



Male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

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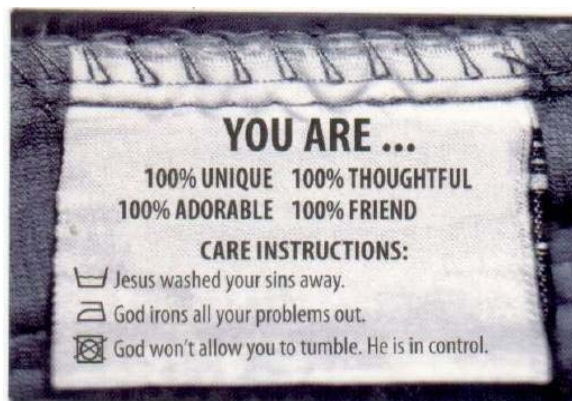
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Male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

SUMMARY

Background and motivation

Clothing labels concern the permanently attached labels as well as the temporarily attached labels known as hangtags that are found on clothing products. Clothing labels assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions. Clothing labels are made up of two attributes, namely the physical nature of clothing labels in addition to the information on clothing labels.

Adequate knowledge, positive perceptions and optimal use of clothing labels may result in satisfied consumers who make responsible and informed purchases. The aim of this study was subsequently, to determine male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The provision of clothing labels does not guarantee that consumers will read, understand or apply the information on clothing labels. Therefore this research is based on retailers' assumption that the provision of informative clothing labels is sufficient to encourage the usage thereof and that all consumers understand and perceive the clothing labels as intended. Due to the lack of research that exists in South Africa in the field of clothing labels, it is not known whether consumers have adequate knowledge and positive perceptions of clothing labels and the information on them, and whether they use the labels optimally.

Methodology

The research design of this study was non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive. Questionnaires were used as the measuring instrument to collect the data. The study population included all the consumers in three municipalities in the North-West Province above the age of 18 years, male as well as female, who can read and who had purchased a clothing product some time from one of the selected stores. Data collection was undertaken in the Bonjana, Platinum and Southern district municipalities, which included, Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. A total of 304 usable questionnaires were obtained.

Results and discussion

On average 71% of the respondents had adequate knowledge of the information presented on clothing labels (excluding the care instructions) and 65.6% had adequate knowledge regarding the care instructions. Respondents perceived colours in general (79.9%), letter size (83%) and readability (77.7%) of information on clothing labels as positive. They found it very important that the information on clothing labels will not fade (68.8%), and that the positioning remains constant (78.8%), in addition to not showing (84.9%). Respondents perceived the indication of information on clothing as positive, regarding the fibre content (84.2%), country of origin (61.2%), size indication (89.5%) as well as additional information, such as applied special finishes (76.4%) and indication of eco friendly clothing (69.5%) and licensed trade marks (78%). Respondents sufficiently made use of the care instructions in words (68.1%) and symbols (63.2%) when purchasing similar items. More than half (56.9%) of the respondents used the indication of special finishes applied to clothing during the pre- and post purchasing phase. The indication of eco friendly clothing was used by the respondents (51%) for future reference and 63.5% made use of the licensed trademarks when purchasing similar products.

In conclusion the results generally indicated that the respondents had adequate knowledge and positive perceptions of clothing labels, and made use of clothing labels before, during and after purchasing clothing products. Furthermore only small significant differences were found between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. It was established that relationships do exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels.

KEY WORDS

Knowledge; Perceptions; Clothing label; Male consumers; Female consumers.

Manlike en vroulike respondente se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette

OPSOMMING

Agtergrond en motivering

Kledingetikette sluit permanente sowel as tydelik aangehegte etikette in, bekend as hangetikette. Deur produkinligting en moontlike versorgingsinstruksies te verskaf, help kledingetikette verbruikers in hul besluit of hulle die kledingprodukte gaan koop of nie. Kledingetikette bestaan uit twee komponente naamlik die fisiese aard daarvan, en die inligting daarop.

Voldoende kennis, positiewe persepsies en genoegsame gebruik van kledingetikette kan bydra tot tevredenheid by verbruikers en hulle help om ingeligte besluite te maak. Die doel van hierdie studie was om te bepaal wat manlike en vroulike verbruikers se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette is. Die voorsiening van kledingetikette verseker nie dat verbruikers die inligting daarop sal lees, verstaan en toepas nie. Daarom word navorsing gebaseer op handelaars se voorveronderstellings dat die voorsiening van informasieryke kledingetikette genoegsaam is om die gebruik daarvan aan te moedig en dat alle verbruikers dit verstaan en ervaar soos dit bedoel word. As gevolg van 'n tekort aan navorsing in Suid-Afrika rakende kledingetikette, is dit huidiglik onbekend of verbruikers voldoende kennis en positiewe persepsies van kledingetikette het en of hulle dit genoegsaam gebruik.

Metodologie

Die navorsingsontwerp van hierdie studie was nie-eksperimenteel, kwantitatief, verkennend en beskrywend. Vraelyste is gebruik as meetinstrument om data in te samel. Data-insameling is gedoen in die Bonjana, Platinum en Suidelike distrikte munisipaliteite, waaronder Rustenburg, Klerksdorp en Potchefstroom val. Die studiepulasie wat geteiken was het alle verbruikers in dié drie munisipaliteite bo die ouderdom van 18 jaar, manlik sowel as vroulik, wat kon lees en al kledingprodukte by die gekose winkels gekoop het, ingesluit. Daar is in totaal 304 bruikbare vraelyste voltooi.

Resultate en bespreking

Van die respondente het gemiddeld 71%, 'n voldoende kennis van die inligting op kledingetikette (uitsluitend die versorgingsinstruksies) gehad en 65.6% het 'n voldoende kennis van die versorgingsinstruksies gehad. Respondente was positief teenoor die kleur oor die algemeen (79.9%), die lettergrootte (83%) en leesbaarheid van inligting (77.6%) op die kledingetikette. Respondente was positief dat kledingetikette nie moet verdof nie (68.8%), dat plasing dieselfde bly (78.8%) en dat dit nie uitsteek by kledingstukke nie (84.9%). Respondente het van inligting op kledingetikette positief ondervind met betrekking tot die aanduiding van veselinhoud (84.2%), land van oorsprong (61.2%), grootte (89.5%) asook die volgende addisionele informasie: aanduiding van spesiale afwerkings (76.4%), aanduiding van omgewingsvriendelike kleding (69.5%) en gelisensieerde handelsmerke (78%). Die aanduiding van spesiale afwerkings is deur meer as die helfte van die verbruikers gebruik gedurende aankope. Die aanduiding van omgewingsvriendelike kledingstukke is deur 51% van die respondente gebruik by verdere aankope, terwyl 63.5% van die respondente genoegsaam gebruik gemaak het van die gelisensieerde handelsmerke in hul aankoop van soortgelyke produkte. Respondente het genoegsaam gebruik gemaak van die versorgingsinstruksies in woorde (68.1%) en in simbole (63.2%) om ingeligte besluite te maak gedurende die aankoop van soortgelyke kledingprodukte.

Samevattend: Die resultate het oor die algemeen getoon dat respondente voldoende kennis en positiewe persepsies rakende kledingetikette gehad het, en dat hul genoegsaam gebruik gemaak het van kledingetikette voor, gedurende en na die aankoop van kledingprodukte. Daar is slegs klein betekenisvolle verskille gevind tussen manlike en vroulike respondente se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette. Daar is wel bevind dat daar 'n verband bestaan tussen respondente se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette.

SLEUTELTERME

Kennis; Persepsies; Kledingetiket; Manlike verbruikers; Vroulike verbruikers.

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Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

Male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

1.1.1 Background

Clothing labels comprise the permanently attached labels as well as the temporarily attached labels known as hangtags that are found on clothing products (Chowdhary, 2003:244). Consumers are exposed to clothing labels on a regular basis, due to the fact that all consumers wear clothing daily. Clothing labels facilitate consumers' purchase decisions regarding clothing products, by providing product information and care instructions (Mason *et al.*, 2008:277; Chowdhary, 2003:244; Brown & Rice, 1998:197; Hatch, 1993:129; Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:97). Care instructions can be used to effectively care for clothing products after purchase (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:21).

The function of clothing labels is to simplify the consumers' decision-making process (Solomon, 2004:352; Muller, 1982:213). Clothing labels are made up of two attributes, namely the physical nature of clothing labels in addition to the information on clothing labels (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:104-114). The nature of clothing labels comprises the clothing labels' physical legibility, construction, fibre composition, attachment to and the position on clothing products (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:104-108). The information on clothing labels comprises the fibre content, country of origin, size indication, price indication, manufacturer's name, additional information and care instructions (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:108-114; Brown & Rice, 1998:197; Hatch, 1993:129).

1.1.2 Motivation

The provision of clothing labels does not guarantee that consumers will read, understand or apply the information on clothing labels (Yan *et al.*, 2008:536). Research is therefore based on retailers' assumption that the provision of informative clothing labels is sufficient to encourage the usage thereof and that all consumers understand and perceive the clothing labels as intended (Yan *et al.*, 2008:536).

A lack of research regarding clothing labels exists globally, since little recent research on this topic has been done. One of the most recent studies on clothing labels which was done in the United States, was aimed at consumers' perceptions of the information on clothing labels and the

effectiveness of this information (Yan 2008). Most of the South African consumers included in a qualitative study done by Maqalika-Mokobori, (2005:96) were aware of the existence of clothing labels on clothing products. According to Muller (1982:216) only 15.9% of a sample of South African consumers were aware of clothing care labels and made use thereof. It was established in an international research study that consumers did make use of clothing labels and hangtags in the information search phase, purchase phase, and post purchase phase: however the efficiency of the labels and hangtags has not yet been established (Davis, 1987:8). Similar research done in Ghana showed that 38% of men and 44% of women looked for clothing labels when purchasing clothing products (Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:99), thus male as well as female consumers may use clothing labels differently. Hence, it is necessary to determine if consumers in South Africa use the information on the clothing labels and if so, to what extent they use it. Irrespective of whether consumers use clothing labels, clothing labels are provided by clothing manufacturers due to legislation.

South African legislation requires textile and clothing products to have a permanent indication of care instructions on them for the consumer and the launderer to be able to clean them appropriately (SANS, 2008:135). The manufacturers have to provide adequate labelling because it is required, without necessarily considering satisfying the consumers' needs for clothing labels. The legislation regarding clothing labels is there to protect consumers from unjust trading and retailers from financial liability due to the lack of information on clothing labels (Hatch, 1993:129).

However, the effectiveness of clothing labels may remain unknown to the manufacturer. The provision of clothing labels alone cannot guarantee that consumers are aware of clothing labels or that they make effective use thereof (Yan *et al.*, 2008:536). Furthermore, the knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels may differ between male and female consumers. In an Australian study regarding environmental labels, results revealed that 67.7% of the consumers do read product labels, and only 55.4% of them were satisfied with the labels (D'Souza *et al.*, 2006:168). The consumers judged the labels according to the accuracy of the information on the labels, rather than the readability thereof (D'Souza *et al.*, 2006:168). This indicates that accuracy was more important to the consumers than the readability of the environmental labels.

A quantitative study regarding the use of clothing care labels was done in South Africa in 1982 by Muller, and another related qualitative study concerning consumers' perceptions of textile labels was done by Maqalika-Mokobori in 2005. Further studies regarding consumers and clothing labels

may yield even more new insights concerning the South African consumer behaviour regarding clothing labels, as no published studies on consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels within the South African context could be found.

Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels includes their understanding of the information on clothing labels, the functions thereof and how to use them (Niemann & Nothling, 2008:26; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:104). Consumers may or may not know and understand the information found on clothing labels. If consumers realise that the function of clothing labels is to inform them, they may read clothing labels more often and more intensively. Consumers may also be under the impression that they understand and use clothing labels correctly, when in reality they don't. If they think that they have sufficient knowledge (known as subjective knowledge) and as a result refrain from obtaining additional information, it may result in uninformed decision-making (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:214; Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:645). It is therefore important to establish consumers' knowledge about clothing labels, especially their understanding of the meaning of the information provided by clothing labels. Consumers need to understand the information on clothing labels in order to be able to make sufficient use of this information.

Another factor that may influence consumers' use of clothing labels is perceptions consumers have regarding the clothing labels. According to Rousseau and Spoelstra (2003:219) perception entails the process whereby individuals observe, organise, select, and react to stimuli in their environment in a logical manner. Consumers perceive products (labels) via their senses when they see, feel, smell, taste and hear things (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009:152). Therefore, it can be said that consumers perceive clothing labels via their senses when reading and holding them before, during and after purchasing clothing products.

Consumers' perceptions are said to influence their purchasing behaviour (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:85). Therefore, it is important to study consumers' perceptions regarding clothing labels as these may influence their purchasing of clothing products. Consumers' perceptions of products are influenced by physical stimuli as well as by consumers' previous experiences which include consumers' knowledge, motivations and prospects (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009:158). Thus, consumers may perceive clothing labels differently as each consumer experiences the physical stimuli of clothing labels within his/her unique context.

Consumers who perceive the information on clothing labels as untrustworthy, such as those who recall from prior experience that clothing labels let them down, will most probably avoid making use of clothing labels (Hatch, 1993:129). Consequently, it is necessary to determine how consumers perceive clothing labels, especially consumers' perceptions of the physical nature of clothing labels as well as of the information on clothing labels. Perceptions of clothing labels formed by consumers may classify the clothing label as useful or not. The consumer's perceptions of the usefulness of clothing labels are not known. Therefore, a possibility exists that clothing labels may not fully meet consumers' needs and that they may not find or view them as useful as intended (Yan *et al.*, 2008:536), in which case they may refrain from using them.

Consumers are said to make use of clothing labels in order to find out about the fibre content, country of origin, size, price indication, manufacturer's name, brand name, any additional information of interest and possible cleaning methods when purchasing clothing (Hatch, 1993:129; Brown & Rice, 1998:197). Consumers may use clothing labels while deciding whether or not to purchase a clothing product, to re-evaluate the product before purchasing it, to find out how to clean and maintain the clothing product after it has been purchased. The clothing label may also serve as future reference for the consumers, if they are satisfied with the product, to assist them in future purchases. It is likely that consumers may use clothing labels, in either the information search phase, purchase phase or post-purchase phase as stated by Blackwell *et al.* (2001:71), during the consumer decision-making process.

Accurate knowledge, positive perceptions and optimal use of clothing labels may result in satisfied consumers who make responsible and informed purchases. Research regarding clothing labels may indicate problems consumers are currently experiencing with clothing labels, and as a result provide opportunities to rectify the situation. South African consumers are unique in their own right, as South Africa has different living environments, levels of education, cultures and lifestyles. According to Cant *et al.* (2006:42) a country's climate, economy, government and technology all influence the consumers' living environment, and as a result thereof influence their consumer behaviour. In view of this South Africa has a unique context that causes consumers to behave accordingly.

According to Gothan and Erasmus (2008:639) the majority of South African consumers has previously been disadvantaged in many ways, especially financially, which resulted in fewer clothing purchases and subsequently little exposure to clothing labels. More South African consumers now have an increased income (SAARF, 2009:18), and as a result these consumers

are likely to purchase more clothing at some stages in their lives. Subsequently, these consumers might use clothing labels when purchasing or caring for clothing products (Yan *et al.*, 2008:532).

Male and female consumers may understand, perceive and use clothing labels differently or similarly. In the past, hair colour and beauty products were mainly purchased by female consumers while equipment products were mainly purchased by male consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009:50). Today's female consumers are increasingly purchasing equipment, whereas male consumers are increasingly purchasing beauty products, this indicates the change in the behaviour of male as well as female consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009:50). More male consumers do their own shopping than in previous years. The changing world brings about changes in male and female consumption behaviour, therefore continuous research is needed to understand the current behaviour of these consumers.

According to a study done by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:102) there are no significant differences between male and female consumers in Ghana regarding the perceptions of clothing labels. However, in a study done by Krugel and Van Heerden (2008:36) it was established that male and female consumers differ in their reading, comprehension and use of clothing labels. Male and female consumers have different interests when purchasing products and as a result, they may search for different information while obtaining similar products. This is why male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels will be determined and compared.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research is motivated amongst others on retailers' assumption that the provision of informative clothing labels is sufficient to encourage the usage thereof and that all consumers understand and perceive the clothing labels as intended. Due to the lack of research that exists in South Africa in the field of clothing labels, it is not known whether consumers have adequate knowledge and positive perceptions of clothing labels and the information on them, and whether they make sufficient use of the labels. This study attempted to obtain information about consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, and whether all these aspects differ between male and female consumers.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to determine male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels.

1.3.2 Objectives

In order to determine the knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels the following objectives were proposed along with sub-objectives.

To determine consumers' knowledge regarding clothing labels by establishing whether consumers understand the information on clothing labels. An arbitrary score of 50% or more was taken as adequate understanding or adequate knowledge of the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.

To determine consumers' perceptions regarding clothing labels, by establishing how positive or negative consumers perceive the physical nature of clothing labels regarding the colour, the letter size on the label, size of label, readability, permanency, attachment, and positioning of clothing labels as well as to establish how consumers perceive the information on clothing labels, specifically concerning the fibre content, country of origin, size indication, manufacturer or brand name additional information and care instructions. A positive score of 50% or more regarding the satisfaction, importance and efficiency of the physical nature and information on clothing labels was taken as a positive perception.

To determine consumers' use of clothing labels, by establishing to what extent consumers use the information on clothing labels during the information search stage of the purchase decision, the purchase stage and the post purchase stage as well as during care and for future reference. An arbitrary score of 50% was taken as optimal use during the purchasing stages.

The fourth objective was to determine whether males and females differ regarding objectives one to three, by calculating practically meaningful effectiveness (Cohen, 1988:221).

The fifth objective was to determine whether relationships exist between selected variables in objectives one to three, by using Pearson's correlation coefficients.

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework in Figure 1.1 illustrates how the concepts in this study are linked together. **Male** and **female consumers** behave differently when they purchase products and services (Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:99; Krugel & Van Heerden, 2008:36).

Consumers' **knowledge** of clothing labels includes the meaning of the care symbols, the function of clothing labels, type of information on clothing labels and the application of the information on clothing labels (Niemann & Nothling, 2008:26). Consumers' knowledge about clothing labels and their understanding of the information on the clothing labels will be determined regarding the fibre content, country of origin, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.

Perceptions are established by consumers' impressions of a product (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218). It can be said that consumers' perceptions of the physical nature and information of clothing labels are most likely responsible for the fact that they fail to read and follow the information on clothing labels. Consumers' perceptions are said to influence their purchasing behaviour (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:85). The physical nature of clothing labels includes the legibility, construction, fibre of label, attachment and positioning of the clothing label. The information on clothing labels includes the fibre content, country of origin, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.

Research has established that consumers do **make use** of clothing labels in the **information search** phase, **purchasing** phase and **post purchase** phase, but the efficiency of clothing labels has not been established (Davis, 1987:8; Yan *et al.*, 2008:536).

This research may provide adequate data that may be used to make **recommendations** to **consumers** as well as **manufacturers** which may empower clothing consumers to make better purchases, or better care decisions, and assist the manufacturer in efficient clothing labelling.

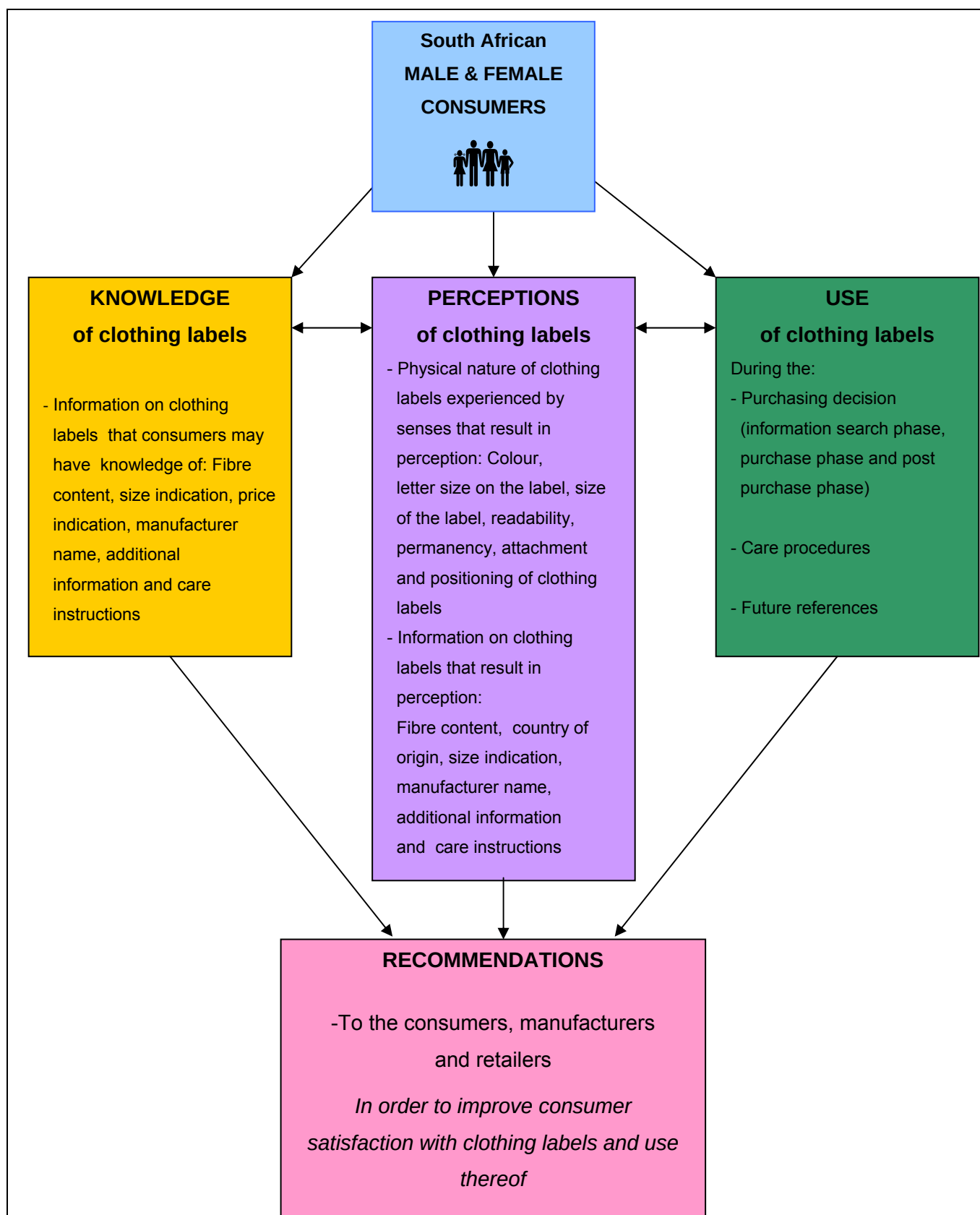


Figure 1.1 The conceptual framework of consumers' perceptions, knowledge and use of clothing labels

1.5 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS IN CONTEXT OF STUDY

Consumer: A person that identifies a need or desire, purchases and uses products or services and then disposes thereof (Solomon, 2004:8).

Clothing labels: A clothing label can be defined as a small piece of fabric with information on it that is attached to the inside of clothing products (Wolfe, 2003:338), as well as fibre, paper, cardboard, leather or plastic hangtags which provide more information about the clothing product (Thiry, 2008:22). This study only refers to clothing labels, which include hangtags.

Clothing: “Garments that help prevent harm to the body resulting from weather, environmental dangers, occupational hazards and enemies” (Wolfe, 2003:17). “There are many different styles of clothing made of various fabrics, trimmings and other materials” (Wolfe, 2003:17). “Clothing reflects the handicraft skills, artistic imagination, and cultural rituals of people” (Wolfe, 2003:17).

Perception: Perception entails the process whereby individuals observe, organise, select, and react to stimuli in their environment in a logical manner (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:219).

Knowledge: Knowledge is the information that is stored in the brain’s memory (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:84). Knowledge satisfies the strong need of consumers to know and understand the people and things they come in contact with (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:G-7). Knowledge also includes the prior knowledge acquired by consumers, known as knowledge content that includes the knowledge consumers have obtained about brands, products, how to utilise products and how to buy products (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92).

Use: According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2007:4) usage is the very core of consumer behaviour, as usage has symbolic significance to the consumer. Consumers may use products sufficiently or insufficiently.

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SAARF see South African Advertising Research Foundation

SANCU see South African National Consumer Union

SANS see South African National Standards

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Chapter 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

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LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to comprehend consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, the in depth literature review will define and explain the related concepts and how they influence one another. The focus areas includes consumers and their purchase decision making process, clothing labels and consumers' perceptions, knowledge and use of clothing labels.

2.2 CONSUMERS

Consumers include all people, because all people consume or make use of refuge, transportation, clothing and food products in their lives (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:4). Consumption can be investigated by looking at who, what, when, why, and how consumers purchase, look for, use and dispose of products and services (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:543; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:3). Consumer behaviour thus also focuses on how consumers decide to use their resources like money, time and energy on products and services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:3).

It can be said that consumers differ from each other, as each has a specific lifestyle, culture, occupation and level of education among other things. This makes it difficult to identify trends among consumers, therefore South African consumers will be defined to understand their unique context.

2.2.1 South African consumers

South Africa's economy is still emerging, and subsequently consists of different consumers as their earnings, education, housing, accessible services, ideals, and media exposure differ tremendously (Du Plessis, 2003:76). There are millions of previously disadvantaged South African consumers who have only recently obtained access to their own houses, electricity as well as basic products or services (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:640). In addition, the vast variety of cultural groups in South Africa is another reason for the different consumers in South Africa (Du Plessis, 2003:76). Eleven official languages are recognised in South Africa, including many different socio-economic backgrounds, explaining the variety of lifestyles (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:640).

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:4) all consumers make use of education, equipment, vacation, supplies and luxuries on a regular basis, but it cannot be said for all South Africans. The majority of South Africans do not have the privilege of going on holiday and completing school, not even to mention obtaining luxuries. According to Statistics South Africa (2007:4) there are 4130 000 consumers between the age of seven and twenty-four in South Africa, who are not attending an educational institution. This implies that approximately 35% do not obtain education (Statistics South Africa, 2007:4).

Furthermore, 9.7% of South African consumers above the age of twenty have had no formal education, meaning that these consumers cannot read, write or do basic calculations (Statistics South Africa, 2007:4). When considering these statistics it becomes clear that the lack of an education affects these consumers' day to day lives and consequently their ability to make informed decisions. Furthermore, these consumers may not have the ability to qualify for a job that earns enough money to make a decent living. The statistics are supported by the 2007 unemployment rate in South Africa that was 25.5%, which means that 4336 000 consumers were jobless (Statistics South Africa, 2007:28).

2.2.2 Male and female consumers

Male and female consumers differ in various ways, thus their behaviour differ when they consume products and services. Research has found that modern male consumers do their own clothing shopping as well as that of their family members (De Klerk & Lubbe, 2008:37). In the past products like hair colour and beauty products were mainly used and consumed by female consumers and equipment products mainly used by male consumers but this is now turning around (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:50). Consumers are changing every day just as the world they live in is changing, thus bringing change in their consumption behaviour. This indicates that male and female consumers may have similar knowledge, perceptions and resulting use (or not) of clothing labels.

2.3 CONSUMERS' DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Consumers make decisions every day, especially when purchasing products and services. Their decision making varies according to the decision being made and how important it is, as it is a complicated process (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:85). Despite this, most decisions go through a basic series of phases when the decision is being made. Multiple models exist that depict consumers

decision making process, among those referred to by, Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:18), Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:114) and Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:85). The model developed by Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:85) was chosen to depict consumers' decision making processes, because it clearly illustrates the influence perceptions and knowledge have on the need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchasing, consumption, post-consumption and the divestment phase. The consumers' decision making process (CDP) of Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:85) is illustrated in Figure 2.1 and Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:114) indicate where perception fits in.

2.3.1 Model of consumer decision making process

According to Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:67) the CDP model is divided into seven phases. At each stage different factors play a role, affecting consumers' thoughts, evaluation and ultimately their actions. The seven phases are need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, purchase, consumption, post-consumption evaluation and divestment respectively (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:71).

2.3.1.1 Phase 1: Need recognition

Need recognition takes place in phase one (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:71), when consumers realise they need a product or a service (Babin & Harris, 2009:213). This is when consumers realise that their ideal (desired state) is different from reality (actual state), and subsequently experience a problem (Babin & Harris, 2009:220; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:72). This realisation of a need leads to steps in order to meet the need in the most suitable way (Babin & Harris, 2009:213). The problem may have realistic as well as unrealistic solutions (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:71). The realistic solutions will most likely provide in consumers' needs, and not necessarily in consumers' desires (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:71). This implies that not all needs are always tended to, as some needs may remain unfulfilled (Babin & Harris, 2009:221).

2.3.1.2 Phase 2: Information search

According to Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:74) once the consumers realise a need, they require information so as to decide on the best product or service. Depending on the time and finances available (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74), consumers' pre-purchase search for information is aimed at making a decision (Babin & Harris, 2009:222). In modern times information is easy to obtain, in fact it is so common that it may make consumers' decision making more difficult (Babin & Harris,

2009:222). Need recognition and information search are both influenced by internal influences and environmental variables, as indicated in Figure 2.1 (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74).

Internal influences include consumers' resources, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, lifestyle (Babin & Harris, 2009:222; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87), needs and perceptions (Du Plessis, 2003:111). Environmental variables include the consumers' culture, social class, reference groups, family and situation (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87, Du Plessis, 2003:111). It is important to understand all the factors that influence consumers' information search in order to be able to improve need satisfaction. Information search thus occurs internally, implying that consumers consider their previous experiences by recalling prior knowledge of the subject they need information on (Babin & Harris, 2009:222; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87). Furthermore, information search may also occur externally as consumers may consider other consumers' views when making decisions (Babin & Harris, 2009:223; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87).

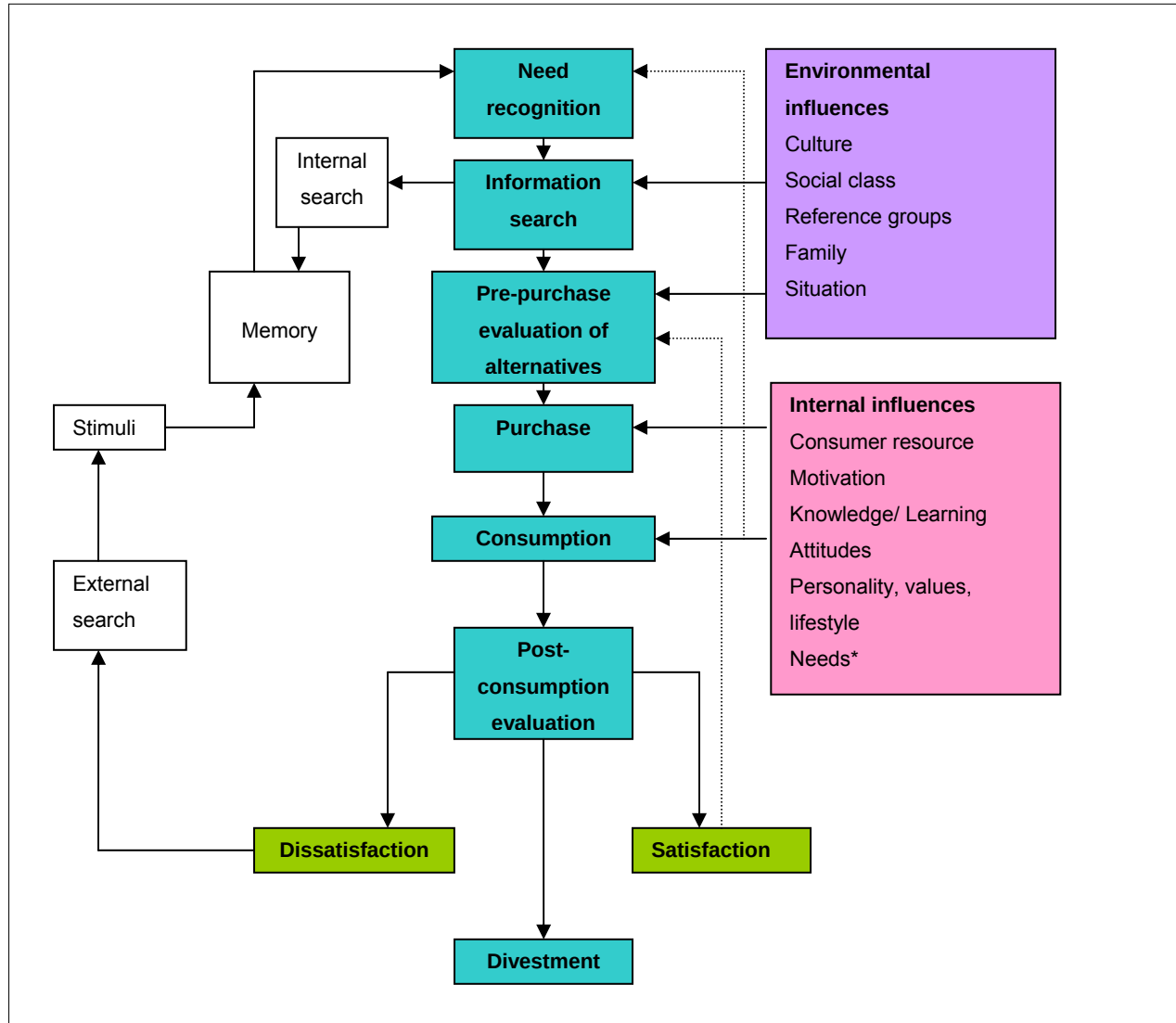


Figure 2.1 The consumer decision process model (Combination of Blackwell *et al.*, (2006:85) and Du Plessis (2003:114))

Internal influences

The internal influences consist of the following factors: consumers' resources, motivation, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values, lifestyle, needs, and perceptions, all of which influence consumers' decision making (Babin & Harris, 2009:222; Du Plessis, 2003:114; Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:83). Consumers refer to these internal influences in search of a solution to satisfy their needs (Babin & Harris, 2009:222).

❖ Consumers' resources

Consumers' resources consist of the available time, money and energy they have to solve the problems they are facing (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74). Thus limited resources will result in limited

purchasing options, for example consumers with a small budget will only consider the products within the affordable price range, resulting in fewer products to choose from (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:64). It can also be said that the considered product's price is an important piece of information consumers use (Babin & Harris, 2009:224).

❖ Consumers' motivation

Motivation is the internal condition or force, which guides consumers to make decisions according to their needs (Du Plessis, 2003:111; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83). This force is the result of an unfulfilled need, which causes consumers great tension, until the need is met (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83). Consumers' behaviour in satisfying their needs, is the direct result of their previously acquired knowledge (learning), thoughts and cognition (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83).

The model illustrates the motivational process (Figure 2.2), indicating how consumers' needs affect their behaviour in response to the tension which drives them to fulfil a specific need, by utilising prior experience and thinking (cognition), which then reduce the tension (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83). Motivation acts as a force that initiates consumption of products and services, which then cause consumers to gain experience or practice that contributes to their learning (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83). Because motivation is powered by needs, as explained in figure 2.2, consumer needs will now be explained. It can be said that consumers' purchasing of products and services is affected by their needs and how they decide to react to them, as well as by their knowledge acquired by learning and cognition.

❖ Consumers' needs

The emotional and physical requirements of consumers are called needs (Du Plessis, 2003:111). All consumers have primary and secondary needs. Primary needs include food, shelter, water, air, clothing and sex, as they are required to preserve life (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83). The secondary needs on the other hand include self-worth, reputation, fondness, authority and knowledge of the world, all of which are set by consumers' culture and environment (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83).

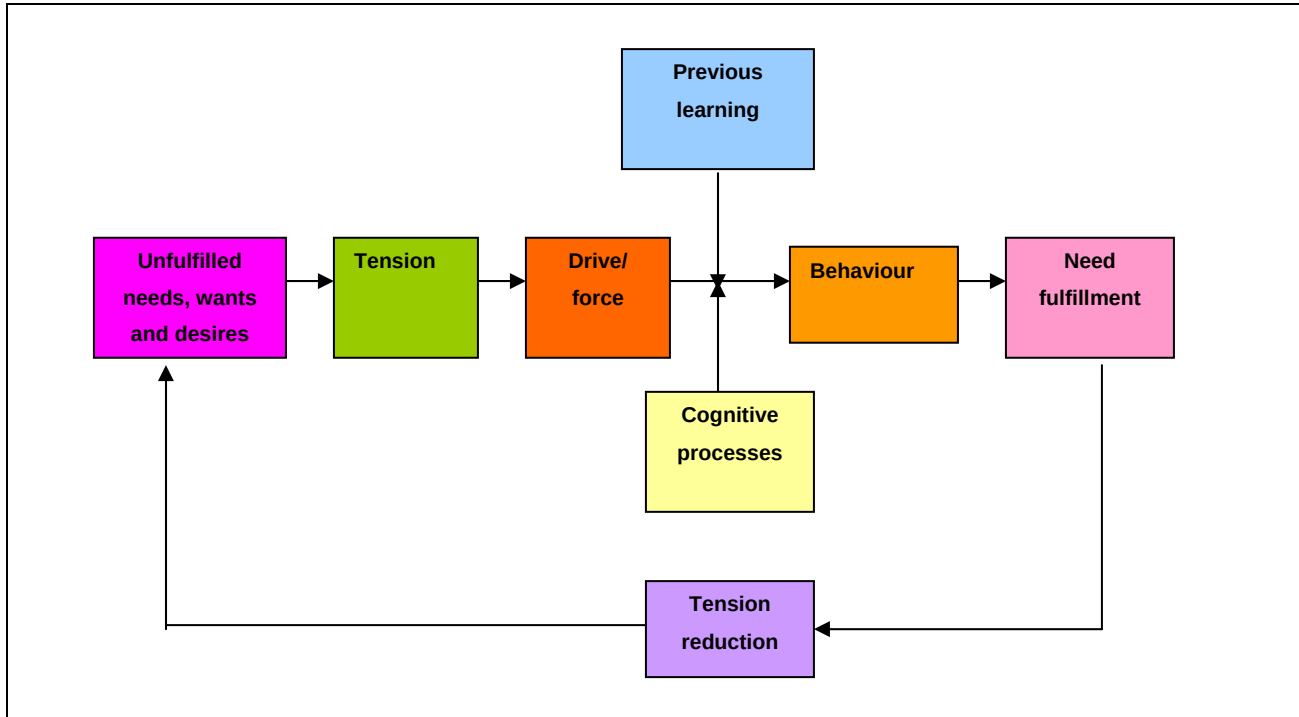


Figure 2.2 Model of the motivation process (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:83)

❖ Consumers' knowledge

Knowledge and cognitive abilities affect consumers' decision making (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:108). Information is organised in order to understand it better: this is known as comprehension (Babin & Harris, 2009:53). Knowledge is the information that is stored in consumers' minds as memory (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84). Furthermore, two types of knowledge are at stake, namely subjective knowledge and objective knowledge (Babin & Harris, 2009:53; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:109). Subjective knowledge constitutes consumers' perceptions of what they think they know, whereas objective knowledge refers to the actual knowledge consumers have, that can be used in their information search (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:109). Research done on consumers' knowledge indicates that consumers with moderate knowledge on a subject will search more intensively for information than experts who refrain from searching for additional information if knowledge exists on the subject (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:215; Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:645). If consumers think that they have adequate knowledge, and it is only subjective instead of objective knowledge, they may refrain from obtaining additional information resulting in uninformed decision making (Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:645).

In order to better understand memory, learning must be investigated, as they go hand in hand with each other. Learning entails skills acquired prior to the situation as well as the memory that is formed when the experience is changed into knowledge and the reaction to it (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:86; Du Plessis, 2003:111). When consumers perceive information, they organise it, and then compare it to previously acquired knowledge in order to understand the meaning thereof (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:171; Sen, 1998:65).

Previously acquired knowledge can be divided into two components namely structure and content (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92). The information consumers have acquired about types of products, shops and how to use the products is the knowledge content and sometimes called consumption knowledge (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:93; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:350). The magnitude of knowledge depends on the assortment of facts that is acquired or learned (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:98). These facts are associated around concepts and are called schemes (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:218). Consequently, knowledge structures depends on how information is organised by consumers (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92).

Consumer's understanding requires two factors of previously acquired knowledge: categorisation and comprehension (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92). Categorisation is when consumers identify a product in their environment, by means of its likeness to a similar known item (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92). For example, when consumers see a tight fitting garment made from t-shirt material they will associate it with sport wear instead of casual dress. Comprehension is when previously acquired knowledge is used to better understand the categorisation of something (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:92).

❖ Consumers' learning

Consumers learn every day as they think and solve problems, thus some problems may be solved faster than others (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:215). Learning entails the skills acquired before a situation, as well as the process that alters the experience gained into knowledge of how to react thus forming memory (Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:250; Du Plessis, 2003:111, Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:86). Therefore consumer learning is a process, as it keeps on developing, as consumers gain more knowledge and become familiar with products and services while making use of it. Consumers' learning therefore also includes the change in behaviour as a result of interaction with people and stimuli (Babin & Harris, 2009:61).

According to Rousseau and Pitt (2003:249), consumers' behaviour when consuming products and services, is the result of their learned behaviour, values, preferences, and attitudes. Thus previous experiences, feelings and information are stored in consumers' memory (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:203). Consumers think when they make decisions, and this triggers emotion that determines their behaviour (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:252).

Memory processing is vital to consumers' decision making, as additional information on a subject can be recalled that may assist the process of information search (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:203,252). Consumers make use of active mental processes when solving problems, known as cognitive learning, which is the essence of the cognitive learning theory as illustrated in figure 2.3 (Babin & Harris, 2009:61; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:215). Cognitive learning follows a pattern of information processing, of how information is stored, and finally of how the information is retrieved (Babin & Harris, 2009:61; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:216; Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:250).

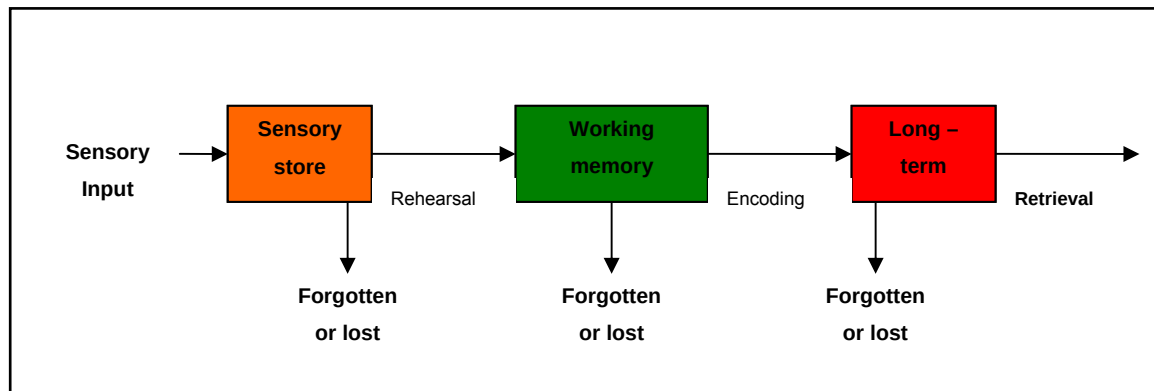


Figure 2.3 Information processing and memory stores (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:217).

First consumers experience a sensory input that is either processed and stored in the sensory store, or not processed and lost as a result (Babin & Harris, 2009:72; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:216). Furthermore a perception of value concerning products or services, is established in the split second that cognition occurs; thus a first impression is formed (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:216). The short term store, also known as workbench memory, is the active memory where information is kept for a short time (Babin & Harris, 2009:72; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:217). If consumers rehearse the information by thinking about it or using it again, it is transferred to the long term memory store by means of encoding in two to ten seconds, but if no rehearsal occurs within 30 seconds it gets lost (Babin & Harris, 2009:72; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:217).

Information in the short term memory is limited to five items, whereas information in the long term store is kept for longer periods such as days, weeks or even years, from which it can be retrieved (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:217; Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:250). The capacity of long term memory is unlimited, and it can store information permanently (Babin & Harris, 2009:75). The information is stored in long term memory in the form of semantic coding, implying that it can be conveyed in words (Babin & Harris, 2009:75).

According to Babin and Harris (2009:76) knowledge is stored in consumers' long term memory in associative networks that are pathways linking knowledge and memory. Declarative knowledge is cognitive components known as facts that can be displayed in a network, with nodes as the concepts and the paths between the nodes showing the association (Babin & Harris, 2009:76). Consumers' associative networks of products and services are called schemata and the concepts exemplars (Babin & Harris, 2009:77).

❖ Consumers' attitudes

Attitudes are consumers' holistic evaluation of things concerning their qualities, attributes, perceptions and facts, resulting in a specific behaviour toward certain products and services (Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:260). According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:238) consumers' attitudes are taught tendencies to act in an acceptable or unacceptable manner concerning an object. In this study objects include clothing products as well as clothing labels. Consumers' own experiences and those of other consumers, as well as mass media, form consumers' attitudes towards products and services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:238; Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:260).

The more knowledge consumers have about products and services, the more likely they are to develop attitudes towards them, which can be either positive or negative (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:249; Rousseau & Pitt, 2003:261). Consumers' attitudes cause them to avoid using all their available knowledge concerning a product or service, resulting in little knowledge use (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:250). As a result, consumers' attitudes differ as their and experience differ, causing them to behave differently in the same purchasing situation, in response to their positive or negative attitude.

❖ Consumers' personality

Personality entails the unique working of the physical and psychological functions of consumers that ultimately determine how they behave in different environments (Rousseau, 2003:285). Personality also portrays consumers' uniqueness and although personalities mainly remain

stable, change is not inevitable (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:116). As a result personality is connected to many aspects, such as consumers' purchasing behaviour, risk taking and even product selection (Rousseau, 2003:284). Different theories exist that measure consumer personalities, to better understand them, namely the trait theory, psychoanalytical theory, social theory as well as the self-concept theory (Rousseau, 2003:284-288).

❖ Consumers' values

Firstly, culture determines consumers' values which determine consumers' lifestyle according to what is acceptable and what not in their communities (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:249; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:86). Secondly, values consist of images in consumers' minds, which determine their attitude towards products and services, and as a result influence the consumers' behaviour in each setting they find themselves (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:394). Therefore it is important to consider consumer values, for they affect how consumers will behave in different circumstances, specifically when making purchasing decisions.

❖ Consumers' lifestyle

Lifestyle consists of consumers' living and spending behaviour that resemble their "Activities", "Interest" and "Opinions" abbreviated as AIO (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:179; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:53). Consumers' lifestyles are mainly related to their social class, as consumers in the same social class have similar AIO, thus setting the social classes apart (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:370). As a result consumers' have different lifestyles that determine their purchasing behaviour, for their lifestyles determine their priorities.

❖ Consumers' perceptions

Perceptions are established by consumers' awareness, impressions, and interpretations of products as well as other stimuli in their environment (Schiffman, 2001:3; Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:217; Babin & Harris, 2009:41). Stimuli are experienced by consumers via their senses, namely sight, smell, sound, touch and taste (Babin & Harris, 2009:42). Perceptions also include psychological processes through which meaning is given to stimuli regarding circumstances, relationships, previous experience, and memory, by coordinating and combining sensations (Schiffman, 2001:3). According to Babin and Harris (2009:41) this is why perceptions form the basis for consumers' learning. Consumers behave according to their perceptions and not necessarily in response to the actual reality (Babin & Harris, 2009:42; Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:222). It can subsequently be said that consumers' perceptions influence their search for,

purchase and use of products or services, as perceptions dictate their decision making and behaviour.

Consumers unconsciously select which stimuli they will perceive and those they choose not to: this is known as perceptual selection (Babin & Harris, 2009:45; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:160). Consumers make use of perceptual selection/ perceptive selection everyday, as consumers will not be able to function normally or purchase the desired products in a store, if they do not limit the stimuli perceived (Babin & Harris, 2009:46; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:160). If the stimuli of all the various products that are present in a store were perceived, consumers would not know how to react and be overwhelmed by all the information and endless options.

Consumers' brains subconsciously process very low stimuli; these stimuli are an absolute threshold of perceptions (Babin & Harris, 2009:46). There are two factors that influence consumers' perceptual selection, namely their previous experience as well as their motivation at that time (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:160). For example, when consumers previously bought a specific brand of clothing, and were satisfied with it, they may limit their search to only the preferred brand of clothing products (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:160).

Consumers form perceptions when they go through the process of detecting, selecting, classifying and responding to environmental stimuli respectively (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:223; Babin & Harris, 2009:43). Consumers' responses to their perceptions differ according to the following components that play a role: impulse, observation, selection, organisation and consumers' reaction to it all (Babin & Harris, 2009:43; Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:223). The model of perceptions is illustrated in Figure 2.4 as found in Rousseau & Spoelstra (2003:219).

In the model of perceptions, it is evident how the stimulus acts on the consumer's observation of the stimulus followed by the consumer's selection and organisation, and finally evokes a reaction (Babin & Harris, 2009:44; Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:219). An example is when a consumer experiences an impulse in the environment, such as a beautiful jacket in a store. When the consumer sees the product, he/she touches the product to better judge the characteristics by means of observation (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:223). Consumers' motives cause them to perceive things differently, as motives are directed by their desires and needs. Consequently more attention will be given to information or products which can potentially satisfy those desires

and needs (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:160). Thus, the consumer in the example may realise the need for the jacket as winter is coming and red is the fashionable colour, which makes the jacket the perfect choice to purchase (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:223).

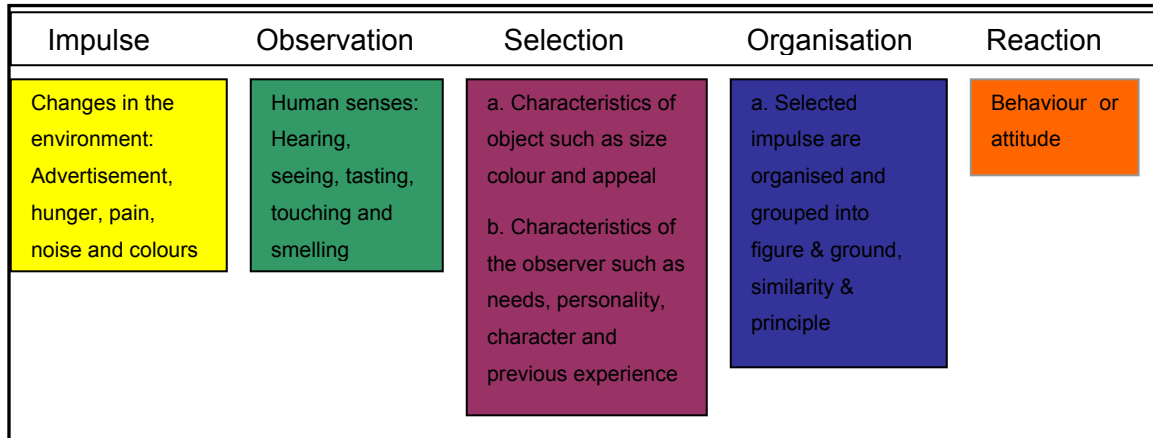


Figure 2.4 Model of perceptions (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218)

The consumer's selective organisation may make the jacket appear to stand out from its surroundings and become more prominent to the consumer (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:220). Therefore consumers' selective organisation may explain why they refrain from using, or why they do use, clothing labels. Such perceptions may be formed by previous experience of information on clothing labels that they could not follow, or that caused damage when they were followed. In addition the clothing labels may also lack the information consumers are looking for, thus preventing consumers from using the clothing labels. Just as internal influences may dictate consumers' decision making behaviour, environmental influences also play a significant role. Information search in the decision making process can also occur externally (in environment), as consumers also refer to their family, their culture and social class, all of which influence their decision making behaviour (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74).

Environmental variables

Consumers may not always have sufficient stored information in their memory and as a result refer to other sources of information, such as their family and friends (Babin & Harris, 2009:223). The environmental variables that have an effect on consumers' decision making include consumers' culture, social class, reference groups, family, sales personnel and their current situation (Babin & Harris, 2009:221; Du Plessis, 2003:114; Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:83).

❖ Consumers' culture

The collection of norms, values, ideals, knowledge, traditional food, beliefs, art and symbols all represent consumers' culture, which is unique (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:426; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:394). Culture is a learned characteristic, and young children acquire the details of their parents' culture at a young age, which is mainly rehearsed while playing (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:396). Furthermore Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:395) state that culture is there to fulfil consumers' needs in the community, by guiding them to solve problems in a set way. Thus consumers' culture impacts on how they behave in purchasing situations. Culture forms the framework that is referred to in life situations, influencing how consumers solve the problems they are faced with (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:394).

❖ Consumers' social class

Social class resembles the differentiation between consumers within a community where individual consumers or groups are organised according to their style of life, activities, norms, level of education as well as financial and social positions (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001:544; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:358). Social class is mainly measured by means of classifying consumers into different social status positions, according to their level of wealth, prestige and power compared to the other consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:358).

❖ Consumers' reference groups

Reference groups include peer groups, that act as an influence and cause pressure to abide to them, as they set the social standard (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:74). Consumers may observe other consumers or seek advice from them when making decisions (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87). Reference groups also include all the people whom consumers refer to for advice, opinion and beliefs, all of which are considered when purchasing products or services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:312).

❖ Consumers' family

The family often acts as a decision making entity, evoking conflict of interests according to the gender roles which subsequently influence consumers' behaviour (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87,515). In addition, the family is originally described as two or more consumers that are related by marriage, adoption, blood or just by living together (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:326; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:515). Not all households are families, for example dorms, and couples living together (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:327).

Families are increasingly changing from the mainly nuclear family society, consisting of a mother, father and children, to more extended families, consisting of a nuclear family living with grandparents (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:328). In addition single-parent families, consisting of one parent with children, are occurring more often as a result of more divorce cases and increased fatality rates in the world today (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:328). Family members influence consumers' decision making processes, according to the life cycle stage of the family (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:515). The family subsequently determines the consumers' environment in which they make decisions.

❖ Consumers' situation

Consumers' behaviour depends on the specific situation they find themselves in, therefore their situation affects consumers' decision making (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:85). The consumers' situation includes matters out of their hands, such as a medical emergency, that may influence their behaviour at any given time (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87). As a result the intensity of the consumers' search for information depends on the individual differences as well as on the environmental influences (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:87). So, if there is a medical emergency it will dictate the consumer's behaviour.

2.3.1.3 Phase 3: Pre- purchase alternative evaluation

This phase considers the alternative choices as obtained from the information search (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:80). Consumers weigh their options in order to select the best product or service according to their criteria (Babin & Harris, 2009:236; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:80). New or previous evaluations of products and services are stored in the consumer's memory, which can be accessed and applied to assist decision making (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:80). According to Babin and Harris (2009:236) consumers may also evaluate the perceptual attributes of products which can be observed immediately, such as the dimensions, colour, price and form of products. Consumers may make use of a criterion to evaluate the available alternatives (Babin & Harris, 2009:236). After the choice of product or service has been established, the place to purchase or obtain it, has to be decided (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:81).

2.3.1.4 Phase 4: Purchasing

Once consumers have established whether they will purchase a product or service or not, further considerations are required: firstly to select the best suited seller, and secondly to make decisions while they are in the shop (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:82). These in-store decisions are moulded by the personnel, the store layout, visual merchandise, and point of purchase (POP) (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:81,168). This phase holds the possibility of a complete disregard of the previous phases as circumstances may prevail, altering them and making the intended choices impossible to execute (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:81). For example, a consumer may plan to purchase a jacket from store A after seeing their advertisement, but when he/ she goes to the store, it is closed. As a result thereof, the consumer purchases a similar jacket from another store.

2.3.1.5 Phase 5: Consumption or use

Once the product is bought it can be consumed by the consumer as they own it. Consumption is when consumers make use of the acquired product or service (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007:4; Babin & Harris, 2009:247). According to Hoyer and MacInnis (2007:4) usage is the very core of consumer behaviour, as usage has symbolic significance to the consumer. The product may be consumed straight away or it may be stored for later use (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:82). When consumers consume the purchased products or service, they are either content with their choice or not, meaning that their needs have been met, or not (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:82; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:552). Consumers' contentment with purchased products determines if they will repeat their purchase or not (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:82; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:552; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007:4). This contentment is determined by the value the consumers obtain from consuming the product (Babin & Harris, 2009:246). Furthermore, the caution taken and the frequency of use will control how quick the product purchase will have to be repeated in order to replace the consumed product (Babin & Harris, 2009:249; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:83).

2.3.1.6 Phase 6: Post-consumption evaluation

In this stage the consumer evaluates the product after it has been purchased and consumed, which is why the consumer will either be satisfied or dissatisfied, according to the product's performance (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:83; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:547). Satisfaction entails that the expected performance was met, but if it does not perform as expected, it may cause dissatisfaction (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:82). According to Blackwell *et al.* (2006:83) a satisfied consumer will repeat the purchase, whereas a dissatisfied consumer will try an alternative the next time. Cognitive dissonance occurs after consumption, which makes consumers judge their

choice of product or service (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:547). If they think their decision was good their cognitive dissonance will be little (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:547).

Satisfaction with a product mainly depends on whether or not consumers use the products as intended and how effectively, for incorrect use can cause a good product to be experienced as a poor one (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84). This enforces the reason that there must be proper use and maintenance instructions in order to prevent the above mentioned scenario. More and more manufacturers design proper consumption and care instructions labels (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84). They also put guarantees and other information on the product to ensure the optimum performance when the product is in use (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84).

2.3.1.7 Phase 7: Divestment

In the final stage of the consumer decision model, consumers have finished with the products, regardless whether they are used up, broken or just not good enough any more, causing consumers to dispose of the products (Babin & Harris, 2009:260; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84). Methods of disposal may vary among consumers (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84-85). Some may throw the products out with trash, and others may donate, sell, convert, trade or even recycle the products (Babin & Harris, 2009:260; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84-85). It is not just the product that has to be disposed of but also the packaging it came in, (if not already discarded after purchase) together with additional instructions and maintenance guidelines (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:84). Consumers are becoming more conscious of the impact of their behaviour on the environment. This is where environmental issues have to be considered by the consumer in order to better conserve the environment (Babin & Harris, 2009:260; Blackwell *et al.*, 2006:85).

The consumer's decision making process remains complex, due to all the influences that play a role as illustrated in figure 2.1, and the fact that no two consumers are the same. Yet all consumers wear clothing which they have to obtain on a regular basis. The purchasing of clothing products becomes even more complex, as the information and the variety of brands available increase, making it harder to make informed decisions (Du Plessis, 2003:110). In response to this, consumers have to obtain sufficient information on the available clothing products to assist them in making their choices. Clothing labels may assist consumers in their selection of clothing products by providing adequate information and assisting them to determine if the clothing product will suit their needs in terms of care, quality, cost and even image (Mason *et al.*, 2008:277).

2.4 CONSUMERS AND CLOTHING LABELS

Clothing labels assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions (Hatch, 1993:129; Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:97; Brown & Rice, 1998:197; Mason *et al.*, 2008:277). Clothing labels include hangtags and permanent labels found on clothing products, which provide a wide range of explanatory terms and directions to consumers (Chowdhary, 2003:244). These terms and conditions inform consumers about the clothing products' care instructions, properties and origin.

2.4.1 Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels

In light of the discussion of knowledge (p10) in the context of consumers' decision making process, knowledge will now be discussed with regard to consumers' knowledge of clothing labels. The consumer may use previously acquired knowledge of clothing products to know that there are labels present, and further categorise clothing labels for having information about the clothing product. Consumers' memory and the ability to recall it, depend on what they know and on their ability to classify and organise the information (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:171). Thus consumers' knowledge of clothing labels should consist of the meaning of the care symbols, the function of clothing labels, the type of information on clothing labels and the application of the information accordingly (Niemann & Nothling, 2008:26).

2.4.2 Consumers' perceptions of clothing labels

In light of the discussion of perceptions (p15) in the context of consumers' decision making process, perception will now be discussed with regard to consumers' perceptions of clothing labels. According to Rousseau and Spoelstra (2003:219), perceptions entail the process whereby individuals observe, organise, select, and react to stimuli in their environment in a logical manner. Consumers perceive products with their senses when they see, feel, smell, taste and hear things (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:152). Therefore it can be said that consumers perceive a clothing label with their senses when reading and holding it before, during and after purchasing clothing products.

Perceptions are established by consumers' impressions of a product and other items in their environment (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218). Clothing labels have to be read, before

consumers can understand the information on it or form perceptions thereof. Thus it can be said that consumers' perceptions of clothing labels are most likely the reason why consumers avoid reading and applying the information on clothing labels or not. Consumers' perceptions and knowledge of clothing labels and hangtags may affect consumers' use thereof during the purchase decision making. Clothing labels provide information to the consumers' advantage, but it has not yet been established whether it is efficient enough, understood and used properly, or what the value is to consumers in South Africa.

2.4.3 Consumers' use of clothing labels

In light of the discussion of consumption and use (p19) in the context of consumers' decision making process, consumption will now be discussed with regard to consumers' use of clothing labels. Information of the label may be applied by making use of it or obtaining benefit from it. According to Chowdhary (2003:244) the clothing label and hangtag provide the primary connection with the consumer and the clothing product, as most consumers look for and read the clothing label or hangtag when examining clothing products. Some consumers not only obtain the information provided but also perceive the social identity it provides, and read the care instructions to determine the clothing product's maintenance (Chowdhary, 2003:244). Consumers may find the information provided by labels and hangtags extremely useful, while other consumers may find it overwhelming or do not understand it.

Research has established that consumers do make use of clothing labels and hangtags in the information search phase and post purchase phase (Davis, 1987:8). The efficiency of clothing labels and hangtags' use has, however, not been established (Davis, 1987:8). Similar research done in Ghana showed that 38% of men, and 44% of women looked for clothing labels when purchasing clothing products (Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:99).

Clothing labels are valuable to consumers as they provide them with information about the clothing product (Cooklin, 1997:117; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:51). This information increases consumer satisfaction concerning the care, choice and utilisation of clothing products (Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:98). Thus clothing labels perform a vital function of informing consumers about clothing products, which in turn helps to ensure consumer satisfaction when purchasing and using clothing products.

2.5 CLOTHING LABELS

Clothing labels can be defined as small pieces of fabric with information on, which are mainly permanent and attached to the inside of clothing products (Wolfe, 2003:338). Hangtags are similar to clothing labels but are usually temporary and made of paper, fibre, cardboard, leather or plastic, which can provide extra information about clothing products (Thiry, 2008:22).

2.5.1 Types and styles of clothing labels

The permanent labels (sewn-in) mostly contain the care instructions, the manufacturer's number, country of origin and fibre composition amongst other information and is illustrated in Figure 2.5 (Davis, 1987:8; Brown & Rice, 1998:18; Anon, 2009c:5). Temporarily attached clothing labels can provide information in the pre- and post purchase situation, but after the information has been obtained, consumers remove and dispose of them. These clothing labels may provide information such as price, brand name, store name and additional product information (Davis, 1987:8; Hatch, 1993:129). Furthermore, hangtags are mostly attached with a string or a removable plastic fastener (Thiry, 2008:22). According to Brown and Rice (1998:197), hangtags are part of clothing products when they are sold, and thus act as a marketing tool, which must be calculated into the clothing product's price.

Research has shown that additional information about clothing products, especially that referring to procedures to be followed when caring for the products increased the effectiveness of the care label (Hatch & Lane, 1980:368). In the context of this study the term *clothing labels* refers to both permanently attached labels as well as temporarily attached labels such as hangtags. Both the temporary and permanently attached clothing labels come in different styles, though hangtags come in all shapes and styles whereas permanently attached labels are limited to the following few styles.



Figure 2.5 Example of a label with all the correct information on it (Anon, 2009c:8)

The different styles of clothing labels are: a double label (multiple labels on top of each other) with one fold or one open end, flat (information on one side) with or without folded ends, and lastly folded round labels (information on both sides) (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546; Anon, 2009c:11). The most appropriate style of label used on clothing products is according to the product's design (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546).

The information on clothing labels may be presented on one label or multiple ones; the latter is usually the case (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). The most logical reason for multiple clothing labels on one clothing product is the convenience it provides to manufacturers to combine the required information, according to each product instead of developing a special label for each clothing

product. Thus there is more than one type of label on clothing products such as brand labels, size labels and labels with additional information (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545).

The *brand* label is mostly big, brightly coloured, and easy to see, which mainly promotes the product image, for example a trade mark (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545).

According to Glock and Kunz (1995:545) the *size* label assists consumers in finding the best fit. Mason *et al.* (2008:278) distinguish between informative and non informative size labels, the first being the randomly chosen number (size 12, 14, 16) or letter (S, M, L), and the second the size labels that describe how the clothing product should fit (slim fit/ waist 100-105 cm).

Additional information may be presented on labels to promote consumers' prospects of the product and to establish the appropriateness thereof for use (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). Thus additional information such as special care procedures that can be followed and the treatments applied to the clothing product that may enhance the product's performance, may be presented on the hangtags or permanent label.

2.5.2 Information on clothing labels

In the far past, clothing products did not have clothing labels with care instructions on them, which caused confusion about the correct care methods to be used (Hatch, 1993:129). As a result consumers refrained from purchasing clothing products without care labels (Davis, 1987:8; Hatch, 1993:129). Consumers do make use of clothing labels to find out the fibre content, country of origin, size, price, manufacturer, brand name, possible cleaning methods and any additional information of interest when purchasing clothing (Hatch, 1993:129; Brown & Rice, 1998:197), when it is provided. In addition, clothing labels can also assist sales personnel with relevant product information so that they are able to answer consumers' enquiries. Conclusively, clothing labels that are easy to read and understand can assist consumers in making more efficient purchasing decisions (Mason *et al.*, 2008:276).

2.5.2.1 Fibre content

According to a study done by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:97) the fibre content of clothing products was ranked the most important aspect among other information on clothing labels, by Ghanaian consumers. Therefore, it is important that the name(s) and percentage(s) of fibre compositions of clothing products are specified on the clothing label, according to the labelling regulations of the country (Thiry, 2008:26). Most countries prefer the fibre content to be displayed in the main spoken language (Thiry, 2008:26). The names of the different fibres or their generic names must all be indicated in the same font size to avoid misleading consumers to think that one fibre is more important than the other (Hatch, 1993:130). To avoid confusion, the fibre content of clothing products has to be stated in known terms on the clothing label (Hatch, 1993:130). For example if clothing labels state the scientific name for cotton instead of just 'cotton' consumers could think it is something other than cotton.

The percentage of fibres used in clothing products has to be stated on the clothing label, arranged in descending order (Hatch, 1993:144; Brown & Rice, 1998:18, Wolfe, 2003:338). Any trimming used on the clothing product contributing less than 15 % is exempted from being indicated on the clothing label, by stating 'excluding trim' on the care label (Brown & Rice, 1998:18; Kadolph, 1998:152).

2.5.2.2 Country of origin

The country of origin can be defined as the country where the manufacturer's headquarters is situated (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 2008:376). Country of origin must be displayed on the clothing label, so that consumers can know where it was made (Thiry, 2008:26). Some countries also require the national manufacturer or importer's name to better define the country of origin (Thiry, 2008:26). Clothing products may be manufactured in multiple countries, as different stages may take place in different countries. In such cases only the last two countries have to be stated (Brown & Rice, 1998:20).

In South Africa consumers are urged by means of marketing, to purchase products that are locally manufactured, for example "Proudly South African" products (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:71, Niemann and Nothling, 2008:26). The reason for this marketing of clothing products may be to promote awareness of subsequently support for the local manufacturers, which in turn stimulates the local economy.

The country of origin is not a legitimate indication of quality, although consumers often associate low prices with specific countries and as a result consumers perceive all products from that country as low quality (Brown & Rice, 1998:19). In South Africa consumers most probably view imported clothing products such as clothing 'Made in China' versus clothing 'Made in Italy', as poor quality and high quality respectively (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:79).

2.5.2.3 Size indication on clothing products

According to Winks (1997:1), the size indication on clothing products should be consistent with the sizing system used in the country in which it will be sold. Mason *et al.* (2008:276) established that the size indication on local and imported clothing is not always consistent with South Africa's sizing systems, thus attention is urgently needed to improve this problem. South Africa does not have one standardised sizing system, but various ones which consumers have to differentiate between (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:65).

These variations of the sizing currently used on clothing products sold in South Africa may confuse or annoy consumers (Mason *et al.*, 2008:279). The result is that consumers have to try on numerous clothing products before purchasing them, to ensure proper fit, as all the sizing systems differ (Mason *et al.*, 2008:277). Otieno (2000:325) confirms that meeting the sizing needs of consumers in today's global world, is an important aspect of consumer satisfaction.

Clothing sizes range from a letter system: small (S), medium (M), large (L) and a numerical system: 10, 12, 14 to a system according to the bust or hip size: 32, 34, and 36 (Mason *et al.*, 2008:279; Brown & Rice, 1998:20). Consumers' knowledge regarding the identified sizing systems revealed that they are only used to the numerical and letter systems, as these are mostly used on clothing products (Mason *et al.*, 2008:279). In spite of this they have trouble finding clothing that fits well, indicating that body measurements on clothing labels can help consumers to find clothing that fits better (Mason *et al.*, 2008:279).

2.5.2.4 Clothing product price indication

The prices on (clothing) products provide information regarding the potential value the product has (Babin & Harris, 2009:224). Clothing products' prices are presented on the hangtags rather than on the permanent labels, because the distributor or retailer attaches the price according to

his/her set selling price (Clodfelter, 2006:437). The price changes frequently and it can be adapted quickly on a hangtag by simply placing the new price over the previous one. Consumers would not appreciate it if the price was permanently attached to clothing products, because if it showed, consumers might be embarrassed and humiliated by it.

2.5.2.5 Manufacturer and brand name

The manufacturers of clothing products should state their name on the label, as it acts as a reference to the distributor and the consumer, indicating which company manufactured it (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:20). Brand names are trade marks in the form of words or symbols that are used as logo's to set the apparel apart from another manufacture's products (Brown & Rice, 1998:29). When consumers are satisfied with the clothing product they can purchase the same brand again, or if they are not satisfied, they can purchase a different brand. Most manufacturers use the brand name to create an image of the product, to enhance the consumers' perceptions thereof, thus encouraging them to purchase the clothing products (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:20). Brand names mainly establish a perception of high quality, causing consumers to prefer the specific brand above other brands, resulting in repeat purchases and ultimately brand loyalty (Brown & Rice, 1998:29).

2.5.2.6 Additional information

Additional non-mandatory information may be presented on clothing labels and hangtags in order to assist consumers in informed decision making when purchasing clothing products (Hatch, 1993:135). Such information includes product descriptions, licensed trademarks, certification marks and even eco-labelling (Hatch, 1993:135).

Product description

- Clothing finishes can be explained as they will enhance consumers' perceptions of the appropriateness of clothing products to their needs, (Hatch, 1993:133). Finishes such as "stabilization" for less shrinkage, "shape retention" to reduce wrinkling, "appearance retention" inhibiting staining, abrasion and fading, as well as "comfort", "biological" and "safety" related finishes may be applied to clothing products to better satisfy consumers' needs (Kadolph, 2007:364-378).

- Sun protection labelling is being investigated to portray the extent to which ultra violet rays are blocked, thus protecting consumers from excessive exposure to the sun (Anon, 2008b:11; Anon, 2008a:20; Gambichler *et al.*, 2006:125).
- Eco-labelling is ever increasing in popularity, as consumers are becoming more aware of their carbon tracks, making eco-labelling more appealing to environmentally conscious consumers, encouraging them to purchase eco-friendly clothing (Anon, 2008a:20; D'Souza *et al.*, 2006:162).

Warranties

According to Brown and Rice (1998:30) other voluntary information on clothing labels includes warranties, as they promise quality and compensation if the consumer is not satisfied. Warranties are not required by regulations but the manufacturer may voluntarily provide them, to increase the perceived quality of the item and gain trust in the clothing product's potential (Brown & Rice, 1998:30).

Licensed trademarks and certification marks

Licensed trademarks and certification marks enable consumers to identify the authentic product, encouraging informed decision making, and preventing false claims. The most common licensed trademarks and certification marks are illustrated and defined in Table 2.1.

2.5.2.7 Care instructions

Clothing products are chosen cautiously, thus consumers should also pay attention to the cleaning instructions provided, in order to obtain the optimum value and satisfaction from clothing products (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:21; Corbman, 1983:540). As the care instructions provide adequate care methods for clothing products, they should not harm the product if followed correctly (Thiry, 2008:24).

Care labels' information may be presented in different formats, namely in words or in symbols, or a combination of the two (Yan *et al.*, 2008:532). Care labels comprise of the washing, bleaching, drying, ironing and dry-cleaning instructions (Anon, 2009b:1). According to Schiffman and Kanuk

Table 2.1 Licensed trademarks and certification marks

Name of textile	Trademark or certification mark	Description
a. Wool	  	Pure wool (100%) and wool blend fabric certification marks, of The Wool Bureau Inc. (Hatch, 1993:137).
b. Cotton:	 Pure cotton  Cotton blend	The Seal of Cotton trademarks, pure cotton and natural cotton blend (Hatch, 1993:137; Brown & Rice, 1998:31).
c. Linen		In Europe as well as America there are Masters of Linen certification marks (Brown & Rice, 1998:31).
d. Silk		Pure silk certification,, hallmarked by Silk mark, by the government of India (Anon, 2009a:1).
e. Leather		Leather certification marks help consumers to know if the clothing product is made of real leather (Hatch, 1993:137).

(2007:398) symbols are used to communicate information beyond language and culture barriers, due to the fact that the symbols represent the different instructions.

The function of symbols is to convey a message that consumers understand as intended, without too much thinking (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:398). Despite this intention, symbols may still result in conveying more than one meaning and could even oppose each other (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:399). Research has found that consumers prefer the wording only, or wording together with symbols, rather than only symbols, as consumers understand the wording better (Yan *et al.*, 2008:532). The basic care symbols as well as more detailed care symbols for clothing products are illustrated and defined in Table 2.2.

The care symbols on clothing product labels are mainly the basic symbols in the first column of Table 2.2. The label may for example only indicate “machine washable” without specifying a suitable cycle or water temperature. This may be due to the manufacturer’s approach that if they only provide care instructions because of label legislation, they may not invest the necessary time and money to develop detailed care instructions. The result is unclear labels, that require consumers to guess the suitable water temperature and washing machine cycle despite the fact that care instructions are provided (Mason *et al.*, 2008:277). Consumers’ interpretation and application of the care instructions on clothing labels could result in improper care procedures, altering the quality of the product and subsequently consumers’ satisfaction with the clothing product. Unsatisfied consumers will either start purchasing a different brand product or tell their peers about the problems they experienced, influencing them to avoid the brand in future (Mason *et al.*, 2008:277).

Table 2.2 Care symbol definitions (Anon, 2009b:1)

 Washing INSTRUCTIONS	 Machine Wash, COLD	 Machine Wash, COLD Permanent Press	 Machine Wash, COLD Gentle Cycle	 Hand Wash
	 Machine Wash, WARM	 Machine Wash, WARM Permanent Press	 Machine Wash, WARM Gentle Cycle	 Do Not Wash
	 Machine Wash, HOT	 Machine Wash, HOT Permanent Press	 Machine Wash, HOT Gentle Cycle	
 Bleaching INSTRUCTIONS	 Bleach as needed <i>Any bleach, like Clorox®, may be safely used</i>			 Do Not Bleach <i>No bleach product should be used</i>
 Drying INSTRUCTIONS	 Tumble Dry, NO HEAT	 Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, NO HEAT	 Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, NO HEAT	 Do Not Tumble Dry
	 Tumble Dry, LOW HEAT	 Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, LOW HEAT	 Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, LOW HEAT	 Line Dry
	 Tumble Dry, MEDIUM HEAT	 Tumble Dry, Permanent Press, MEDIUM	 Tumble Dry, Gentle Cycle, MEDIUM HEAT	 Drip Dry
	 Tumble Dry, HIGH HEAT			 Dry Flat
 Ironing INSTRUCTIONS	 Iron, Steam or Dry, with LOW HEAT			
	 Iron, Steam or Dry, with MEDIUM HEAT			
	 Iron, Steam or Dry, with HIGH HEAT			
 Dry cleaning INSTRUCTIONS	 Dry clean <i>May appear with additional letters and/or lines</i> Take this item to a professional drycleaner			 Do Not Dry clean

2.5.3 Physical nature of clothing labels

The nature of the label includes the physical aspects of the label such as the legibility, construction and fibre composition, size (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:51).

2.5.3.1 Legibility

The clothing label must remain legible throughout the products' life cycle, despite suggested laundering of the product as well as the wear and tear (Anon, 2009c:12; Cooklin, 1997:118). The font size used on clothing labels and hangtags should be easy to see and read for most consumers (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:51). A small font size may influence consumers' ability to understand information presented on it (Babin & Harris, 2009:63). Brightly coloured clothing labels, along with the use of a small font size for the information on clothing labels are sometimes not user-friendly, especially to the aged and aging (Niemann & Nothling, 2008:26). Colour used to present information can also affect comprehension, as different cultures assign different meanings to colours (Babin & Harris, 2009:63). However, there are some regulations in South-Africa demanding that manufacturers use acceptable colours in making clothing labels (SANS, 2008:3).

2.5.3.2 Construction

Label construction varies as some are either woven or non-woven with the information printed on it, and other labels have information woven into them (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546; Anon, 2009c:5). Coatings and finishings are applied to the label to assist printing and make them more durable, but at the same time the finishing may alter the touch, which could affect the comfort of the label (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). It is commonly thought that woven labels are always expensive, but that is only true for small orders, as the bigger orders are similar in price to the non-woven labels (Glock & Kunz, 1995:547). The label must be long-lasting, meet the budget and be easily attachable (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545).

2.5.3.3 Fibre composition

The material used for the label should be well matched to the clothing product it is used on, suitable for the positioning and the exposure the clothing product will endure (Anon, 2009c:5; Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). Many different fibres are used for labels, from natural to man-made fibres (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). The reality is that not all the label fibres are ideal, as some may cause discomfort. Coatings applied to labels for easier colouring and durability can result in stiff and hard labels and may cause irritation to the consumer (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546).

Subsequently, it is not recommended to use such finished labels on the inside of clothing products otherwise the labels will be cut out of the product (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546).

Clothing labels can be very uncomfortable, and quickly agitate a consumer to such a state that they cut them out of the clothing product (Thiry, 2008:28; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:63). If the label is cut out and discarded, it did not achieve its function (Thiry, 2008:28; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:64). This may lead to incorrect care procedures and dissatisfaction with the clothing product. A heat transfer of the label information directly onto clothing is an excellent alternative, as there are no labels attached, only the information (Thiry, 2008:28). However, a directly transferred label may not be suitable for all clothing products, for example see-through clothing products.

2.5.3.4 Size of the label

Clothing labels should be easily visible in order for the consumer to find it, but not too big, to maintain the clothing product's appearance (Cooklin, 1997:118). The size of care labels in South Africa has been standardised in 2007, to a length of 90mm and width of 20mm (Anon, 2009c:8). Consumers also indicated that clothing labels should not be too small, in order for them to easily find and read them (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:58).

2.5.4 Attachment and positioning of clothing label

It is of great importance that clothing labels are properly attached to the clothing product, otherwise the consumer may easily throw it away if it comes loose (Cooklin, 1997:118). The inconsistency of clothing labels' positioning may confuse consumers as they often have to search for the clothing labels (Cooklin, 1997:18; Stevens, 1993:3; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:59).

2.5.4.1 Attachment of clothing label

According to Glock and Kunz (1995:546) the different types of clothing labels are attached in specific ways, and are selected according to the suitability for the clothing products. The appropriate attachments of the different types of labels are explained below, and illustrated in Figure 2.6.

The double label with a fold as well as the open ended label should be attached into a seam of the clothing product or on top of another clothing label (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Thus only one

side of double or flat clothing labels are attached to clothing products, so that both sides of information are accessible, reducing the number of labels required (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Flat labels without folded ends are sewn at both ends and sometimes attached to the outside of clothing products for decoration purposes, as the hard ends may scratch consumers (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Whereas flat labels with folded ends are sewn at both ends, or around all four sides to attach it in a flat position onto the inside, or to the outside of clothing products (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546; Anon, 2009c:11). Flat labels with folded ends may be attached to almost any clothing product at any place according to the information on the label and the function it has to perform (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). The folded round label is often used for the brand name of the clothing product and as a result, it is attached to the most visible places, such as neck areas and in the back of skirts or trousers (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546; Anon, 2009c:11).

Another attachment issue of concern is that of how many labels should be attached to a clothing product. Multiple labels are commonly sewn on to each other, and then onto the clothing product, to reduce the time of attaching all the labels one by one (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Multiple labels attached to clothing products may influence consumers' comfort during wear. Manufacturers should consider consumers' comfort first and foremost when attaching labels on clothing products, instead of focussing on expenses and effort.

A crucial consideration is the attachment of the correct label to the clothing product it is intended for (Glock & Kunz, 1995:547). As the wrong label on a clothing product can cause much more damage to the product than if it did not have any label at all (Glock & Kunz, 1995:547; Hatch, 1993:135). Labelling requirements in general strive to prevent incorrect information on clothing labels, in order to prevent inappropriate care procedures. Consumer rights protect the consumer from being misled by inaccurate product information. It is therefore of great importance that the correct information is presented on clothing product labels.

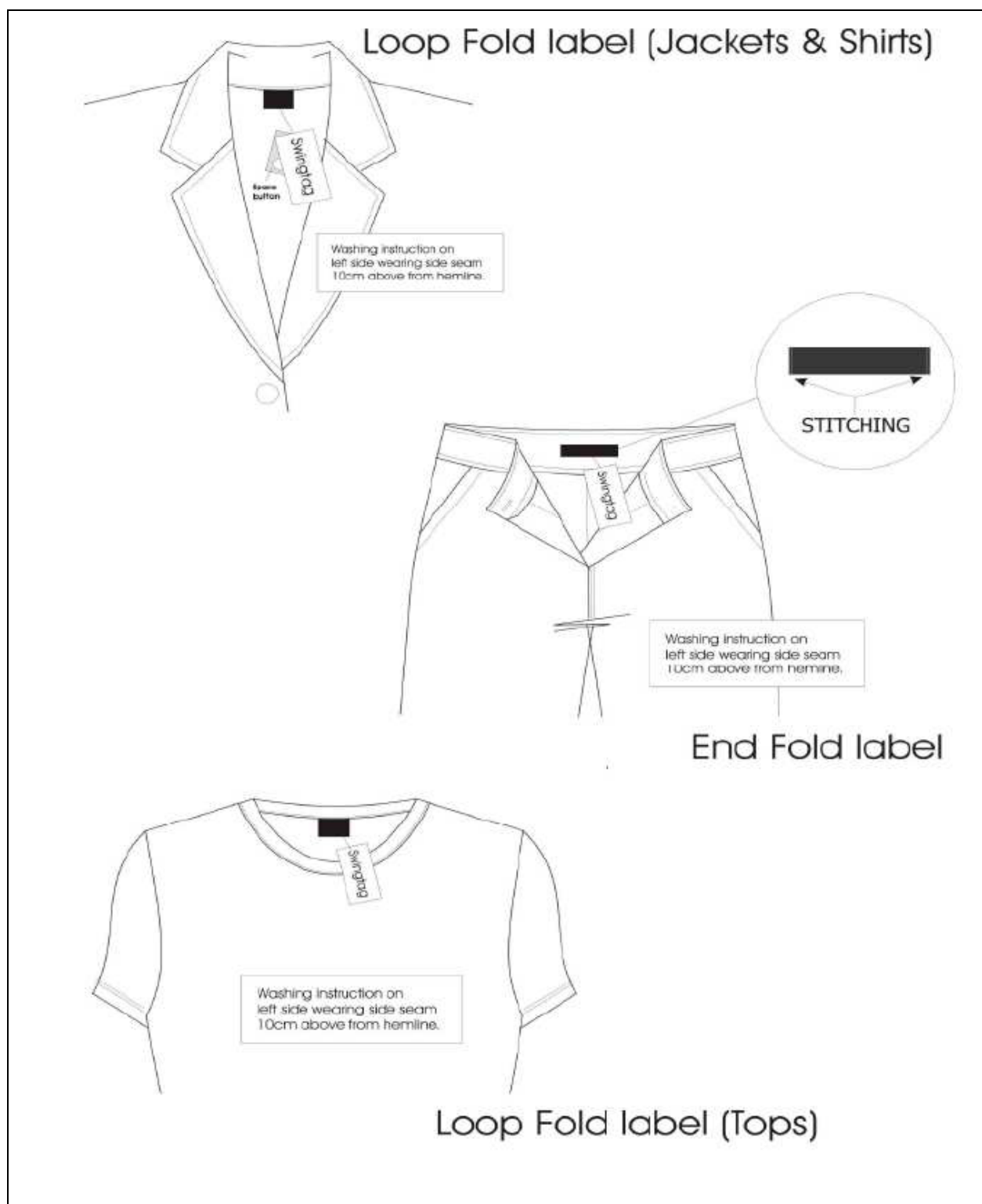


Figure 2.6 Clothing label attachment positions (Anon, 2009c:11)

2.5.4.2 Positioning of the clothing label

The inconsistency of clothing labels' positioning may confuse consumers as they often have to search for the clothing labels (Cooklin, 1997:18; Stevens, 1993:3; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:59). If labels are easy to find, consumers can benefit from them (Cooklin, 1997:18; Stevens, 1993:3).

According to Kadolph (1998:150) clothing labels' position is mostly in necklines and in the back of pants and skirts according to the type of product. In a study done by Maqalika-Mokobori, (2005:63) consumers prefer clothing labels to be sewn in the back of the neckline, while other consumers prefer the label in the side seams of clothing products. Irrespective of consumers' preferences, the positioning of the clothing label should be as consistent as possible and easy to find. In some countries, like America, clothing labels are not voluntarily placed on clothing products, but rather as a result of legislation regulations and requirements, designed to enforce consumers' rights and to maintain a standard for clothing labelling (Collier & Tortora, 2001:503).

2.5.5 Labelling requirements and consumer rights

Adequate legislation of clothing labels in America applies to clothing products, excluding shoes, gloves, hats and other accessories that do not cover the body (Collier & Tortora, 2001:503). Relevant labelling requirements and their application will subsequently be discussed, followed by consumer rights in knowing what they purchase.

2.5.5.1 Labelling requirements

The permanent care labelling ruling was established in 1972 by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) of America (Collier & Tortora, 2001:503), whereas the Care labelling of clothing and textile products Act (Trade practice Act 1974) was established by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC, 1998). South African labelling requirements state that all clothing products must be accompanied by an appropriate size indication (SANS, 2008:135).

America has a label rule, namely Care Labelling of Textiles Wearing Apparel Act 72, (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). This rule requires that the manufacturer's name and number, care instructions, country of origin and fibre content must be present on the clothing label (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). The provision of the size, construction characteristics, style number and labour used, is voluntary (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). The legislation rules regarding clothing labels are there to

protect consumers from unjust trading and financial liability due to misleading information on clothing labels (Hatch, 1993:129).

Care labelling requirements also apply to textile products as well as clothing products in South Africa, namely the requirement of *Care labelling of piece goods, textile articles and clothing* (SANS, 2008:1001, 1309). This requirement states that textile and clothing products must have a permanent indication of care instructions on it, for the consumer and the launderer to be able to clean it appropriately (SANS, 2007:1309).

Legislation on and regulations pertaining to size indication on clothing differ from country to country, Mexico for example requires sizing of children and women's wear by law (Nom-004-SCFI-2006 Labelling regulations for textiles and apparel) (Thiry, 2008:26), whereas Canada's standard system for sizing women's apparel (CGSB 49.201-92-CAN/CGSB) allows the manufacturer to choose whether he or she wants to state the size or not (Thiry, 2008:26).

2.5.5.2 Consumer rights

South African consumers have the right to be informed to be able to consider all the alternatives available, in order to make an informed decision (SANCU, 2006:11; Mason *et al*, 2008:277). This entails that consumers may demand complete and accurate information on a product or service, thus also for clothing products (Hatch & Lane, 1980:361; SANCU, 2006:11). The consumers still remain responsible to obtain product information when it is not present on clothing products (SANCU, 2006:11). Furthermore SANCU (2006:11) entails that any unclear information provided must be explained to the consumer if required. Therefore consumers should be able to obtain assistance when they don't understand clothing labels or hangtags providing information of the clothing products they are purchasing.

2.5.6 Conclusion

The information as well as physical nature of clothing labels entail consumers' comprehension, perceptions and use thereof. As a result consumers' usage of clothing labels may increase if their perceptions and knowledge of clothing labels are investigated and understood. Consumers' needs could be met in their pre- as well as post- stages of purchasing clothing products if proper attention is given towards effective labelling. More effective clothing labels may increase consumers' satisfaction with their clothing products.

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Chapter 3: THE ARTICLE

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Male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

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OPSOMMING

Kledingetikette sluit permanente sowel as tydelik-gehegte etikette in. Tydelike etikette staan bekend as hangetikette. Kledingetikette help verbruikers wanneer hul besluit of hulle kledingprodukte gaan koop of nie, deur die inligting en moontlike versorgingsinstruksies te verskaf. Kledingetikette bestaan uit twee komponente, naamlik die fisiese aard en die inligting op die etiket. Verbruikers se kennis van kledingetikette behels hulle interpretasie van die inligting daarop, die funksie daarvan, en hoe om dit te gebruik. Verbruikers beleef kledingetikette deur middel van hul sintuie wanneer hulle dit lees en vashou. Verbruikers se persepsies van produkte word beïnvloed deur die fisiese stimuli daarvan asook hulle eie vorige ervaring waaronder kennis, motivering en vooruitsigte val. Dit is onbekend wat verbruikers se persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette is. Genoegsame kennis, positiewe persepsies en optimale gebruik van kledingetikette kan bydra tot tevredenheid by verbruikers en bydra daartoe dat hulle ingeligte en verantwoordelike besluite maak. Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal wat manlike en vroulike verbruikers se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette is. Die voorsiening van kledingetikette verseker nie dat verbruikers die inligting daarop sal lees, verstaan en toepas nie. Daarom word navorsing gebaseer op handelaars se voorveronderstellings dat die voorsiening van informasieryke kledingetikette genoegsaam is om gebruik daarvan aan te moedig, en dat alle verbruikers dit verstaan en gebruik soos dit bedoel word. As gevolg van 'n tekort aan navorsing in Suid Afrika rakende kledingetikette, is dit onbekend of verbruikers genoegsame kennis en positiewe persepsies van kledingetikette het en of hulle dit optimaal gebruik. Die navorsingsontwerp van hierdie studie is nie-eksperimenteel, kwantitatief, verkennend en beskrywend. Vraelyste is gebruik as meetinstrument om data in te samel. Die studiepopulasie wat geteiken is, het manlike en vroulike verbruikers in drie munisipaliteite in die Noordwes Provinsie (die Bonjana, Platinum en Suidelike distrikmunisipaliteite), bo die ouderdom van 18 jaar, wie kon lees en al kledingprodukte van die uitgesoekte winkels gekoop het, ingesluit. Daar is in totaal 304 bruikbare vraelyste voltooi. Respondente het genoegsame kennis (71%) van die inligting op kledingetikette gehad (uitsluitend die versorgingsinstruksies), en 65.6% het genoegsame kennis van die versorgingsinstruksies gehad. Respondente was positief teenoor die kleur in die algemeen (79%), die lettergrootte (83%) en leesbaarheid (77.7%) van inligting op die kledingetikette. Respondente was positief dat kledingetikette nie moet verdof nie (68.8%), plasing dieselfde bly (78.8%) en dat dit nie moet uitsteek by kledingstukke nie (84.9%). Respondente was positief oor die aanduiding van inligting op kledingetikette wat betref die aanduiding van veselinhoud (84.2%), land van oorsprong (61.2%), grootte (89.5%), asook die volgende addisionele inligting: die aanduiding van spesiale afwerkings (76.4%), aanduiding van omgewingsvriendelike kleding (69.5%) en gelisensieerde handelsmerke (78%). Respondente het optimaal gebruik gemaak van die versorgingsinstruksies in woorde

(68.1%) en in simbole (63.2%) om ingeligte besluite te maak gedurende die aankoop van soortgelyke kledingprodukte. Die aanduiding van spesiale afwerkings is deur meer as die helfte van die respondente gebruik gedurende aankooppraktyke. Die aanduiding van omgewingsvriendelike kleding is deur 51% van die respondente gebruik by verdere, waar 63.3% van die respondente gebruik gemaak het van die gelisensieerde handelsmerke in hul aankoop van soortgelyke produkte. Om saam te vat, die resultate het oor die algemeen getoon dat respondente genoegsame kennis en positiewe persepsies van kledingetikette gehad het, en dat hul optimaal gebruik gemaak het van die kledingetikette voor, gedurende en na die aankoop van kledingprodukte. Verder is daar slegs klein betekenisvolle verskille gevind tussen manlike en vroulike respondente se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette. Daar is bevind dat daar wel korrelasies bestaan tussen respondente se kennis, persepsies en gebruik van kledingetikette. Resultate het aangedui dat manlike sowel as vroulike verbruikers genoegsame kennis oor kledingetikette het, hulle persepsies daarvan positief was en dat hulle optimaal van die kledingetikette gebruik gemaak het.

SLEUTELTERME

Kennis; Persepsies; Kledingetiket; Manlike verbruikers; Vroulike verbruikers..

Male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

ABSTRACT

Clothing labels assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions. Adequate knowledge, positive perceptions and optimal use of clothing labels may result in satisfied consumers who make responsible and informed purchases. The provision of clothing labels does not guarantee that consumers will read, understand or apply the information on clothing labels. Due to the lack of research that exists in South Africa in the field of clothing labels, it is not known whether consumers have adequate knowledge and positive perceptions of clothing labels and the information on them, and whether they use the labels optimally. The aim of this study was to determine male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The research design of this study was non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive. Questionnaires were used as the measuring instrument to collect the data. The study population included all the consumers in three municipalities in the North-West Province. A total of 304 usable questionnaires were obtained. On average the respondents had adequate knowledge of the information presented on clothing labels and of the care instructions. Respondents perceived the physical nature of clothing labels and the indication of information on clothing positively. Respondents optimally made use of the care instructions in words and symbols when purchasing similar items. Furthermore, only small significant differences were found between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels.

KEY WORDS

Knowledge; Perceptions; Clothing label; Male consumers; Female consumers.

Introduction

Background and motivation Clothing labels comprise of the permanently attached labels as well as the temporarily attached labels known as hangtags that are found on clothing products (Chowdhary, 2003:244). In the context of this study the term *clothing labels* refers to both permanently attached labels as well as temporarily attached labels such as hangtags. Consumers are exposed to clothing labels on a daily basis, due to the fact that all consumers wear clothing daily. Clothing labels assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions (Hatch, 1993:129; Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:97; Brown & Rice, 1998:197; Chowdhary, 2003:244; Mason et al, 2008:277). Clothing labels' function is therefore to simplify the consumers' decision making process (Muller, 1982:213; Solomon, 2004:352).

The provision of clothing labels does not guarantee that consumers will read, understand and apply the information on clothing labels (Yan et al, 2008:536). The research is based on retailers' assumption that the provision of informative clothing labels is sufficient to encourage the usage thereof, and that all consumers understand and perceive clothing labels as intended. Consumers may or may not understand the information found on clothing labels. Consumers may think that they have adequate knowledge and as a result refrain from obtaining additional information, known as subjective knowledge, that may result in uninformed decision making (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:214). Consumers may perceive the physical nature of clothing labels in addition to the information on the clothing labels.

In addition, a lack of research regarding clothing labels exists globally, as little recent research on this topic has been done. The most recent study regarding consumers' perceptions of the clothing label information and its effectiveness was done by Yan et al. (2008) in Canada. Consumers' use of clothing care labels was previously researched in South Africa by Muller (1982) and consumers' perceptions regarding textile labels by Maqalika-Mokobori (2005). It may therefore be necessary to do a timely study in South Africa, to determine the current situation regarding clothing labels.

Problem statement This research is based amongst other on retailers' assumption that the provision of informative clothing labels is sufficient to encourage the usage thereof, and that all consumers understand and perceive the clothing labels as intended. Due to the lack of research that exists in South Africa in the field of clothing labels, it is not known whether consumers do have adequate knowledge and a positive perception of clothing labels and the information on them, and whether they use the labels optimally. This study attempted to obtain information regarding consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, and to determine whether all these aspects differ between male and female consumers.

The following aim was set for this study: To determine male and female consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. In order to determine the knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, the following objectives were proposed along with sub-objectives. The first objective was to determine consumers' knowledge regarding clothing labels by establishing whether consumers understand the information on clothing labels. An arbitrary score of 50% or more was taken as adequate understanding or adequate knowledge of the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.

Objective two was to determine consumers' perceptions regarding clothing labels, by establishing how positive or negative consumers perceive the physical nature of clothing labels regarding the colour, the letter size on the label, size of label, readability, permanency and positioning of clothing labels as well as to establish how consumers perceive the information on clothing labels, specifically concerning the fibre content, country of origin, size indication, manufacturer or brand name additional information and care instructions. A positive score of 50% or more regarding the satisfaction, importance and efficiency of the physical nature and information on clothing labels was taken as a positive perception.

The third objective was to determine consumers' use of clothing labels, by establishing to what extent consumers use the information on clothing labels during the information search stage of the purchase decision, the purchase stage and the post purchase stage as well as during care and for future reference. An arbitrary score of 50% was taken as sufficient use during the purchasing stages.

The fourth objective was to determine whether males and females differ regarding objectives one to three, by calculating practically meaningful effectiveness (Cohen, 1988:221).

The fifth objective was to determine whether relationships exist between selected variables in objectives one to three, by using Pearson's correlation coefficients. A thorough literature review was done to shed light on the above mentioned objectives, and is presented briefly.

LITERATURE REVIEW: CONSUMERS AND CLOTHING LABELS

Clothing labels assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions (Hatch, 1993:129; Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:97; Brown & Rice, 1998:197; Mason et al, 2008:277). Clothing labels include hangtags and permanent labels found on clothing products, which provide a wide range of explanatory terms and directions to consumers (Chowdhary, 2003:244). These terms and directions inform consumers about the clothing products' care, properties and origin. Clothing labels are not voluntarily placed on clothing products, but rather according to set legislation regulations and requirements, designed to enforce consumers' rights and to maintain a standard for clothing labelling (Collier & Tortora, 2001:503).

Labelling requirements South African labelling requirements state that all clothing products must be accompanied by an appropriate size indication (SANS, 2008:1401). Care labelling requirements apply to textile products as well as clothing products in South Africa, namely the requirement of *Care labelling of piece goods, textile articles and clothing* (SANS, 2008:1001, 1309). This requirement states that textile and clothing products must have a permanent indication of care instructions on it, for the consumer and the launderer to be able to clean it appropriately (SANS, 2007:1309).

Consumer rights South African consumers have the right to be informed to enable them to consider all the options available, in order to make an informed decision (SANCU, 2006:11; Mason et al, 2008:277). This entails that consumers may demand complete and accurate information on a product or service, thus also for clothing products (Hatch & Lane, 1980:361; SANCU, 2006:11). The consumers still remain responsible to obtain product information, when it is not present on clothing products (SANCU, 2006:11). Consumers should be able to obtain assistance when they don't understand the information on clothing labels or hangtags of the clothing products they are purchasing.

Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels

The consumer may use previously acquired knowledge of clothing products to know that there are labels present. The recall of information from consumers' memory is dependent on what they know and grasp as well as on how well they organise and classify it (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:171). Thus consumers' knowledge of clothing labels may include the meaning of the care symbols, the function of clothing labels, the type of information on clothing labels and the application of the information accordingly (Niemann & Nothling, 2008:26).

Consumers' perceptions of clothing labels

According to Rousseau and Spoelstra (2003:219), perception entails the process whereby individuals observe, organise, select, and react to stimuli in their environment in a logical manner. Consumers perceive products with their senses when they see, feel, smell, taste and hear things (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:152). Therefore it can be said that consumers perceive a clothing label with their senses when reading and holding it before, during and after purchasing clothing products. Subsequently, perceptions are established by consumers' impressions of a product and other items in their environment (Rousseau & Spoelstra, 2003:218). Clothing labels have to be read, before consumers can understand the information on it or form perceptions thereof.

Consumers' use of clothing labels

According to Chowdhary (2003:244) the clothing label and hangtag provide the primary connection between the consumer and the clothing product, as most consumers look for and read the clothing label or hangtag when examining clothing products. Some consumers not only obtain the information provided but also perceive the social identity it provides, and read the care instructions to determine the clothing product's maintenance (Chowdhary, 2003:244). It is argued that some consumers find the information provided by labels and hangtags extremely useful, while other consumers may find it overwhelming or do not understand it.

Research established that consumers do make use of clothing labels and hangtags in the information search phase and post purchase phase (Davis, 1987:8). Despite the fact that

consumers use clothing labels the efficiency of the labels and hangtags has not been established (Davis, 1987:8). Similar research done in Ghana showed that 38% of men, and 44% of women looked for clothing labels when purchasing clothing products (Fianu & Harrison-Arthur, 1997:99). This suggests that male as well as female consumers differ in their use of clothing labels.

There are different types of clothing labels, such as those which are permanently attached to clothing and others that are temporarily attached to clothing. The permanent labels mostly contain the care instructions, the manufacturer's number, country of origin and fibre composition amongst others (Davis, 1987:8; Brown & Rice, 1998:18). Temporarily attached clothing labels provide information in the pre- and post purchase situation, but after the information has been obtained, consumers remove the labels and dispose thereof. These clothing labels are referred to as hangtags, and may provide information such as price, brand name, store name and additional product information (Davis, 1987:8; Hatch, 1993:129). Furthermore, hangtags are mostly attached with a string or a removable plastic fastener (Thiry, 2008:22). According to Brown and Rice (1998:197) hangtags are part of clothing products when they are sold, and thus act as a marketing tool, which must be calculated into the clothing product's price.

Research has shown that additional information about clothing products, especially those referring to procedures to be followed when caring for the products, increases the effectiveness of the care label (Hatch & Lane, 1980:368). In the context of this study the term *clothing labels* refers to both permanently attached labels as well as temporarily attached labels such as hangtags.

Information on clothing labels

In the past, clothing products did not have clothing labels with care instructions on them, which caused confusion about the correct care methods to be used (Hatch, 1993:129). As a result consumers refrained from purchasing clothing products without care labels (Davis, 1987:8; Hatch, 1993:129). Clothing labels serve as excellent sources of information to consumers when purchasing clothing products (Hatch, 1993:129; Brown & Rice, 1998:197). Consumers make use of clothing labels to find out the fibre content, country of origin, size, price, manufacturer, brand name, additional information of interest and possible cleaning methods when purchasing clothing (Hatch, 1993:129; Brown & Rice, 1998:197). This information includes the following: Fibre

content, country of origin, price indication, manufacturer and brand name as well as additional information and care instructions.

Clothing products' fibre compositions are specified on the clothing label, according to the country's labelling regulations (Thiry, 2008:26). The names of the fibres must be indicated in the same font size to avoid misleading consumers to think that one fibre is more important than the other (Hatch, 1993:130). To avoid confusion the fibre content of clothing products has to be stated in known terms on the clothing label (Hatch, 1993:130).

The country of origin can be defined as the country where the manufacturers' headquarters of marketing is situated (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 2008:376). Country of origin must be displayed on the clothing label. Some countries also require the national manufacturer or importers' name, to better define the country of origin (Thiry, 2008:26). Clothing products may be manufactured in multiple countries, where different stages may take place in different countries. In such cases only the last two countries have to be stated (Brown & Rice, 1998:20). In South Africa, consumers most probably view imported clothing products from certain countries, such as clothing 'Made in China' versus clothing 'Made in Italy', as poor quality and high quality respectively (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:79).

Clothing sizes range from a letter system: small (S), medium (M), large (L) and a numerical system: 10, 12, 14 to a system according to the bust, or hip size: 32, 34, and 36 (Mason et al, 2008:279; Brown & Rice, 1998:20). Consumers' knowledge regarding the identified sizing systems revealed that they are only used to the numerical and letter systems, as it is mostly used on clothing products (Mason et al, 2008:279). Despite these systems they had trouble finding clothing that fit, indicating that body measurements on clothing labels may help consumers to find better fitting clothing (Mason et al, 2008:279).

Clothing products' prices are presented on the hangtags rather than on the permanent labels, because the distributor or retailer fixes the price according to his/her set selling price (Clodfelter, 2006:437). The price changes frequently, as it can be adapted quickly on a hangtag, by simply placing the new price over the previous one. Consumers would not appreciate it if the price was permanently attached to clothing products, because if it showed, consumers might be embarrassed and humiliated by it.

Brand names are trademarks in the form of words or symbols that are used as logo's to set the apparel apart from another manufacture's products (Brown & Rice, 1998:29). Brand names mainly establish a perception of high quality, causing consumers to prefer the specific brand above other brands, resulting in repeat purchases and ultimately brand loyalty (Brown & Rice, 1998:29). When consumers are satisfied with the clothing product they can purchase the same brand again, or if they are not satisfied, they can purchase a different brand. The manufacturers of clothing products should state their names on the labels, as it acts as a reference to the distributor and the consumer, indicating which company manufactured it (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:20). Most manufacturers use the brand name to create an image of the product, to enhance the consumers' perceptions thereof, encouraging them to purchase the clothing products (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:20).

Additional non-mandatory information may be present on clothing labels and hangtags in order to assist consumers in informed decision making when purchasing clothing products (Hatch, 1993:135). Such information includes product descriptions, licensed trademarks, certification marks and even eco-labelling (Hatch, 1993:135).

Clothing finishes can be explained as they will enhance the consumers' perceptions of the appropriateness of the clothing product for their needs, (Hatch, 1993:133). Finishes such as 'stabilization' for less shrinkage, 'shape retention' to reduce wrinkling, 'appearance retention' inhibiting staining, abrasion and fading as well as 'comfort', 'biological' and 'safety' related finishes are used on clothing products (Kadolph, 2007:364-378) and as a result indicated on clothing labels.

Sun protection labelling is being investigated to portray how much ultra violet rays are blocked, thus protecting the consumer from excessive exposure to the sun (Extreme textiles, 2008:11; News, 2008:20; Gambichler et al, 2008:125). Eco-labelling is constantly increasing in popularity, as consumers are becoming more aware of their carbon tracks, making eco-labelling more appealing to environmentally conscious consumers, encouraging them to purchase eco-friendly clothing (News, 2008:20; D'Souza et al, 2006:162).

According to Brown and Rice (1998:30) other voluntary information on the label or hangtag includes warranties, as they promise quality and compensation if the consumer is not satisfied. Warranties are not required by regulations but the manufacturer may voluntarily provide it, to increase the perceived quality of the item and gain trust in the clothing product's potential (Brown & Rice, 1998:30).

Consumers may be able to identify an authentic product by means of licensed trademarks and certification marks. As a result this may assist in informed decision making, and prevent false claims. Licensed trade marks include 100% pure wool, wool blend, pure cotton, cotton blend, pure silk and genuine leather (Brown & Rice, 1998:31; Hatch, 1993:137).

Clothing products are chosen cautiously, thus consumers should also pay attention to the cleaning instructions provided, in order to obtain the optimum value and satisfaction from clothing products (Thiry, 2008:24; Brown & Rice, 1998:21; Corbman, 1983:540). As the care instructions provide adequate care methods for clothing products, it should not harm the product if followed correctly (Thiry, 2008:24).

Care labels' information may be presented in different formats, namely in words or in symbols, or a combination of the two (Yan et al, 2008:532). Care labels include the washing, bleaching, drying, ironing and dry-cleaning instructions (Textile industry affairs; care symbols explained, 2009:1). Research has found that consumers prefer the wording only, or wording together with symbols, rather than symbols only, as consumers understand the wording better (Yan et al, 2008:532).

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:398) symbols are used to communicate information beyond language and culture barriers. The ideal of symbols is to convey a message that the consumers understand as intended (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:398). Despite this intention symbols may still result in conveying more than one meaning and could even oppose each other (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007:399). As a result consumers may attach meaning to the care symbols and other additional information illustrated by symbols, including licensed trademarks.

Physical nature of clothing labels

The nature of the label includes the physical aspects thereof, such as the legibility, construction, fibre composition, size, the positioning and attachment (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:51). According to Cooklin (1997:118) the clothing label must remain legible throughout its life cycle, despite suggested laundering of the product as well as the wear and tear. The letter size as well font size used on clothing labels and hangtags should be easy to see and read for most consumers (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:51).

Label construction varies as some are non-woven with the information printed on it, and other labels have information woven into it (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Coatings and finishing are applied to the label to assist printing and make them more durable, but at the same time the finishing may alter the touch, which could affect the comfort of the label (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546).

The material used for the label should be well-matched to the clothing product it is used on, suitable for the positioning and the exposure the clothing product will endure (Glock & Kunz, 1995:545). The reality is that not all the label fibres are ideal, as some may cause discomfort. Coatings applied to labels for easier colouring and durability can result in stiff and hard labels and may cause irritation to the consumer (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546).

Clothing labels can be very uncomfortable, and quickly agitate a consumer to such a state that they cut it out of the clothing product (Thiry, 2008:28; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:63). If the label is cut out and discarded, it does not achieve its function (Thiry, 2008:28; Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:64). This may lead to wrong care procedures and dissatisfaction with the clothing product. A heat transfer of the label information directly onto clothing is an excellent alternative, as there are no labels attached, only the information (Thiry, 2008:28), though a directly transferred label may not be suitable for all clothing products, for example see through clothing products.

Clothing labels should be easily visible in order for the consumer to find it, but not too big, to maintain the clothing product's appearance (Cooklin, 1997:118). The size of care labels has been standardised in 2007, to a maximum length of 90mm and width of 20mm (Quality assurance,

2009:8). Consumers also indicated that clothing labels should not be too small, in order for them to easily find and read them (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:58).

Attachment and positioning of clothing labels

It is of great importance that clothing labels are properly attached to the clothing product otherwise if it comes loose, the consumer may easily throw it away (Cooklin, 1997:118). According to Glock and Kunz (1995:546) the different types of clothing labels are attached in specific ways, and are selected according to the suitability for the clothing products. Another attachment issue of concern is that of how many labels should be attached to a clothing product. Multiple labels are commonly sewn on to each other, and then onto the clothing product, to reduce the time of attaching all the labels, one by one (Glock & Kunz, 1995:546). Multiple labels attached to clothing products may influence consumers' comfort during wear. Therefore, manufacturers should consider consumers' comfort first and foremost when attaching labels on clothing products, instead of expenses and effort.

Suitable positioning of the clothing label plays a role in consumers' ability to quickly find it when looking for it. The inconsistency of clothing labels' positioning may confuse consumers as they always have to search for the clothing labels (Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:59; Cooklin, 1997:18; Stevens, 1993:3). If labels are easy to find, consumers can benefit (product information) from it (Cooklin, 1997:18; Stevens, 1993:3). According to Kadolph (1998:150) clothing labels' position is mostly in necklines, the back of pants and skirts and she is of the opinion that the position of the label depends on the product type. In a study done by Maqalika-Mokobori (2005:63), consumers indicated that they prefer clothing labels to be sewn in the back of the neckline, while other consumers prefer the label in the side seams of clothing products. Irrespective of consumers' preferences, the positioning of the clothing label should be as consistent as possible and easy to find.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach

The research design of this study was non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive as described by Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:34). A non-experimental research design was selected as this is widely used when conducting surveys, to acquire quantitative information to describe the research topic (Maree & Pieterse, 2007b:152). Quantitative research was selected for this study, because it is more formalised, more controlled consistently and offers precise results (Mouton & Marais, 1989:157). In addition, quantitative research focuses on and measures specific attributes that can be quantified (Fouche & Delport, 2007:74-75). Questionnaires were used as the measuring instrument to collect the data as described by Fouche and De Vos (2007:137). According to Burns and Bush (2006:28) exploratory research can be done if little research exists on the problem.

Study population

The study population included all the clothing consumers in three municipalities in the North-West Province above the age of 18 years, male as well as female, who could read and who had purchased a clothing product some time from one of the selected stores.

Sample selection Data collection was undertaken in the North-West Province, specifically in the Bonjana Platinum and Southern district municipality, which included, Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. These were the larger towns with a bigger population representation (The pilot project in Southern Africa, 2004:2). Data collection was done at one of each town's largest and diverse shopping malls, so that a fairly representative sample of the population of each town was obtained.

A non-probability convenience sample was used for this study by using the respondents who complied with the selection criteria (Maree & Pieterse, 2007b:152). The selection criteria were that consumers must be above the age of 18 years, male or female, be able to read and have

purchased clothing products from one of the selected stores. The consumers who met the selection criteria at the time of data collection, who were willing to complete the questionnaire took part in this study. In addition, cluster sampling, was used to choose the specific towns included (Strydom et al, 2007b:198).

A convenience sample was used because it is not difficult to obtain and not too expensive specifically if quota sampling is done to acquire the desired number questionnaires as suggested by Maree & Pieterse (2007a:177). Thus, the consumers at the specified stores were asked to complete the questionnaires until the desired number of questionnaires was completed.

The chosen malls were in Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. Within each of the three shopping malls a discount store, a chain store, and a department store were selected, where data was gathered. The day and time of data collection were on Fridays from 10:00 am till 15:30 pm. The risk of self selection was eliminated by selecting specific times of the day and days of the week (Du Preez & Visser, 2003:16). Data was collected simultaneously at all three selected stores, at one shopping mall at a time. Rustenburg was first, followed by Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom.

Consumers were approached upon walking through the store entrance, by means of greeting them in a friendly manner and explaining that the research was conducted for the North-West University, regarding consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. When the consumers responded positively, they were asked to complete the questionnaire. If the consumers agreed, the researcher or fieldworkers explained that their answers are completely anonymous and that they are free to withdraw at any time, should they wish to do so. After this, the questionnaire was handed to the respondent to complete, while the researcher was present to assist when necessary as recommended by Delpont (2007:169). Self-administered questionnaires reduce the researcher's input as they allow the respondent to complete the questionnaire independently (Delpont, 2007:169).

When no list of people in an area is available to the researcher, a map can be used to geographically select the areas where the research will be done (Strydom, 2007b:200). Cluster sampling using a map was suitable for selecting the towns, as no resident list of North-West Province's Southern or Bonjama Platinum district municipality was available to apply

randomization. Cluster sampling saves time and money by reducing the number of questionnaires needed and makes it possible to focus on a small specific section of the greater geographical area, as suggested by Strydom (2007b:200). Therefore, the North-West Province, and specifically the more prominent or larger towns in the North-West province, were identified, followed by identifying each town's most accessible and diverse shopping mall.

Size of the sample A sample size of approximately 300 was obtained for the purpose of this study, as suggested by the North-West Statistical Consultation Services. A total of 340 questionnaires was handed out from which 304 completed questionnaires were collected. A total of 113 questionnaires was completed at each of the three shopping malls of which 37 questionnaires were filled in at each of the selected stores per day. According to Strydom (2007b:195) the sample size cannot be too large as it must be feasible, and a large population requires a smaller percentage of respondents in order to be effective. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy was used to calculate the ratio of the squared correlation between variables to the squared partial correlation between variables (Field, 2005:735). The value of the KMO range between zero and one, thus a value close to one indicate compact correlations, providing reliable factors with factor analysis (Field, 2005:735).

The measuring instrument

The measuring instrument used in the data collection was a questionnaire (Addendum A) that was based on a questionnaire regarding consumers' utilisation of clothing labels, developed by Honours students at the North-West University in 2007. In addition, an extensive literature review regarding clothing labels was conducted, to adapt the questionnaire according to the research field. The questionnaire that was used to obtain the data comprised of a combination of open and closed ended questions. The majority of the questions was closed and the scaled questions were in the form of a Likert scale. According to Burns and Bush (2006:281), Likert scale questions capture consumers' emotion as consumers were asked to which extent they agree with the statements. The content layout of the measurement instrument is depicted in Addendum C.

Ethical aspects

Firstly, ethical approval for this project, registered as NWU-00024-09-S1, was obtained from the Ethical Committee of the North-West University. The ethical approval ensured that no unethical questions would be asked and that no respondent would feel forced to complete the questionnaire, as suggested by Schiffman and Kanuk (2009:38). The consumers were made aware that they could withdraw at any time. Subsequently the purpose of the study was briefly explained so that they could make an informed decision when they chose to participate (Strydom, 2007a:57).

Pilot testing the measuring instrument

Pilot testing for clarity was done before the final data collection, as suggested by Strydom (2007:205). The pilot testing of the measuring instrument (questionnaire) was done at a chain store that was not used in the final data collection, at a shopping mall in Potchefstroom. A total of eight questionnaires were obtained in the pilot study. The pilot test ensured that the respondents could interpret and answer the questions correctly.

Only eight questionnaires were completed in the pilot study, and it became apparent that the layout of the questionnaire had to be altered. Once the alterations were made the supervisors checked the questionnaire, and approved it. The revised questionnaire was given to a few fellow students who completed it without difficulty which proved that the final measuring was suitable. The completion time was established, ranging between 5 and 8 minutes. Experts also assisted in the final revision of the last changes made. The revised questionnaire consisted of four A5 pages, laid out on one A4 paper printed on both sides.

Psychometric properties of the measuring instrument

Validity The validity was used in addition to the reliability index of the measuring instrument (questionnaire), in order to evaluate whether the reliable instrument measures the intended attribute effectively (Furlong et al, 2000:69). Content validity was investigated to determine

whether all attributes were included in the questionnaire and to avoid gaps in the field of the research (Furlong et al, 2000:69). Content validity was checked by the study supervisor and co-supervisor who are experts in the field of textiles. The Keiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy were used to make sure the patterns of correlations were compact and to ensure optimum factor analysis, as suggested by Field (2005:240).

Construct validity was also used to control the validity of the questionnaire (Pieterse & Maree, 2007a:217; Sun et al, 2007:71). Construct validity means that related items are used to assess one factor in its entirety; this was measured by means of factor analysis (Pieterse & Maree, 2007a:217). Factor analysis known as common factor analysis indicated that questions that measured the same factor were answered similarly (Pieterse & Maree, 2007a:219; Sun *et al.*, 2007:71). Therefore factor analysis was done to ensure that only one common factor was measured in each section. The results of the validity calculations of the questionnaire are discussed in the result and discussion section.

Reliability The measuring instrument's reliability was assessed by means of measuring the internal consistency (Furlong et al, 2000:66). The internal consistency was measured by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Furlong et al, 2000:68). If most of the questions are homogenous, they should measure only one attribute at a time. The inter-item correlation values were calculated, to investigate reliability (Furlong et al, 2000:68). The results of the reliability analysis of the questionnaire are discussed in the results and discussion section.

Method of statistical analysis

The raw data collected was entered into the computer by the researcher using Excell, and double checked to prevent errors in the data processing, after which it was transferred to SPSS (version 17.0) statistical software (Field, 2005), to perform the statistical calculations. The validity and reliability calculations were first completed, and finding the results satisfactory, the following statistic analyses were performed. Frequency distribution and mean scores were computed to aid the analysis of the data, as suggested by Strydom (2007c:226). Mean scores were calculated by adding the sum of the values and dividing it by the number of values. The open ended questions used to investigate the first objective were assessed according to a memorandum and the correct answers coded for computer processing.

In order to determine if there was a practically significant difference between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, split file statistical calculations were executed in SPSS (Field, 2005:125). These calculations provided the frequency and percentage of male and female respondents' answers to each question. Male and female respondents' responses were used to calculate the *w*-values, and are discussed in the results and discussion section. A one dimensional two by two table was used (Cohen, 1988:221). According to Cohen (1988:224-225) *w*-values may have the following effect sizes; $w=0.10$, $w=0.30$, $w=0.50$ that indicates a small, medium or large effect size respectively. The *d*-values entail the effect size of the differences between the male and female respondents' answers to the same questions. A *d*-value of 0.2 represent a small effect, 0.5 a medium effect and 0.8 a large effect (Cohen, 1988:222). The results of the *d*-values are discussed in the results and discussion section.

Pearson's correlations coefficients were computed in SPSS (Field, 2005:125) to determine if correlations exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The correlations are represented by *r*- values, where $r = 0.1$ = small effect size, $r = 0.3$ = medium effect size and $r = 0.5$ = large effect size (Field, 2005:32). The results of these correlations are discussed in the results and discussion section. The frequency, mean values and percentage distribution are mainly depicted in tables, as suggested by Pieterse and Maree (2007b:191).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study and the discussion thereof are given in this section in the following order: Firstly, the measuring instrument's psychometric properties regarding the validity and reliability of the questionnaire are presented and discussed. Secondly, the characteristics of the sample will be discussed. Finally, the results are presented according to the objectives of the study.

Psychometric properties of the measuring instrument

Validity determination of measuring instrument Content validity was investigated with the assistance of the supervisor and co-supervisor, whereas the construct validity was determined by the Keiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure and factor analysis. The results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy (Table 1) indicated that the patterns of correlations were compact, as all the values were close to one, ensuring optimum factor analysis.

Place Table 1 here

Factor analysis was done to determine how many common factors were extracted in each section of the questionnaire as suggested by Pieterse and Maree (2007a:218). The results of the validity determination of the measuring instrument by means of factor extraction are depicted in Table 2. The results revealed that multiple factors were extracted for each of the three sections. However, the number of factors extracted was still acceptable. It is seldom achieved that only one factor is extracted in practice (Hugo, 2007:55). All the communalities were above 0.5. The factors extracted, together explained more than 50% of the variance for each of the three sections. Bartlett's test of sphericity was done on the measuring instrument, and it indicated that there is no sphericity. Validity results for Sections B and C were satisfactory, but for further research, attention should be given to the validity of Section D. Due to the fact that the validity determinations were satisfactory, the researcher was of the opinion that the measuring instrument was valid.

Place Table 2 here

Reliability determination of measuring instrument Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for the sections of the measuring instrument, to investigate reliability. The results of the reliability determination of the measuring instrument are depicted in Table 3. A rather low Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.599 was obtained for Section B, that measured the respondents' knowledge regarding the clothing label. According to Malhotra and Birks (2007:358) a value of 0.6 or less indicates unsatisfactory reliability. The results of Cronbach Alpha coefficient calculations for Section C (0.809) and Section D (0.915) respectively, were excellent and therefore these sections could be deemed highly reliable. Section C measured respondents' perceptions and Section D measured respondents' use of clothing labels. The lower Cronbach Alpha coefficient for Section B may be due to the smaller number of questions included in this section, as suggested by Cortina (1993:100). As the reliability determinations of Sections C and D were excellent, while that of Section B was moderately satisfactory, it can be assumed that the measuring instruments' reliability was acceptable.

Place Table 3 here

Demographic characteristics of sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample are depicted in Table 4. A total number of 304 respondents in the study provided fully completed questionnaires. Of the 304 respondents 37.5% were aged 18 to 24 years, and 22% aged 25 to 30 years. Furthermore, half of the respondents (50.7%) were single and 40.5% completed high school. The majority of the respondents (40.5%) had completed Grade 12. More females (75.7%) than males (24.3%) responded and the majority of the respondents (62.2%) were white, followed by 32.2% black respondents. Nearly equal numbers of the respondents lived in Klerksdorp (31.3%) and Rustenburg (29.6%), followed by 22.4% in Potchefstroom. Half of the respondents worked, implying that they had higher clothing needs than other non-working respondents.

Place Table 4 here

Results according to objectives

The results pertaining to the five objectives - set to determine the knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels, will now be discussed. An arbitrary positive score of 50% or more in all the sections was taken as adequate, positive and sufficient.

Respondents' knowledge regarding clothing labels

Regarding objective one, Section B of the questionnaire tested whether respondents knew the meaning of the information on clothing labels, specifically concerning the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions. The results display the number and percentage of the correct answers in Table 5. The column indicating *w*-values in Tables 5, 6 and 12, and *d*-values in Tables 7-11 will be discussed later.

Knowledge regarding information on clothing labels

Place Table 5 here

The results in Table 5 indicate that 56.9% of the respondents knew the meaning of the fibre content as indicated on clothing labels. Consequently the respondents' knowledge regarding the fibre content on clothing labels was moderate but the ideal is that all respondents have adequate knowledge of the fibre content indication on clothing labels. A substantial number (82.1%)* of the respondents knew the meaning of the size in letters (XS) and numbers (12) (Table 5). In contrast to this finding, 80% of Kenyan consumers included in another study did not know the meaning of

* Average of consumers' knowledge of the size indication in letters (80.6%) and in numbers (83.6%)

the lettered and numbered size indication (Mason et al, 2008:279). It seems as if the South African respondents have more knowledge regarding the size indication on clothing labels compared to Kenyan consumers. The predominant group (85.5%) of the respondents knew the meaning of the price indication on clothing products (Table 5). A total of 66.1% of the respondents knew the brand name, suggesting that the respondents have reasonable knowledge regarding the brand name (Table 5). The respondents had difficulty in knowing the meaning of the additional information found on clothing labels, as only 53.3% of the respondents knew what the special finish meant. According to the percentage scores, the price and size indication (numbers) were ranked the highest, in contrast to the additional information which was ranked the lowest.

Respondents' knowledge regarding care instructions on clothing labels

Place Table 6 here

Respondents' knowledge regarding the care instructions is depicted in Table 6. The results revealed that the respondents knew most of the symbols' correct meanings. The ironing symbol elicited the most correct answers (80.6%) closely followed by the hand wash symbol, with 79.9% correct answers. According to Yan et al. (2008:535) consumers prefer care label instructions in 'words only' to that of 'symbols only', possibly because the respondents do not know the meaning of the care symbols. The majority of the results to objective one revealed that on average 71%* of the respondents had adequate knowledge of the information presented on clothing labels (excluding the care instructions) and 65.6%** had adequate knowledge regarding the care instructions. Still, the remainder of respondents (29%) did not know the meaning of the information, as found on clothing labels, implying that they may not be able to make informed purchase decisions. It can be concluded that a total average of 68.3%*** of the respondents understand the information on clothing labels, specifically concerning the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions. According to the percentages knowledge of the ironing symbol and the hand wash symbol was ranked the highest, where as knowledge of the dry clean symbol was ranked the lowest.

*Average percentage of correct answers in Table 5.

** Average percentage of correct answers in Table 6.

*** Average percentage of correct answers in Table 5 and 6.

Respondents' perceptions regarding nature of and information on clothing labels

Regarding objective two, Section C of the questionnaire tested how respondents perceived the physical nature of clothing labels. The results are displayed in Tables 7 and 8. In addition, Section C of the questionnaire also tested respondents' perceptions of the information on clothing labels, of which the results are displayed in Table 9.

Respondents' perceptions regarding the physical nature of clothing labels The perceptions of respondents regarding the satisfaction with the various aspects of the nature of clothing labels are depicted in Table 7.

Place Table 7 here

Table 7 indicates that 68.8% of the respondents were satisfied with the permanency of the legibility of clothing labels in general. Therefore, less than a third of the respondents are of the opinion that the clothing labels' information fades before the clothing products' life is over. The majority of the respondents (82.9%) viewed the colour of the label itself as 'very satisfactory' or 'satisfactory'. The letter size used on the label was viewed as 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory' by 79.9% of the respondents. Most of the respondents (77.6%) perceived the readability of the clothing label as 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'. The size of the label itself was perceived as 'very satisfactory' or 'satisfactory' by more than three quarters of the respondents (79.6%). Most of the respondents (70.7%) perceived the positioning of clothing labels on clothing as 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'. When looking at the ranking order, the respondents perceived the colour of the label most satisfactory, followed by the readability while the permanency of the legibility was least satisfactory.

Respondents' perceptions of selected aspects regarding the nature of clothing labels In Table 8 respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of the various aspects of the nature of clothing labels are depicted.

Place Table 8 here

Regarding whether clothing labels are scratchy or not, the majority (95.4%) of the respondents viewed it of great importance that the clothing label must not scratch them, implying that construction and fibre composition of the clothing label have to be carefully considered to minimise scratching. This factor was ranked the most important among these three aspects. A study by Maqalika-Mokobori (2005:64) found that South African consumers will cut out clothing labels when scratching them, despite the fact that they dispose of the information on it at the same time. The majority of the respondents (78.7%) indicated that it is 'very important' or 'important' that the label is always in the same place, regarding the attachment of clothing labels, because it is then easy to find and use. Maqalika-Mokobori (2005:61) also found that consumers prefer the clothing labels' position to remain constant. By far the majority of the respondents (84.9%) indicated that it is 'very important' or 'important' that the label must not show. This implies that most of the respondents possibly perceived the clothing label as a form of embarrassment, if it would show. Maqalika-Mokobori (2005:64) similarly found that consumers perceived clothing labels as a form of embarrassment if it kept showing despite its attachment to the inside.

Respondents' perceptions of the information indication on labels In Table 9, the efficiency of information indication on clothing labels regarding various types of information as perceived by the respondents is depicted.

Place Table 9 here

Of the 304 respondents 84.2% perceived that the indication of fibre content on clothing labels is 'efficient' or 'absolutely efficient', so most of the respondents were satisfied with the current fibre content indication on clothing labels in general. More than half (61.2%) of the respondents were satisfied with the indication of country of origin on the clothing labels, though 38.8% were not. The majority of the respondents (89.5%) perceived the size indication of clothing products as 'absolutely efficient' or 'efficient'. Most of the 304 respondents (77%) perceived the indication of manufacturer as 'absolutely efficient' or 'efficient'. The indication of the brand name was predominantly perceived as 'absolutely efficient' or 'efficient' (86.2%). Most respondents (81.4%) perceived the care instructions presented in words more 'satisfactory' than the 76.3%

respondents who perceived care instructions in symbols 'efficient'. In the testing of respondents' perceptions regarding special finishes on clothing labels, it was established that 76.4% of the respondents perceived the indication of special finishes applied to clothing as 'absolutely efficient' or 'efficient'. Most of the respondents (69.5%) perceived the indication of eco friendly clothing as 'efficient' or 'absolutely efficient'. The majority (78%) of the respondents perceived that the licensed trade marks were indicated efficiently on clothing labels. Regarding the ranking of these aspects, size indication was perceived as most 'efficient', followed by indication of brand name and care instructions in words. Country of origin was perceived as least 'efficiently' indicated.

To summarise, respondents perceived the colour of clothing labels (79.9%), the letter size used on labels (83%) and the readability (77.6%) as satisfactory. Furthermore, it was of great importance that clothing labels should not fade (68.8%) and that the positioning should be on the same place. Respondents perceived the indication of information on clothing as efficient, regarding the fibre content (84.2%), country of origin (61.2%), size indication (89.5%) as well as additional information such as applied special finishes (76.4%), indication of eco friendly clothing (69.5%) and licensed trade marks (78%). It can therefore be said that the respondents in general perceived the nature of and the information on clothing labels as satisfactory and efficient.

Respondents' use of clothing labels

Regarding objective three, Section D of the questionnaire tested to what extent respondents use the various types of information on clothing labels during the information search, purchase stage and the post purchase stage, specifically during care and for future reference.

The frequency with which respondents use the information on clothing labels before and during purchasing

Place Table 10 here

The information search and purchasing stages of the purchase decision were investigated to determine respondents' use of clothing labels before and during purchasing of clothing. According

to Table 10, the largest group of the respondents revealed that they only used the indication of fibre content sometimes (27%), followed by always (25%), seldom (24.3%) and mostly (23.7%) before and during the purchasing stage. The results indicated that nearly half of the respondents (48.7%) used the indication of fibre content, while just more than half of the respondents (51.3%) infrequently used this information. Contrary to these findings, a study by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:100) found that the indication of fibre content was rated as the most important information on the clothing label. Their findings were also supported by other studies that found that the fibre content was the most important information consumers look for during the information search stage (Davis, 1987:11-12, Maqalika-Mokobori, 2005:63).

More respondents indicated that they 'sometimes' or 'seldom' (64.8%) considered the country of origin before and during the purchasing stage, while the remainder of the respondents indicated that they 'mostly' or 'always' considered the country of origin before and during purchasing clothing. A study among Australian consumers indicated that they 'always' (20.4%) and 'often' (28.1%) looked at the country of origin on clothing labels (Patternson & Tai, 1991:8). Consequently, in comparison to Australian consumers, South African respondents made less use of the country of origin information.

Of the 304 respondents 91.1% indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' used the size indication on clothing labels before and during their purchase. Similar results obtained by Davis (1987:11) revealed that 84.6% of the respondents used size to judge the fit. In contrast, a study by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:101) found that only 30% of consumers made use of the size indication on the clothing label to determine the fit of the item.

The majority of the respondents (90.8%) 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the price indication on clothing before and during their purchase. Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:101) obtained similar results and found that only four percent of Ghanaian consumers indicated that the price was unimportant, when the product was desirable. This suggests that the majority of respondents used the price indication when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products.

In total 55% of the respondents 'mostly' or 'always' used the indication of manufacturer before and during purchasing of clothing products. In a study by Davis (1987:12), it was found that 70.1% of respondents did make use of the name of the manufacturer when evaluating a clothing product,

suggesting that the South African respondents used the name of the manufacturer on clothing labels less when compared to consumers in the United States of America. Just about two-thirds (68.1%) of these South African respondents 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the brand name when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products.

Nearly two-thirds (63.2%) of the respondents indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' used the care instructions provided in words. In addition, just less respondents (56.6%) 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the care instructions provided in symbols. Furthermore, a total of 57.2% of these respondents 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the indication of special finishes before and during their purchasing decision. Half of the respondents (51%) indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' used the indication of eco friendly clothing before and during purchase decisions. These results are unique as no similar or contradicting results have been obtained elsewhere.

More than half of the respondents (58.6%) indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the licensed trademarks such as pure cotton, before and during their purchasing decisions. On average more than half (61.8%)** of the respondents 'always' or 'often' made use of clothing labels during their decision to purchase. In contrast a study by Muller (1982:217) found that only 15.1% of the South African consumers used the care instructions of clothing labels during their purchasing decision, suggesting that consumers in the twenty first century possibly more frequently refer to clothing labels' information during their purchasing decision than in the twentieth century. The size indication was ranked first, implying that this information on clothing labels were consulted most frequently, followed by price and brand name. Fibre content and country of origin were consulted second least and least frequently respectively.

The extent to which respondents used clothing label information when cleaning clothing

In the post purchase stage, respondents care for their clothing by means of cleaning it. The responses of the respondents in this study are displayed in Table 11.

Place Table 11 here

** Average of positive percentages in Table 10.

More than half (53.6%) of the respondents indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the fibre content information when caring for their clothing. The majority (72.1%) of the respondents indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' used the ironing instruction when caring for their clothing, therefore it can be said that the respondents fairly regularly made use of the ironing instruction when deciding on care procedures. Similar findings obtained by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:100) indicated that 82.9% of Ghanaian consumers used clothing labels to obtain information regarding the ironing instruction, specifically to determine the suggested temperature.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.5%) indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the drying and dry-clean instruction when caring for their clothing products. Similar results were found by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:100) who indicated that 63.8% of Ghanaian consumers made use of the drying instruction to establish the correct drying method. Nearly as many of the respondents (61.5%) 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the bleach instruction when caring for their clothing. The respondents indicated that 73.6% 'always' or 'mostly' used the washing instruction. Similar results were obtained by Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:100) who indicated that 78% Ghanaian consumers made use of the washing instruction, to determine which appropriate detergent, cleaning method and water temperature should be used. In addition, 62.5% of the respondents indicated that they 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the dry-clean instructions when caring for their clothing products. Further more, 56.9% of the respondents 'always' or 'mostly' used the indication of special finishes when cleaning their clothes.

On average the majority of the respondents (63.2%)* 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the clothing label when deciding on suitable care procedures. Once again contradicting results were obtained by Muller (1982:217) indicating that only 23.3% of the respondents used the clothing label during their care procedure decisions. A possible explanation for this is the time lapse from Mullers' study until now, indicating that today's respondents more often use clothing labels when deciding on suitable care procedures for their clothing. The washing instructions followed by the ironing instructions were ranked the highest, where as the fibre content indication was ranked the lowest.

The use of labels for reference purposes when purchasing similar clothing items and the comparison of male and female respondents in this regard In the post purchase stage,

* Average of positive percentages in Table 11

consumers may refer to clothing label information in order to make a repeat purchase in the future, when evaluating a similar item. The respondents' responses to their use of clothing labels as future reference and the comparison of male and female respondents in this regard are displayed in Table 12.

Place Table 12 here

Of the 304 respondents 61.2% said that they did look at the indication of fibre content when purchasing or evaluating a similar item, whereas only 38.8% did not. In addition, the respondents indicated that 42.4% did and 57.6% did not make use of the information regarding the country of origin on the clothing label when purchasing or evaluating a similar item. Almost all of the respondents (95.1%) made use of the size indication when purchasing or evaluating a similar item. The majority (64.8%) of the respondents responded that they did consider the indication of manufacturer when purchasing or evaluating similar items. These results are unique as no similar or contradicting results were obtained elsewhere. Additionally, nearly three-quarters (74.3%) of the respondents indicated that they did make use of the specification of brand name when purchasing or evaluating similar items. With reference to additional information on labels, 56.9% indicated that they used information regarding special finishes applied to clothing when purchasing or evaluating similar items, while the indication of eco friendly clothing was used by half of the respondents (51%) when purchasing or evaluating similar products.

Respondents indicated that 63.5% of them made use of the licensed trademarks such as pure cotton, when purchasing or evaluating a similar product. Furthermore, just more than two-thirds (68.1%) of the respondents made use of the care instructions in words, while 63.2% consulted the symbols when purchasing or evaluating similar items. The w-values indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female respondents' use of clothing labels for reference and future purchasing. The size indication followed by brand name indication were ranked the highest with regard to use, in contrast with country of origin that was ranked the lowest, indicating that this information is not very useful to respondents.

Differences between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

Regarding objective four, the comparison between male and female respondents' knowledge of information and care symbols on clothing labels is displayed in Tables

5 and 6 respectively. The comparison of the male and female respondents' answers to the section regarding their knowledge of the information on clothing labels (Table 5) yielded three large and one small practically significant effect sizes regarding price ($w=0.81$) and size indication (letters ($w=0.57$) and numbers ($w=0.68$)) respectively. Whereas the comparison between male and female respondents' knowledge of the care symbols (Table 6) yielded another three large practically significant effect sizes for the hand wash ($w=0.61$), iron ($w=0.60$) and bleach instruction ($w=0.52$) respectively. This difference can be ascribed to the fact that males do not experience the need to understand the information on labels as they are in general not responsible for caring of their own clothing.

The comparison between male and female respondents' perceptions of the physical nature as well as the importance and efficiency of information on clothing labels is displayed in Tables 7, 8 and 9. Regarding the nature of clothing labels (Table 7) male and female respondents differed with a small practically significant effect size ($d=0.23$), with reference to the size of the label. Females were more satisfied with this aspect of clothing labels. Regarding the importance of the nature of clothing labels (Table 8) two small practically significant differences between males and females were found with reference to the facts that labels must not scratch ($d=0.39$) and must not show ($d=0.35$). In both cases females were more convinced of these requirements possibly due to the importance of the aesthetical aspects. When looking at the small practically significant differences between the responses of males and females regarding the efficiency of information indication on clothing labels (Table 9), they differed with reference to one aspect. This was the indication of special finishes applied ($d=0.34$). The female respondents were more convinced than the males that this aspect on clothing labels was indicated efficiently.

The comparison between male and female respondents' use of the information on clothing labels is displayed in Table 10, 11 and 12. Most of the male and female respondents answered similarly for the section regarding their use of clothing labels before and during purchasing (Table 10). As a small practically significant effect size ($d=0.43$) regarding the care instruction symbols, country of origin $d=0.32$ and size indication $d=0.28$, although country of origin is in general not very useful information, however females used this information more frequently than males. Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:99) found that both male and female consumers make use of the clothing label to obtain care instructions, regarding washing, drying ironing and storage. Furthermore they also found that male as well as female respondents made use of clothing labels to determine the fit of the item. Regarding the use of clothing label information when cleaning clothing (Table 11), no practically significant differences were found between responses of male and female respondents.

These results differ from those of a study done on consumers in Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, which found that female consumers tend to obtain more information than male consumers (Cleaveland et al, 2003:31). In addition, Cleaveland et al. (2003:31) found that male consumers are more likely to make use of store sales personnel to obtain information. The majority of the results of this study suggest that the South African male and female respondents do not differ remarkably in terms of the preceding objectives regarding respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels.

To summarise, male and female respondents answered the section regarding their perceptions of clothing labels similarly, displayed in Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10 as the *d*-values thereof only indicated small effect sizes. The highest effect sizes obtained were $d = 0.43$ (Table 10) indicating a small difference in male and female consumers' use of care instructions before and during purchase and $w = 0.81$ (Table 5) indicating a large difference between male and female consumers regarding their knowledge of price. Thus, in general there were only a few significant differences between male and female respondents regarding their perceptions of the nature of and the information on clothing labels. Fianu and Harrison-Arthur (1997:99) found that there were no significant differences between male and female consumers when looking for clothing labels while purchasing clothing products.

The relationship between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels

Place Table 13 here

Regarding objective five, in Table 13, Pearson's correlation coefficients revealed that the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels yielded a statistically significant negative correlation of $r = -0.132$ with their use of clothing labels. Subsequently, the higher the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels, the less they used it and vice versa, (Table 13) possibly because respondents may think they know enough to determine what clothing product to purchase and how to care for it without referring to the clothing labels. This explanation is supported by research done on consumers' knowledge that indicated that respondents with moderate knowledge on a subject will search more intensively for information, whereas experts refrain from searching for additional

information if knowledge exists on the subject (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2008:215; Gothan & Erasmus, 2008:654). Pearson's correlation coefficients indicated that the respondents' perceptions of the physical nature of clothing labels had a positive statistically significant correlation with use ($r = 0.313$). This indicated that the better the respondents' perceptions of clothing labels were, the more frequent respondents' made use thereof. A possible reason for this correlation may be that when respondents perceive the physical nature of clothing labels as satisfying, they may be more willing to use them. If the clothing labels met their needs, it probably encouraged them to use them more often. Rousseau and Spoelstra (2003:217) found that consumers behaved according to their perceptions and not necessarily in response to the actual reality, therefore respondents' perceptions possibly influenced their search for and use of the information on clothing labels.

Conclusion

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and had completed Grade 12 which can be described as a young and knowledgeable group. The first objective was to determine respondents' knowledge regarding clothing labels. The majority of the results of objective one revealed that on average 71%* of the respondents had adequate knowledge of the information presented on clothing labels (excluding the care instructions) and 65.4%** had knowledge regarding the care instructions. It can be concluded that a total of 68.2%*** of the respondents understand the information on clothing labels, specifically concerning the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions. As nearly a third of the respondents did not know the meaning of the information, as found on clothing labels, they may not be able to make informed purchase or care decisions.

The second objective was to determine respondents' perceptions regarding clothing labels, with reference to the physical nature, other selected aspects and efficiency of information indication respondents ranked the colour, readability as most efficient. The statement that the printed information remains legible was ranked the least positive by the respondents. It seems as if the respondents did not have a problem with colour of the label as 82.9% of the respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied'. The majority of the respondents (77.7%) perceived the readability of

* Average of all the percentage distributions in Table 5

** Average of all the percentage distributions in Table 6

*** Average of percentage distributions of Table 5 & Table 6

information on clothing labels as positive, therefore it can be said that the respondents perceived clothing labels as remaining adequately legible.

Nearly all of the respondents (95.4%) viewed it as very important that the clothing label must not scratch them, implying that the construction and fibre composition of clothing label have to be carefully considered to minimise scratching the respondents.

Most of the respondents (84.9%) perceived clothing labels as a form of embarrassment, if they showed. The respondents (70.7%) were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the positioning of clothing labels in general and 50.7% also indicated that they perceive it as of great importance that the label is always on the same place of the clothing products, because it possibly assists them in finding it easily, and as a result using it. The conclusion was that respondents perceived the various aspects of the physical nature of the clothing label as mainly satisfactory.

Most (89.5%) of the respondents perceived the size indication on clothing labels as efficient. A total of 77% respondents perceived the indication of the manufacturer on clothing labels as satisfactory. Furthermore, 86.2% of the respondents perceived the indication of the brand name as satisfactory. The respondents also perceived the care instructions presented in words (81.4%) and symbols (76.3%) on clothing labels as efficient. The results indicated that respondents perceived the additional information regarding special finishes efficient, implying that it met their needs. It can be said that the indication of eco friendly clothing on labels was also perceived as efficient. Regarding the efficiency of information indication, most of the respondents (84.2%) were satisfied with the fibre content indication on clothing labels. Most (78%) of the respondents truly perceived the indication of licensed trade marks as efficient on clothing labels. It can therefore be said that respondents ranked their perceptions of information indication on clothing labels specifically, in the following order: size indication, brand name, care instructions in words, the fibre content, additional information, manufacturer, care instructions in symbols, indication of eco friendly clothing and country of origin.

The third objective was to determine respondents' use of clothing labels at various stages. The responses are discussed in the ranking order of respondents' use of clothing labels. The size

indication was extensively used 'always' or 'mostly' by 91.1% of the respondents in their information search stage. In addition, the majority of the respondents (90.8%) used the price indication when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products. Most (68.1%) of the South African respondents made use of the brand name when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products. A total of 63.2% of the respondents made use of the care instructions in words and more than half of the respondents made use of the licensed trade marks before and during their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, 57.2% of the South African respondents 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the indication of special finishes before and during their purchasing decision. A total of 56.6% of the respondents made use of care instructions in symbols. More than half (51%) the respondents regularly used the eco friendly indication before and during purchase decisions. The South African respondents used the name of the manufacturer on clothing labels (55%) less frequently.

The results indicated a great variance in respondents' use of the indication of fibre content, as nearly half (48.7%) the respondents 'always' or 'mostly' used this information. It can be said that the fibre content was used during the information search stage, to assist in purchasing decisions. Respondents made insufficient use (35.2%) of the country of origin indication on clothing labels when making purchasing decisions. The South African respondents used the name of the manufacturer on clothing labels (55%) less frequently. On average the majority (61.8%)* of respondents regularly used the information on the clothing label during their purchase decision making. Respondents in the twenty first century more frequently referred to the clothing label information during their purchasing decision than in the twentieth century.

Regarding the use of labels during cleaning of clothing products, the majority (73.6%) of the respondents made use of the washing instruction and 72.1% also made use of the ironing instruction. Sixty two point five percent (62.5%) of the respondents used the drying instruction, furthermore, 65.4% of the respondents used the bleach indication during care procedures. The fibre content indication was ranked the least by 53.6% respondents while selecting appropriate care procedures. On average the majority (62%)** of respondents regularly made use of the clothing label when deciding on suitable care procedures. Compared to previous research, today's respondents use the clothing label more often when deciding on adequate care procedures for their clothing.

* Average of positive percentage distribution of Table 10

** Average of positive percentage distribution in Table 11.

Considering the use of labels for reference purposes when purchasing or evaluating a similar item almost all of the respondents (95.1%) made use of the size indication followed by more than two thirds (74.3%) of the respondents who made use of the indication of brand name.

The majority of respondents did make use of the care instructions in words (68.1%) and symbols (63.2%) when purchasing or evaluating similar items. The country of origin was ranked lowest when evaluating or purchasing similar items. In conclusion it can be said that 62% of respondents often used the information on the clothing labels during their pre- and post purchase stage, including their information search, care practices and future use.

The fourth objective was to determine whether males and females differ regarding their knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The comparison of the male and female respondents' responses to the section regarding their knowledge of the clothing labels yielded three large effect sizes namely: price and size indication in numbers followed by size indication in letters. It seems that the female respondents have more knowledge in this regard. The difference regarding the knowledge of the brand name yielded only a small effect size which could indicate that both male and female respondents knew something about brand names. Knowledge regarding care instructions also yielded three large effect sizes namely: the hand wash, ironing and bleaching symbol. Again female respondents had more knowledge regarding care symbols.

There were also no significant differences between male and female respondents' response regarding their perceptions of the nature and the effectiveness of the information on clothing labels. Small *d*-values were computed regarding the difference between male and female respondents with reference to the size of the label itself, the fact that the label must not scratch and must not show. The difference in opinion between male and female respondents regarding the efficiency of information indication on clothing labels yielded only one small *d*-value regarding the indication of special finishes, such as wrinkle free performance. This could possibly be ascribed to the fact that if they know how to care for their clothing, wrinkle free performance is an important aspect implying no ironing is required. Most of the male and female respondents responded similarly for the section regarding the use of clothing labels, as none of their *d*-values had a significant effect size, with the exception of one small effect size (.43) namely the use of care instruction symbols.

Summarizing, it can be said that males and females differ practically significantly regarding knowledge (significant *w*-values regarding price, size indication in numbers and in letters) whilst the *w*-values were significant regarding the hand wash, ironing temperature and bleach instructions with reference to differences between male and female perceptions. Satisfaction regarding the physical nature of clothing labels, practically small significant *d*-values were found for the fact that labels must not scratch or show, the size of the label itself and the indication of special finishes applied. Regarding the frequency with which respondents use the information on clothing labels before and during purchasing and when cleaning clothing items after purchasing, males and females differed to a small extent regarding the use of care instruction symbols.

The fifth objective determined whether relationships exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. Correlations indicated that the higher the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels, the lower their perception of the clothing labels was, and vice versa, whereas the better the respondents' perception of clothing labels was, the more frequent respondents made use thereof. On the other hand, the higher the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels was, the less they used them and, vice versa.

Concluding remarks

The results found that male as well as female respondents had adequate knowledge, positive perceptions and optimal use of clothing labels in general. Furthermore, only a few significant differences were found between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. It was established that relationships do exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. This study shows that clothing labels are necessary as respondents do have knowledge, perceptions and make use thereof. Although the respondents have adequate knowledge, positive perceptions and make optimal use of clothing labels, more attention can be given to development of more informative information without making the labels bigger. The physical nature can be improved to make it less irritating. Consumers can be educated to have more knowledge of the information and therefore use it more optimally.

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TABLE 1: VALIDITY: KEISER MEYER OLKIN MEASURE OF SAMPLE ADEQUACY

Section and questions	Keiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)
Section B: Question 8-19 Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels	0.724
Section C: Question 20-38 Consumers' perceptions of clothing labels	0.824
Section D: Question 39-66 Consumers' use of clothing labels	0.891

TABLE 2: VALIDITY: FACTOR EXTRACTION

Section and questions	Factors extracted	Percentage of total variance explained (%)	Range of communalities
Section B: Question 8-19 Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels	4	53%	0.360 - 0.673
Section C: Question 20-38 Consumers' perceptions of clothing labels	4	55%	0.303 – 0.671
Section D: Question 39-66 Consumers' use of clothing labels	7	65%	0.319 - 0.760

TABLE 3: RELIABILITY DETERMINATION: CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENT

Section and question number	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	N (number of Items)
Section B: Question 8-19 Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels	0.599	12
Section C: Question 20-38 Consumers' perceptions of clothing labels	0.809	19
Section D: Question 39-66 Consumers' use of clothing labels	0.915	28

TABLE 4: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY SAMPLE (N=304)

Demographic characteristics		Frequency (n)	Percent distribution (%)
Age in years	18-24 *	114	37.5
	25-30	67	22
	31-35	36	11.8
	36-40	17	5.6
	41-50	44	14.5
	51-60	19	6.3
	60 and older	7	2.3
Marital status	Single/ unattached *	154	50.7
	Living with spouse	18	5.9
	Married	112	36.8
	Divorced/ separated	10	3.3
	Widow/ Widower	10	3.3
Highest level of education	Some Primary school	2	0.7
	Completed Grade 7	4	1.3
	Some High school	26	8.6
	Completed Grade 12 *	123	40.5
	Certificate/ Diploma	76	25
	University degree	49	16.1
	Postgraduate degree	24	7.9
Gender	Male	74	24.3
	Female *	230	75.7
Population group	Black	98	32.2
	White *	189	62.2
	Coloured	0	0
	Indian	0	0
	Asian	15	4.9
	Other	2	0.7
Place of residence	Rustenburg	90	29.6
	Klerksdorp *	95	31.3
	Potchefstroom	68	22.4
	Other	51	16.8
Current occupation	No response	66	21.7
	Not working/ student/ housewife/ retired	83	27.3
	Working/ Manager/ Teacher/ Auditor/ Clerk	155	50

* Highest percentage of respondents for each demographic characteristic

TABLE 5: RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE REGARDING CLOTHING LABEL INFORMATION

Item	N=304		Male (N=74)		Female (N=230)		w-values
	Frequency (n)	Distribution % + #	Frequency (n)	Distribution % #	Frequency (n)	Distribution % #	
Fibre content	173	56.9	37	12.2	136	44.7	0.08
Size indication (letters)	245	80.6	50	16.4	195	64.1	0.57***
Size indication (numbers)	254	83.6	53	17.4	201	66.1	0.68***
Price	260	85.5	58	19.1	202	66.4	0.81***
Brand name/manufacturer	201	66.1	43	14.1	158	52.0	0.24*
Additional information	162	53.3	39	12.8	123	40.5	0.05

The w-values indicate a significant effect size when comparing male and female respondents.

* Small effect size, ** Medium effect size, *** Large effect size

+ Average percentage of correct answers = 71%

Percentage distribution is computed out of the total respondents (304)

TABLE 6: RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE REGARDING CARE INSTRUCTIONS ON CLOTHING LABELS

Symbols	Meaning	N=304		Male (N=74)		Female (N=230)		w-values
		Frequency (n)	Distribution+ %	Frequency (n)	Distribution %	Frequency (n)	Distribution %	
	Do not bleach	231	76	56	75.7	175	76.1	0.52***
	Use moderately warm iron	245	80.6	53	71.6	192	83.5	0.60***
	Dry clean	97	31.9	25	33.8	72	31.3	-0.32
	Machine wash at moderate heat	198	65.1	47	63.5	151	65.7	0.26*
	May tumble dry	179	58.9	38	51.4	141	61.3	0.11*
	Hand wash	243	79.9	56	75.7	187	81.3	0.61***

The w-values indicate a significant effect size when comparing male and female respondents.

* Small effect size, ** Medium effect size, *** Large effect size

+ Average percentage of correct answers = 65.4%

TABLE 7: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND SATISFACTION REGARDING THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF CLOTHING LABELS

Consumers' view of clothing labels in general	1. Very satisfactory			2. Satisfactory			3. Almost satisfactory			4. Unsatisfactory			Positive	Negative	Mean score	Ranking order	d-values*
	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	1+2	3+4			
	n %			n %			n %			n %			n %	n %			
Printed information remains legible	80 26.3	14 18.9	66 28.7	129 42.4	32 43.2	97 42.2	58 19.1	17 23	41 17.8	37 12.2	11 14.9	26 11.3	209 68.7	95 31.3	2.83	6	0.16
The colour of label itself	94 30.9	21 28.4	73 31.7	158 52	37 50	121 52.6	37 12.2	10 13.5	27 11.7	15 4.9	6 8.1	9 3.9	252 82.9	52 17.1	3.09	1	0.03
The letter size on the label	84 27.6	21 28.4	63 27.4	159 52.3	37 50	122 53	47 15.5	12 16.2	35 15.2	14 4.6	4 5.4	10 4.3	243 79.9	61 20.1	3.03	4	0.15
Readability	103 33.9	22 29.7	81 35.2	133 43.8	33 44.6	100 43.5	55 18.1	16 21.6	39 17	13 4.3	3 4.1	10 4.3	236 77.7	68 22.4	3.07	2	0.12
Size of the label itself	97 31.9	23 31.1	74 32.2	145 47.7	30 40.5	115 50	38 12.5	14 18.9	24 10.4	24 7.9	7 9.5	17 7.4	242 79.6	62 20.4	3.04	3	0.23*
The position of the label on the clothing item	89 29.3	20 27	69 30	126 41.4	31 41.9	95 41.3	57 18.8	17 23	40 17.4	32 10.5	6 8.1	26 11.3	215 70.7	89 29.3	2.89	5	0.02

*The d-values indicate practically significant differences between male and female respondents.

TABLE 8: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED ASPECTS REGARDING THE NATURE OF CLOTHING LABELS

Importance of selected aspects regarding the nature of clothing labels	1. Very important			2. Important			3. Of little importance			4. Of no importance			Positive	Negative	Mean score	Ranking order	d-values*
	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	1+2	3+4			
	n			n			n			n			n	n			
	%			%			%			%			%	%			
Label must not scratch	248	49	199	42	18	24	12	6	6	2	1	1	290	14			
	81.6	66.2	86.5	13.8	24.3	10.4	3.9	8.1	2.6	0.7	1.4	0.4	95.4	4.6	3.76	1	0.39*
Label must always be in the same place	154	32	122	85	27	58	37	7	30	28	8	20	239	65			
	50.7	43.2	53	28	36.5	25.2	12.2	9.5	13	9.2	10.8	8.7	78.7	21.4	3.2	3	0.11
Label must not show	214	39	175	44	18	26	19	9	10	27	8	19	258	46			
	70.4	52.7	76.1	14.5	24.3	11.3	6.3	12.2	4.3	8.9	10.2	8.3	84.9	15.2	3.46	2	0.35*

*The *d*-values indicate practically significant differences between male and female respondents.

TABLE 9: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFICIENCY OF INFORMATION INDICATION ON CLOTHING LABELS

Efficiency of information indication on clothing labels	1. Absolutely efficient			2. Efficient			3. Barely efficient			4. Not efficient			Positive	Negative	Mean score	Ranking order	d-values*
	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	1+2	3+4			
	n			n			n			n			n	n			
	%			%			%			%			%	%			
Indication of fibre content	114 37.5	28 37.4	86 37.4	142 46.7	28 37.4	114 49.6	34 11.2	14 18.9	20 8.7	14 4.6	4 5.4	10 4.3	256 84.2	48 15.8	3.17	4	0.13
Country of origin	79 26	21 28.4	58 25.2	107 35.2	24 32.4	83 36.1	65 21.4	18 24.3	47 20.4	53 17.4	11 14.9	42 18.3	186 61.2	118 38.8	2.70	9	-0.06
Size indication of clothing product	180 58.9	34 45.9	145 63	93 30.6	29 39.2	64 27.8	16 5.3	6 8.1	10 4.3	16 5.3	5 6.8	11 4.8	273 89.5	32 10.6	3.43	1	0.28
Indication of the manufacturer/retailer	120 39.5	30 40.5	90 39.1	114 37.5	22 29.7	92 40	48 15.8	16 21.6	32 13.9	22 7.2	6 8.1	16 7	234 77	70 23	3.09	6	0.09
Indication of the brand name	154 50.7	33 44.6	121 52.6	108 35.5	30 40.5	78 33.9	31 10.2	10 13.5	21 9.1	11 3.6	1 1.4	10 4.3	262 86.2	42 13.8	3.33	2	0.08
Care instructions in words	151 49.7	30 40.5	121 52.6	99 31.7	26 35.1	73 31.7	42 13.8	14 18.9	28 12.2	12 3.9	4 5.4	8 3.5	250 81.4	54 17.7	3.28	3	0.25
Care instructions in symbols	117 38.5	23 31.1	94 40.9	115 37.8	30 40.5	85 37	52 17.1	15 20.3	37 16.1	20 6.6	6 8.1	14 6.1	232 76.3	72 23.7	3.08	7	0.20
Indication of special finishes applied to clothing	123 40.5	20 27	103 44.8	109 35.9	30 40.5	79 34.3	57 18.8	20 27	37 16.1	15 4.9	4 5.4	11 4.8	232 76.4	72 23.7	3.12	5	0.34*
Indication of eco friendly clothing	95 31.3	19 25.7	76 33	116 38.2	24 32.4	92 40	53 17.4	20 27	33 14.3	40 13.2	11 14.9	29 12.6	211 69.5	93 30.6	2.87	8	0.24
Licensed trade marks	137 45.1	27 36.5	110 47.8	100 32.9	27 36.5	73 31.7	49 16.1	15 20.3	34 14.8	18 5.9	5 6.8	13 5.7	237 78	67 22	3.17	4	0.21

*The d-values indicate practically significant differences between male and female respondents.

TABLE 10: THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH RESPONDENTS USE THE INFORMATION ON CLOTHING LABELS BEFORE AND DURING PURCHASING

Frequency of use	1. Always			2. Mostly			3. Sometimes			4. Seldom			Positive +	Negative	Mean score	Ranking order	d-values*
	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	1+2	3+4			
	n			n			n			n			n	n			
	%			%			%			%			%	%			
Fibre content	76	18	58	72	23	49	82	22	60	74	11	63	148	156	2.49	9	-0.18
	25	24.3	25.2	23.7	31.1	21.3	27	29.7	26.1	24.3	14.9	27.4	48.7	51.3			
Country of origin	47	14	33	60	17	43	91	29	62	106	14	92	107	197	2.16	10	-0.33
	15.5	18.9	14.3	19.7	23	18.7	29.9	39.2	27	34.9	18.9	40	35.2	64.8			
Size indication of garment	229	42	187	48	20	28	21	9	12	6	3	3	277	27	3.64	1	-0.28
	75.3	56.8	81.3	15.8	27	12.2	6.9	12.2	5.2	2	4.1	1.3	91.1	8.9			
Price indication	225	49	176	51	16	35	20	9	11	8	0	8	276	28	3.62	2	-0.07
	74	66.2	76.5	16.8	21.6	15.2	6.6	12.2	4.8	2.6	0	3.5	90.8	9.2			
Name of the manufacturer	78	22	56	89	25	64	69	19	50	68	8	60	167	137	2.58	8	0.13
	25.7	29.7	24.3	29.3	33.8	27.8	22.7	25.7	21.7	22.6	10.8	26.1	55	45.3			
Indication of the brand name	115	26	89	92	26	66	62	18	44	35	4	31	207	97	2.94	3	0.11
	37.8	35.1	38.7	30.3	35.1	28.7	20.4	24.3	19.1	11.5	5.4	13.5	68.1	31.9			
Indication of special finishes applied to clothing	86	16	70	88	28	60	78	20	58	52	10	42	174	130	2.68	7	0.15
	28.3	21.6	30.4	28.9	37.8	26.1	25.7	27	25.2	17.1	13.5	18.3	57.2	42.8			
Indication of eco friendly clothing	77	17	60	78	17	61	92	24	68	57	16	41	155	149	2.58	8	0.13
	25.3	23	26.1	25.7	23	26.5	30.3	32.4	29.6	18.8	21.6	17.8	51	49.1			
Licensed trade marks	100	22	78	78	24	54	75	18	57	51	10	41	178	126	2.75	5	-0.04
	32.9	29.7	33.9	25.7	32.4	23.5	24.7	24.3	24.8	16.8	13.5	17.8	58.6	41.5			
Care instructions wording	106	19	87	86	26	60	65	18	47	47	11	36	192	112	2.83	4	0.07
	34.9	25.7	37.8	28.3	35.1	26.1	21.4	24.3	20.4	15.5	14.9	15.7	63.2	36.9			
Care instructions symbols	93	17	76	79	20	59	82	29	53	50	8	42	172	132	2.71	6	0.43
	30.6	23	33	26	27	25.7	27	39.2	23	16.4	10.8	18.3	56.6	43.4			

*The d-values indicate practically significant differences between male and female respondents (# small effect size)

+ The average of positive percentages = 61.8%

TABLE 11: THE EXTENT TO WHICH RESPONDENTS USE CLOTHING LABEL INFORMATION WHEN CLEANING CLOTHING

Extent to which consumers use:	1. Always			2. Mostly			3. Sometimes			4. Seldom			Positive**	Negative	Mean score	Ranking order	d-values*
	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & Female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	1+2	3+4			
	n			n			n			n			n	n			
	%			%			%			%			%	%			
Fibre content	104	22	82	59	21	38	70	20	50	71	11	60	163	141	2.64	6	-0.09
	34.2	29.7	35.7	19.4	28.4	16.5	23	27	21.7	23.4	14.9	26.1	53.6	46.4			
Ironing instruction	134	26	108	85	29	56	48	12	36	37	7	30	219	85	3.04	2	0.05
	44.1	35.1	47	28	39.2	24.3	15.8	16.2	15.7	12.2	9.5	13	72.1	28			
Drying instruction	120	20	100	70	26	44	75	19	56	39	9	30	190	114	2.89	3	0.15
	39.5	27	43.5	23	35.1	19.1	24.7	25.7	24.3	12.8	12.2	13	62.5	37.5			
Dry-clean indication	127	21	106	63	22	41	65	20	45	49	11	38	190	114	2.88	4	0.19
	41.8	28.4	46.1	20.7	29.7	17.8	21.4	27	19.6	16.1	14.9	16.5	62.5	37.5			
Bleach instruction	136	29	107	51	11	40	63	22	41	54	12	42	187	117	2.88	4	0.13
	44.7	39.2	46.5	16.8	14.9	17.4	20.7	29.7	17.8	17.8	16.2	18.3	61.5	38.5			
Washing instruction	150	28	122	74	25	49	46	12	34	34	9	25	224	80	3.12	1	0.18
	49.3	37.8	53	24.3	33.8	21.3	15.1	16.2	14.8	11.2	12.2	10.9	73.6	26.3			
Indication of special finishes applied to clothing	103	21	82	70	19	51	71	21	50	60	13	47	173	131	2.71	5	0.07
	33.9	28.4	35.7	23	25.7	22.2	23.4	28.4	21.7	19.7	17.6	20.4	56.9	43.1			

*The *d*-values indicate practically significant differences between male and female respondents.

** Average of positive percentages = 63.2%

TABLE 12: THE USE OF LABELS FOR REFERENCE PURPOSES WHEN PURCHASING SIMILAR CLOTHING ITEMS AND THE COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS IN THIS REGARD

Use of clothing labels for reference purposes	1. Yes			2. No			Ranking order for positive use	w-values +
	Male & female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)	Male & female (N=304)	Male (N=74)	Female (N=230)		
	n	n	n	n	n	n		
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Fibre content	186 61.2	49 66.2	137 59.6	118 38.8	25 33.8	93 40.4	7	0.12*
Country of origin	129 42.4	39 52.7	90 39.1	175 57.6	35 47.3	140 60.9	10	0.16*
Size indication of garment	289 95.1	70 94.6	219 95.2	15 4.9	4 5.4	11 4.8	1	0.04
Indication of manufacturer	197 64.8	48 64.9	149 64.8	107 35.2	26 35.1	81 35.2	4	0.08
Indication of brand name	226 74.3	58 78.4	168 73	78 25.6	16 21.6	62 27	2	0.10*
Indication of special finishes applied to clothing	173 56.9	39 52.7	133 57.8	131 43.1	35 47.3	97 42.2	8	0.07
Indication of eco friendly clothing	155 51	37 50	117 50.9	149 49	37 50	113 49.1	9	0.09
Licensed trade marks	193 63.5	45 60.8	147 63.9	111 36.5	29 39.2	83 36.1	5	0.07
Care instructions wording	207 68.1	48 64.9	158 68.7	97 31.9	26 35.1	72 31.3	3	0.07
Care instructions symbols	192 63.2	46 62.2	145 63	112 36.8	28 37.8	85 37	6	0.08

+ The w-values indicate a significant effect size when comparing male and female respondents.

* Small effect size, ** Medium effect size, *** Large effect size

TABLE 13: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RESPONDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF CLOTHING LABELS (N=304)

Consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels	Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels	Consumers' perceptions of information on and nature of clothing labels	Consumers' use of clothing labels
Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels	-	-0.072	-0.132*
Consumers' perceptions of information on and nature of clothing labels	-	-	0.313**
Consumers' use of clothing labels	-	-	-

* Small correlation, ** Medium correlation

Chapter 4:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

All consumers wear clothing which they have to obtain on a regular basis. The purchasing of clothing products becomes even more complex, as the information and the variety of brands available increase, making it harder to make informed decisions. Clothing labels can assist consumers when they are deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products, by providing product information and potential care instructions. Clothing labels include hangtags and permanent labels found on clothing products, which provide a wide range of explanatory terms and directions to consumers. These terms and conditions inform consumers about the clothing products' care instructions, properties and origin.

Consumers' knowledge of clothing labels involves the understanding of information depicted on the labels, such as the meaning of the care symbols. Furthermore, consumers perceive clothing labels with their senses when reading and handling them before, during and after purchasing clothing products. Subsequently, perceptions are established by consumers' impressions of a product in their environment. Clothing labels have to be read, before consumers can understand the information on them or form perceptions thereof. Thus it can be said that consumers' perceptions of clothing labels are most likely the reason why consumers avoid reading and applying the information on clothing labels, or not.

Research established that consumers do make use of clothing labels and hangtags to various degrees in all phases of purchasing, including the information search phase as well as the pre- and post purchase phase, to acquire information. Despite the fact that consumers use clothing labels, the efficiency of the labels and hangtags has not been established. The use of clothing labels may assist consumers in making informed pre- and post purchase decisions. The permanent labels mostly contain the care instructions, the manufacturer's number, country of origin and fibre composition, amongst others. Temporarily attached clothing labels provide information in the pre- and post purchase situation, but after the information has been obtained consumers remove them and dispose thereof. These clothing labels are referred to as hangtags, and may provide information such as price, brand name, store name and additional product information.

Consumers make use of the information on clothing labels to determine the fibre content, country of origin, size, price, manufacturer, brand name, possible cleaning methods and any additional information of interest when provided while purchasing clothing. On the other hand consumers experience the nature of the label which includes the physical aspects of the label such as the colour, the letter size on the label, size of the label, readability, permanency, attachment and positioning of the label. The information and the physical nature of clothing labels make an impact on consumers' comprehension, perceptions and use thereof. As a result consumers' usage of clothing labels may increase if their perceptions and knowledge of clothing labels are investigated and understood.

The methodology of this study can briefly be described as follows: The research design was non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory, and descriptive. The study population included all the consumers in the three areas in North-West Province that met the selection criteria. The sample was selected specifically in the Bonjana, Platinum and Southern district municipalities, which included, Rustenburg, Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. Data collection was done at one of each town's largest shopping malls, so that a fairly representative sample of the population of each town was obtained.

A non-probability convenience sample was used for this study, by using the respondents who complied with the selection criteria, and included consumers above the age of 18 years, male and female, who could read and who had purchased clothing products from one of the selected stores. The measuring instrument consisted of open-ended and closed questions. After ethical approval had been obtained, the questionnaire was pilot tested and improved. The measuring instrument was tested for validity and reliability. A total of 340 completed questionnaires were obtained, of which only 304 were valid and useable. Furthermore, statistical analysis was used to obtain the frequency distribution of the responses and to calculate mean scores and the effect size of differences between male and female consumers. Correlation coefficients were computed to determine if correlations exist between consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The results were displayed in tables.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

4.2.1 Conclusions according to the objectives

4.2.1.1 Objective 1

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24 years, and completed Grade 12

which can be described as a young and knowledgeable group. The first objective was to determine respondents' knowledge regarding clothing labels. The majority of the results of objective one revealed that on average 71%* of the respondents had adequate knowledge of the information presented on clothing labels (excluding the care instructions) and 65.4%** had adequate knowledge regarding the care instructions. It can be concluded that a total of 68.2%*** of the respondents knew the information on clothing labels, specifically, concerning the fibre content, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions. As nearly a third of the respondents did not know the meaning of the information, as found on clothing labels, they might not be able to make informed purchase or care decisions.

4.2.1.2 Objective 2

The second objective was to determine respondents' perceptions regarding clothing labels, with reference to the physical nature, other selected aspects and efficiency of information indication respondents ranked the colour and readability as most efficient. The statement that the printed information remains legible was ranked the least positive by the respondents. It seems as if the respondents did not have a negative perception with colour of the label as 82.9% of the respondents was 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied'. The majority of the respondents (77.7%) perceived the readability of information on clothing labels as positive, therefore it can be said that the respondents perceived clothing labels as remaining adequately legible. Nearly all of the respondents (95.4%) was very positive that the clothing label must not scratch them, implying that the construction and fibre composition of clothing labels have to be carefully considered to minimise scratching the respondents.

Most of the respondents (84.9%) perceived clothing labels negatively as a form of embarrassment, if they showed. The respondents (70.7%) were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the positioning of clothing labels in general and 50.7% also indicated that they positively perceive the label to always be on the same place of the clothing products, because it possibly assists them in finding it easily. The conclusion was made that respondents perceived the various aspects of the physical nature of the clothing label positively.

* Average of all the percentage distributions in Table 5

** Average of all the percentage distributions in Table 6

*** Average of percentage distributions of Table 5 & Table 6

The most (89.5%) of respondents perceived the size indication on clothing labels as positive. A total of 77% respondents perceived the indication of the manufacturer on clothing labels positively. Furthermore, 86.2% of the respondents perceived the indication of the brand name as positive. The respondents positively perceived the care instructions presented in words (81.4%) and symbols (76.3%) on clothing labels. The results indicated that respondents perceived the additional information regarding special finishes positively, implying that it met their needs. It can be said that the indication of eco friendly clothing on labels was also positively perceived. Regarding the efficiency of information indication, most of the respondents 84.2% were satisfied with the fibre content indication on clothing labels. Most (78%) of the respondents truly perceived the indication of licensed trade marks on clothing labels as positive. It can therefore be said that respondents ranked their perception of information indication on clothing labels specifically, in the following order: size indication, brand name, care instructions in words, the fibre content, additional information, manufacturer, care instructions in symbols, indication of eco friendly clothing and country of origin.

4.2.1.3 Objective 3

The third objective was to determine respondents' use of clothing labels at various stages. The responses are discussed in the ranking order of respondents' use of clothing labels. The size indication was sufficiently used 'always' or 'mostly' by 91.1% of the respondents in their information search stage. In addition, the majority of the respondents (90.8%) used the price indication when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products. Most (68.1%) of the South African respondents made use of the brand name when deciding whether or not to purchase clothing products. A total of 63.2% of the respondents made use of the care instructions in words and more than half of the respondents made use of the licensed trade marks before and during their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, 57.2% of the South African respondents 'always' or 'mostly' made use of the indication of special finishes before and during their purchasing decision. A total of 56.6% of the respondents made use of care instructions in symbols. More than half (51%) the respondents sufficiently used the eco friendly indication before and during purchase decisions. The South African respondents used the name of the manufacturer on clothing labels (55%) less frequently. The results indicated a great variance in respondents' use of the indication of fibre content, as nearly half (48.7%) the respondents 'always' or 'mostly' used this information. It can be said that the fibre content was used during the information search stage, to assist in purchasing decisions. Respondents made little use (35.2%) of the country of origin indication on clothing labels when making purchasing decisions. The South African respondents used the name of the manufacturer on clothing labels (55%) less frequently. On average, the majority (61.8%)* of

respondents regularly used the information on the clothing label during their purchase decision making. Respondents in the twenty first century more frequently referred to the clothing label information during their purchasing decision than in the twentieth century.

Regarding the use of labels during cleaning of clothing products, the majority (73.6%) of the respondents made use of the washing instruction and 72.1% also made use of the ironing instruction. Sixty two point five percent (62.5%) of the respondents used the drying instruction. Furthermore, 65.4% of the respondents used the bleach indication during care procedures. The fibre content indication was ranked the least by 53.6% respondents while selecting appropriate care procedures. On average the majority (62%)** of respondents regularly made use of the clothing label when deciding on suitable care procedures. Compared to previous research, today's respondents used the clothing label more often when deciding on adequate care procedures for their clothing.

Considering the use of labels for reference purposes when purchasing or evaluating a similar item almost all of the respondents (95.1%) made use of the size indication followed by more than two thirds (74.3%) of the respondents who made use of the indication of brand name. The majority of respondents did make use of the care instructions in words (68.1%) and symbols (63.2%) when purchasing or evaluating similar items. The country of origin was ranked lowest when evaluating or purchasing similar items. In conclusion it can be said that 62% of respondents often used the information on the clothing labels during their pre- and post purchase stage, including their information search, care practices and future use. Conclusively respondents sufficiently made use of clothing labels before, during and after purchase practices.

4.2.1.4 Objective 4

The fourth objective was to determine whether males and females differ regarding their knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. The comparison of the male and female respondents' response to the section regarding their knowledge of the clothing labels yielded three large effect sizes namely: price and size indication in numbers followed by size indication in letters. It seems that the female respondents have more knowledge in this regard. The difference regarding the knowledge of the brand name yielded only a small effect size which could indicate that both male and female respondents know something about brand names. Knowledge regarding care instructions also yielded three large effect

* Average of positive percentage distribution of Table 10

** Average of positive percentage distribution in Table 11.

sizes namely: the hand wash symbol, ironing symbol and bleaching symbol. Again female respondents had more knowledge regarding care symbols.

There were also no significant differences between male and female respondents' response regarding their perceptions of the nature and the effectiveness of the information on clothing labels. Small *d*-values were computed regarding the difference between male and female respondents with reference to the size of the label itself, the fact that the label must not scratch and must not show. The difference in opinion between male and female respondents regarding the efficiency of information indication on clothing labels yielded only one small *d*-value regarding the indication of special finishes, such as wrinkle free performance. This could possibly be ascribed to the fact that if they know how to care for their clothing, wrinkle free performance is an important aspect implying no ironing is required. Most of the male and female respondents responded similarly for the section regarding the use of clothing labels, as none of their *d*-values had a significant effect size, with the exception of one small effect size (0.43) namely the use of care instruction symbols.

Summarizing, it can be said that males and females differ practically significantly regarding knowledge (significant *w*-values regarding price, size indication in numbers and in letters) whilst the *w*-values were significant regarding the hand wash, ironing temperature and bleach instructions with reference to differences between male and female perceptions and satisfaction regarding the physical nature of clothing labels, practically small significant *d*-values were found for the fact that labels must not scratch or show, the size of the label itself and the indication of special finishes applied. Regarding the frequency with which respondents use the information on clothing labels before and during purchasing and when cleaning clothing items after purchasing, males and females differed to a small extent regarding the use of care instruction symbols.

4.2.1.5 Objective 5

The fifth objective determined whether relationships exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. Correlations indicated that the higher the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels, the lower their perceptions of the clothing labels were and vice versa, whereas the better the respondents' perceptions of clothing labels were, the more frequently respondents made use thereof. On the other hand, the higher the respondents' knowledge of clothing labels was, the less they used them and vice versa.

4.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

Firstly, new data were gathered to investigate whether the provision of clothing labels alone will encourage the use thereof and if all respondents understand and perceive clothing labels as intended. Secondly, the lack of research in the field of clothing labels was reduced by shedding new light on the topic regarding respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. Finally, data were gathered to determine if male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels differ, and whether correlations were found between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels mutually.

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation of this study included that only three towns were covered in the North-West Province, implying that the sample obtained data that cannot be generalised for all the consumers in the North-West Province. Subsequently, the data are only relevant regarding consumers living in Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Klerksdorp. Another limitation may have been that the study was quantitative, making it difficult to truly measure consumers' use of clothing labels without leaving room for the halo effect, as consumers may say they make use of clothing labels, but in real life they don't and vice versa. These limitations can be considered in similar research to ensure that new results shed light on the previous research. Furthermore, the lack of availability of recent studies and information on clothing labels, specifically regarding consumers' behaviour, limited the study as the results could not be compared extensively to similar studies done in South Africa. This may cause an erroneous interpretation as the contexts of other countries are different.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The recommendations for action are aimed at the retailers and educators. Retailers can take action by informing consumers about the information on clothing labels, by means of emphasizing the importance of using clothing labels on their hang tags, web site and other promotional information. In addition, retailers can also take action by altering the nature of the clothing label to suit the consumers' preferences concerning the font size, fibre composition and positioning. Educators can take action by actively educating consumers regarding the correct meaning and application of information and symbols found on clothing labels, as well as the importance of using clothing labels regularly. Action is

needed from the retailers and educators in order to improve consumers' knowledge, subsequent perceptions and finally their use of clothing labels to contribute to consumer satisfaction.

4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The results of this study can be used and build on to provide consumers as well as manufacturers with recommendations. For example consumers can be assisted in the areas that they lack knowledge, have erroneous perceptions and refrain from using clothing labels. This can then in turn assist the consumers so that they can make optimum use of their clothing products as intended by manufacturers. On the other hand, the manufacturers can be informed on consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels in South Africa. The manufacturers can then use the information to improve their clothing labels or promote their research, in order to provide in their consumers' needs better. Consumers' actual knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels should be individually measured by means of observation, to eliminate the halo effect. A wider study population and bigger sample may provide more insight into the aspects already investigated. In conclusion it can be said that many possibilities exist for further studies on clothing labels, especially in South Africa. These possibilities should be considered by post-graduate students and researchers alike to broaden the field of consumer research on clothing labels.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion it can be said that clothing labels should play an important role in consumers' everyday life. Consumers obtain knowledge regarding the information on clothing labels and form perceptions regarding the physical nature of the label as well as the efficiency of the presentation of the information. The consumers furthermore make use of the labels according to the usefulness of the information on clothing labels. Results generally indicated that the respondents had adequate knowledge and positive perceptions of clothing labels, and made use of clothing labels before, during and after purchasing clothing products. Furthermore, a few significant differences were found between male and female respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. It was established that relationships do exist between respondents' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels. Consumers' knowledge of information on clothing labels, their perceptions and use of clothing labels can be improved even more, in order to reach the optimum use of clothing labels.

ADDENDUM A

Questionnaire regarding consumers' knowledge, perceptions and use of clothing labels.

ADDENDUM B

Measuring instrument: content layout

Section	Information the section obtained	Number of questions in section
Section A	Demographic information: gender (male and female), age, occupation, level of education and hometown.	7
Section B	Knowledge of the information on clothing labels: Fibre content, country of origin, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.	12
Section C	Perceptions of clothing labels' nature: Colour, letter size on the label, size of the label, readability, permanency, attachment and positioning of clothing labels. And information: Fibre content, country of origin, size indication, price indication, manufacturer or brand name, additional information and care instructions.	19
Section D	Use of clothing labels: Regarding the information on the clothing labels during the information search stage of the purchase decision, the purchase stage and the post purchase stage as well as during care and for future reference.	28

ADDENDUM C

Letter to store managers



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Consumer Sciences
Tel. (018) 299 2081/2471
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annette.vanaardt@nwu.ac.za
22 Julie 2009

The Manager
City mall
Klerksdorp

Dear Sir/ Madam

Research questionnaire to be filled in in your store

We would like to confirm our agreement with you to accommodate our Masters student, Annemie Niemann, for one day, 21 August, to have a questionnaire on clothing labeling filled in by your customers. The student is mainly interested in how much the customers know about the information on clothing labels, how often they use the labels when purchasing clothing items and whether they understand the symbols on clothing labels. We hereby undertake that the questionnaire will be filled in anonymously and only by voluntary customers.

If you could supply us with an e-mail address, we can e-mail the questionnaire to you if you wish us to do so.

We would like to thank you very much for your willingness to assist us in this research and making this study possible.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Annette van Aardt
Co Study leader
Consumer Sciences

ADDENDUM D

Guidelines for SAAFECS manuscript (Blignaut, 2005) ^{*****}

Preparation and technical detail of manuscripts

Components of a manuscript

Each separate part of the manuscript begins on a new page. Arrange the different parts as follows:

- ♦ Title page
- ♦ Substantive summary ($\pm$ 600 words) in Afrikaans if the article is in English, and vice versa. (This abstract will form part of the final article.)
- ♦ Abstract of 200 words in English. (This abstract will form part of the home page of the article.)
- ♦ Five to ten search words in English. (Please consult your librarian for suitable descriptors.)
- ♦ Text
- ♦ References
- ♦ Tables
- ♦ Figures

1. Title page

The manuscript is sent anonymously to the reviewers, but all identifying information should appear on the title page:

- ♦ Concise title that reflects the contents of the article. (Avoid study, effect and new and use terms that are useful for information retrieval.)
- ♦ Name, current address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address of each author. (Male authors may give only their initials if they prefer.) However, it is customary for female authors to write one first name in full. The same initials and/or name should be consistently used for publications in the JFECS to facilitate indexing.)
- ♦ Information on support the author/s received, financial or otherwise, whether the manuscript forms part of a larger project, and other relevant information
- ♦ a colour photo of all authors in .jpg or .gif format must accompany the manuscript; or they may be e-mailed to seugnet@iburst.co.za when the final manuscript is presented by the editor for publication.

2. Summary

^{*****} (BLIGNAUT, A.S. 2005. Guidelines for authors files properties. Available online. URL: <http://www.up.ac.za/saafecs/general/technical.pdf> Accessed 27 March 2009.)

The second page of the manuscript – numbered Page 1 – contains the title of the article and a summary of the article in Afrikaans if the article is in English, and vice versa. In a research article this abstract should present a summary of the background, purpose, design and methods (including dates of data collection, sampling, methods of data collection and analysis), results and conclusions. For a review or other article it should cover the context of the review, the main aims/questions addressed, design and methods. The main elements of the argument, theory or model being proposed in relation to the stated aims/questions, and the main conclusions should be briefly described.

3. Abstracts and search words

An abstract, of not more than 200 words in English, that will be used on the home page of the article on the JFECS web site. Please supply five to ten search words in English that are compatible with literature database descriptors. Please consult your librarian.

4. Text

The text begins on a separate page. Manuscripts should be typed in 1,5 or double spacing on A4 paper. Leave 30 mm margins on both sides, an extra space between paragraphs and between subheadings. Number every paragraph in the left-hand margin to facilitate the task of the reviewers. Headings and subheadings: No more than three heading and subheading levels should be used. Headings and subheadings are not underlined. The three levels are dealt with as follows:

HEADING

First-level headings are typed in the upper case bold. Two spaces (three manual line breaks) are left above and two below the heading.

Second-level subheading

This subheading is typed in lower case bold. A space (two manual line breaks) is left above and below the subheading.

Third-level subheading A space (two manual line breaks) is left above the subheading. The first sentence begins on the same line, with five spaces between the subheading and the start of the sentence.

5. Writing style

Authors should use correct technical terminology and avoid unnecessary repetition and circumlocution. All numbers from one to twelve are to be written in full, except fractions, units of measurement, statistical data and symbols. When a number is inevitable at the beginning of a sentence it must be written in full. Only acknowledged abbreviations and symbols should be used. Less well-known abbreviations have to be explained. The symbols % and °C are typed next to the figure without a space (25% and 40°C). Metric terminology and symbols have to comply with the recommendations of the Metrication Department of the SABS.

6. References

The Journal uses a user-friendly adaptation of the Harvard system:

References in the text:

- ♦ Literature cited in the text are arranged unnumbered and alphabetically according to author on a separate page.
- ♦ Quotations and references to literature in the text are accompanied by the author's surname, the year of publication and the page number, in brackets (Smit, 1987:12).
- ♦ Facts or arguments that are not those of the author are supported by a source reference. When the source is an article, the author's name and the date are required. When the source is a book, the page/s are also required.
- ♦ References to literature with three or more authors require the first author's name only, followed by et al (Louw et al, 1986:34).
- ♦ Different publications by an author in the same year are indicated by a, b, etc: Brown (1998a & 1998b) found that ...
- ♦ References to different publications of the same author are made with the dates in chronological order: (Du Plessis, 1987, 1988, 1995a, 1995b & 1999).
- ♦ References to an anonymous source require the title of the publication in the place of the author's name (Fur and fur-like fabrics, 1971:15).

List of references:

References that are frequently used by authors who publish in the JFECS are illustrated below. Please note the use of punctuation marks, spaces, italics and capitals. Books, government publications, proceedings and theses:

KINGDON, J. 1997. The Kingdon field guide to African mammals. San Diego. Williams. [Book with one author.]

GIBSON, R. 1997. Prisoner of power: the Greg Blank story. Johannesburg. Clarke. [Book with subtitle.]

ESCHLEMAN, JR. 1993. The family. An introduction. 7th ed. London. Allyn & Bacon. [Book with several editions.]

SWART, PJ & BLACK, JP. 1999. A tour of South Africa. Johannesburg. Haigen. [Book by two authors.]

LONGENECKER, JG, MOORE, CW & PETTY, JW. 1994. Small business management: An entrepreneurial emphasis. 9th ed. Cincinnati. South-Western.

South African Association of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences. 2000. Home economics in South Africa. Pretoria. [A book published by an organisation, association or institution.]

South Africa. Department of Constitutional Development. 1993. Negotiating a democratic South Africa. Pretoria. Government Printer. [A government publication.]

Fifth National Congress of the South African Association for Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences. Potchefstroom. 2000. Proceedings. Pretoria. South African Association for Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences. [Proceedings of conferences, congresses.]

NYE, FI & BERARDO, FM (eds). 1966. Emerging conceptual frameworks in family analysis. 1966. London. Collier-MacMillan. [Book with an editor or compiler as author.]

McINTYRE, J. 1966. The structure-functional approach to family study. In Nye, FI & Berardo, FM. 1966. Emerging conceptual frameworks in family analysis. London. Collier-MacMillan. [Chapter by an author in a book edited by another person.]

SCHÖNFELDT, HC. 1997. Effect of age on beef quality. PhD thesis. Pretoria. University of Pretoria.

Articles in journals and newspapers:

ERASMUS, AC. 1998. A suggested approach to educating consumers on the purchase of electrical household appliances. Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences 26(2):145-151. [Article by one author.]

VILJOEN, AT & GERICKE, GJ. 1998. Methodology for the collection and application of information on food habits and food preferences in menu planning of heterogeneous groups. Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences 26(2):89-102. [Article by two authors.]

BOSMAN, MJC, VORSTER, HH & STEYN, HS. 1998. The effect of storage on the characteristics of high-fibre muffins with different levels of a protein-based fat substitute. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences* 26(2):131-144. [Article by three or more authors.]

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NGWEZI, P. 2000. Flood victims near city get a helping hand. *Pretoria News* 16 February:1. [Article or news item under author's name.]

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Jonassen, DH. Technology as cognitive tools: learners as designers. Available on line. URL: <http://itech1.coe.uga.edu/itforum/paper1/paper1.html>. Accessed 15 April 1999. [Article on the Internet.]

7. Tables

Well-planned tables contribute to the value of an article. Only essential information should be included in support of the text:

- ♦ Each table has to be typed on a separate page and in single spacing.
- ♦ Tables have to be numbered and given headings that reflect the content:

TABLE 1: RANKING OF THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME ECONOMISTS

- ♦ Each column should have a heading and should contain measurements of the same unit.
- ♦ No full stops are used after headings.
- ♦ Note the use of a decimal comma.
- ♦ Abbreviations (explained in a footnote under the table) may be used as space is limited.
- ♦ In the text a table is referred to by its number: Table 1 or (Table 1).
- ♦ Indicate placement of the table in the text as follows:

Place Table 1 here

8. Figures and other graphical material

Carefully selected graphs, sketches or other graphic material could facilitate understanding of the text. Bear in mind that figures have to fit into one or two columns of the Journal. Detail may be lost in the process of scaling down graphic material to fit into one or two columns:

- ◆ Design the graphics with the width of a column (75 mm) or page (170 mm) in mind. The largest size graphics is 225 mm x 170 mm.
- ◆ Text-based figures should be constructed in Microsoft Office PowerPoint XP/2003 and saved as a PowerPoint Presentation (.ppt format).
- ◆ Use Arial type-face as the base font for all text-based figures.
- ◆ Charts should be constructed in Microsoft Office Excel XP/2003 and saved as an Excel spreadsheet (.xls format).
- ◆ Use Arial type-face as the base font for all text in charts.
- ◆ Graphical material accompanying the text should be in a format that is ready for typographical processing. Additional fees will be charged for editing of incorrect graphical material.
- ◆ Photographs or maps should be clear, with sufficient contrast, but keep the pixel size of the photograph as low as possible for easy downloading from the Internet.
- ◆ Submit photographs electronically in a .jpg format.
- ◆ All photographs and graphic material are referred to as figures.
- ◆ Most of the conventions for tables apply to figures as well, except that figures have subscripts:

FIGURE 1: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE FORMATION OF HABITUAL EATING HABITS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

- ◆ In the text figures are referred to by their numbers: Figure 1 or (Figure 1).
- ◆ Indicate placement of the figure in the text as follows:

Place Figure 1 here
