

**A SOUTH AFRICAN STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE
OF SHELF-EDGE LABELLING
ON URBAN CONSUMERS' GROCERY SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR.**

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(B. CONSUMER SCIENCES)

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Philippine 4:13

***“I have the strength to face all conditions
by the power that Christ gives me.”***

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SUMMARY

All consumers engage in some form of grocery shopping in order to satisfy their most basic needs. During grocery shopping consumers tend to make their final decision about grocery purchases within the store. This increases the importance of the availability of in-store information.

Shelf-edge labels can be viewed as informative point-of-purchase promotional material providing information, such as price. Since the implementation of bar-coded shelf-edge labels, the practice of individually pricing items declined, leaving the shelf-edge label often to be the only source indicating price and similar in-store information. The provision of in-store promotional and informational material can be associated with high costs and therefore needs to be optimised to its fullest potential.

However, the use of shelf-edge labels by South African consumers is a question on the minds of retailers as well as consumer scientists, since an empirical research regarding this topic has been neglected in the past. Therefore, neither retailers, nor scientists know the extent to which consumers use shelf-edge labels during grocery shopping. Consumers' reasons for certain responses to or expectations of shelf-edge labels have not yet been properly investigated. This research aimed to answer these questions.

The results of the study answered the study's objectives in a descriptive and exploratory manner, which led to the development of a conceptual frame. This conceptual frame provides a content specific decision-making model which indicates the use of shelf-edge labelling during grocery shopping. Retailers can use this model, as well as other results drawn from the study, to implement shelf-edge labels as informational material to its fullest potential. The study is furthermore beneficial to science in its ability to assist in the understanding of consumer behaviour.

**'n SUID-AFRIKAANSE STUDIE OOR DIE INVLOED VAN WINKELRAK-
ETIKETTERING OP STEDELIKE VERBRUIKERS SE KRUIDENIERSWARE
AANKOOPGEDRAG**

OPSOMMING

Alle verbruikers is betrokke in 'n vorm van kruideniers-inkopies om hul lewensbehoefte te bevredig. Tydens sulke inkopies is hulle geneig om die finale besluite in die kruidenierswinkel te maak. Hierdie gedrag verhoog die noodsaaklikheid van inligting wat binne die winkelomgewing verskaf word.

Winkelrak-ettikette kan beskou word as punt-van-verkope promosie materiaal, wat inligting soos prys verskaf. Die implementering van strepiesskode winkelrak-ettikette het die gebruik van individuele beprysing van produkte laat afneem. Dit het veroorsaak dat die winkelrak-etikette in baie gevalle die enigste bron van inligting is, soos prys. Om sulke inligting binne die winkelomgewing te verskaf kan gepaard gaan met geweldige hoë kostes en moet daarom ten volle benut word.

Ten spyte hiervan is die mate waarin Suid-Afrikaanse verbruikers winkelrak-etikette gebruik, 'n vraagstuk vir handelaars en akademici. Die onderwerp is in die verlede verwaarloos deur wetenskaplike navorsing. Daarom is handelaars en akademici nie instaat om aannames te maak rondom die mate waarin Suid-Afrikaanse verbruikers winkelrak-etikette gebruik of hulle redes vir die gedrag nie. Verder is hulle ook nie bewus van die verwagtinge wat verbruikers omtrent die etikette het nie. Hierdie navorsing het egter daarna gestreef om lig te werp op hierdie areas van onsekerheid.

Die resultate van hierdie studie het daarin geslaag om antwoorde te gee op die vraagstukke in 'n beskrywende en ondersoekende wyse, wat daartoe gelei het dat 'n konseptuele raamwerk ontwikkel kon word. Hierdie raamwerk verskaf 'n konteks-spesifieke besluitnemingsmodel wat die rol van winkelrak-ettikette tydens kruideniersaankope aandui. Handelaars kan die model, in kombinasie met ander resultate van die navorsing, gebruik om winkelrak-ettikette te ontwikkel en te gebruik. Die studie is verder ook voordelig vir akademici omdat dit instaat is om by te dra tot die verklaring van verbruikersgedrag.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	Electronic shelf label
FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
GST	General Systems Theory
GTC	Grocery, toiletry, confectionary
POP	Point-of-purchase
POPAI	Point-of-purchase Advertising Industry

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The grocery industry (often referred to as Fast Moving Consumer Goods or FMCG) has a vast influence on the South African economy. This industry includes all forms of outlets, predominantly focused on the reselling of groceries, toiletries and confectionery. Within the South African context, these outlets have been estimated at a total of 69 771 stores with a turnover of close to R64 729 million in 2002 (ACNielsen, 2002).

Considering the size and magnitude of this market, grocery shopping and the retail environment in which it occurs, has been studied extensively from several different perspectives. An aspect that has, however, received far less attention and is often taken for granted, is the so-called "shelf-edge labels" used in this grocery retail environment. Most of the South African grocery outlets make use of shelf-edge labels (also referred to as "shelf talkers"), to communicate product and price information. The lack of empirical research regarding the use of shelf-edge labels is disconcerting, taking into account the time, energy and financial resources that retailers invest in providing these labels to facilitate consumers' decision making during grocery shopping.

Grocery shopping is a task performed by most, if not all, households on a daily, weekly and/ or monthly basis. It is estimated that about three quarters of an average household's income is spent in grocery stores (Urbany *et al.*, 1996:92). As consumers, these households not only spend a lot of money, but also a considerable amount of time in the grocery store environment. Whether shelf-edge labels positively contribute to these consumers' grocery shopping experiences and comply with their requirements, is debatable. Yet, if this is the case, it stands to reason that retailers should pay more attention to shelf-edge labelling as an input in the store environment and adjust it according to the expectations of the consumer.

1.1.1 Grocery store environment

Little doubt remains that the physical store environment has a major impact on consumers' acquisition of grocery items. Research has, for example, indicated that 70% to 80% of all purchasing decisions are made inside the store (Iris, 2002:27; Murphy, 2003:23; Hui, 2004:12). This emphasises the importance of the store environment on consumers' grocery decisions.

Viewed from a systems perspective, a multitude of factors within the physical store environment may serve as inputs with regard to a consumer's decision to purchase groceries. One such input that may be of particular significance, is the point-of-purchase (POP) promotions found in most grocery retail outlets. Shelf-edge labels, a form of POP promotions, are considered by many store managers to be one of the most important types of merchandising materials (Anon,1995:107).

1.1.2 Point-of-purchase promotions

Various studies have indicated that POP promotions are often considered the most effective promotional method in influencing consumers' decisions (Jansson *et al.*, 2003:59). These have an up to 90% success rate in for example, promoting price reductions (Shaw, 2001:36). Inman *et al.* (1990:75) have in fact found that some consumers would pay more attention to promotional signage and cues surrounding the product, than to the product itself.

Empirical findings (Inman *et al.*, 1990:75; Shaw, 2001:36 & Jansson *et al.*, 2003:59), such as the above, highlight the importance of signage in retail stores and in particular the value it has as cues for information about price. As pointed out, shelf-edge labels can be viewed as a specific form of POP promotion. Although POP promotions have been a frequently studied topic, shelf-edge labels as a method of informing the consumer and promoting the product, have been neglected by scientific research. Moreover, the influence of shelf-edge labels on consumers' grocery shopping behaviour within the South African context remains largely unknown to date.

1.1.3 Shelf- edge labels

Promotional signals, such as shelf-edge labels, are described by Inman *et al.* (1990:74) as very specific types of POP promotions. It can be used in various ways to attract a consumer to a particular shelf within the store environment and simultaneously to a specific brand (Hui, 2004:12). This highlights the importance of shelf-edge labels to the retailer. Also to be taken into account, is the fact that these labels offer certain benefits to the consumer.

Shelf-edge labels were originally designed to be of primary use to the retailer in facilitating certain stock-related tasks, as it contained information about the products' barcode and storeroom position (Chandrasekharan, 2004:1). It also brought about the end of individual pricing of products, since the prices were now simply indicated on the shelf-edge label. In later years of retailing, the use of shelf-edge labels as POP methods was realised. Apart from indicating price, these labels were further refined to inform the consumer about the package size, product name and, most importantly, unit price (Manning *et al.*, 2003:367). As such, the shelf-edge label has evolved into a source of information based not only on the retailer's requirements, but also more focused on the needs of the consumer (Chandrasekharan, 2004:1).

It is argued that the information provided by shelf-edge labels can be useful to the consumer during purchasing decisions, as it enables the consumer to easily compare various products available on the shelves of grocery outlets. The question, however, remains whether these labels are of particular importance to South African consumers in this regard. More specifically, the question could be posed whether the information, such as price and unit price included on these labels, is adequate in meeting their expectations.

1.1.4 Price information on shelf-edge labels

To many consumers price plays an important role in their acquisition of grocery products (Kahn & McAlister, 1997:186). During the purchasing of these goods, consumers would, for example, use reference prices derived from advertisements and/ or previous shopping trips (Kelly *et al.*, 2000:248), as mental cues (Vanhuele & Dreze, 2000:3). Consumers would then typically evaluate prices (consciously or subconsciously) by comparing the retail outlet's proposed price to their reference

price (Diamond & Johnson, 1990:3). A conclusion drawn is that although not all consumers are equally sensitive to price, they do consider it at some point in time either at a conscious or subconscious level. This stipulates the importance of price information included on shelf-edge labels in facilitating their decision-making behaviour.

Bearing in mind that within the vast majority of grocery outlets, shelf-edge labels have largely replaced individual pricing of products, it becomes apparent that inadequate shelf-edge labelling places the consumer in a position where he/she cannot make an optimal decision. As stated by Urbany *et al.* (1996:93), consumers need to be aware of a price to benefit from it and consequently make informed economical decisions. In this regard, Dickson and Sawyer (1990:51) argue that consumers do not always have the time at their disposal to search for price information. This might be particularly true within urban environments, where it is a known fact that consumers often face several time constraints (Dellaert *et al.*, 1997:1). The development of shelf-edge labelling that would make price identification easier for the consumer to notice and interpret, is therefore emphasised.

Research that is focused on understanding the consumer's point of view concerning shelf-edge labels could shed some light on possible improvements with regard to methods by means of which this information is being presented. Such methods would allow the consumer to gain more from the shopping experience and simultaneously benefit the retailer (Dickson & Sawyer, 1990:50). To date, limited empirical findings exist regarding the extent to which consumers are disappointed if preset expectations about shelf-edge labelling (and the price information included on it) are not met. Incorrect pricing information on shelf-edge labels might have potentially negative implications on consumers' decision satisfaction and therefore ultimately on retailers' profitability.

1.1.5 The importance of shelf-edge labels from a retailer's perspective

Shelf-edge labels have successfully served the retailer for quite some time. Although they might still be satisfied with shelf-edge labels in its current form, the previous discussion illustrates that the consumer's perspective should be

recognised. Although very limited scientific research has been done to determine the impact of shelf-edge labelling on the shopping behaviour of consumers, findings such as those presented by Inman *et al.* (1990:80) illustrate that certain scenarios could very easily result in a consumer being disappointed in the retailer and a consequent loss in confidence.

Such scenarios could for example include pricing discrepancies between shelf-edge labelling and prices charged at pay points. Research done by Dickson and Sawyer (1990:42) indicated that when a price (indicated on a shelf-edge label) is checked and evaluated just before purchase, it might still form part of the consumer's short term memory, by the time he/she reaches the pay point. Should there be a discrepancy between the price stored in the consumer's short term memory and the price charged at the pay point, it could lead to a reduction in decision satisfaction. This might have negative implications for the retailer, such as negative word of mouth and/ or a decision to change stores, especially in urban areas where consumers have a multitude of retail outlets to choose from.

The relevance of these situations on consumer reactions within a South African context is brought into question and clearly requires further investigation. The fact remains that in today's competing marketplace, retailers could hardly afford to remain ignorant of the consequences of consumers' possible dissatisfaction with shelf-edge labelling. As postulated by the so-called prospect theory, a small amount of negative feedback on a shopping experience has a far greater impact on future shopping behaviour than a larger amount of positive feedback (Swingyard & Whitlark, 1994:339).

The conclusion drawn, is that shelf-edge labelling can be costly, not only as a result of the time, energy and financial resources already invested in it by retailers, but also as a result of the consequences brought about by the possible incorrect application thereof. Research is therefore needed to gain a more in-depth understanding of shelf-edge labelling for it to be optimised and used to its fullest potential.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although a considerable amount of research has been focused on the retail environment, little is known about the use of shelf-edge labelling within this environment. It becomes clear that research is needed to determine the influence that shelf-edge labelling exercises on South African urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour.

Such research should determine to which extent consumers use shelf-edge labelling during grocery shopping, their reasons for using these labels and in which ways their decision-making behaviour is facilitated or affected. By conducting a study of this nature, the importance of shelf-edge labelling within the South African context can be determined and brought to the attention of retailers. Insight derived from the research could potentially present retailers with valid ways of improving shelf-edge labels, which in turn could benefit consumers, since there would be a better chance of meeting their needs and expectations.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The main aim of this study was focused on determining the influence of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour within a South African context.

1.3.2 Objectives

The following specific objectives were formulated:

- To determine to what extent shelf-edge labels are used by urban consumers in their selection of grocery items.
- To ascertain urban consumers' reasons for using or not using shelf-edge labels in their selection of grocery products.
- To determine urban consumers' expectations of shelf-edge labelling in facilitating their selection of grocery items.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

This mini-dissertation is presented in article format. Chapter 1 provides a brief background and motivation, emphasising the importance of this study and demonstrating the lack of attention previously paid to the subject. In Chapter 2 the sampling and research methods as well as the data analysis techniques are described. Chapter 3 is presented in article format and provides an in-depth discussion of the results of the research. Chapter 4 includes the second part of the article presented in Chapter 3 and proposes a theoretical framework that was derived from the results of this study along with the literature consulted. The references and reference lists included in Chapters 3 and 4 were done according to the editorial prescriptions of the Journal of Retailing (included in Appendix G). A concluding discussion of the study is provided in Chapter 5, which also includes possible applications of the results and recommendations for future research.

1.5 AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The study reported in this mini-dissertation was planned and executed by a team of researchers. The contribution of each researcher is given in the following table:

Table 1: Authors' contributions to the study

Name	Role in the study
MS. X. BOTES	Author, responsible for literature research, the gathering and interpretation of data, descriptive analysis and the preparation of this mini-dissertation.
MS. N.C. SONNENBERG & DR. M. VAN DER MERWE.	Study leaders and co-authors, supervising descriptive analysis and interpretation of the data, as well as the completion of this mini-dissertation. Also assisted in organising sponsorships and funds to enable the study.

The following is a statement from the co-authors confirming their individual role in the study and giving their permission that the articles may form part of this mini-dissertation.

I declare that I have approved the articles included in this mini-dissertation, that my role in the study, as indicated above, is representative of my actual contribution and that I hereby give my consent that it may be published as part of the Masters' mini-dissertation of Miss X. Botes.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research operates in an area of uncertainty, and seeks to understand phenomena (Hoepfl, 1997:47), such as shelf-edge labels. In Chapter 1 it was illustrated that the shelf-edge label, from the consumers' perspective within the South African context, has not been comprehensively researched. In order to gain a better understanding of the practice of utilising shelf-edge labels, *i.e.* as a phenomenon typically part of the majority of shopping areas, an ideal situation was presented for the use of a qualitative research methodology.

The present study was approached in a qualitative naturalistic manner in an effort to understand the role of shelf-edge labels within its context-specific settings (Hoepfl, 1997:47), namely the grocery store itself. This study also adopted the form of descriptive research, as well as demonstrating elements of exploratory investigation (Mason, 1996:6). The aim of this chapter was therefore to provide a more in-depth understanding of the methodology applied in this study, as well as the motivation behind the use of the specific procedures.

2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research was aimed at understanding and exploring (Mason, 1996:6) aspects of grocery shopping, with specific reference to the meaning consumers attach to shelf-edge labels. Consumers' subjective experiences were taken into account. The researcher endeavoured to penetrate the world of the consumer (Hayes, 2000:188) through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and projective techniques, which in the present study implied that consumers had to be questioned regarding their perceptions, experiences and expectations of shelf-edge labelling.

The above-mentioned research approach, which is qualitative in nature, involves the participation of a relatively small number of participants (Maykut & Morehouse,

1994:63), until saturation of data is reached. The results derived from such research are not quantified (Hoepfl, 1997:48), but can lead to hypothesis generation (Mason, 1996:5) for quantitative research which can be generalised as applicable to a wider population.

The intent of this qualitative study was to formulate the most basic information about shelf-edge labels, which can serve as an introduction to larger scale research on shelf-edge labelling within a South African context. In order to do so, the data obtained were revealed in a descriptive manner (Hayes, 2000:108). This descriptive research provides an understanding role of shelf-edge labelling on South African consumers' grocery shopping behaviour.

2. 3 RESEARCH SAMPLE

As mentioned, this qualitative study was done from a South African perspective. Due to the diverse nature of South African consumers, results of consumer behaviour research conducted in other countries are not always relevant within the South African consumer market and do not necessarily reflect the behaviour of the South African consumer population. The unique nature of the consumer, in the South African context, was taken into consideration when the sample of the study was planned and obtained.

2. 3.1 STUDY POPULATION

Food is a physiological need of all human beings, causing them to engage in some form of grocery shopping (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998:367). Therefore, participant inclusion criteria were kept to a minimum in the present study, with the intention of recruiting a heterogeneous sample. The consumers who participated included males and females from different income groups and varying cultural backgrounds, although mainly Afrikaans- and English-speaking. These participants ranged in age from early twenties to older than 50 years of age. Furthermore, participants that were recruited had to be aware of shelf-edge labelling and be responsible for, or share the responsibility of grocery shopping for their households.

Consumers residing in various geographical areas engage in some form of grocery shopping. Yet, it could be argued that consumers in smaller towns are less pressured by time constraints and would therefore take more time when shopping (Wakefield & Inman, 1993:229). The same cannot be assumed for all consumers, since research has indicated that some urban consumers have limited time for grocery shopping (Kahn & McAlister, 1997:117). These consumers would benefit from information sources, such as shelf-edge labels that facilitate faster decision making. It was, therefore, preferable to select urban consumers for the purpose of this study, since they are more likely to fall into the latter category.

2. 3. 2 SAMPLING

A purposive sample was most suitable for this study (Barbour, 2001:4), since it allowed participants to be recruited according to the judgement of the researcher, and the purpose of the study (Mason, 1996:94). The sample population included urban consumers regardless of gender, age, race, or first language. The focus was on urban consumers as they would probably be in the habit of paying attention to shelf labels in order to save time since their time is limited, as proposed by Kahn and McAlister (1997:117).

Permission was obtained from store management to observe and approach clientele, while they were grocery shopping in the retail outlet. Observation of consumers in urban grocery stores made it possible to identify those who paid attention to shelf-edge labels during grocery shopping. Thus, all the participants were familiar with shelf-edge labels, which ensured that they would be able to participate in interviews, focus group discussions and complete the projective technique (Mason, 1996:94). Purposively selected consumers were approached and requested to participate. Recruitment continued until a sufficient number of participants had been identified (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:62).

2. 3.3 STUDY LOCATION

Consumers who were selected as participants were studied within the grocery-shopping environment to determine the impact that shelf-edge labels have on their behaviour. The specific grocery-shopping environment used, namely hypermarkets

and supermarkets, are considered the largest grocery retail outlets within the South African context. Although these types of stores are not the majority in number, their turnovers make them the most dominant grocery outlets in the Gauteng area (ACNielsen, 2002).

Two outlets, a hypermarket and a supermarket, from different leading grocery chains were selected to be used as the study location. Both these chains have convenience stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets located throughout South Africa. The specific stores that were selected as natural settings for in-store data collection were situated in Randburg, Johannesburg. This centre is considered a shopping destination for consumers from a variety of suburbs in the Gauteng province. A coffee shop within the same centre served as a venue for the focus group discussions.

The Gauteng area has proved to be the most influential within the South African Grocery, Toiletry and Confectionery (GTC) universe and, both selected outlets being situated in the Gauteng area, were therefore ideal for making a study of metropolitan consumers. Figures published by ACNielsen (2002) showed that hypermarkets and supermarkets in this area had been responsible for the largest contribution to Gauteng's financial success during 2002.

2.3 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Various authors address ethical aspects in their research (Miles & Huberman, 1994:288; Bloor *et al.*, 2001:84), but the guidelines provided by Strydom (2002a :62) were used for this study. All forms of data collection were conducted in a manner which would disrupt the lives of the participants as little as possible. Participation was on a voluntary basis and prior to proceedings all participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study. All ethical aspects were also discussed with the participants before they were interviewed in the retail outlet. These aspects were again highlighted at the focus group discussions. As mentioned, participants were asked to sign a letter of consent as prescribed by the North-West University (included as Appendix A).

Participants were assured of their anonymity and that information obtained from them would remain confidential and would only be used for the purpose of the study. Furthermore, they were guaranteed that neither their own names nor those of the retail outlets would be used. The discussions and interviews were recorded for transcribing purposes with the consent of the consumers. Participants were informed that this was merely done to ensure that true and scientific results would be presented for data analysis.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative techniques of data collection differ from quantitative techniques in the sense that they are less structured and adapt to the situation and objective in question. These techniques are also more personal, because the researcher and the participant interact on a closer level (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45). In this study various techniques were used to ensure that triangulation would be obtained. The techniques used included semi-structured in-store interviews, the application of a projective technique and focus group discussions.

2.4.1 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted in Potchefstroom before the actual data gathering started. This pre-test study provided an opportunity to test the data gathering methods, and identify any problems that could occur, before actual data collection commenced (Strydom & Delpont, 2002:337).

A pre-test of a focus group discussions, consisting of ten participants, was first held. Projective techniques were used as an introduction to the pilot focus group discussion, in an identical way as in the actual study's focus groups (2.4.3 & 2.4.4). This projective technique took the form of sentence completion, similar to the actual data collection. These sentences were formulated according to the study objectives. The sentences proved to be successful and only needed some refinement.

After participants had completed the projective technique, the sentences were discussed during the focus group discussion. This first focus group was used to identify additional topics, such as their reasons for using, or not using shelf-edge

labels, which stimulated discussions (Strydom, 2002b:211). Participants were probed in order to answer all the objectives of the study. The purpose of this focus group was also to familiarise the researcher with focus group procedures (Mason, 1996:46) and to obtain general ideas that could be used in the semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were also pre-tested. These interviews were similar to those to be conducted during the actual data-collection. Twelve interviews were held at a grocery outlet in Potchefstroom. The same interview guide, as designed for the actual data collection, was used. It proved to be successful and only minor changes were suggested (included in Appendix B).

The pilot study incorporating semi-structured interviewing, the projective technique and the focus group was handled similarly to the actual data collection process. Field notes and audio recordings were made, transcribed and compared to each other, to determine accuracy. This was followed by the actual data collection process conducted in Randburg, Johannesburg.

2.4.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured questioning proved to be beneficial in fulfilling the research objectives and to provide a detailed picture of the participants' views (Greeff, 2002:302). The open-ended questions kept the atmosphere relaxed, which is beneficial in phenomenological studies where participants should be allowed to share their beliefs and experiences with more ease (Coolican, 1999:140), since it would enable the researcher to penetrate and understand the world of the consumer better (Hays, 2000:171). The open-ended questions allowed participants to reveal interesting aspects that could be followed up in the focus group discussions.

A set of pre-determined questions was used as guide, but participants were allowed to introduce new attributes that have been omitted (Greeff, 2002:302). Participants were able to express themselves freely due to the open-endedness of the questions. There was no certainty that the same information would be derived from the various

interviews and participants were only limited through the interview guide to remain focussed on the topic (Greeff, 2002: 302).

Semi-structured interviews continued until data saturation was reached. Data saturation is reached when no new information can be derived from the data (Flick, 1999) and data collection should continue until saturation is reached (Stydom & Delport, 2002:336). Regardless of the fact that saturation was reached quite early, 45 interviews were held to ensure that enough participants would be available for focus group discussions.

2.4.3 PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

As mentioned, the projective technique was used as an introductory exercise to the focus group discussion. Scenarios of grocery shopping situations were given to the participants through a technique referred to by Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:29) as sentence completion. Participants were asked to complete a number of incomplete scenarios with the first word or phrase that comes to mind. This technique reveals the participants' unprompted feelings, ideas and opinions (Donoghue, 2000:49; Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003:29). These scenarios are provided in Appendix C.

The completed sentences served as guidelines in the focus group discussion, leading to triangulation, which ensures more trustworthy results (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). All answers were discussed and participants were questioned about their reasons for answering in a particular way. Through these focus group discussions participants encouraged fellow participants to elaborate on their responses and interesting information was shared.

2.4.4 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group discussions are generally used for reasons such as to obtain background information, stimulate new ideas, and to generate the ideas of participants with regard to a certain topic (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:15). In this study, focus group discussions served all these purposes.

Apart from the above-mentioned uses of focus group discussions, such discussions can also be used with success in exploratory research and at various stages of the data collection (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:15). In the present study, focus group sessions were conducted after the interviews. Due to the fact that the same participants who had been interviewed also took part in the focus group discussions, they subconsciously had time to think about shelf-edge labels and how these influenced their purchasing behaviour. This facilitated more in-depth discussions and the collection of rich data.

Using focus group discussions as a data collection tool on consumers' opinions about shelf-edge labelling, has various advantages. It is an effective, affordable method through which a group of participants can simultaneously be interviewed (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:16). The discussions also allow opinions to be clarified (referred to as member checks). Apart from being cost effective and elucidating consumer views, focus group discussions also provide richer data, since members of the focus group also probe one another, thereby stimulating a discussion around the topic under debate (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990:16).

Furthermore, the discussions in focus groups are affected by the venue where these sessions take place. The phenomenological nature of the study on shelf-edge labelling required a location and setting where the participants would feel at ease (Greeff, 2002:300). This is important to ensure that the world of the consumer is understood, as phenomenological studies aim to do (Hays, 2000:171). Such an atmosphere would ensure that they share detail about their behaviour. This motivated the use of a venue in the same complex as the retail outlets where refreshments were served and participants could take a break from their shopping routine. However, the exchange of information remains the most important criteria for successful focus group discussions. Therefore, the participants were informed about the research topic, names of other participants, what would be required of them and what would be offered as incentives (Greeff, 2002:312).

During these discussions, field notes were taken and conversations were audio recorded to tape. Afterwards the field notes were compared to the tape recordings,

to ensure that the data could be trusted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277). Directly after the discussion, the annotations made during the study were discussed with the participants to ensure that they agreed about the summary, once again increasing the credibility of the data through a member check (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:147). Data saturation was reached after the third focus group. Two additional discussion groups were held to confirm the findings. Although the amount of consumers in focus group sessions varied, a total of 22 consumers participated in focus group discussions. Although some consumers contributed more than others, none of these participants joined a focus group session more than once. These participants included males as well as females from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative nature of the study produced a large amount of raw data, which needed to be analysed in such a manner that the rich and descriptive value would be preserved. To assist in accomplishing this all data recordings were firstly transcribed verbatim, in such a manner as to keep the transcriptions true to the phenomenological nature (Hayes, 2000:188). The statements of participants who communicated in Afrikaans were carefully translated into English, ensuring that the original meaning would be preserved. The interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed to allow the researcher to refer to them repeatedly (Hayes, 2000:174). This facilitates in peer review, since colleagues can only refer to the transcriptions to identify themes. The typed script then became the data used to analyse results (Hayes, 2000:174).

Coding was the second important step in data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:134). Through coding, the researcher continuously suspended prior knowledge on the subject in order to enter the participants' phenomenological world and was able to understand their ideas, perceptions and experiences (Hayes, 2000:189). At this stage the researcher referred to the study's objectives to assist in data analysis.

The next step in data analysis was to identify general themes (Grinter, 1998:3; Hayes, 2000:125; De Vos, 2002:348; Henning *et al.*, 2004:132). Themes are ideas or topics detected while analysing the transcriptions, which appeared repeatedly throughout the transcriptions. For purposes of analyses, each theme was colour-coded to ease the identification of different themes (Hayes, 2000:176). These themes were recoded and named according to the describing verbatim data (Grinter, 1998:3; Hayes, 2000:177; Henning *et al.*, 2004:132). The themes were supported by literature, while colleagues and other researchers reviewed all analysed data. The analysed data are presented in tables included in Appendices D, E, and F.

2.6. STRATEGIES USED TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

During the execution of qualitative studies, the researcher in a sense becomes subjective to the research, through his/her involvement in data collection and analysis (Hoepfl, 1997:60). For this reason it is important that the results obtained be tested and evaluated to valuable and trustworthy. Trustworthiness refers to the believability of the findings (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:64) and can be achieved through various methods. In the present study, the model described in Lincoln and Guba (1985:385) was used to ensure trustworthiness, using the principles of Krefting (1991:214). However, some methods described by authors, such as Maykut and Morehouses (1994:147) in terms of peer reviewing and member checks described in a similar manner by Mays and Pope (2000:4), along with the question guide advised by Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) were also included. Table 2 provides a summary of the strategies applied to ensure trustworthiness of data.

Table 2: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness in a study on the consumers' perceptions of shelf-edge labelling

Strategy	Criteria	Application
Credibility	Field experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot study was performed to explore the research setting. • 45 semi-structured in-store interviews were conducted. • Five focus group discussions were held. • 22 participants took part in the projective technique. • One hour was spent with participants to allow them to verbalise their views on shelf-edge labels.
	Reflexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were compared to audio recordings and transcribed data by the research team and peers.
	Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and projective techniques were used as data collection methods. • Data collection by means of verbatim transcriptions and field notes which were compared throughout data analysis • Verbatim transcript was quoted in the results. • Concepts and themes were identified and argued by research team within theoretical confines. • Literature control on shelf-edge labels throughout the study.
	Member checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were discussed with participants to ensure the notes correspond with their opinions.
	Peer debriefing /review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw data were analysed by a co-researcher and. • discussions with other researchers.
	Data collection techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot study on in-store interviews. • Pilot study using a focus group discussion and the projective technique.
Transferability	Selection of sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposive sample were used, recruiting participants displaying interest in shelf-edge labels.
	In-depth description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of methodology and results accompanied by verbatim quotations.
Dependability	Dependability audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed analysis of themes and concepts controlled by experienced researchers.
	Dense description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of methodology.
	Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty five semi-structured in-store interviews, five focus group discussions (22 participants) and data from the projective technique (22 participants) were verbatim transcribed and compared to field notes. • Open coding method.
	Peer examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent discussions with colleagues regarding methodology, findings and analysis.
	Question guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant was interviewed according to the same question guide.
Conformability	Conformability audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All records and transcripts were kept.
	Reflexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were made and used for data analysis.

2.7 CONCLUSION

Qualitative research usually provides rich and meaningful data. It is, however, of utmost importance for the researcher to remain focused on the objective of the study. Therefore, the collection of this data needed to be done with care. Results can only be trustworthy once the necessary steps had been taken in advance and throughout the study to ensure trustworthiness. Furthermore, the various data collection methods, including in-store interviews, projective techniques and focus group discussions, that were done to reflect on one another, along with the pilot study and observation of consumers during recruitment, also contributed to the trustworthiness and objectivity of results.

The different data-collection methods contribute to each other's value. Any data-collection method has short-falls and should be used in combination with other methods in order to derive the best results possible. In consumer science where the consumer, who is often unaware of his/her own behaviour, is the centre of research, such multiple data-collection methods provide valuable results in describing and exploring consumer behaviour, as in the case of this study, as well as ensuring triangulation.

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CHAPTER 3

The role of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 1: A qualitative study

(Manuscript to be submitted for publication in the Journal of Retailing)

CHAPTER 4

The role of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 2: A conceptual framework

(Manuscript to be submitted for publication in the Journal of Retailing)

The role of shelf-edge labelling in urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 1: A qualitative study

ABSTRACT

This study was launched to alert the awareness to consumers' perceptions regarding shelf-edge labels. This aspect of consumer behaviour had not yet been explored in a South African context.. This phenomenological study was conducted with the aim of determining urban grocery consumers' use and expectations of shelf-edge labels. The findings of this qualitative research indicated that shelf-edge labels have an important role to play in decision-making processes while doing grocery shopping. It was also revealed that certain blocking mechanisms, which inhibit the use of these shelf-edge labels, might be present under certain circumstances. Retailers can base further development of shelf-edge labels on the insight gained on consumers' expectations regarding shelf-edge labels. Both consumer and marketing science should benefit from these findings in terms of understanding the role of shelf-edge labels with regard to consumers' decision-making in a grocery store environment.

INTRODUCTION

Grocery shopping is a task most consumers have to perform in order to survive and fulfil one of their most basic physiological needs, namely food and nourishment, as described by Maslow (*in Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000*). In response to this basic need, households can spend up to two thirds of their income on grocery shopping (*Urbany et al., 1996*). This provides some indication of the magnitude of the grocery universe globally.

Within the South African context, ACNielsen (2002) published figures, indicating an estimated 69 771 grocery outlets in South Africa in 2002. Of these stores, hypermarkets and supermarkets generated an income of approximately R25.3 million, with the urban Gauteng area being the most influential. These figures indicate the importance of the grocery industry in urban South Africa to the economy of the country.

Considering the importance of this industry, several studies have addressed significant factors and influential inputs that contribute to the successful management of the grocery store environment. These have focussed on aspects, such as price (*Hoch et al., 1995*), consumers' search for price information (*Urbany et al., 1996*; *Berne et al., 1999*), the value of unit pricing (*Manning et al., 2003*), point-of-purchase (POP) promotions (*Jansson et al., 2003*; *Hui, 2004*) and consumers' unplanned purchases (*Kelly et al., 2000*), to name but a few. An aspect that has, however, received less attention is that of shelf-edge labelling.

Most grocery outlets make use of shelf-edge labels, primarily to indicate price (Food Marketing Institute, 2001). Shelf-edge labels are often referred to as shelf talkers, barcode cards or unit price indicators. All of these are aimed at informing the consumer (Nucifora, 1995; Piemonte, 2001; Manning *et al.*, 2003). Piemonte (2001) defines it as a printed card designed to be attached to the shelf, carrying a message about the product, while Inman *et al.* (1990) described it as a specific type of POP promotion or promotional signage, which consumers are confronted with during grocery shopping. In conjunction with these descriptions, these labels can be considered through the general systems theory.

When applying the General Systems Theory (GST), shelf-edge labels could be viewed as important informational inputs on which consumers base their grocery purchasing decisions. In this regard, retailers have invested a considerable amount of effort, time and financial resources into the development of shelf-edge labelling. In recent years, technological developments have, for example, brought about the introduction of electronic shelf-edge labels (ESL) (Food Marketing Institute, 2001), which involves an even larger financial commitment.

Despite its success in the global market, ESL has to date not found widespread acceptance within the South African grocery retail sector (Fujitsu, 2005). This might be attributed to several reasons, one of which could be the limited understanding of South African consumers' use of shelf-edge labelling. Such an understanding is essential in evaluating whether it is feasible for South African

retailers to invest any additional effort into the further development and use of shelf-edge labelling.

To address this limitation within existing empirical research findings, the present study, conducted in a qualitative nature, was focused on exploring the influence of shelf-edge labels on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour within a South African context. The first objective was to determine to what extent urban consumers use shelf-edge labels in their selection of grocery items. Secondly, consumers' reasons for using or not using shelf-edge labels when acquiring grocery products were investigated. The third objective of this study was to find out what these consumers' expectations of shelf-edge labelling, would be in facilitating their selection of grocery items.

BACKGROUND

Grocery store environment

The grocery store environment forms an integral part of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. The magnitude of the South African grocery store environment significantly influences the South African economy and therefore cannot be ignored by scientific research. The Gauteng area is the most influential in South Africa (ACNielsen, 2002), providing consumers within this predominantly urban area with a vast variety of options. Due to the limited time available to these consumers to spend on selecting each product (Kahn & McAlister, 1997), their final decision to purchase is mostly made in the store (Iris, 2002; Murphy, 2003; Hui, 2004) and should be facilitated by inputs in the store system, such as shelf-edge labelling.

Shelf-edge labels

Shelf-edge labels can assist the consumer during grocery shopping in various ways. It can ease the task of shopping for the consumer by providing the barcode, which links the shelf-edge label to the product on the shelf (Chandrasekharan, 2004) and inform the consumer about a product's size, name and unit price (Manning *et al.*, 2003; Competition Bureau, 2005). All of this information can guide the consumers' decision to purchase. Therefore, certain aspects pertaining to the use of shelf-edge labels within a grocery store environment can be highlighted, such as its informational value.

Informational inputs

Consumers need information on products in order to make optimal in-store purchasing decisions (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). This does not necessarily imply that consumers are consciously aware of their continual search for information (Vanhuele & Dreze, 2000). In many cases the consumer would take note of information without consciously searching for it. It is therefore important for information to be presented in a suitable format (Degerate *et al.*, 2000). Shelf-edge labels provide the opportunity for presenting information in a more subtle format and therefore it is reasonable to conclude that a shelf-edge labels can be utilised for this purpose.

Apart from being a source of information and a useful tool in decision making while doing grocery shopping (Miyazaki *et al.*, 2000), signage on shelves can also be used as promotional material, consequently increasing sales (Kahn & McAlister, 1997). To effectively realise the potential of such signage, retailers need to know

what the consumer expects of the shelf-edge label and address their expectations accordingly. Many of these expectations may be related to price. Various authors have indicated that price is important during decision-making (Kahn & McAlister, 1997 and Hawkins *et al.* 1998).

Price information

In grocery outlets, information such as price, is often indicated on the shelf-edge labels only. This method of pricing provides financial advantages to the retailer (Fox, 2002) as it provides the price of each product in a way which is more cost-effective and less labour intensive than individual pricing. This type of pricing does not only benefit retailers, but also offers certain advantages to the consumer.

Piemonte (2001) is of opinion that price relevant information on the shelf-edge label can transform grocery stores into information centres. The Consumer Federation of America advises consumers to use price information, such as the unit price, during grocery shopping (Manning *et al.*, 2003) in order to compare package size with price-related information. This enables the consumer to select the most economical option.

Consumers also compare store prices to their reference price to determine the economical benefits of the purchase (Kelly *et al.*, 2000). The reference price refers to the amount the consumer expects to pay or is willing to pay (Diamond & Johnson, 1990), due to memorised and recalled price information (Vanhuele & Dreze, 2000). These stored prices, together with prices previously paid, become the reference price (Dickson & Sawyer, 1990).

Reference prices serve as a price guideline and a form of control in the decision to purchase (Dickson & Sawyer, 1990; Wakefield & Inman, 1993). Consumers sensitive to price or highly involved in the purchasing decision, would therefore use reference prices more often (Moon & Russel, 2002). This price is compared to the store price, as indicated on the shelf-edge label, highlighting the impact of shelf-edge labelling as a source of price information.

The absence of price information (or shelf-edge labels) on products, places the consumers in a situation where they cannot make an optimal decision, often resulting in unsuccessful promotions (Urbany *et al.*, 1996) and low decision satisfaction. This can result in negative feedback for the retailer (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). However, retailers, who do provide price-related information on shelf-edge labels, place the consumers in a position where they can benefit from price reductions and make informed economical decisions (Urbany *et al.*, 1996; Miyazaki *et al.*, 2000).

The amount of attention paid to such information, is decided by consumers during shopping (Bronneberg & Vanhonacker, 1996). However, by repeated exposure to stimuli, such as shelf-edge labelling, the chances of consumers paying attention to it are increased. By repeating promotions with, for example, shelf-edge labelling, the concept of the promoted product is highlighted (Vanhuele & Dreze, 2000), making the promotion more effective. With consumers having less time available, the impact of out-of-store promotions, such as television promotions and the use of newspapers have decreased (Nucifora, 1995). This simultaneously

increased the impact of in-store promotions, such as shelf-edge labels. The use of ESL in more developed countries enables promotions to be communicated even more effectively (Webb, 2002).

Electronic shelf-edge labels

Similar to most areas of modern life, technological advancements also had an impact on shelf-edge labels. Electronic shelf labels are already used extensively in some countries and to a lesser extent in others, such as in South Africa. This technological improvement provides the regular price, unit price, promotional information, comparisons and the savings per product, while some ESL can also add reminders to buy related products (Webb, 2002).

Although the ESL method has been available on the market for some time, it has only recently become more affordable (Fox, 2002). Electronic shelf-edge labelling can enhance the consumers' shopping experience in various ways. The occurrence of incorrect pricing or the absence of shelf-edge labels would take place only on very rare occasions (Food Marketing Institute, 2001), since electronic equipment is secured to the shelf and does not need be removed in order to be updated. With reference to the standard way of preparing shelf-edge labels, it is important to note that incorrect pricing and other problems related to the use of shelf-edge labels do occur because of human error (Bergen *et al.*, 2004). This places an extra burden on the shoulders of the retailer who must constantly make certain that the correct information is being conveyed. Such human error can, however, be minimised or prevented by means of the new ESL technology.

Human error is for example minimised by the fact that ESL enables a change in information, such as price, to instantly be updated from a centralised data processing system throughout a retailer's entire stockholding and POP systems. The price is simultaneously changed on the shelf and at the pay point (Webb, 2002), thereby enhancing internal control in the store environment with less effort.

This technology furthermore ensures data integrity between the point-of-sale controller and internal databases (Tagnetics, 2004). Clearly ESL would be an advantage to the retailer by being less labour intensive than individual pricing or the use of ordinary shelf-edge labels and by simplifying the use of pricing strategies (Bergen *et al.*, 2004). Due to the quick changes in price, retailers can use pricing strategies ideal for them (Fox, 2002; Webb, 2002).

Some might argue that the new technologically improved ESL system provides standardised information and answers to many retail and consumer based problems. However, the ESL system also holds certain drawbacks that need to be considered. Although it has become more affordable over the last few years, implementation of ESL is rather expensive (Webb, 2002). Before such financial investments are made in a country such as South Africa, consumers' use, expectations and problems with shelf-edge labels should be determined.

Problems related to shelf-edge labelling

Although shelf-edge labels can be a valuable source of information during grocery shopping, problems regarding its use are not excluded. As previously mentioned, most of these problems occur due to human error (Food Marketing

Institute, 2001), with incorrect pricing as one of the main concerns identified in previous research (Bergen *et al.* 2004). Incorrect pricing mainly occurs when prices are changed at checkout points, before they are updated on the shelf-edge labels (Competition Bureau, 2005). Such price discrepancies affect both consumers and retailers.

One problem, occurring as a result of incorrect price information on the shelf-edge label, is overpricing (Bergen *et al.*, 2004). This occurs when the prices on shelf-edge labels are not marked correctly. The federal trade commission of the USA found that over-pricing affects consumers between 4.82% and 6.00% of the time (Bergen *et al.*, 2004). However, there are no statistics about overpricing available in South Africa, possibly because of the absence of a governing body that serves as external control to protect the South African consumer.

Undercharging, on the other hand, reduces the profit made by the retailer (Food Marketing Institute, 2001). This indicates that incorrect price information would not only affect consumers, but retailers as well, emphasising the importance of accurate pricing information on shelf-edge labels. However, to date this phenomena has not been extensively investigated in the South African context. The present study explored South African consumers' reasons for using shelf-edge labels and can shed some light on the problems consumers experience with shelf-edge labels.

The opinions of consumers, regarding their problems with shelf-edge labelling, provide important feedback for the retailer, serving as an aid to improve consumer

satisfaction. It could be argued that the retailer has responsibility to exercise internal control to improve the situation for the consumer, since South African consumers have no form of external control (Spears, 2004) offered by legislation, which can protect them against inconsistent information and incorrect shelf-edge pricing (Opperman, 2005).

Value of shelf-edge labelling

From the above discussion it is evident that aspects regarding shelf-edge labelling, that could possibly cause disappointment, need to be identified and addressed by scientific research. The prospect theory (Davies *et al.*, 2001) emphasises that a small amount of negative feedback, such as incorrect shelf-edge labelling on a shopping experience, has a far greater impact on the future shopping behaviour than a large amount of positive feedback.

Through this study the importance of shelf-edge labels becomes clear and the essence of researching this topic becomes unquestionable. Kahn and McAlister (1997) furthermore stated the importance of in-store information to be standardised. The results obtained in this study can be used to design standardised shelf-edge labels. The further standardisation and value of shelf-edge labelling can be enhanced by determining the extent to which consumers make use of shelf-edge labels and their reasoning for this behaviour. Understanding urban South African consumers' expectations regarding shelf-edge labels can also provide necessary inputs in achieving such a goal. Research methods, qualitative in nature, are very useful in this regard.

METHOD

Research design

The lack of empirical research regarding shelf-edge labels, inspired a qualitative naturalistic research approach (Fouché & Delport, 2002), during which data were collected in a context-specific setting (Hoepfl, 1997). This was done within the actual grocery outlets themselves. This research had a phenomenological focus, which aims to understand the world of the consumer (Hayes2000) and therefore is viewed from a life setting and attempted to understand consumers' view and use of shelf-edge labels (Fouché & Delport, 2002), applying a descriptive and exploratory approach. This approach generates new data (Mouton, 1996), which can aid in the understanding of consumers' grocery shopping behaviour (Fouché & Delport, 2002). In order to do so, applying the correct sampling procedures was essential.

Sample

This qualitative research approach took into account that grocery stores, forming a system, are part of a suprasystem (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), which can refer to the chain to which they belong. The two stores used in this study as the study location, form part of a chain, as suprasystem. The chains selected for this study, are the largest in the country and have outlets ranging from convenience stores to super- and hypermarkets across South Africa.

The supermarket chains that were use as study location, are situated in a shopping complex in the northern parts of Johannesburg, South Africa. Consumers

were observed for recruitment during grocery shopping in the two outlets, to ensure that participants were familiar with shelf-edge labels, and currently paying attention and using shelf-edge labels. With these grocery outlets situated in urban regions, it was ensured that the recruited consumers are of urban nature. The consumers were approached for a voluntary interview, after which they were invited to participate in focus group discussions. In-store recruitment continued until a sufficient number of participants agreed to join in on the study (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

The use of purposive sampling for the recruitment of participants was appropriate (Barbour, 2001), since it allowed for participants to be recruited according to the purpose of the study (Mason, 1996), regardless of demographical characteristics, which acknowledged the diverse nature of the South African population.

In order to ensure that enough participants would also be available to participate in the focus group discussions, 45 consumers were recruited and interviewed in-store. This also ensured that a sufficient number of participants would be included to reach data saturation in both in-store interviews and focus group discussions (Strydom & Delpont, 2002). Sampling was followed by the actual data collection process.

Data collection

Data collection was done through the use of semi-structured interviews, a projective technique and focus group discussions. All three methods were tested with a pilot study prior to the actual study, which simultaneously prepared the

researcher for fieldwork (Strydom, 2002). All data gathered were captured through the use of tape recordings and field notes, which were compared during data analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted within two selected grocery outlets. The use of open-ended questions projected the true opinions of the consumers (Greeff, 2002). Participants' responses were probed through the use of an interview guide (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), that was based on the objectives of the study.

Focus group discussions and projective technique

The projective technique was used as an introduction to the focus group discussions. This was done through sentence completion (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003), whereby participants had to complete open-ended sentences with the first word or phrase that came to mind. These completed sentences served as guideline to direct the focus group discussions.

A total of 22 consumers participated in the focus group discussions and completed the projective technique. Within such focus group discussions participants can stimulate the ideas of others (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) and therefore needed to have a comfortable atmosphere. To ensure this, the focus group discussions were held at a coffee shop close to the grocery outlets and the participants were served with refreshments and rewarded with incentives, as gesture of appreciation.

Five focus group discussions were held. During the fourth discussion it seemed as if data saturation had been reached. Another group discussions was held to ensure data saturation of all themes under discussion. The field notes and audio recordings of both the interviews and discussions served as the basis for data analysis.

Data analysis

Both the tape recordings from focus group discussions and in-store interviews were verbatim transcribed in the original language the participant used. The statements of participants who responded in Afrikaans were carefully translated into English to preserve the original meaning. The transcripts became the data used for analysis, which enabled the researcher to refer to the data repeatedly (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Trustworthiness

During this study, trustworthiness was ensured by using the model of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and the principles of Krefting (1991), while some strategies described by authors such as Maykut and Morehouse (1994), Mays and Pope, (2000) and Babbie and Mouton (2001) were also included. Table 1 provides a summary of the strategies applied to ensure trustworthiness of data.

Table 1: Strategies to ensure trustworthiness during the study

Strategy	Criteria	Application
Credibility	Field experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot study was performed to explore the research setting. • 45 semi-structured in-store interviews were conducted. • Five focus group discussions were held. • 22 participants took part in the projective technique. • One hour was spent with participants to allow them to verbalise their views on shelf-edge labels.
	Reflexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were compared to audio recordings and transcribed data by the research team and peers.
	Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and projective techniques were used as data collection methods. • Data collection by means of verbatim transcriptions and field notes which were compared throughout data analysis • Verbatim transcript was quoted in the results. • Concepts and themes were identified and argued by research team within theoretical confines. • Literature control on shelf-edge labels throughout the study.
	Member checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were discussed with participants to ensure the notes correspond with their opinions.
	Peer debriefing /review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw data were analysed by a co-researcher and. • discussions with other researchers.
	Data collection techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot study on in-store interviews. • Pilot study using a focus group discussion and the projective technique.
Transferability	Selection of sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposive sample were used, recruiting participants displaying interest in shelf-edge labels.
	In-depth description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of methodology and results accompanied by verbatim quotations.
Dependability	Dependability audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed analysis of themes and concepts controlled by experienced researchers.
	Dense description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of methodology.
	Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty five semi-structured in-store interviews, five focus group discussions (22 participants) and data from the projective technique (22 participants) were verbatim transcribed and compared to field notes. • Open coding method.
	Peer examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent discussions with colleagues regarding methodology, findings and analysis.
	Question guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant was interviewed according to the same question guide.
Conformability	Conformability audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All records and transcripts were kept.
	Reflexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes were made and used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent to which consumers make use of shelf-edge labels

Three categories of consumers emerged from the data collected on the extent to which consumers make use of shelf-edge labels. These categories included consumers who always make use of shelf-edge labels (“We always do” and “...for sure, always, always”), consumers who would sometimes or under certain circumstances use shelf-edge labelling (“I do sometimes and other times I don’t” and “...not all the time.”) and a third category of consumers who never make use of shelf-edge labels (“No, not really” and “No, you end up doing thumb sucking.”). Their reasoning for this behaviour is discussed in the following sections.

Consumers’ reasoning for using shelf-edge labels

Theme: Consumers use shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision making

During grocery shopping, consumers either engage in nominal/ habitual decision making or limited decision making (Burgess, 1998). As pointed out by Hawkins *et al.* (1998), consumers use internal, as well as a limited amount of external information, during limited decision making. A prominent theme that emerged from the analysis of the data is that shelf-edge labels are particularly useful as external sources of information during the limited decision-making process. This

theme was addressed through concepts of product-, price- and retail-related information.

Product-related information

It became apparent that consumers use shelf-edge labels to gather product-related information, on which they base purchasing decisions (“To decide how badly I need the product, considering all the information on it” and “it provides information on which decisions regarding purchases can be made”). Participants’ use of shelf-edge labels in this regard was particularly relevant under specific circumstances, such as when they were interested in switching brands (“It helps me decide what to buy. In fact, I have just switched to this product”) or when they were interested in trying new products (“I also like new stuff, you’re like on a mission, you have to look, then you pay more attention to the label”). In general, product-related information on shelf-edge labels become increasingly important to participants when they know little about the product (“when you know little about a product, but want to buy something, you would look at the label”).

The fact that consumers’ final decisions are made in-store (Iris, 2002; Murphy, 2003; Hui, 2004), is also reflected in the above comments. The value of shelf-edge labelling as a source of product information when making these in-store decisions, is therefore evident. Yet, participants also indicated that they would similarly make use of the price-related information on shelf-edge labels to guide their purchasing decisions.

Price-related information

Price influences consumers' purchasing behaviour and is a key concept in the evaluation of product alternatives (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). The data indicated that consumers use shelf-edge labels for various price-related reasons. Since the implementation of barcodes, the use of individual pricing of products declined (Food Marketing Industry, 2001). As previously stated, this results in shelf-edge labels being the only method of price identification used, which increase the importance of price information on the shelf-edge label.

In light of the discontinued use of individual product pricing, the participants confirmed that they use shelf-edge labels to identify the price of the products in which they are interested ("...to identify the product and the price" and "because the price is not on the item anymore"). However, the implementation of shelf-edge labels as the source of price information, also offers a sense of convenience to consumers ("It is convenient to find the price there" and "It is easier to locate than individual prices"). The convenience of locating price information on the shelf-edge label can also facilitate the comparison of product prices.

Consumers tend to compare products with each other. Such comparisons are often based on price ("...to compare prices" and "I started comparing the prices"), especially where little product information, other than price is available (Du

Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). This typically happens during the purchasing decision, where more than one alternative is available (Shiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

Shelf-edge labelling also seems to be particularly useful as a source of price information when comparing prices of competing brands (“For the price and to compare it to another brand” and “...you look when you have a really competing brand. Like tea, there are five teas, they are all imported and they all seem the same, so you look at the price”) or when comparing prices among different grocery stores (“...to see how much the product costs and to compare it to other stores” and “I found that store X is more expensive than store Y at North Gate. I started comparing the prices”).

Some participants also indicated that they use shelf-edge labelling to compare the actual price of a product to their reference prices (“I use it for price reference” and “I like to see if a price has gone up or come down”). If the advertised price on the shelf-edge label is more economical than the reference price, some participants stated that they might even purchase more of that specific product (“I know it had a certain price, but it was R34.99 so I thought I would buy two”). Furthermore, the use of the unit price on the shelf-edge label, enabled participants to compare package sizes of different products (“I like it if they break it down and give a unit price so that you can compare apples with apples” and “...sometimes I use it to compare the weight and I want to know the price per kilogram”).

Finally, participants indicated that they compare the price on the shelf-edge label to the price at the pay point (“Also I check when it is scanned, I check if it is

right; I memorise the price on the shelf” and “I know exactly how much it costs when I get to the till”). Such reactions could be related to the frequent occurrence of pricing discrepancies (Competition Bureau, 2005). This emphasises the importance of internal control by the retailers to ensure that accurate pricing is maintained on shelf-edge labels in order to keep their customers satisfied.

The reasons why price-related information was important to participants, were mostly to determine whether they could afford the product (“I definitely look at it, I look how much it costs and whether I can afford it”) or to obtain the cheapest or the best price (“...well mostly for price, to get the cheapest option” and “...to make sure that I get the best price or to get the best option”). Although the participants' reasons for using shelf-edge labels could be categorised according to the concepts related to price, they do not make use of shelf-edge labels for isolated reasons, but rather a combination of reasons, such as price and brand (“The price, the brand, but most of the times I work with a calculator so I always check it”) or budgeting, price and quality (“...to budget and compare pricing and quality”). Along with these reasons, some consumers made use of shelf-edge labels in order to obtain retail-related information.

Retail-related information

Participants stated that they also used shelf-edge labels for retail-related information. Shelf-life, or the date the product was placed on the shelf is important to them (“When they put it on the shelf and how long it has been on the shelf” and “...with perishable products you need a shelf life”). This information ensures that the consumer purchases fresh products that could be of use for longer. By indicating

the date that the product was placed on the shelf on the shelf-edge label, grocery shopping can be simplified, since the consumer will know where to look for this information and need not waste time in searching for it. Tsiros and Heilman (2004) confirmed that when consumers are deciding on the purchasing of perishable products, such as fruits, meats, confectionery or dairy products, consumers emphasise freshness as one of the most important considerations.

Another factor that can facilitate the process of grocery shopping is indicating whether products are out-of-stock. During the focus group discussions the topic of grocery outlets being out-of-stock were raised. Some grocery outlets in South Africa use additional shelf-edge labels to inform the consumer that the product is out-of-stock, or not currently available (“They would have those labels saying temporarily out of stock, then you know it is out of stock and you can stop looking”). Based on the opinions of the participants, this strategy is both desirable and successful (“I prefer it, it irritates me more to look for the product with the hope that it is packed incorrectly”).

Since outlets started using the out-of-stock indicators, consumers have grown accustomed to them and now prefer the practice. They argue that if the grocery outlets indicate, through the use of shelf-edge labels, that a product is out-of-stock, it saves them the time searching for the product (“...those temporary out of stock labels help a lot, it saves you time”). More importantly, consumers are assured that the product would return to the shelf, and was not discontinued (“...such labels are very helpful, then you know they still sell it, but the stock on the floor and in the storeroom is sold out”).

The above discussion offered consumers' reasoning for using shelf-edge labels. Although consumers use shelf-edge labels for various reasons during limited decision-making, not all consumers make use of shelf-edge labels to the same extent.

Consumers' reasoning for not using shelf-edge labels

Theme: Consumers' nominal/ habitual decision-making behaviour eliminating the use of shelf-edge labelling

Consumers can also engage in nominal decision making during grocery shopping (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). During nominal decision making, consumers make use of internal information and do not search for external information (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). Some participants in this study gave reasons for not using shelf-edge labels, and these related to the characteristics of nominal decision making.

Nominal decision making

One typical characteristic of nominal decision making is a low purchase involvement (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998), which was confirmed by the present study through statements, such as: "...my husband would go and take the very first thing he sees, the price, the brand – nothing is important to him"; "...when I know what I want to buy I don't look" and "...they have a pre-determined list of requirements" This low involvement indicated by the latter two statements was caused by the participants having pre-determined needs and knowledge of what they wanted.

Another reason for low purchase involvement is familiarity with the product (“...if I know the product I would just grab and go”).

According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003) nominal decision making can also be caused by low price involvement, which surfaced as another reason why consumers do not use shelf-edge labels (“...maybe much cheaper products like salt” or “...she does not look how much it costs, she just throws it into the basket “). Nominal decision making is furthermore associated with repeated purchases (“when I buy something I always buy then I don’t worry” and “Well you won’t use it when you buy the same thing all the time”) and brand loyal purchases (“...when you are a regular brand buyer you don’t check it” and “I am brand loyal, I don’t care about the label”).

These results confirmed that the participants could be divided into those who sometimes, always and never make use of shelf-edge labels and those who do not. However, consumers’ purchasing behaviour is not always the reason why they do not use shelf-edge labels. Some participants wanted to make use of shelf-edge labels, but were unable to do so, as a result of certain blocking mechanisms.

Theme: Blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Most decision-making models do not include blocking mechanisms, while only a few consider these mechanisms. As stated by Erasmus *et al.* (2001): “...decision-making models should not be generalised, but rather be content specific.” The present study indicated that some participants were confronted with blocking mechanisms during grocery shopping. These blocking mechanisms

included incorrect information or positioning, illegible shelf-edge labels and time constraints. Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003) also recognise the occurrence of blocking mechanisms that can influence the search and processing of information.

Incorrect information

The data indicated that incorrect information can act as a blocking mechanism that prevents consumers from using shelf-edge labels (“I don’t use it at all, what is the use? It is always wrong” and “I often find that the labels are wrong”). Price discrepancies is one specific source of incorrect information that often inhibits the use of shelf-edge labels (“...sometimes the stuff is on sale and they would still have the old price on” and “...there are times when the shelf-edge label do not correspond with what is on the till and that is very frustrating”). Retailers should become aware of the fact that incorrect information on shelf-edge labels can have serious consequences, since it hinders the consumer to make use of the information provided to base purchasing decisions upon. When considered from a systems perspective, these consequences should be viewed as feedback loops which the retailer needs to pay attention to.

Apart from inaccurate pricing, incorrect positioning was another blocking mechanism found to prevent the use of shelf-edge labels. This occurs when the shelf-edge label and product do not correlate due to incorrect placing of one or the other. Participants stated that: “...sometimes they are mixed up, and I will look and I will take the product and when I get to the till it is not what is on the shelf” and “...something that wastes a lot of my time is that the products are not correctly packed.” Miller (2002) stated that consumers do not mind browsing, but that

searching is experienced negatively in a shopping situation. This explains why consumers might experience incorrect positioning as a blocking mechanism.

To prevent this confusion and simultaneously assist consumers' search for information such as price, some grocery stores make use of product pointers on the shelf-edge label to indicate the position of the relevant product that is being referred to on the label. Yet, when either the product or the shelf-edge label is incorrectly placed, these pointers can create confusion and frustration ("...sometimes the arrows are not correct; the arrows are never in the right direction").

Another aspect further contributing to problems experienced with the positioning of shelf-edge labels, is situations where the shelf-edge label is absent. "I can't find them" and "...there are no signs of the label" are statements of consumers having trouble with the shelf-edge label being absent. In this regard, participants criticised the method of attaching the labels to the shelves ("...the way in which they attach the labels is not always effective – it falls off"). In some cases there are too many shelf-edge labels on a particular shelf ("There are too many labels on the shelf, and the consumers get confused with the products' codes"). This can create an information overload (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998; Iris, 2002), blocking the decision-making process.

Illegible shelf-edge labels

Participants also experienced problems with the legibility of shelf-edge labels (“...it would be nice if you could read them”). Some stated that the print on the shelf-edge label is too small (“...it is so small I have to use my reading glasses”). In combination with a legible print size, the shelf-edge labels need to withstand environmental conditions in grocery stores (“...the supermarket labels aren’t always visible and they are tatty”). When the labels get damaged they become difficult to use (“...when the labels get wet or damaged, you cannot read them”). This creates another blocking mechanism inhibiting the use of shelf-edge labels.

Time constraints

When requested to complete the sentences included in the projective technique (consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because...) participants stated “...they don’t have time to read, in other words, they are in a hurry” and that “...their time for shopping is limited and they have to search for the label”. This shows the importance of time to urban consumers (Kahn & McAlister, 1997) and they can therefore not waste it on searching for shelf-edge labels.

Since the availability of time would increase consumers’ search for information (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998), it is no surprise that a lack of available time for shopping inhibits the use of shelf-edge labels. Retailers can relieve this time constraint by presenting the consumer with sufficient external information, that would be easy to find and read, and thus render the search for information as being less time consuming. The consumers are then more likely to make use of external information, in spite of their time constraints.

Theme: Consumers' reactions to blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

The theme of consumers' reactions to blocking mechanisms, illustrates the value of qualitative research in obtaining rich data that had not been not anticipated during the planning of the study. The present study aimed to determine participants' use and expectations of shelf-edge labelling along with their reasoning for this behaviour. As a derivative of these objections, the blocking mechanisms along with consumers' reactions to these mechanisms were discussed, primarily during the focus group discussions. This additional data made a valuable contribution to the study, by providing the retailer with information that emphasises the importance of accurate shelf-edge labelling.

Consumer behaviour in response to blocking mechanisms can be categorised as: no response, asking for assistance, complaining, not purchasing and leaving the retail outlet and/or patron another store. The first group of consumers showed no reaction, indicating that the blocking mechanisms had no particular influence on their behaviour (“...many consumers would not complain, they are not going to bother” and “...the problem is not that big, I like the store”). However, another group would ask for assistance (“I would just ask someone if there is no price on it” and “I would go and ask them”). To some consumers, blocking mechanisms is an immense frustration, forcing them to complain (“I always complain, it happens so often and that is annoying” and “I complain every time, it is very irritating”).

The consequences of the blocking mechanisms preventing the use of shelf-edge labels is often overlooked by retailers. Some consumers stated that they

would not purchase the product (“I have watched consumers and if there is no price, they don’t buy it, then the product ages on the shelf” and “If they fix it quickly and say sorry, but if it is a hassle I would just leave it”) or leave the retail outlet (“I hate it, I would go to another store, which is stupid from my point of view to drive a further distance” and “It gets to a point where I would go to a place where they do have labels, I’ll go to another shop”).

Many of the above-mentioned blocking mechanisms are within the retailer’s control and much can be done to improve the use of shelf-edge labelling. The retailers benefit if the consumer makes use of shelf-edge labels and they therefore have to ensure that shelf-edge labels assist the consumer in the best possible way. The present study highlighted the question of what consumers expect of shelf-edge labels and offered insight into consumers’ opinions in this regard. Retailers can use this information to address shelf-edge labels accordingly.

Consumers’ expectations of shelf-edge labels

Theme: Information consumers expect to derive from shelf-edge labels

Although all three data collection techniques employed in this study questioned consumers’ expectations regarding shelf-edge labels, the projective technique provided the most valuable findings to illustrate consumers’ expectations in relation to shelf-edge labelling. Participants completed the sentence: “...a shelf-edge label should include...” In response to this statement they indicated a need for information. The product name and the price of the product were mentioned repeatedly and seemed to be the most important expected information on shelf-edge

labels (“...the name, the amount and the price” and “...the price should stand out, and then, which product it is”).

Participants again confirmed that they make use of shelf-edge labels to compare products according to the unit price. Although not all grocery outlets indicate the unit price on shelf-edge labels, consumers expect it to be on shelf-edge labels (“The price and the unit price, I find it important to make comparisons”; “...they should look at adding the unit price”; “...the price per litre on a 500ml bottle”).

Apart from product name, price and unit price, participants also expected the retailer to provide other relevant product information. Some consumers expect shelf-edge labels to contain information of product ingredients (“I think they should specifically warn if there are a lot of additives, especially things like MSG or allergens” and “I would like it if they stipulate the nut content, I have a granddaughter who is sensitive to nuts. In fact it is life threatening, so that is the type of information I would like to see”) and nutritional information (“Add some nutritional information”; and “...with foods and stuff – how much calories”). Higgenson *et al.* (2002) found that consumers are becoming more aware of product ingredients and nutritional information. In addition, consumers tend to be more health conscious and aware of what they eat (Higgenson *et al.*, 2002).

During the focus group discussions, the relevance of this information on shelf-edge labels was debated. Although some participants felt strongly about this being implemented, others opposed the idea: “It holds too many dangers, the labels are

so often wrong, can you imagine if you read the incorrect label." and "You have to realise, you don't go to the store to read labels, if you are sensitive, read at home and just come and purchase the product").

Participants also had expectations about retail-related information. The use of barcodes was described as beneficial to consumers ("You often have to look at the barcode" and "...it is sometimes a bit confusing but the barcode helps"). As stated with consumers' reasoning for using shelf-edge labels, freshness or shelf life is an important consideration when purchasing perishable products. Although not all grocery outlets indicate the date of shelf placement on the shelf-edge labels, participants in this study recommended that it should be included on the shelf-edge label ("...the date on which the product was placed on the shelf"). Clearly this is a recommendation retailers should pay attention to, since it can enhance the grocery shopping experience of consumers.

Theme: Efforts consumers expect from retailers to enhance the use of shelf-edge labels

The data showed that participants' expectations about shelf-edge labels also include some actions taken by retailers. The participants expect the retailers to design shelf-edge labels in such a manner that they will be legible ("In certain divisions they are very unclear; you need to be able to read it") and accurately describing the product ("They have to describe the products better" and "...they should make sure the description is clear").

The participants also expect retailers to ensure that shelf-edge labels are positioned correctly (“If it is not packed correctly, then it is hard to look at the price” and “...the correct labels have to stand on the right places”). Participants felt that some of these problems could be resolved if they had more assistance in-store (“...and you know – there is never staff available to help – you can’t find them anywhere”).

Evidently, shelf-edge labels involve several complexities and retailers can benefit from taking note of them. The present study provides valuable insight on the consumers’ use and expectations of shelf-edge labels, which can be incorporated into an effective strategy to influence consumers’ shopping behaviour within a grocery store environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study were useful in gaining a more in-depth understanding of consumers’ perceptions on the informational value of shelf-edge labels. Through this research, shelf-edge labels illustrated to be a convenient source of external information in the grocery environment. This was indicated regardless of the fact that participants differed in the extent to which they used shelf-edge labels.

Through the use of shelf-edge labels retailers can limit consumers’ search for information by providing the information needed, as determined in the study. The study also indicated that consumers have the need for price-, product- and retail-retailed information. All of these can effectively be indicated through the use of

shelf-edge labels. It therefore becomes evident that shelf-edge labels can be beneficial to consumers as well as retailers.

Price information was indicated in many situations to be the basis of decisions, and comparisons. Therefore, retailers should be aware of the marketing benefits shelf-edge labels can provide. By providing store brands with shelf-edge labels, indicating the economically competitive advantage above national brands, consumers might choose store brands rather than the national brand to make the most economical decision. Marketers would also benefit from shelf-edge labels if product-related information could be provided on products newly introduced to the market.

The data furthermore indicated, that some consumers would not use shelf-edge labels, because they engage in repeated or brand loyal purchases. These consumers choose not to use shelf-edge labels. However, this is not the case for all consumers not making use of shelf-edge labels.

Blocking mechanisms prevented some consumers from using shelf-edge labels. The provision of incorrect information, incorrect positioning of shelf-edge labels, an information overload and the shelf-edge label being absent were identified as blocking mechanisms. All of these blocking mechanisms, can be controlled and prevented.

The study also explored consumers' expectations of shelf-edge labels. The results of this objective will enable retailers to adjust shelf-edge labels in order to

meet the expectations of their consumers. The descriptive and exploratory nature of the study provided interesting findings which retailers can use in the design and implementation of shelf-edge labels within the grocery store environment. The study can aid scientists to understand the behaviour of grocery shopping and can serve as a basis for future studies regarding the use of shelf-edge labels. It should, however, be noted that due to this study's qualitative nature it is recommended that future studies on the use of shelf-edge labels should include a quantitative approach, which can be generalised to the rest of the population.

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CHAPTER 4

The role of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 2: A conceptual framework

(Manuscript to be submitted for publication in the Journal of Retailing)

The role of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 2: A conceptual framework

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The role of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour. Part 2: A conceptual framework

ABSTRACT

Previous research conducted as an exploratory investigation within the South African context, indicated that urban consumers differ in the extent to which they make use of shelf-edge labelling during grocery shopping. These consumers primarily engaged in limited or nominal decision making in their acquisition of grocery items, with shelf-edge labels being of particular value as an external source of information during limited decision making. This paper provides a theoretical framework that has been developed from the findings of the previous research, in addition to various decision-making models that have been consulted. The framework is based on a systems perspective and provides a more in-depth understanding of the role of shelf-edge labelling as an informational input in consumers' decision-making processes, which occur within a grocery store environment.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer decision making is a popular research theme and the subject of many scientific publications. Various models have in fact been developed to illustrate this process (Berkowitz *et al.*, 1992; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). In general, consumer decisions can be divided into three categories: nominal or habitual, limited and extended decisions (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). These decisions range from simple to highly complex and differ in terms of the amount of information that would be searched and alternatives that would be evaluated for a particular decision to be made (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001).

Although consumer decision-making processes may vary, traditional models of consumer decision making tend to include five stages to describe the process, namely problem recognition, pre-search stage, information search, evaluation of alternatives, choice and outcome evaluation (Erasmus *et al.*, 2001). Some may also include aspects, such as blocking mechanisms (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003) and others post-purchase behaviour (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). However, Erasmus *et al.* (2001) criticise the generalisation of decision-making processes and argue that a study of consumer decision-making behaviour should be context- and product specific in order to contribute to theory building.

Within the context of grocery shopping, the findings of the study presented in Part 1 of this paper indicated that consumers engaged in habitual or limited decision making during the acquisition of grocery items. This is supported by the findings of Burgess (1998) according to which grocery shopping is associated with lower purchase involvement and lower prices, indicating a lower perceived risk. These

circumstances characterise nominal and limited decision making, which require a limited search for information.

Although the search for information may not be extensive, the particular role of shelf-edge labels as information source in consumers' limited decision-making processes when purchasing groceries, was highlighted in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) of this paper. These findings also confirmed that consumers make decisions in-store, as indicated by various authors (Kahn & McAlister, 1997; Iris, 2002; Hui, 2004) and therefore mostly use information provided in-store should they engage in an external search for information. Yet, the study also revealed that certain blocking mechanisms may inhibit the use of such information and that the value of shelf-edge labelling as an informational input decreases when consumers engage in nominal decision making. As pointed out by Erasmus *et al.* (2001), such intricacies are often not reflected in the more traditional decision-making models.

The present paper offers a continuation of the research portrayed in Part 1 that drew attention to urban consumers' use of shelf-edge labels during purchasing decisions in the grocery store environment. However, the purpose of this article is to incorporate the findings presented in Botes *et al.* (submitted for publication) into a conceptual framework that has been derived from a combination of consumer decision-making models that have been consulted.

The framework is based on a General Systems Theory (GST) approach, and therefore illustrates the use of shelf-edge labels as an informational input in consumers' decision-making processes, which occur within the grocery store

environment. This frame can provide retailers and academics with an enhanced understanding of consumers' use of shelf-edge labelling during the information-search phase of in-store decision-making processes. It can also provide a platform from which future studies on shelf-edge labels can be embarked on.

CONSUMER DECISION MAKING

Types of decision making

Consumers can engage in different types of decision making. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, three types of consumer decision making are distinguished, namely extended decision making, limited decision making and nominal decision-making. Hawkins *et al.* (1998) provide a model, indicating the difference between these type of decision making. This model is presented in Figure 1.

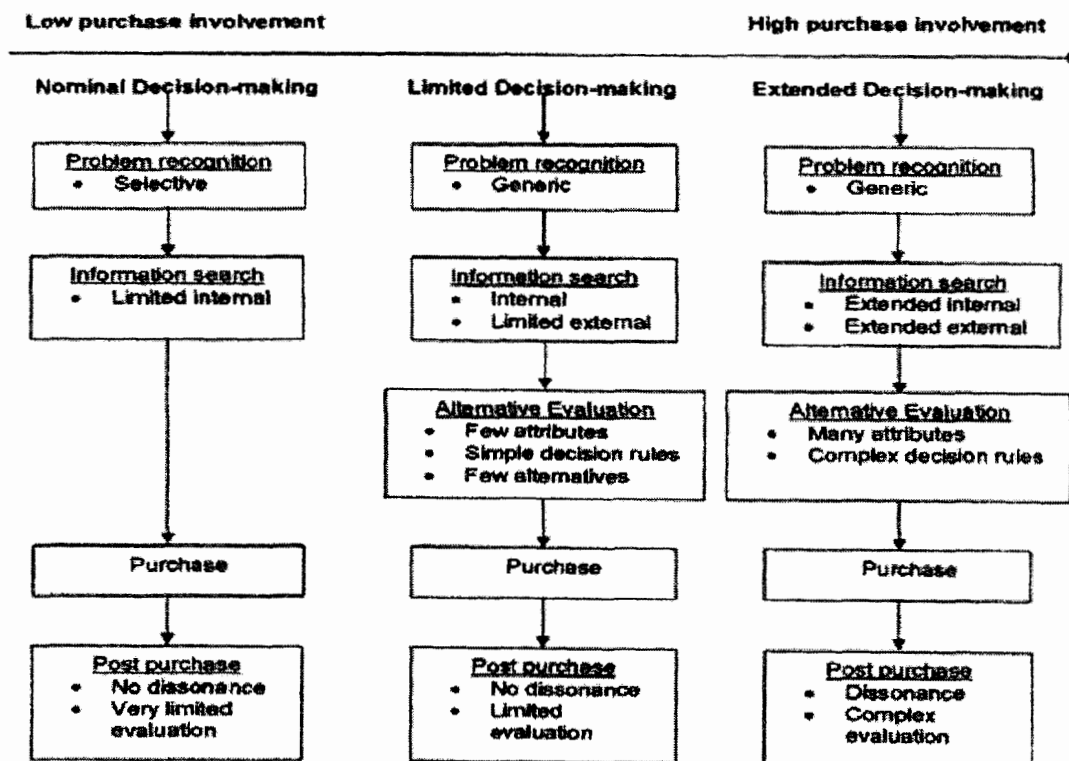


Figure 1: Involvement and types of decision making (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998)

The model of Hawkins *et al.* (1998), illustrates that purchase involvement increases as the complexity and extent of the decision-making process increases. Extended decision making includes generic problem recognition followed by an extended internal and external information search (Figure 1) (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998; Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). Alternatives are evaluated by viewing many attributes and using decision criteria or so-called “heuristics”. These heuristics reduce the complexity of the decision (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). This is followed by a purchase leading to complex post-purchase evaluation, with the possibility of dissonance (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998).

This model (Figure 1) further indicates that limited decision making also includes generic problem recognition, but differs from extended decision making in the sense that only a limited amount of information is searched (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001) from internal and limited external sources (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998), such as shelf-edge labels. Simple decision-making heuristics may be implemented (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001) and few alternatives would be evaluated. After these steps have been taken the decision to purchase takes place, followed by post-purchase evaluation with no dissonance and limited evaluation (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998).

Nominal decision making (Figure 1) on the other hand, involves the least amount of purchase involvement (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). The consumer actively simplifies the decision to purchase (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). The problem recognition is selective and as a result consumers who engage in this type of decision making, make use of only a limited internal information search (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998) and therefore, as found in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication), do not make

use of shelf-edge labels. These consumers do not evaluate alternatives and simply purchase the product without much hesitation or deliberation about the matter (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). Consumers often engage in brand loyal or repeated purchases to further simplify the process (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). Similar to limited decision making, post-purchase evaluation is associated with no dissonance and the evaluation is very limited (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998).

One might argue that within the grocery store environment, consumers may employ either nominal or limited decision-making strategies in their acquisition of a particular grocery item at any given point in time. One consumer might engage in limited decision-making in purchasing a specific grocery product, whereas another would display nominal decision-making behaviour in acquiring the same product. The outcome remains identical, but as postulated in the first part of this paper, the value of shelf-edge labelling as an informational input may differ in terms of the type of decision-making strategy applied. The systems' concept of "equifinality", as described by Von Bertalanffy (*in* Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993) and Spears (2004), characterizes this situation in that the same output may be achieved although the input may vary along with the extent to which this information is transformed in the decision-making process. The following section provides more insight with regard to various other GST principles that can be applied to consumers' decision-making processes.

The decision-making process from a systems perspective

As explained by Whitchurch and Constantine (1993), one of the core assumptions of GST is that of self-reflexivity, which refers to the unique ability of human beings to make themselves and their own behaviour the object of

examination. This would typically include consumer behaviour and consumer decision making as illustrated in the model of Schiffman and Kanuk (2000). This model, shown in Figure 2, views the decision-making process from a systems' perspective and incorporates typical systems elements such as inputs, process (or transformation), as well as outputs.

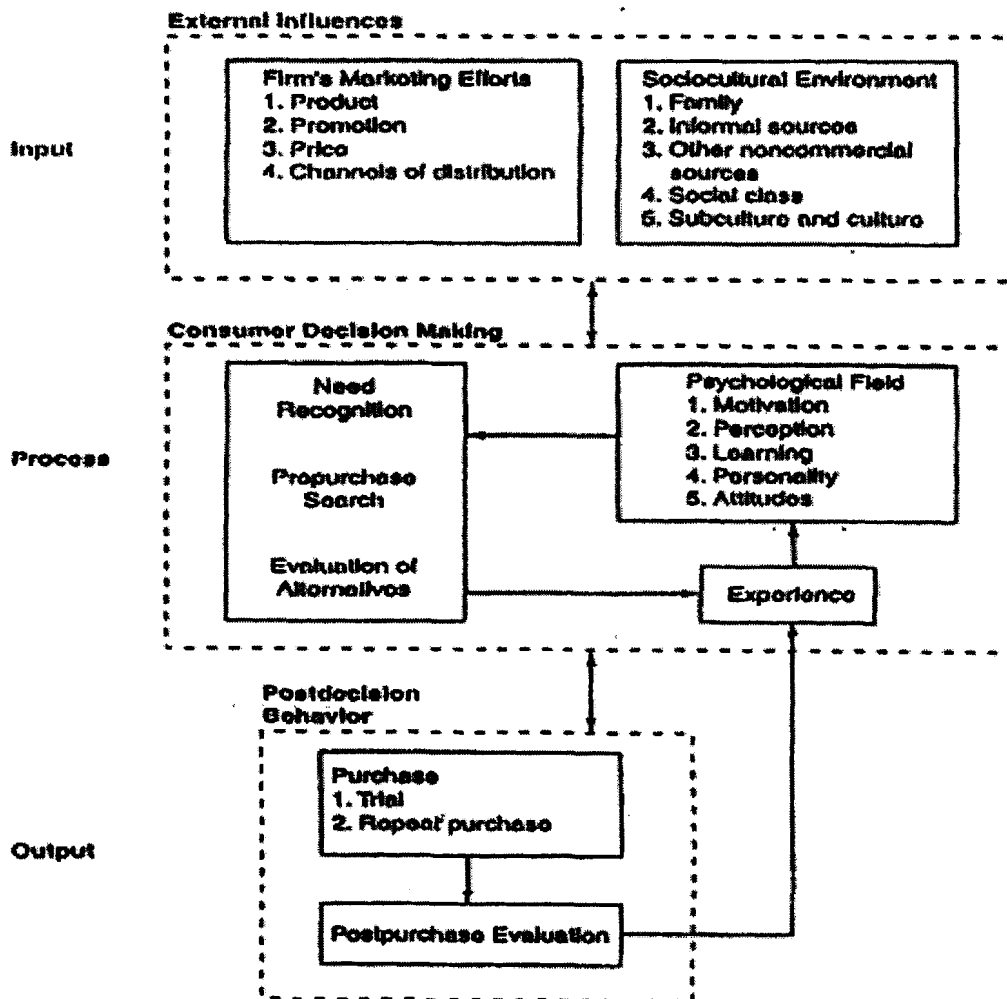


Figure 2: Consumer decision making viewed from systems perspective (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000)

Inputs refer to all the aspects consumers are confronted with during the decision-making process (Spears, 2004), which according to the model of Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) (Figure 2) include the typical marketing inputs of product, promotion, price and channels of distribution. The research conducted in Part 1 of this paper (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication), however indicated that shelf-edge labels can be viewed as a particularly useful method of informing consumers about these marketing inputs. During grocery purchases, where most decisions are made in-store, marketing inputs play an important role, but such inputs should also be accompanied by the informational input imparted by shelf-edge labels to be of true value to the consumer.

As stated in the introduction, the findings reported by Botes *et al.*, (submitted for publication) also brought to light that blocking mechanisms can inhibit the use of such inputs. Although blocking mechanisms are components not addressed in the model (Figure 2) provided by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000), their impact should be considered in applying one of the core assumptions of GST, namely that “a system must be understood as a whole” (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). This assumption is based on the understanding that components within a system are interdependent and exhibit mutual influences. Typically, this would imply that consumers’ decision-making processes are affected should they not be able to access the informational input provided by shelf-edge labelling as a result of blocking mechanisms.

Access to inputs is important, as it influences the way in which the decision-making process is transformed (Spears, 2004). The model (Figure 2) provided by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) visually demonstrates this transformation process.

During this process, external influences such as marketing efforts and the socio-cultural environment are transformed in the way in which the consumers recognise their needs, and engage in decision making. Consumers' psychological field also influences their search for information and their evaluation of alternatives. The way in which this transformation takes place, determines the consumers' purchase and post-purchase behaviour, which are viewed as outputs in the system (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

Outputs refer to the results of the transformation process and represent achievement of the systems' goals (Spears, 2004). Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) considered the purchase and post-purchase phases as outputs of the decision-making process (Figure 2). The equifinality concept has been explained in terms of the purchasing outcome of a particular decision-making process, but a further aspect to be taken into consideration, is that the purchase of a particular product could be classified as either trial or repeat purchase. Whether a specific grocery item is purchased as a trial or as a repeat, based on previous experience, the distinction clearly lies in the inputs and the transformation of such inputs during the decision-making process. These are aspects, which are not clearly reflected in the model presented by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000).

As far as the post-purchase evaluation as an output of the decision-making process is concerned, Schiffman and Kanuk's (2000) model in Figure 2, illustrates that this can also influence consumers' future purchasing experience and their psychological behaviour (motivation, perception, learning, personality and attitudes). Although the above-mentioned aspects were not investigated by Botes *et al.* (submitted for publication, presented in Part 1), it should be noted that retailers need

to be aware of consumers' post-purchase evaluation, since the GST describes such behaviour as feedback loops, which affect consumers' future decision-making processes. As explained by Whitchurch and Constantine (1993), once established, a system maintains a certain pattern of behaviour (in this case decision making) that is determined by these feedback loops.

Another aspect that is highlighted in the model of Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) (Figure 2), that did not form part of the objectives of the research reported in Part 1, is the influence of the socio-cultural environment as an input in consumers' decision-making processes. From a systems perspective, it could be argued that consumers' decision-making occurs within the larger context (or the so-called "suprasystem") of a socio-cultural environment. Information is, for example, obtained from the family as well as informal and other non-commercial sources, and incorporated into the decision-making process as an input. This reflects the concept of "open systems", which theorists, such as Spears (2004) and Whitchurch and Constantine (1993) describe in terms of the amount of interaction that occurs between a system and the environment in which it is embedded. All consumer decision making is to a certain extent influenced by information obtained from the socio-cultural environment. The degree to which consumers allow information to enter their decisions determines its openness and the permeability of boundaries that exist between their decisions and the socio-cultural context in which it occurs.

Although the socio-cultural environment, marketing inputs, as well as the psychological behaviour of consumers (Figure 2), were not included as objectives in the study reported in Part 1, these aspects have been the focus of marketing and other behavioural sciences for many years. As pointed out by Whitchurch and

Constantine (1993), GST has the capability of unifying sciences. The potential therefore exists to combine the findings of this research with those in other fields of interest, to further enhance an understanding of consumers' decision-making processes. Within the scope of this paper, the focus will, however, remain at integrating the findings of the study reported in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) into a conceptual frame as discussed in the following section.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAME

The study conducted in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication), leads to the development of a conceptual frame, describing the phenomena through the eyes of consumers, true to the nature of phenomenological research (Fouche & Delport, 2002). This conceptual frame acknowledges the models discussed in the preceding sections of this paper. The model provided by Hawkins *et al.* (1998) (Figure 1) on different types of decision making and the model of general decision making from a systems perspective (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000, Figure 2), along with the results of Part 1 of this paper were combined to provide a frame accurately describing the role of shelf-edge labels as input during grocery shopping (Figure 3).

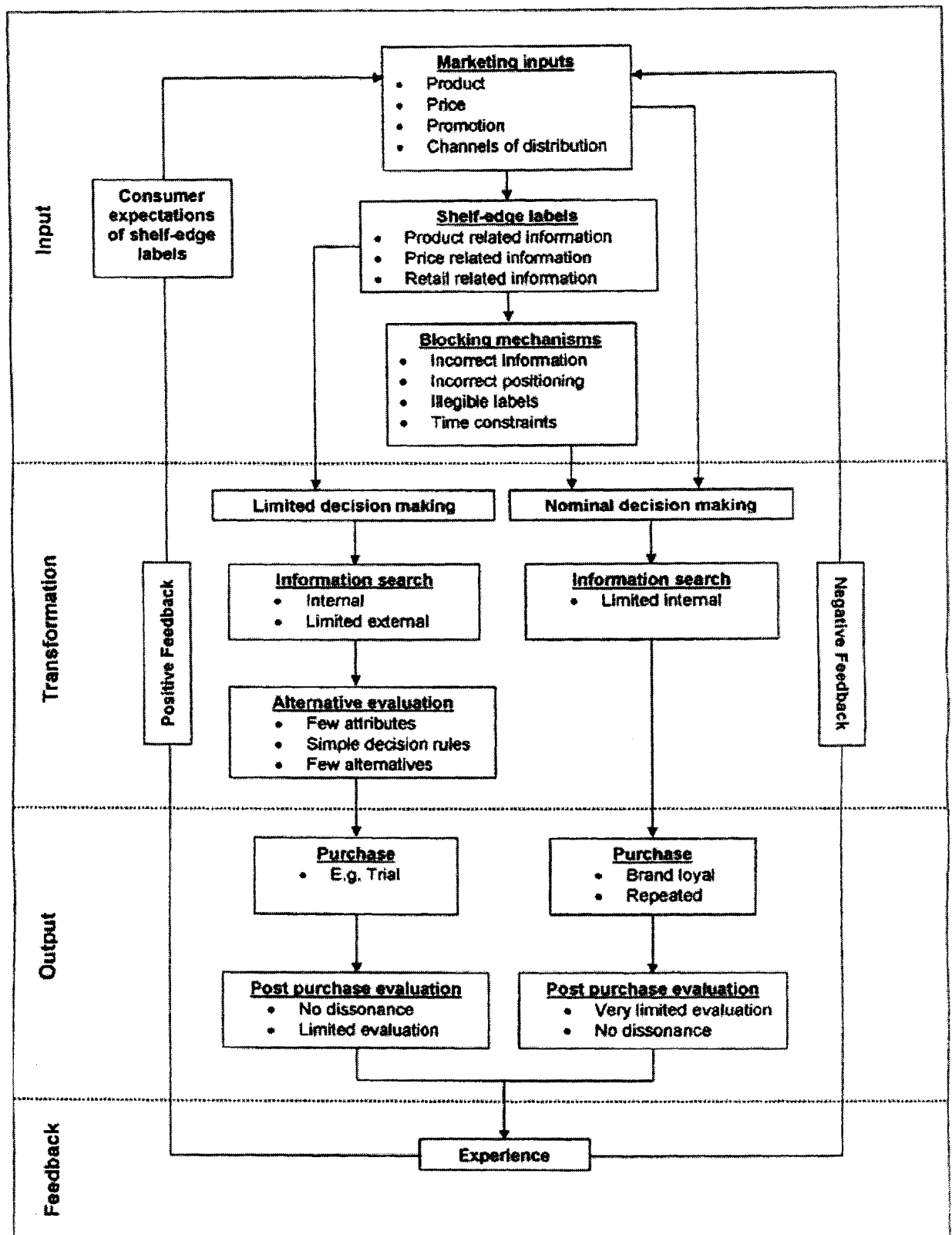


Figure 3: A Conceptual frame of consumer decision making during grocery shopping

The results discussed in Part 1 of this paper indicated that consumers make use of shelf-edge labels to a different extent. Typical to limited decision makers, these participants made use of some form of external information, namely shelf-edge labels. Nominal decision-making participants did not use external information and therefore did not make use of shelf-edge labels.

Limited decision making and the use of shelf-edge labels.

As pointed out in the previous section, limited decision making involves more external information search and evaluation of alternatives than nominal decision making. This search for external information would, however, remain limited (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001) and within the context of grocery shopping, as previously stated the detail about the purchasing decision is often made in-store (Kahn & McAlister, 1997). Although the search for information is limited, the role of shelf-edge labels as one of the few in-store information sources that can be used by consumers in their evaluation of alternatives in grocery outlets, should not be taken for granted.

To limited decision makers, shelf-edge labels serve as a sufficient source of external information, (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication). The participants made use of shelf-edge labels for various reasons. Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) refer to price, product and retail outlets as marketing inputs with which the consumers are confronted. The results from Part 1 indicated that consumers made use of the shelf-edge label, as input to gather such product-, price- and retail- related information.

Products as a marketing input and the use of shelf-edge labels

As illustrated in Figures 3, products form an important marketing input in consumers' decision-making processes when shopping for groceries. Although the risk associated with groceries tend to be lower (Burgess, 1998) than with other purchases, as stated in the introduction, the findings of Botes *et al.*, (submitted for publication), indicated that consumers do make use of shelf-edge labels to gain more information about products, especially when they are considering purchasing a new product or switching brands. External information is therefore of greater value to consumers with no or limited prior experience with a brand or product (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998), who would consequently engage in limited decision making.

This emphasises the importance of shelf-edge labels as external information source on products, especially those newly introduced to the market. As such, the conceptual framework presented in Figure 3, illustrates the value of product-related information indicated on shelf-edge labels as an input that is used by consumers during limited decision making. Along with product information, price and price-related information was also found to be important inputs in consumers' limited decision making, pertaining to certain grocery products (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication). During limited decision making, any product offering that presents a competitive distinction, can gain a temporary advantage (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). Price, as indicated on shelf-edge labels, can provide such a distinction and is therefore recognised in the conceptual framework (Figure 3) as an influential marketing input.

Price as a marketing input and the use of shelf-edge labels

One of the most prominent reasons participants gave for using shelf-edge labels was for price-related reasons. Shelf-edge labels are often the only source indicating the products' price (Bergen *et al.*, 2004) and therefore consumers interested in price need to make use of the shelf-edge label to gain price-related information.

The participants from the study conducted by Botes *et al.* (submitted for publication), indicated that they make use of various price-related information on shelf-edge labels, to base decisions on. This is done to compare different products, stores and brands according to price. Furthermore, consumers often base decision-making heuristics on price (Sheth *et al.*, 1999,). This indicates that consumers use shelf-edge labels for price-related reasons and therefore the role it plays in the decision-making process is unquestionable. Along with retail- and product related information, price is included in the conceptual frame as shown in Figure 3.

Retail outlet as marketing input and the use of shelf-edge labels

The research conducted in Part 1 of this paper (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) indicated that consumers make use of shelf-edge labels to obtain retail - related information. Grocery outlets as channels of distribution have evolved to such an extent that even the decision about where to purchase is associated with some form of risk. Consumers have the option to choose between extensive product selections to a limited product selection, ranging in price (Kahn & McAlister, 1997). Competition between grocery stores is strict and consumers base their decision on various factors (Kahn & McAlister, 1997). However, the research conducted in Part

1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) indicated that consumers require certain information on shelf-edge labels that specifically relates to the retail outlet.

The participants in Part 1 indicated that they needed retail-related information indicating shelf-life and out-of stock situations. The provision of such information influenced consumer decision making and satisfaction and therefore the transformation and outputs of the system. Retail-related information provided on shelf-edge labels is therefore included in the conceptual frame as seen in Figure 3, as an input to the limited decision-making process.

Retailers should be aware of the importance on shelf-life and the indication of out-of-stock situations on shelf-edge labels, because it influences the systems' outputs and simultaneously their goals. Yet, it should also be noted that not all consumers make use of shelf-edge labels to an equal extent (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication). Some consumers indicated that they would never or only sometimes use shelf-edge labels. According to their reasoning it became clear that some of these consumers engage in nominal decision making where no external information is used to guide the purchase decision while some consumers experience the need to make use of shelf-edge labels but were confronted with blocking mechanisms preventing them from doing so (Figure 3).

Blocking mechanisms preventing the input of shelf-edge labels

Although external information search can provide tangible benefits, such as lower price and intangible benefits, such as a reduced risk or greater confidence in the decision, some consumers might deliberately not engage in external information

search due to the cost (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). This cost can be of monetary nature, referring to search cost, cost of opportunity or time, or it can be of non-monetary nature (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998:533). Non-monetary cost can have a greater impact, since it occurs due to the frustration or conflict between the search effort and other activities.

Participants in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) indicated that they experienced some of these costs, which served as blocking mechanisms preventing the use of shelf-edge labels. Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003) describe blocking mechanisms as major obstacles in the decision-making process. Figure 3 indicates that blocking mechanisms can be viewed as another input in grocery shopping. This input limits the use of external information and therefore the type of decision used during grocery shopping.

The blocking mechanisms with which the participants in the study of Botes *et al.* (submitted for publication) were confronted, included incorrect positioning of shelf-edge labels, provision of too little information (also recognised by Urbany *et al.*, 1996) or an information overload (as supported by the findings of Kahn and McAlister, 1997), illegible labels and shelf-edge labels providing incorrect information. Time is often limited during grocery shopping (Kahn & McAlister, 1997) and not surprisingly some participants indicated that time-constraints also served as blocking mechanisms.

Shelf-edge-label-related blocking mechanisms, as an input in the decision-making process, influence the consumers' experience in grocery shopping and

decision-making method. Therefore, these blocking mechanisms needed to be included in the conceptual frame, which describes the role of shelf-edge labels during grocery shopping. This illustrates how the blocking mechanisms can cause consumers to engage in nominal decision making, which can be compared to a system with less permeable boundaries.

Nominal decision making

According to Figure 1, consumers who do not make use of external information, engage in nominal decision making. Therefore, as stated, these consumers do not particularly value external information such as shelf-edge labels, and mostly use internal information. Internal information search refers to information gathered from the information in the consumers' memory (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). As pointed out by Hawkins *et al.* (1998), nominal/habitual decisions during grocery shopping tend to be characterised by internal information search, since the purchase is considered less complex (Figure 1). In these cases, consumers base these decisions on aspects such as brand beliefs and past experiences to be gained from an internal search for information (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003). Since consumers are confident in attaining satisfaction based on previous experiences, they tend to be less involvement with the decision (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2003).

As discussed and indicated in Figure 1, consumers who make use of nominal buying actively simplify the process of decision making. This can be done through repeated purchases or brand loyal purchases. The results drawn from Part 1 of this paper (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) show this to be relevant in the South African context. Some of the participants who engaged in nominal decision making

for example stated that they do not make use of shelf-edge labels, as a result of their low price involvement.

It becomes clear that along with the inputs with which the consumers are confronted, their way of decision making determines their use of information and the transformation of the decision-making process. Nominal decision makers would transform less input during their acquisition of grocery items. The way this transformation differs from limited decision makers explains the different types of purchases (trial, repeat or brand loyal), as indicated in Figure 3.

Outputs of the decision-making process

Various inputs and the transformation process, results in outputs or otherwise stated, the way consumers make decisions. As indicated in Figure 3 and previously mentioned, limited decision makers make use of some external information and may be influenced to make "trial" purchases (Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). These purchases along with the shopping-experience are then evaluated (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000) by the consumer. This evaluation would influence consumers' future shopping behaviour in the form of feedback. This is described as either positive or negative feedback loops, which are fed back into the system as inputs to consumers' future shopping situations.

Nominal decision makers' purchase behaviour is also determined by their transformation of the decision-making process. As discussed above they exclusively engage in brand-loyal or repeated purchases, followed by limited evaluation (Figure 3). They would, however, evaluate the shopping situation more than the product

purchased. Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) indicated that these consumers would experience no dissonance, but the influence of blocking mechanisms might cause these consumers to experience dissonance with the situation rather than the product. This can also be described as either negative or positive feedback similarly serving as inputs to their future purchasing behaviour.

Feedback to the decision-making system

The general systems theory (GST) emphasises that an open system is dependent of its parts, where each part influences the entire system and functions in dynamic equilibrium, continuously responding to its environment (Spears, 2004). Feedback loops are paths of communication indicating how the system needs to adapt to reach its desired goals. When these goals are reached the system is in a state known as homeostasis (Spears, 2004). The feedback received in a system can either be positive or negative. Negative feedback is used to maintain homeostasis or initiate changes in the system to restore homeostasis. Positive feedback on the other hand promotes change that would change the system's homeostasis (Spears, 2004).

The conceptual framework (Figure 3) incorporates these feedback loops. The consumers might have a goal to make economical purchases which satisfy their needs. The feedback indicated in Figure 3 can indicate to consumers how change needs to be made in order to reach or maintain these goals. Regardless of the fact that not all consumers or grocery outlets value shelf-edge labels to the same extent, positive and negative feedback influence their future behaviour.

Participants who indicated that they were not confronted with blocking mechanisms and regularly made use of shelf-edge labels, use their experience as negative feedback. They have no reason to change their behaviour. They are satisfied with the current homeostasis and therefore it only needs to be maintained (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

On the other hand, some participants in Part 1 (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication) also indicated that they are nominal decision makers and therefore do not make use of shelf-edge labels since they engage in repeated or brand loyal purchases. These consumers are satisfied with their way of decision making and use their experience as negative feedback, where their homeostasis should only be maintained. It should be noted that brand loyal consumers might make use of shelf-edge labels to know that an out-of-stock product would return to that store, or promotion on their favourite brand might influence them to purchase more than one (Botes *et al.*, submitted for publication).

The importance of blocking mechanisms in determining outputs and certain feedback loops should also be emphasised. The study by Botes *et al.* (submitted for publication) portrayed in Part 1 indicated participants' reactions to blocking mechanisms which included consumers' decision to leave the product or retail outlet due to blocking mechanisms experienced. Clearly, this resulted in positive feedback which indicated the need to change in their behaviour. Consumers who complained, also experienced positive feedback with the need to change. In some instances these consumers experienced blocking mechanism regarding shelf-edge labels so intensely that they were not prepared to continue their current behaviour and would

for example visit another outlet. This means that the retailers are not succeeding in their goal to satisfy consumers and should adapt their methods accordingly.

From this discussion, it becomes clear that feedback loops are of absolute importance, within such a conceptual frame. Retailers, marketing and consumer science can use this conceptual frame with its content-specific feedback loops to explain consumer behaviour during grocery shopping, as well as their expectations regarding shelf-edge labels, and employ it as theoretical basis in future research.

Conclusion

Based on earlier research on consumers' behaviour regarding shelf-edge labelling, various consumer decision-making models that have been consulted were combined to develop a content specific conceptual framework that illustrates the importance of shelf-edge labelling as an external source of information during grocery shopping. This paper furthermore indicates the different types of decision making in which grocery-shopping consumers would engage as well as the inputs and outputs they experience during this process.

The current research, together with earlier research on the subject showed the importance of shelf-edge labels, as well as the role it plays in the grocery shopping experience. Through the conceptual frame developed, it can be seen that retail can use shelf-edge labels as marketing input, while consumers would use it as inputs providing information on which decisions can be based. The paper also indicates how consumer decision making influences the way shelf-edge labels transform during decision-making and how this transformation influences

consumers' purchase and post-purchase behaviour. This is useful information to retailers and consumer scientists, since it can aid in understanding and prediction of consumers' shopping behaviour.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions regarding the accomplishment of the research objectives and empirical findings of this study, as well as possible implications of this research for retail and industry. Attention was drawn to constraints, limitations and the significance of certain aspects such as the research procedure, of the study. A summary of these aspects in conjunction with recommendations for future research is presented at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Conclusion

It is a known fact that the grocery industry generates a substantial contribution to the South African economy. This study indicated that the grocery industry contributes equally to research possibilities. It can serve as setting in which research for marketing, as well as consumer science, can be done. Within this environment shelf-edge labels were studied, incorporating certain objectives.

In terms of addressing the first objective, namely determining the extent to which consumers use shelf-edge labels, it was found that they engaged in nominal and limited decision making during grocery shopping. The type of decision making employed, tended to differ according to the product category being shopped for. However, nominal decision makers were inclined not to use external information, which supports the findings that some consumers would not make use of shelf-edge labels. Limited decision makers did make use of shelf-edge labels and therefore used shelf-edge labels to gain information about the product being shopped for. From this deviating behaviour, it was shown why categories differed regarding the extent to which consumers use shelf-edge labels, while also indicating that consumers would sometimes, never, or always use shelf-edge labels.

In determining consumers' reasons for using or not using shelf-edge labels, in answer to the second objective, various themes surfaced. This can be of value to retailers, since it provides grounds on which more control can be exercised over consumers' grocery

shopping behaviour. These reasons are equally important to scientists since it provides more insight into the consumer's decision-making processes.

Consumers indicated that they made use of shelf-edge labels for informative reasons. Shelf-edge labels thus served as inputs in their decision making and provided consumers with price-, retail- and product-related information, which they could compare and base their decisions on. However, as stated previously, there was an indication that not all consumers used shelf-edge labels to the same extent.

Some consumers engaged in nominal decision making, which excluded external information, such as information presented on shelf-edge labels. Other consumers, however, did not make use of shelf-edge labels due to blocking mechanisms preventing them from doing so. These blocking mechanisms included time constraints, incorrect information, the positioning of shelf-edge labels and the fact that these shelf-edge labels were often illegible. The role of blocking mechanisms is not always included in general decision-making models. This study, however, illustrated blocking mechanisms as being of importance, preventing the use of shelf-edge labels during grocery shopping and the concept was therefore included in the content specific conceptual frame that was developed in the study.

These blocking mechanisms are not only important to science, but also to retailers. This study indicated that consumers' reaction to these blocking mechanisms influenced retail outlets. Some consumers were so intimidated by these blocking mechanisms that they would leave the product or the grocery outlets. Therefore, retailers should pay attention to the results of this study, since it can directly affect them. In addition consumers also revealed certain expectations of what shelf-edge labels should involve. Retailers should be aware of these expectations and strive to satisfy consumers by living up to consumers' expectations.

To address the final study objective, consumers' expectations regarding shelf-edge labels were determined. These expectations corresponded with their reasoning for using or not using shelf-edge labels. Consumers indicated that shelf-edge labels should provide information related to the price, such as unit price, as well as product related information. Consumers stated that product ingredients and nutritional information

indicated on the shelf-edge labels could facilitate in their shopping and they therefore expected retailers to consider such information. Consumers also indicated that they expected shelf-edge labels to carry a barcode, shelf-life, and accurate description of the product correctly placed with the specific product in question.

It is therefore apparent that this study provided insight on consumers' use of shelf-edge labels. The information obtained is applicable to theory development in future research, as well as to retailers in planning in-store activities. In the following section the implications of these findings will be discussed.

5.3 Application

Regardless of the fact that this study was conducted from a consumer science perspective, the implications for retailers are noteworthy. Throughout the study this became evident. This once again shows that marketing and consumer science can easily be unified through the use of a systems theory. This motivated the application of a systems theory to indicate the role of shelf-edge labels during grocery shopping.

Retailers should realise the value of shelf-edge labels as marketing input and that shelf-edge labels can influence sales. Shelf-edge labels can be used as informative point-of-purchase promotional material. This can be seen as a cost-effective way to provide all the information the consumer needs when deciding what to purchase.

Consumers' expectations of such a diverse amount of information on shelf-edge labels and their expanded reasons for using shelf-edge labels can be associated with the benefits of electronic shelf-edge labelling (ESL). Yet, this study did not focus on ESL as topic and did not examine all its' influencing factors, therefore the application of ESL within the South African context can neither be recommended nor rejected, and further studies are needed. . Retailers can, nevertheless, at present improve their application of the traditional shelf-edge labels. This can be done by considering and applying the results of this study to their outlets.

The study provides retailers with basic ideas on how traditional shelf-edge labels can be designed according to the expectations of the consumer. These expectations and

blocking mechanisms can serve the retailer with feedback, indicating the need for changes.

From the results of this study a conceptual frame was designed from a systems perspective. This model aids in the understanding of consumer behaviour and is therefore important to consumer science as a discipline. One of the aims of consumer science is to provide insight to consumer behaviour. This study greatly contributes to this goal through the content specific conceptual framework, explaining consumer decision making during grocery shopping. This model also indicates that marketing inputs such as shelf-edge labels influence consumers, and that the contributing role that such marketing inputs have on consumer behaviour should not be taken for granted.

5.4 Limitations and recommendations

This study was conducted from a phenomenological qualitative approach with a descriptive and exploratory nature. Due to this fact, the sample used consisted only of a relatively small number of urban Gauteng consumers. Therefore, the findings of the research cannot be generalised to either the entire South African population, or be considered as general consumer behaviour.

The purpose of this study was to merely explore urban consumers' use and opinion of shelf-edge labelling during grocery shopping. This study therefore describes a smaller sample of urban consumers within the South African context. It is, however, recommended that future studies should enlarge the sample and that the study be expanded into a quantitative survey that provides more representative data on a larger segment of the South African consumer population. Such a study can benefit from the initial findings produced in this study, by using it as a starting point for the conceptualisation and identification of relevant constructs.

Some aspects were not addressed by the current study, including issues such as the consumers' role in the decision-making process, type of shopping trip during which consumers are interviewed, product categories from which the consumer is shopping and the grocery outlets where most of the shopping is done. These aspects might show interesting results, but were not part of this study's objectives. Therefore, it is recommended that attention be given to these aspects during future research.

During the present study, data about the use of shelf-edge labels were not product specific. Along with consumer demographics, this can also influence the study results, due to the fact that consumers considered some products of a higher risk than others. Future studies on the use of shelf-edge labels should be product specific or at least recognise the category from which the consumer is shopping.

In combination with product category, the type of retail outlet should also be taken into consideration in future studies. During the present study, a hypermarket and supermarket were used. Due to the fact that not all rural areas in South Africa have hypermarkets or supermarkets nearby, other grocery outlets, such as convenience stores, should also be included. An investigation of the utilisation of shelf-edge labels in different types of grocery outlets, probably including consumer behaviour in rural areas, could certainly lead to interesting results.

The research indicated that some consumers would not make use of shelf-edge labels as information source. However, this research did not question those consumers who did not make use of shelf-edge labels about their use of any other sources of information, because it was not included as one of the objectives of this study. This leaves scope for future research to determine whether consumers make use of any other marketing inputs as information sources, and if so what these would encompass.. Such research could be of value to retailers, consumers and marketing science.

5.7 Comments on the research procedure

This study made use of three different data collection methods. Recommendations and limitations regarding the use of semi-structured in-store interviews, focus groups and projective techniques can be summarised as follows:

5.7.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

The use of semi-structured interviews as opposed to the use of other interviewing methods can be recommended. The semi-structured nature of the interview methods allowed participants to introduce new ideas to the study, which could be followed up during focus group discussions. Simultaneously, the use of an interview guide ensured that participants were asked the same questions. The interview guide contributed to

data gathering since it allowed for consumers to proceed to a next objective in their discussion. The incorporation of such a guide is recommended during the use of semi-structured interviews.

As far as the recruitment of participants for in-store interviews is concerned, careful consideration should be given to the shopping hours during which recruitment is done. Consumers who shopped during peak hours, (for example lunch hour) were less willing to participate in the interviews. They mentioned and emphasised their time constraints. It is important to conduct such research at a time when participants are willing and able to devote attention to the research in question. By giving the participants an indication of the exciting implications of the research, they felt more inclined to participate in the methods to follow.

5.7.3 Projective technique

The projective technique served as introduction to the focus group discussions. The use of such a combination of data-collection methods can be recommended for future research. Apart from ensuring triangulation in data, the repeated discussion of the same objective provided consumers with the opportunity to mention ideas forgotten during previous data collection procedures. Through the projective technique, participants portrayed their subjective opinions regarding the scenario provided, through a method referred to as sentence completion. This gave the participants an idea of what would be discussed during the focus group and aided the researcher in answering the studies' objectives. This method also clarified consumers' views regarding issues discussed in the focus group sessions, when analysed in conjunction with the transcripts of discussions.

It is advised that projective techniques be used in conjunction with other data collection methods, and not as a single method of gathering qualitative data. Participants in this study completed the sentences with short phrases that provided a limited understanding of their reason for answering in a particular manner. In this regard the focus group discussions proved to be useful in further exploring their views and opinions.

5.7.2 Focus group discussions

The sequence in which the data collection methods were applied proved to be particularly useful in this study. Focus group discussions followed the in-store interviews. The same participants of the interviews were asked to join in these discussions. This ensured triangulation of results and gave participants time to ponder on their thoughts regarding the use of shelf-edge labels.

Although some researchers are of opinion that participants should not be acquainted with one another, due to the lack of confidentiality, this study gave reason to differ. Some focus groups consisted out of participants who knew each other, while other groups had no acquainted participants. The groups where some familiarity existed, generated more valuable results. From this, the researcher is of opinion that in situations where the topic being discussed, is not of a personal nature, it may be helpful to have participants who share acquaintance.

5.7.4 Data analysis

It is recommended that data analysis be completed as soon as a specific set of data has been gathered. This gives the researcher an idea of when data saturation has been reached, as well as an indication of the predominant themes that emerge from the results. Such themes can be followed up in subsequent data collection sessions. Data analysis that is approached in such a manner, eases the task of coding, since the researcher becomes familiar with the data from an early stage. Furthermore, continual reviewing is necessary to ensure that the data are being explored for all possible contributions.

Data analysis should, however, not be done by a single researcher, since the researcher can become too familiar with the results. This can result in a situation where the researcher becomes numb to significant results. It can furthermore be recommended that independent researchers revise themes and concepts to ensure objective results.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS PRESENTED TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE

STUDY

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

A South African study of the influence of shelf-edge labelling on urban consumers' grocery shopping behaviour.

Dear Mr. /Mrs. /Miss

Date ... / .../2005

AIM AND NATURE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research project is to obtain consumers' perceptions, ideas and opinions of shelf edge-labels that are used in grocery stores. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and projective techniques will be employed to address this aim and to obtain the information required to fulfil the objectives of this project.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

- You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview and a focus group discussion, as well as a projective technique regarding shelf-edge labelling.
- The interview will take place in the grocery store.
- The discussion will be guided by a facilitator.
- The discussion offers you the opportunity to voice your opinion about shelf-edge labels.
- No answer or response would be regarded as incorrect.
- No preparation is required for the discussion.
- Each participant in the group would be given the opportunity to voice his/ her opinion as well as comment and debate on the opinion of other participants.

NOTICE OF RECORDINGS

It is brought to your attention that the discussions, and interviews will be recorded on tape, to ensure that valuable information is preserved and analysed within the appropriate context. After completion of the discussions, these recordings will be transcribed to text. You have the right to examine the transcribed text at any given time during the course and completion of the research project.

DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Your opinion is considered strictly confidential and only members of the research team will have access to the information. No data published in dissertations or journals will contain any particulars that could identify you as a participant in this study. You are therefore assured of your anonymity.

POSSIBLE BENIFITS OF THE STUDY

The information gained from these focus group discussions, interviews and projective techniques can prove to be particularly useful to retailers in improving their shelf-edge labelling and enhancing their appeal to the end consumer. More importantly though, this study can also ensure a better understanding of the use of shelf-edge labelling in the acquisition of grocery items and shoppers' expectations in this regard.

INFORMATION

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Xania Botes, (Masters' degree student) at 082 493 9087 or project leaders, Mrs. Nadine Sonnenberg at 018 299 2478 and Dr. Daleen van der Merwe at 018 299 2476.

WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATION

It is brought to your attention that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw from the focus group discussions at any given time should you wish to do so.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned _____ (Full names) read through the information provided about the research project and declare that I fully understand the content thereof. I was given the opportunity (if so preferred) to discuss any aspects of the project with the researchers and hereby voluntary agree to participate in the project.

I would hereby like to exempt the University or any employee or any student of the University from any liability which I might incur during this project.

I furthermore waive my right to institute any claims whatsoever against the University which may arise during the running of the project or the conduct of any person involved in the project, except for claims arising from the negligent conduct of the University or its employees or students.

I received a signed copy of the consent form.

Signature of participant: _____

Signed at _____ on

WITNESSES

DATE

1. _____

2. _____

TITEL VAN NAVORSINGSPROJEK:

'n Suid-Afrikaanse studie van die invloed van winkelrak-etikettering, op stedelike verbruikers se kruideniersaankoopgedrag.

Geagte Mnr/Mev/Mej

Datum: ... / .../2005

DOEL EN AARD VAN DIE STUDIE

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is om verbruikers se begrip van, asook idees en opinies oor winkelrak-etikette te ondersoek. Die studie maak gebruik van gespreksgroepe om hierdie inligting van verbruikers wat rak-etikette gebruik tydens aankope van kruideniersware, in te win. Die gebruik van winkelrak-etikette word bestudeer sodat die toepassing daarvan in kruidenierswarewinkels meer bevredigend aan die behoeftes van die verbruiker sal voldoen.

PROSEDURE VIR DIE NAVORSING

- Die studie vereis dat u aan 'n semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud en gespreksgroep (fokusgroep) asook 'n projektiewe tegniek voltooi, oor winkelrak-etikette deelneem.
- U sal gevra word om 'n projektiewe tegniek te voltooi voor die aanvang van die gesprek.
- Die onderhoud vind in die kruidenierswinkel plaas.
- Die gespreksgroep word gelei deur 'n fasiliteerder.
- Die gespreksgroep is 'n geleentheid waar u, u eie mening kan lig oor rak-etikette.
- Daar is geen verkeerde antwoorde nie.
- U hoef geen voorbereiding vir die gespreksgroep te doen nie.
- Almal in die gespreksgroep sal 'n geleentheid gegun word om hul mening te lig, ander gespreksgroepslede se opinie te beaam of teen te gaan. Die groep mag menings en opinies van ander gespreksgroepslede debatteer.

VERWITTIG VAN BANDOPNAME

U word bewus gemaak van die feit dat die onderhoud en gespreksgroep op band opgeneem sal word om te verseker dat waardevolle inligting wat deur die deelnemers gelewer word nie verlore gaan nie en die konteks van die inligting deeglik nagegaan kan word. Na afloop van die data insameling sal die kassette getranskribeer word. U is enige tyd geregtig daarop om die teks van u onderhoud of gespreksgroep deur te gaan.

VERKLARING t.o.v. KONFIDENSIALITEIT

Die data word as streng vertroulik beskou en slegs lede van die navorsingspan sal toegang tot inligting hê. Geen data wat in skripsies en joernale gepubliseer sal word sal enige inligting bevat wat die deelnemers sal identifiseer nie. U anonimiteit word dus verseker.

ONTREKKINGSKLOUSULE

U aandag word daarop gevestig dat u ter enige tyd aan die gespreksgroep mag onttrek. U neem dus vrywillig deel totdat anders versoek.

MOONTLIKE VOORDELE VAN DIE STUDIE

Deur verbruikers se menings en opinies aangaande winkelrak-etikette in te win, sal meer doeltreffende aanbevelings gemaak kan word wat die etikettering van winkel rakke sodanig kan beïnvloed dat die verbruiker daaruit voordeel sal trek. Dit sal verbruikers dus in staat stel om deur middel van inligtingsbronne, ingeligte en beter besluite aangaande die aankoop van kruideniersprodukte te kan neem.

INLIGTING

Indien ek enige vrae oor die betrokke studie het, kontak gerus vir Xania Botes, (Meestersgraad student) by 082 493 9087 of u kan die projekteier, Mev. N. Sonnenberg (018 299 2478) of Dr. M. van der Merwe (018 2992476) (Tel: 018 299 2478) kontak.

VERKLARING VAN TOESTEMMING VERLEEN

Ek, die ondergetekende _____
(volle name) het die voorafgaande gegewens in verband met die projek gelees en ook die mondelinge weergawe daarvan aangehoor en ek verklaar dat ek dit verstaan. Ek was die geleentheid gegun om tersaaklike aspekte van die projek met die

projekleier te bespreek en ek verklaar hiermee dat ek vrywillig aan die projek deelneem. Ek gee hiermee my toestemming om as deelnemer in bogenoemde projek op te tree.

Ek vrywaar hiermee die Universiteit asook enige werknemer of student van die Universiteit, teen enige aanspreeklikheid wat teenoor my, in die loop van die projek mag ontstaan.

Ek onderneem verder om geen eise teen die Universiteit in te stel weens skade of persoonlikheidsnadeel wat ek weens die projek of die toedoen van ander deelnemers mag ly nie, tensy dit aan die nalatigheid van die Universiteit, sy werknemers of studente te wyte is.

Ek het 'n getekende kopie van hierdie toestemmingsooreenkoms ontvang.

Handtekening van deelnemer: _____

Onderteken te _____ op _____

GETUIES

DATUM

1. _____

2. _____

APPENDIX B
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide: In-store interviews

1. I noticed you paid attention to the shelf-edge labels.

How often do you make use of the shelf-edge label during grocery shopping?

2. What are your reasons for using/ not using shelf-edge labels?

3. What do you expect to find on such a shelf-edge label?

4. Do you think these labels can be improved? How?

APPENDIX C
PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUE

PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUE

Please complete the following sentences with the first word or phrase that comes to mind. The purpose of this exercise is to obtain insight about the value and use of shelf-edge labelling within a grocery store environment. No answers are considered incorrect.

1. A shelf-edge label is used by consumers in grocery stores to.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Consumers use shelf-edge labels because.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. A shelf-edge label should include.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Shelf-edge labels would be more useful if.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

PROJEKTIEWE TEGNIEK

Voltooi asseblief die volgende sinne deur die eerste woord of frase waaraan u dink, in te vul. Die doel van die oefening is om insig te kry oor die waarde en nut van winkelrak-etikettering in kruideniersware winkels. Geen antwoorde word as verkeerd beskou nie.

1. 'n Winkelrak-etiket word deur verbruikers, in kruidenierswinkels gebruik om.....
.....
.....
2. Verbruikers gebruik winkelrak-etikette, omdat.....
.....
.....
3. Verbruikers gebruik nie winkelrak-etikette nie, omdat.....
.....
.....
.....
4. 'n Winkelrak etiket moet voldoen aan.....
.....
.....
.....
5. Verbruikers sal winkelrak-etikette meer gebruik as dit.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX D
DATA REFLECTING URBAN CONSUMERS' REASONS FOR
USING SHELF-EDGE LABELS

Table 1: Theme - consumers' use of shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision-making

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Provides product related information	To facilitate decision-making	Interviews	1. <i>...om te besluit hoe nodig ek die produk het met al sy inligting op hom in ag geneem.</i> 2. <i>It helps me decide what to buy; in fact I just switched to this product.</i>
		Focus groups	3. <i>When you know little about a product, but want to buy something, you would look at the label.</i> 4. <i>...but then, I also like new stuff, when you look for new stuff, you like on a mission, you have to look, then you pay more attention to the labels...</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 5. <i>...they need information about products.</i> 6. <i>...it provides more detailed information on the product.</i> 7. <i>...dit inligting verskaf op grond waarvan besluite geneem kan word ten opsigte van aankope.</i>
Provides price related information	Price identification	Interviews	—
		Focus groups	8. <i>...to identify the product and the price.</i> 9. <i>[I use shelf-edge labelling]... because the price is not on the item anymore.</i> 10. <i>I check [shelf-edge labels] because they never have the price on the product.</i>
		Projective techniques	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 11. <i>...dit is die enigste manier van prys identifisering in groot supermarkte.</i> 12. <i>...dit vir hulle die prys aandui en dit vir hulle gerieflik is om die prys daar te vind.</i> 13. <i>...it is easier to locate than individual price tags.</i>
	Price comparison • In general	Interviews	14. <i>I use it mostly for price, to compare the prices.</i> 15. <i>I always look at the prices and I compare.</i>
		Focus groups	16. <i>You need comparison in price.</i> 17. <i>...om pryse te vergelyk.</i> 18. <i>I started comparing the prices.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 19. <i>...it gives comparison of prices.</i>

Table 1 (continued): Theme - consumers' use of shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision-making

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Provides price related information (continued)	Price comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> among competing brands 	Interviews	20. ...for the price and to compare it to another brand. 21. I compare the prices, if there is one product I will compare the prices of the different "labels" [referring to "brands"].
		Focus groups	22. You look when you have really competing brands. Like tea, there are five teas, they are all imported and all seems the same so you look at the price. 23. ...their own label, store x's label, is often more expensive. I compare that.
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 24. ...they determine the price of products on display to other competing products. 25. ...to compare the prices of similar items.
	Price comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> among various grocery stores 	Interviews	-
		Focus groups	26. ... om te kyk wat 'n produk kos en dit met ander winkels te vergelyk. 27. Deesdae wat winkels al hoe duurder raak moet jy die winkels vergelyk. 28. I found that store X is more expensive than store Y at North Gate. I started comparing the prices. 29. We can not afford to buy all our stuff here....we buy certain products here and others at another store.
		Projective technique	-
	Price comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparing shelf price to reference price 	Interviews	30. I like to see if a price has gone up or if the price has gone down.
		Focus groups	31. I use it for price reference. 32. I know it had a certain price, but it was R34.99 so I thought I would buy two.
		Projective technique	-

Table 1 (continued): Theme - consumers' use of shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision-making

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Provides price related information (continued)	Price comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparing shelf price to price at pay point 	Interviews	33. <i>Also when it is scanned, I check if it is right.</i> 34. <i>Die pryse is baie keer verkeerd. Ek onthou dit sodat as ek by die till kom dan kyk ek.</i>
		Focus groups	35. <i>I memorize the price on the shelf. I know exactly how much it costs when I get to the till.</i> 36. <i>You have to have a memory. You put everything in your memory bank before you get to the till.</i>
		Projective technique	–
	Price comparison <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparing unit prices 	Interviews	37. <i>I like it when they break it down and give a unit price, so that you can compare apples with apples.</i> 38. <i>Sometimes I use it to compare the weight.</i> 39. <i>I want the price per kilogram.</i> 40. <i>I look how much for one and the weight.</i> 41. <i>I always check the unit price.</i> 42. <i>I check the grams and check the price.</i>
		Focus groups	43. <i>It relates back to the price per kilogram or milliliter.</i> 44. <i>Ek kyk na die eenheid prys as ek vrugte koop en groente – dan is dit belangrik, en as ek kaas koop, dit gee my 'n aanduiding van hoe duur die produk is.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 45. <i>...to get comparative pricing per unit.</i> 46. <i>...om die prys per gewig te bepaal.</i> 47. <i>...to check price per unit.</i> 48. <i>...advise price and quantity.</i> 49. <i>...indicate price per unit or kilo.</i>

Table 1 (continued): Theme - consumers' use of shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision-making

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Provides price related information (continued)	Determining affordability	Interviews	50. <i>Ek kyk na die etikette om die pryse te kan sien. Ek is 'n pensioenaris en ek moet weet waar ek my rande kan draai.</i> 51. <i>Ek kyk definitief daarna, ek kyk wat dit kos en of ek dit kan bekostig.</i> 52. <i>...to see how much it costs before I put it in my trolley.</i>
		Focus groups	53. <i>We got to watch the pennies because we are pensioners.</i> 54. <i>I think, like me, I buy for myself because I am alone and the only time I look at the price is if I only have a certain amount of money and fear the embarrassment of not having enough money with me.</i> 55. <i>...like each month you only have a certain amount for groceries, and you have to make sure what you buy so that next time that you buy you know what you have left.</i> 56. <i>...then I would not buy the most expensive because I buy a lot on price.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 57. <i>...hulle met 'n begroting werk en dus die beste waarde vir geld moet kry.</i> 58. <i>...die begroting van hulle geld beperk is en dus moet jy die beste prys soek.</i> 59. <i>... hulle sekere hoeveelheid geld beskikbaar het waarmee hulle sekere artikels moet koop.</i>
	Determining the cheapest / best price.	Interviews	60. <i>...like for instance my friend was just telling me that she bought the 100 pack of Five Roses for R13, but the 200 pack is R24, so she hasn't done herself a favor at all. She could have got it cheaper.</i> 61. <i>Well mostly for price, to get the cheapest.</i> 62. <i>...to make sure that I get the best price.</i>
		Focus groups	63. <i>... to get the best option.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 64. <i>...om te soek vir die laagste pryse.</i>
	Combination of price related reasons	Interviews	65. <i>...the price, the brand, but most of the times I work with a calculator so I always check it.</i> 66. <i>...to budget and compare pricing and quantity.</i>
		Focus groups	–
		Projective technique	–

Table 1 (continued): Theme - consumers' use of shelf-edge labels as external source of information during limited decision-making

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Provides retail related information	Date of placement on shelf	Interviews	-
		Focus groups	67. ...when they put it on the shelf and how long it has been on the shelf" as store x does with fresh products. 68. ...with perishable products you need a shelf life.
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers use shelf-edge labels because... 69. ... om te sien wat se datum dit op die rak geplaas is. 70. ...om te sien hoe lank die item al op die rak staan.
	Out of stock situations	Interviews	-
		Focus groups	71. They would have that labels saying temporary out of stock, then you know it is out of stock and you can stop looking. 72. Those temporary out of stock labels help a lot, it saves you time. 73. Jy weet dan darem dat die produk gaan terug kom, maar winkels behoort nie out of stock te wees nie. 74. Sulke etikette help baie, dan weet jy hulle hou dit nog aan maar die voorraad op die vloer en in die stoor is klaar. 75. I prefer it. It irritates me more to look for the product with the hope that it is packed incorrectly. 76. I would sometimes go to a store to buy something specific, and then I can't find it. If they tell me from the start that it is out of stock it saves me time.
		Projective technique	-

APPENDIX E
DATA REFLECTING URBAN CONSUMERS' REASONS FOR
NOT USING SHELF-EDGE LABELS

Table 1: Theme – consumers' nominal/ habitual decision-making behaviour eliminating the use of shelf-edge labelling

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Nominal/ habitual decision-making behaviour	Low purchase involvement	Interviews	1. <i>...when I know what I want to buy I don't look.</i>
		Focus groups	2. <i>My husband would go and take the very first thing he sees, the price, the brand -nothing is important to him.</i> 3. <i>If I know the product I would just grab and go.</i>
	Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because ... 4. <i>...hulle nie belangstel nie.</i> 5. <i>...they have a pre-determined list of requirements.</i> 6. <i>...hulle weet wat hulle wil hê.</i>	
	Low price involvement	Interviews	7. <i>Sometimes I know it is expensive then I try not to look.</i> 8. <i>...maybe much cheaper products like salt...</i> 9. <i>As ek die produk ken en weet mens wil dit hê soos sekere koffie – dit maak nie saak wat dit kos nie.</i>
		Focus groups	10. <i>Sy kyk nie wat iets kos nie, sy gooi dit net in die mandjie in.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 11. <i>... they don't worry about price.</i> 12. <i>...hulle nie omgee wat die produk kos nie.</i> 13. <i>...price does not matter if you are shopping for a specific item and you are not interested in alternative brands.</i>

Table 1 (continued): Theme – consumers' nominal/ habitual decision-making behaviour eliminating the use of shelf-edge labelling

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Nominal/ habitual decision-making behaviour (continued)	Repeat purchases	Interviews	14. <i>Like something like margarine which I buy often I don't particularly pay attention to it.</i> 15. <i>Well you won't use it when you buy the same thing all the time.</i>
		Focus groups	16. <i>When I buy something I always buy then I don't worry ...</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 17. <i>... hulle items soos brood nodig het.</i>
	Brand loyal purchases	Interviews	18. <i>When you are a regular brands buyer you don't check it.</i> 19. <i>If I stick to a particular product, then I don't even look at others and then I just keep taking the same one.</i>
		Focus groups	20. <i>Well if you know the brand, I suppose you would not always look.</i> 21. <i>The times that I don't is when there is a particular brand that I always stick to, then I just go for that brand and don't compare any other products.</i> 22. <i>When you are brand loyal and you know what you want and you take it of the shelf and go.</i> 23. <i>I am brand loyal; I don't care about the label.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 24. <i>... a particular brand stands out.</i>

Table 2: Theme - blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements	
Incorrect information	In general	Interviews	1. <i>Ek gebruik dit glad nie-wat help dit, dit is heeltyd verkeerd.</i> 2. <i>I don't like them because they are wrong.</i> 3. <i>I often find that the labels are wrong.</i>	
		Focus groups	4. <i>Die etikette is so dikwels verkeerd.</i>	
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 5. <i>...dit nie altyd akkuraat is nie.</i>	
	Pricing discrepancies	Interviews		6. <i>Sometimes stuff is on sale and they would still have the old price on.</i> 7. <i>Sometimes I find when I get to the till, the price is not the same as on the shelf.</i>
			Focus groups	8. <i>Dit het al baie gebeur dat die prys by die till verskil van die prys op die rak.</i> 9. <i>I found when they have specials, they don't remark their prices.</i> 10. <i>There are times when the shelf-edge label does not correspond with what is on the till and that is very frustrating.</i> 11. <i>...that would work if the prices on there were the prices you actually paid!</i>
		Projective technique		Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 12. <i>...dit foutiewe pryse aandui vir die gegewe produk.</i> 13. <i>... pricing is not up to date.</i> 14. <i>...baie van die etikette verouder is.</i>

Table 2 (continued): Theme - blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Incorrect positioning	Positioning of shelf-edge labels do not correlate with placement of products	Interviews	<p>15. <i>Sometimes they are mixed up, and I will look and I will take the product and when I get to the till it is not what it is on the shelf.</i></p> <p>16. <i>Sometimes they don't even correlate to what is there.</i></p> <p>17. <i>Hulle moet terug gaan na die ou sisteem toe en elke ding merk, dan sal die regte prys altyd op die regte produk wees.</i></p> <p>18. <i>Wat ek al gesien het is as hulle "specials" het, dan pak hulle die "specials" nou hier en 'n ander produk wat nie op "special" is nie reg langs dit. Dan soos die "special" produk opraak pak hulle die produk wat nie op "special" is nie, op die "special" se plek, en mense vat net, hulle kyk nie.</i></p>
		Focus groups	<p>19. <i>The only problem I have got is that labels do not match the products - they are on the wrong shelves.</i></p> <p>20. <i>Baie keer gebeur dit dat hulle nie die goed reg uitstal nie, met ander woorde die regte produk is nie by die regte prys nie.</i></p> <p>21. <i>Something that I found wastes a lot of my time is that the products is not correctly placed.</i></p> <p>22. <i>Die "sticker" [referring to shelf-edge label] is baie keer op 'n plek en dan is daar geen teken van so produk nie.</i></p>
		Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because...</p> <p>23. <i>...sometimes it is the wrong product above the label</i></p> <p>24. <i>...dit dikwels nie reg oor die artikel wat jy wil koop aangebring is nie.</i></p> <p>25. <i>... it is never located in the proper area.</i></p>
	Incorrect product pointers	Interviews	<p>26. <i>Sometimes the arrows are not correct.</i></p>
		Focus groups	<p>27. <i>...you will have an arrow pointing up, and the product is actually below the label.</i></p> <p>28. <i>...en die pyltjies - nee dit werk glad nie.</i></p> <p>29. <i>Things are never lined up - the arrows are never in the right direction.</i></p>
		Projective technique	—

Table 2 (continued): Theme - blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Incorrect positioning (continued)	Lack of shelf-edge labels	Interviews	<p>30. <i>I can't find them.</i></p> <p>31. <i>Mostly it is not with the label itself, the description is fine, it is where they don't have the label at the product.</i></p> <p>32. <i>Sometimes you want to buy something and it does not have a price on, so you could not bother to look.</i></p> <p>33. <i>Daar is geen teken van 'n etiket nie.</i></p> <p>34. <i>Daar is dikwels nie een nie.</i></p> <p>35. <i>Another problem is that they have six items but they only price three of them.</i></p>
		Focus groups	<p>36. <i>Partykeer soek jy na die etiket en dan sal jy na elke liewe een kyk en dit nêrens kry nie.</i></p> <p>37. <i>I found that there are many times they don't mention the price ...so when there is no label – then you don't really notice it.</i></p> <p>38. <i>Ja, die manier hoe hulle die etikette opsit is nie altyd effektief nie – dit val soms af. Daar moet 'n beter sisteem wees op die etiket op die rak te hou.</i></p> <p>39. <i>They have to make sure that they are there - not like that store X and not have them at all.</i></p>
		Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because...</p> <p>40. <i>...dit soms ontbreek.</i></p> <p>41. <i>... you always battle to find it.</i></p>
	Too many shelf-edge labels	Interviews	–
		Focus groups	<p>42. <i>Daar te veel etikette op die rak is, en verbruikers raak deurmekaar met die produkte se kodes.</i></p> <p>43. <i>Baie keer is daar so baie etikette op 'n rak, dat dit mekaar so oorvleuel en dan kan jy regtig nie sien dis nou die een en dis nou daai een nie, en jy wil nie een etiket oplik om te sien wat staan onder hom nie. Dis 'n gemors.</i></p>
		Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because...</p> <p>44. <i>...daar te veel etikette is en die verbruiker raak deurmekaar.</i></p> <p>45. <i>...dit soms verwarrend is met ander artikels.</i></p>

Table 2 (continued): Theme - blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Illegible shelf-edge labels	Small print not visible	Interviews	46. <i>It would be nice if you could read them!</i> 47. <i>The signage needs to be more visible.</i> 48. <i>Die prys moet helder uitstaan.</i>
		Focus groups	49. <i>Mens moet teenaan die rak staan om dit te kan lees, veral produkte met lang name is moeilik om te weet wat is wat. Jy kan nie sien wat daar staan nie.</i> 50. <i>It is so small I have to use my reading glasses.</i> 51. <i>Die name is heeltemal te klein.</i> 52. <i>Wie kan daai klein dingetjie lees?</i> 53. <i>The supermarket labels aren't always visible and they are tatty.</i> 54. <i>Maar 'n ander ding met etikette – veral die koue goed – die barcode is mos onder, so as die etiket verniel of nat word kan mens dit nie meer lees nie.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 55. <i>...dit te klein is om te lees.</i> 56. <i>...you have to pick it up and read the number, the barcode.</i>
Time constraints		Interviews	57. <i>Sometimes I am in a rush...</i>
		Focus groups	58. <i>If you are in a hurry you don't want to be bothered about things like where the price is.</i> 59. <i>Shopping takes a lot of time.</i> 60. <i>I don't like to spend hours in the shop.</i> 61. <i>Ek het nie baie tyd om rond te hardloop om te kyk wat iets kos nie.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Consumers do not use shelf-edge labels because... 62. <i>...hulle nie tyd het om dit te lees nie, met ander woorde baie haastig is.</i> 63. <i>...hulle tyd vir inkopies beperk is en moet soek vir die etiket.</i>

Table 3: Theme – consumers' reactions to blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
No reaction		Interviews	-
		Focus Groups	<p>1. <i>Die probleem is nie so groot nie, ek hou van die winkel.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Gerief is vir my belangriker, ek sal eerder wag tot dit weer reg is.</i></p> <p>3. <i>Many shoppers would not complain, they are not going to bother.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Some feel that because it is suppose to be fast moving consumer goods, they feel uncomfortable to complain because it takes up time.</i></p> <p>5. <i>No look, I always go to that store, because I think they are reasonable, I am use to the shop layout, but if I move, and we are moving soon, then I would go to what is convenient to me.</i></p> <p>6. <i>Nee ek weet nie of ek sal weg gaan nie, hang af, as dit baie erg is miskien.</i></p>
		Projective technique	-
Ask for assistance		Interviews	<p>7. <i>I go and fetch the label and if you go to a certain store you get that first product for free.</i></p> <p>8. <i>If it does not have a label on I query the product.</i></p>
		Focus groups	<p>9. <i>I just ask someone if there is no price on it.</i></p> <p>10. <i>I would go and ask them.</i></p>
		Projective technique	-
Complain		Interviews	<p>11. <i>I always complain, that happens so often and that is annoying.</i></p> <p>12. <i>I complain every time, it is very irritating.</i></p> <p>13. <i>I don't feel embarrassed to complain, if it is reasonable.</i></p> <p>14. <i>Ek gaan kla dadelik, en as die prys minder is as die werklike prys, dan sal ek hulle forseer om vir my dit te gee teen die prys waarvoor hulle dit adverteer.</i></p>
		Focus groups	<p>15. <i>Sometimes I do get irritated, and sometimes I do complain, especially if it is the wrong price, and then if you get to the till you pay more.</i></p> <p>16. <i>I complain to management, every time – and I get free items at one of the stores.</i></p>
		Projective technique	-

Table 3 (continued): Theme – consumers' reactions to blocking mechanisms that inhibit the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Do not purchase the product		Interviews	17. <i>If they fix it quickly and say sorry, but if it is a hassle I would just leave it.</i>
		Focus groups	18. <i>...en as jy nie die etiket kan kry nie, dan los ek dit, ek gaan regtig nie sukkel in die winkel nie.</i> 19. <i>I have watched consumers and if there is no price, they don't buy it, then the product ages on the shelf.</i> 20. <i>... you feel frustrated and you put the product down</i>
		Projective technique	–
Leave retail outlet and/ patron another store.		Interviews	–
		Focus groups	21. <i>I hate it, I would go to another store – which is stupid from my point, to drive a further distance.</i> 22. <i>It gets to a point where I would go to a place where I would go where they have labels, Ill go to another shop.</i> 23. <i>I would change stores, and I would make my stand clear.</i> 24. <i>...dan loop ek sommer uit, want ek is klaar kwaad en dan koop ek niks.</i> 25. <i>I do have the time to complain, but I don't, that is when I just leave, I go somewhere else.</i>
		Projective technique	–

APPENDIX F
DATA REFLECTING URBAN CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF
SHELF-EDGE LABELS

Table 1: Theme – information consumers expect to derive from shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Product name and price		Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The name, the amount and the price.</i> 2. <i>The name of the product and the price.</i> 3. <i>Die naam moet duidelik daar wees en die prys.</i> 4. <i>Die naam van die produk en die prys.</i>
		Focus groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>The price should stand out, and then, which product it is.</i> 6. <i>Die prys en die naam is belangrik.</i> 7. <i>Die prys moet daar op wees, en die naam van die produk.</i>
		Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: A shelf-edge label should include...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. <i>...inligting soos produk naam, prys ensovoorts.</i> 9. <i>...prys en die naam van die produk.</i> 10. <i>...die naam en prys.</i>
Other relevant price information	Unit price	Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. <i>Die prys en die eenheidprys, dis belangrik om vergelykings te maak.</i> 12. <i>The price, the unit price and how much per kilogram.</i> 13. <i>I do like it when they say how much something is per 100 gram.</i> 14. <i>The price per kg is the most important.</i> 15. <i>At store x they have the price and the unit price -it is better than store y.</i>
		Focus groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. <i>Ek wil weet wat betaal ek per kilogram.</i> 17. <i>They should look at adding the unit price.</i> 18. <i>I always look to see the price and the quantity.</i> 19. <i>The only thing they really should add is the unit price, because they are downsizing.</i>
		Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: A shelf-edge label should include...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. <i>...stating quantity in price which is important.</i> 21. <i>...the price per litre on a 500ml bottle.</i> 22. <i>... giving the price per unit.</i>

Table 1 (continued): Theme - information consumers expect to derive from shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements	
Other relevant product information	Product ingredients	Interviews	<p>23. <i>They need to think about warnings about things like MSG.</i></p> <p>24. <i>I know it is not a big thing in South Africa, but they need to think about warnings like foods with MSG.</i></p> <p>25. <i>...moontlik ook alles wat daarin is.</i></p>	
		Focus groups	<p>26. <i>I think they should specifically warn if there are a lot of additives, especially things like MSG or allergens.</i></p>	
	Nutritional information	Projective techniques	<p>Sentence completed: Shelf-edge labels would be more useful if...</p> <p>27. <i>...daar meer noodsaaklike en toepaslike inligting oor die produk, sy bestanddele, sy gebruike, voordele en nadele bevat</i></p> <p>28. <i>I would like it if they stipulate the nut content, I have a granddaughter who is sensitive to nuts – in fact it is life threatening, so that is the type of information I would like to see.</i></p>	
		Interviews	<p>29. <i>Add some nutritional information.</i></p> <p>30. <i>With foods and stuff – how much calories.</i></p> <p>31. <i>Ja, en hulle moet sê of dit "low fat" is.</i></p> <p>32. <i>They should add nutritional information.</i></p>	
		Focus groups	<p>33. <i>I think they should have some nutritional information, not a lot, but just some basic nutritional information.</i></p>	
			Projective technique	<p>Sentence completed: Shelf-edge labels would be more useful if...</p> <p>34. <i>...there was more information about nutrition value.</i></p>

Table 1 (continued): Theme - information consumers expect to derive from shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Other relevant product information (continued)	Controversial views on nutritional information	Interviews	—
		Focus groups	35. <i>Dit hou te groot gevaar in, die etikette is so dikwels verkeerd. Kan jy dink as jy die verkeerde etiket gelees het.</i> 36. <i>Ag ek weet nie of dit gaan werk nie, dit gaan so klein moet wees, dat mens dit nie in die verbygaan sal kan lees nie – wat help dit dan.</i> 37. <i>Julle moet besef, jy gaan nie winkel toe om etikette te lees nie. As jy sensitief is vir goed, lees by die huis en kom kry net die produk in die winkel.</i>
		Projective technique	—
Relevant Retail information	Barcodes	Interviews	38. <i>Mens moet baie keer na die barcode kyk.</i> 39. <i>En die barcode is nodig want miskien is daar iets anders op die rak met 'n ander prys, en 'n ander barcode.</i> 40. <i>It is sometimes a bit confusing but the barcode helps.</i>
		Focus groups	—
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: A shelf-edge label should include... 41. <i>... prys, naam, barcode</i> 42. <i>... prys, naam van die produk en die barcode</i>
	Date placed on shelf/ expiry date	Interviews	43. <i>I like it to have the expiry date.</i>
		Focus groups	—
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Shelf-edge labels should include...: 44. <i>...die datum dui wat die produk op die rak geplaas is.</i> 45. <i>...die vervaldatum verskaf.</i>

Table 2: Theme – Efforts consumers' expect from retailers to enhance the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Shelf-edge label design	Legible	Interviews	1. <i>In certain divisions they are very unclear.</i> 2. <i>Maak die naam duideliker.</i>
		Focus groups	3. <i>You need to be able to read it.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Shelf-edge labels would be more useful if... 4. <i>...helder kleure gebruik word, groter syfers het en meer sin maak.</i> 5. <i>...dit duidelik leesbaar is.</i> 6. <i>...dit groot genoeg is om te kan lees.</i>
	Accurate description	Interviews	7. <i>Hulle moet die produkte beter beskryf.</i> 8. <i>They should make sure the description is clear.</i>
		Focus groups	—
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: A shelf-edge label should include... 9. <i>...'n korrekte beskrywing van die produk.</i>
Shelf-edge label positioning	Correct positioning	Interviews	10. <i>If it is not packed correctly, then it is hard to look at the price.</i> 11. <i>Hou die etiket by die regte produk.</i>
		Focus groups	12. <i>Soos in winkels waar hulle met barcodes werk, en daar glad nie meer pryse op die produkte is nie, moet die etikette op die regte plek wees.</i> 13. <i>Die regte etiket moet op die regte plek staan.</i> 14. <i>Hy moet in die eerste plek onder die spesifieke item wees, die prys van die produk en die prys op die etiket moet ooreenstem.</i>
		Projective technique	Sentence completed: Shelf-edge labels would be more useful if... 15. <i>...correctly corresponding the right info to the right produce on offer.</i>

Table 2 (continued): Theme - Efforts consumers' expect from retailers to enhance the use of shelf-edge labels

Concept	Sub concept	Data collection method	Participants' statements
Responsible staff that can provide assistance if shelf-edge labels are incorrect.		Interviews	-
		Focus groups	<p>16. <i>...and you know – there is never staff available to help – you can't find them anywhere</i></p> <p>17. <i>That is the way we use to do it – have someone responsible for each aisle.</i></p> <p>18. <i>They have all this new technology and computers...and things but nobody wants to get down and do some work.</i></p> <p>19. <i>Because what is typically happening now is you ask someone and he says: "no it is not my aisle", but the person responsible for that aisle should be there and that person should go and check it up or look for it and not send you around in the store.</i></p>
		Projective technique	-



APPENDIX G

**JOURNAL OF RETAILING
MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES**



JOURNAL OF RETAILING

Guide for Authors

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

The goal of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Retailing* is to present the latest in theoretical and empirical research in the field of retail marketing to an audience comprised of academicians, economists, geographers, researchers, top business executives and consultants. Retail marketing is focused upon activities supporting the sale of both services and products to householders, consumer behavior and satisfaction and the organization and management of retail supply chains that deliver these products.

JR seeks articles to provide critical new understanding about the management and technology of retailing and retail/service systems as well as the environment and history in which retail institutions operate and evolve. Manuscripts that may be characterized as descriptive essays, depictions of current events or current business practices are unlikely to fit well in the journal. Most reflect the extensive collection of field or experimental data.

JR authors demonstrate a strong knowledge of the literature of the field and rigorous logic. Increasingly they employ sophisticated statistical techniques for examining data or mathematical models as a means to test or develop ideas. However, articles reflecting effective use of all research techniques are sought. The criterion is that such articles offer important new insights for theory, models, management practice, or government policy in retail and service marketing.

Authors considering publishing in **JR** are welcome to communicate with the editor about their ideas.

Submission of Manuscripts and the Review Process

Wherever possible, the Journal of Retailing would prefer to receive electronic submissions of manuscripts. Authors should send their electronic submissions to jr@babson.edu. For papers longer than 45 pages in total, authors should discuss their space needs with the editor prior to submission. If the manuscript is based upon data or other materials published or under review elsewhere, the author(s) should submit a copy of these materials.

Manuscripts are initially scanned by the editor to determine if they broadly meet the requirements of the journal. Those accepted at this point will usually be read by two or more additional reviewers in a double-blind process.

The review process typically moves through two or three cycles of critique and revision before a manuscript is accepted. The process plays a key role in strengthening each manuscript, a benefit of considerable value to the author(s). Double blind insures that readers do not know the authors of the manuscripts and *vice-versa*. Authors should remove tell-tale tracks in their manuscripts, such as quotes obviously from their own research or detailed reference to their unpublished papers to preserve their anonymity.

In submitting a manuscript to **JR**, the author(s) vouch that the manuscript has neither been published, accepted for publication, nor currently under review at any other publication. The author(s) also agree that the manuscript will not be placed under review elsewhere while the review process at **JR** is ongoing. If accepted for publication by **JR**, the author(s) further agree not to withdraw it for submission elsewhere.

Articles accepted for publication must be printed, double-spaced on one side of the paper, on 8 X 11 with one-inch margins on all sides. In these manuscripts, tables, figures, and

charts, etc., should be appended to the body of the manuscript. References should follow the style set forth below.

The body of the manuscript, tables, and references must be placed in a single file written in either MS Word or Wordperfect. All graphics, such as figures and charts, is preferably received in the form of camera ready copy. However, when this is not possible, the material may be received in a graphics file in either encapsulated postscript(eps), postscript(pc), or tagged image file format (tiff). Electronic files of the final manuscript on a 3.5" diskette are required with the accepted paper.

Accepted manuscripts must lastly include an *executive summary* of about 500-750 words. This review serves the role of an extended abstract for readers who wish to gain the flavor of an article prior to spending additional time with it. The review should highlight major findings and may point out interesting managerial, policy or social implications not touched upon within the main text. Authors should write in a style readily accessible to a broad audience and not simply extract various paragraphs from the main article.

Editorial Requirements

In preparing the manuscript for submission, the following editorial format should be followed.

Title Page: The title page should include the name, title, institutional affiliation, address, phone number, and e-mail address of each author. The date of the manuscript and any acknowledgments should appear on this page.

Abstract: The title of the manuscript and a 100-word summary summarizing the article should begin the numbered pages (page 1).

Text: The main text begins on the second page. A brief orientation of the focus and intended contribution of your study should introduce your paper.

Primary headings are centered in upper case and unnumbered. Secondary headings are flush left in upper and lower case. The first line of each paragraph should be indented.

Presentations are enhanced by a concise style and minimal redundancy from one section to another. Issues put forth in a literature review or methodology sections should be central to understanding the research issues. Data presented in a table or figure need not be described in detail within the text.

Special care is required in the presentation of equations and the capitalization and italicization of algebraic symbols. Spell out numbers one through twenty in the text as well as the word percent. Where spelling and hyphenation is optional, be consistent throughout the manuscript.

Reference citations should be placed in the text and consist of the cited author's last name and the year of publication, enclosed in parentheses, and without punctuation, for example (Hendon, 1989). If the author's name appears in the sentence, only the year of publication should appear in parentheses, for example, ". . . as suggested by Markin, Lillis, and Narayana (1976)." References to multiple works should occur within one set of parentheses, separated by semicolons, as in: (Mathis and Jackson 1979; Megginson 1985; Hershey 1971). Where possible, citations should appear immediately before a punctuation mark.

Reference List: The list of references begins on a separate page and typed double-spaced. The first line of each entry is even with the left margin and subsequent lines are indented five spaces. Sort references by the first author's last name; multiple papers by the same author should be listed in chronological order. Use the examples below as a guide to reference style.

Book: Hall, Margaret, John Knapp and Christopher Winston (1961). *Distribution in Great Britain and North America*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Journal Article: Cummings, Thomas and Susan Manning (1977). "The Relationship between Worker Alienation and Work-Related Behavior," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 10 (April): 167-179.

Book Chapter: Katona, George and Eva Muller (1963). "A Study of Purchasing Decisions," Pp 30-87 in *Consumer Behavior: A Study of Purchasing Decisions*. Lincoln Clark (ed). New York: New York University Press.

Conference Proceedings Paper: Westbrook, Robert A. and Richard L. Oliver (1980). "Developing Better Measures of Consumer Satisfaction: Some Preliminary Results," *Advances in Consumer Research*, IX(A), Kent Monroe (ed). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research. 150-165.

Unpublished Work or Working Paper: Rein, Martin and S. M. Miller. "The Demonstration Project as a Strategy of Change," Mobilization for Youth Training Institute Workshop. April 30, 1984, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Footnotes: Footnotes should be used sparingly and only for the purpose of extending or clarifying the main text with respect to an interesting, but somewhat tangential topic. Otherwise, the material should be included in the main text. Footnotes, numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript, should be typed, doubled spaced, and attached as a separate page.

Tables and Figures: Each table and figure is numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals. The title should appear centered and in upper and lower case. Table footnotes should be indicated by *a*, *b*, *c*, and so forth.

Tables should be limited in size as much as is possible while still serving the purpose of the authors. Where a table is used, it should be as simple as possible. For example, it usually is not necessary to include both frequencies and percentages in a table.

Tables and figures for accepted manuscripts must be set forth on separate pages appended to the text. Authors must also provide camera-ready for all artwork at this time unless it is included in the electronic file and employs a general used presentation program.