in line at the checkout register. Many businesses appear to overlook the fact that the actual purchase act is generally the last contact the consumer will have with the store on that trip. Although first impressions are important, so are final ones. Store personnel need to be not only efficient at this activity but also helpful and personable (Hawkins *et al.*, 2007: 626).

In general, retailers should seek to sell products that satisfy the buyer's needs and provide store layouts that entice customers to move around the store to purchase more merchandise than they may have planned originally (Levy and Weitz, 2007: 512).

## **5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is recommended that further research be done of a qualitative nature that will explore, in depth, more about store layout and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour at convenience stores. It was noted that some respondents wanted to say more about the store layout and their purchasing behaviours but the questionnaire was not designed in a manner that allowed them to elaborate. Therefore, further research is recommended, for example, qualitative research.

## **5.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This study has highlighted the impact of store layout and purchasing behaviours of consumers at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. Issues relating to store layout and purchasing behaviour were discussed. It is believed that the importance of store layout is at an all-time high in major convenience stores. In today's volatile economy, providing

excellent store layout can be the critical difference in any company's success. With ever-changing store layouts in the retail industry, retailers face the ongoing challenge of gaining competitive advantage from creating added customer value. In order to accomplish this value, retailers have to constantly review their store layout strategies.

The empirical data used during this study were based on questionnaires that were administered amongst customers of convenience stores at Kwa Mashu.

The recommendations and conclusions discussed in this chapter represent some of the actions that could possibly be taken at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu to improve store layout. There is no doubt that other recommendations can be used successfully to enhance store layout. This study will have an impact on the service quality which will assist store owners to increase customer satisfaction at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu.



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## **ANNEXURE A**

### LETTER OF CONSENT

15 Azalea  
30 Valley View Road  
Morningside  
4001  
20<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Dear Respondents

I am studying towards my Master's Degree in Marketing at the Durban University of Technology. In terms of the programme, a research project needs to be conducted.

I have chosen to conduct research on store layout and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour at convenience stores in Kwa Mashu. I believe it is important for both consumers and the convenience store owners to have a clear understanding of this subject: how it affects both groups and how to design programmes that will address this problem and bring about satisfactory change for both consumers and store owners. I will, therefore, be interviewing consumers from different locations in the Kwa Mashu area. I will make the research report available at the DUT library.

I hereby request your consent and support in conducting this research by answering this questionnaire. Your responses will be highly confidential.

Thanking you

Tshepo Tlapana

## ANNEXURE B

Page 1 of 1

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**From:** Indirani Naidoo [Naidooi@ukzn.ac.za]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 28, 2009 09:13  
**To:** Tsepo Peter Tlapana  
**Subject:** Re: Stats

Hi Tsepo

Please find attached the amended file .

The data from your questionnaire is mainly categorical in nature. Frequencies & percentages and Chi-square is appropriate for categorical data.

However, I did run reliability for the questions in Q3 but the reliability value was very low, indicating that the questions 3.1 to 3.13 cannot be combined together to form a single construct. My idea was to use these 13 questions together as one score, then obtain means and do t-tests but this was not feasible.

Regards  
Indirani

Please find our Email Disclaimer here-->: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/disclaimer>

## ANNEXURE C

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help improve the retail structure in South Africa, especially store layouts, merchandise display and floor space. Your cooperation in responding to this questionnaire will result into bringing valuable changes which will improve the retail structure and operation.

Please mark an [X] in the appropriate block or number.

1.1 Age in years	
18 –29	1
30 – 40	2
41 – 55	3
56 – 65 and above	4

1.2 Gender	
Male	1
Female	2

1.3 Highest educational qualification	
Less than Matric	1
Matric	2
Post Matric	3

How often do you go shopping in a month?	
Once a week	1
Twice in a week	2
Thrice and more	3

1. Mark the appropriate box with an X for each of the following statements

To what extent do you agree or disagree with statement that describes the quality of the following services provided by convenience stores.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
	3.1 I find the product assortment of this stores adequate	1	2	3	4
3.2 I encounter problems with merchandise display in this store	1	2	3	4	5

3.3 I find the aisle width adequate.	1	2	3	4	5	
3.4 I find the floor space adequate	1	2	3	4	5	
3.5 The ventilation system is satisfactory	1	2	3	4	5	
3.6 The staff has a positive attitude towards shoppers.	1	2	3	4	5	
3.7 The staff is knowledgeable about merchandise assortment and display	1	2	3	4	5	
3.8 The store provides appropriate lighting	1	2	3	4	5	
3.9 The store can handle a lot of people	1	2	3	4	5	
3.10 There is lack of direction signs to merchandise	1	2	3	4	5	
3.11 The merchandise of related products are not shelved together	1	2	3	4	5	
3.12 There is lack of assistance from staff	1	2	3	4	5	
3.13 The store is badly designed	1	2	3	4	5	

**From the responses made in Q3, would you shop again at convenience stores?**

Yes	1
No	2

**With regard to the store entrance and exit points, chose one that matters most to you?**

Different entrances e.g. south & east serving as both entrance and exit points.	1
One separate entrance and one separate exit point.	2
One big entrance serving as both entrance and exit points.	3
One narrow entrance serving as both entrance and exit point.	4

**What do you consider as the best component of a good store layout?**

Good store entrances	1
Good merchandise display	2
Store appearance	3
Easy accessibility	4
Other:.....	5

**Do you have any suggestions to improve service at convenience stores?**

Yes	1
No	2

<b>If yes to the above question, please specify</b>

**Thank you for your valuable time and participation**