# The influence of salesperson trust on customer behaviour

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of salesperson trust and commitment on store trust, satisfaction and customer purchase intention. Interpersonal relationships between retail salespeople and the customers form a very critical and important aspect in ensuring repeated customer purchase intentions. This study investigates a five-variable conceptual model to test these relationships on person-to-person level. The five variables are investigated in depth on the basis of the model. The target population is retail consumers from whom data was collected and analysed through descriptive analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and path modelling.

The results proved to be reliable, valid and significant with the overwhelming majority showing that salesperson trust and commitment indeed influence store trust and satisfaction. These findings further reveal that where an interpersonal relationship exists on the basis of trust, commitment and satisfaction, there is an inclination towards repeat purchases. This provides further evidence of the value of generating and maintaining interpersonal relationships between salespeople and customers.

KEY WORDS: salesperson trust, salesperson commitment, store trust, store satisfaction, customer purchase intention

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Last but certainly not least, our syndicate group, Vision 2017. The vision is realised and you guys were indeed incredible.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AGFI | Average Goodness Fit Index |
| CIP | Customer’s Intention to Purchase |
| CFA | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| CFI | Comparative Fit Index |
| CMIN | Covariance Matrix |
| CR | Cumulative Frequency |
| DF | Degree of Freedom |
| GFI | Goodness of Fit Index |
| IFI | Incremental Fit Index |
| NFI | Normed Fit Index |
| NPAR | Non Parametric test |
| P | Probability Value |
| PCLOSE | Probability of Close Fit |
| RFI | Reliability Fit Index |
| RMR | Root Mean Residual |
| RMSEA | Random Measure of Standard Error Approximation |
| SE | Standard Error |
| SEM | Structural Equation Modeling |
| SC | Salesperson Commitment |
| SS | Store Satisfaction |
| ST | Salesperson Trust |
| STt | Store Trust |
| TAM | Technology Acceptable Model |
| TLI | Tucker Lewis Index |

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Introduction

Every business has to sell its products to customers or consumers; therefore, sales are a very critical function in any organisation. According to Jaramillo *et al*. (2005:705), a salesperson, who is the individual responsible for the sales function, is a very important person in any organisation to realise sales. This is an individual whose influence and involvement in the business dealings with its customers have a direct impact on the bottom line.

The salesperson can therefore make or break a business because he is the interface between the organisation and the consumers, as its representative to the customers and consumers out there (Rix *et al.,* 2003:8). To the customer, this person is expected to behave in a certain manner and to conduct himself and his business in a certain way. There is a great expectation from this individual from the ethics point of view.

A salesperson is the individual who is the middle man between his company's production function and his organisation's customers. He must represent the customers to internal stakeholders and represent his organisation and product to his customers. The salesperson's ethical stance has a direct influence firstly on his fellow internal stakeholders, but secondly, and most importantly, also to his customers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987:230), Sales realisation is primarily influenced by the salesperson.

Salesperson trust is therefore an important element of ensuring that a business achieves its sales goals. Flaherty and Pappas (2000:272) state that a salesperson has great influence on the trust and satisfaction of the consumer. It is only once the consumer is trusting enough and satisfied with the product that the sales person is selling – that there can be an intention to commit into buying.

Consumers often feel what is known as a buyer's remorse. This is a minor doubt after a purchase brought about by the question as to whether the purchase was the best decision or not (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1987:530). In order to curb this feeling, there needs to be a committed salesperson who is not only interested in a once-off sale. Once such a commitment is shown, it leads to trust by the consumer and satisfaction, knowing that they have made the best decision. This, in turn, makes future intentions to purchase much easier.

According to Miranda *et al.* (2005:228), when a customer has knowledge that he can trust the seller, satisfaction is a sure thing, and this, in turn, leads to purchase intention. This can only be when there is a strong, committed and cooperative salesperson or business driving the process.

It is clear that a business can increase its sales through the services of a salesperson, and that the buyer gets to know about the products he buys through the salesperson. There is also a great deal of research in this regard, which has sought to look and indeed confirm that products are bought because the customers get to know about them in one way or the other. What has been proven is that the more productive the salesperson is, the more sales are realised by the selling store (Machado & Diggenes, 2012:152).

Research has focused on the product being sold and the attributes of the products. This has led to a great deal of information on product performance, product specifications and products meeting customer needs and even the salespeople's understanding of the customer's needs (Kennedy *et al.*, 2001:76).

What some of these studies have omitted, though, is a very critical element of sales realisation. This is the fact that products and product specifications have to be communicated by someone or something. What has not been studied thoroughly is the relationship between the salesperson and his customers in relation to the soft skills and attributes outside of the product itself.

The primary objective of this study is to determine what the influence will be of salesperson trust, and his commitment, not only on his product and business, but also to the consumer, on consumers' trust and satisfaction. This study further seeks to determine whether the consumer's trust in the salesperson and his satisfaction have any effect on his/her intention to purchase from that salesperson and that store. It will be interesting to determine the relationship between these aspects and to see to what extent, if at all, they affect one another.

Considering the amount of research that is available, it has barely touched on this important aspect of the sales function; therefore, this study will help many sales businesses to further understand how their representatives affect their customers and their willingness or their intention to purchase from those particular retail stores. It will assist the sales teams in South Africa to further understand the soft skills necessary for sales personnel and ensure that all new recruits in this area do meet the necessary criteria to make it in this profession. It will further aid them in identifying the necessary training for their current salespeople who may not have these attributes already.

The modern customer is much more informed and indeed knows what he needs and what to do to satisfy his needs (Rix *et al.,* 2003:88). This study will also benefit the customer with not only the insight into what attributes they can expect from sales personnel, but also what influences their intention as buyers and spenders of money to make that decision to buy.

## 1.2 Problem statement

It is clear that a business can increase its sales through the services of a sales person (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000:272), and that the buyer gets to know about the products he buys through the salesperson. There is a great deal of research in this regard, which has sought to look and indeed confirm that products are bought because the customers get to know about them in one way or the other. What has been proven is that the more productive the salesperson is, the more sales are realised by the selling store, according to Flaherty and Pappas (2000:272).

Research has focused on the product being sold and the attributes of the products. This has led to much information on product performance, product specifications and products meeting customer needs and even the salespeople’s understanding of the customer’s needs (Engel *et al.,* 1990:122).

What some of these studies have omitted, though, is a very critical element of sales realisation. This is the fact that products and product specifications have to be communicated by someone or something (Belonax *et al.,* 2007:249). What has not been studied thoroughly is the relationship between the salesperson and his customers in relation to the soft skills and attributes outside of the product itself.

This study intends to determine the influence that salesperson trust, and his commitment, not only to his product and business, but also to the consumer, has on that consumer’s trust and his satisfaction. This study further seeks to determine whether the consumer’s trust of the salesperson and whether his satisfaction have any effect on his intention to purchase from that salesperson and that store. It will be interesting to determine the relationship between these aspects and to what extent, if at all, they affect one another.

Considering the amount of research that is available, it has barely touched on this important aspect of the sales function, and this study will help many selling businesses to further understand how their representatives affect their customers and their willingness or their intention to purchase from them. It will assist the sales teams in South Africa to further understand the soft skills necessary for sales personnel and ensure that all new recruits in this area do meet the necessary criteria to make it in this profession. It will further aid them in identifying the necessary training of their current salespeople who may not have these attributes already.

The modern customer is much more informed and indeed knows what he needs and what to do to get it (Rix *et al.,* 2003:88). Therefore, this study will also benefit them with not only the insight into what attributes they can expect from sales personnel, but also what influences their intention as buyers and spenders of money to make that decision to buy.

## 1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of salesperson trust and commitment to store trust, satisfaction and the intention to purchase.

## 1.4 Research objectives

### 1.4.1 Theoretical objectives

a. To review literature on salesperson trust.
b. To review literature on salesperson commitment.
c. To review literature on store trust.
d. To review literature on store satisfaction.
e. To review literature on customer purchase intention.

### 1.4.2 Empirical objectives

a. To investigate the influence of salesperson trust on store trust.
b. To investigate the influence of salesperson trust on store satisfaction.
c. To investigate the influence of salesperson commitment on store trust.
d. To investigate the influence of salesperson commitment on store satisfaction.
e. To investigate the influence of store trust and customer purchase intention.
f. To investigate the influence of store satisfaction and customer purchase intention.

## 1.5 Research questions

a. To what extent does salesperson trust influence store trust?
b. To what extent does salesperson trust influence store satisfaction?
c. To what extent does salesperson commitment influence store trust?
d. To what extent does salesperson commitment influence store satisfaction?
e. To what extent does store trust influence customer purchase intention?
f. To what extent does store satisfaction influence customer purchase intention?

## 1.6 Hypotheses

**H1:** The higher the level of salesperson trust, the higher the level of store trust will be.

**H2:** The higher the level of salesperson trust, the higher the level of store satisfaction will be.

**H3:** The higher the level of salesperson commitment, the higher the level of store trust will be.

**H4:** The higher the level of salesperson commitment, the higher the level of store satisfaction will be.

**H5:** The higher the level of store trust, the greater the chances of purchase intention.

**H6:** The higher the level of store satisfaction, the greater the chances of purchase intention.

## 1.7 Conceptual model

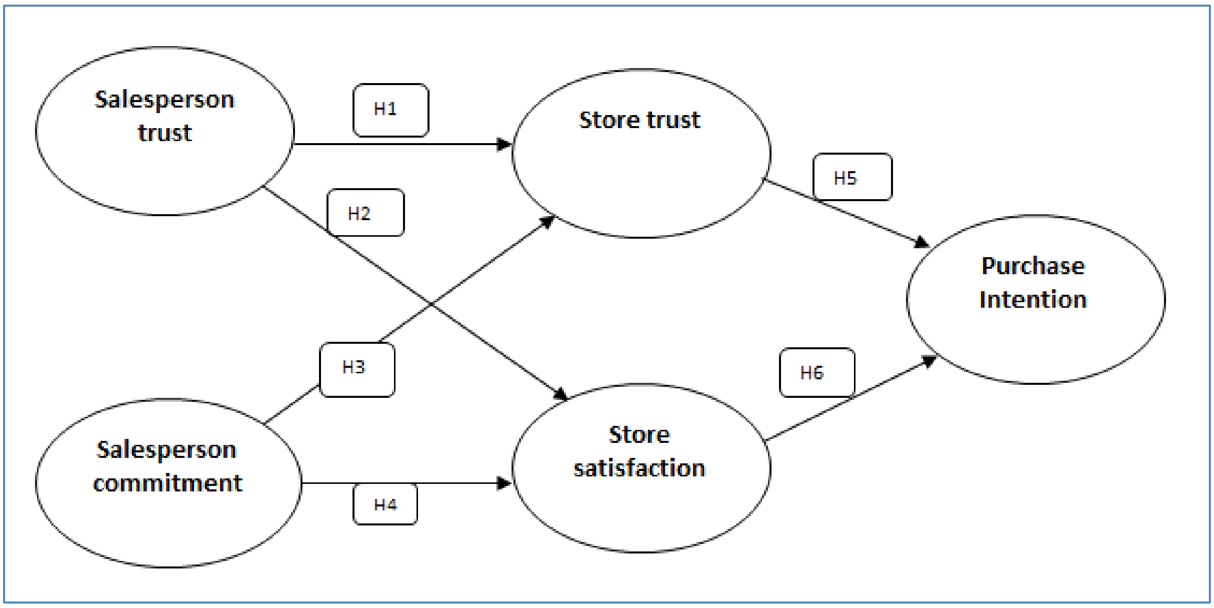

Salesperson trust
H1
Store trust
H2
H5
Purchase Intention
H3
H6
Salesperson commitment
Store satisfaction
H4

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual model representing hypothesised interrelations between the different variables.**

## 1.8 Justification of the study

The benefits of this study are threefold.

a. Firstly, the first two predictor variables, salesperson trust and commitment will firstly benefit salespeople themselves. Because they need to have a better understanding of how they are perceived by the community of customers they serve, this study becomes crucial, more so because consumers have become very knowledgeable in recent times, and they know what they want and how to get it. Salespeople need to be better positioned to fulfil and satisfy the needs of these consumers. They also need to know and understand how to respond positively with regard to service expectations. This study therefore will be very beneficial to salespeople.

b. Secondly, this research will also benefit the selling stores in better understanding themselves and also how the decisions by customers to buy come about. The two mediator variables, store trust and store satisfaction will bring to the fore what relationship they have and that which they ought to have with salespeople in order for them to end up making a sale to their consumers.

c. Lastly, buying consumers need to understand what influences their purchasing decisions and intentions. This aspect will be clarified by the outcome variable, which is the customer purchase intention. Looking at the benefits stipulated above, this study is not only beneficial, but crucial.

## 1.9 Scope of the study

### a. Research design

A quantitative study, through which a questionnaire was formulated and distributed to customers in the retail industry, was followed in this study. The questionnaire was based on Likert scale measuring instrument. This is because quantitative research focuses on numerical data from quantitative variables, according to Bryman (2015:196). The target population identified for this study is the retail industry of the Gauteng business community. The sample frame was therefore only from the Vaal region. Measuring instruments were formulated and the questionnaires would be distributed to sampling elements in the retail industries within the Vaal business region, particularly in Vereeniging, Three Rivers, Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg, because it is in these areas where the majority of the retail industry can be found.

### b. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study has been sampled from a population of retail customers, all of whom had an equal chance of being chosen (Bryman *et al.,* 2015:268) for analysis. The sample was made up of all the individual customers who were at identified retail stores at the time of data collection. A judgemental sampling process, which is a non-probability sampling method, was undertaken to arrive at the list of retail stores for sampling purposes, namely Pick n Pay, Checkers, Spar, Makro, President Hyper and Game. A simple random probability sampling method was used to collect data from the proposed sample frame of 160 units. A final sample of 150 was accepted, as the remaining 10 were rejected on the basis of being incomplete due to some errors on some, while others were not filled in fully.

### c. Data collection

The data collection method involved trained fieldworkers who stood at the entrances of each retail store where pre-arrangements with management of those stores had already been undertaken and permission granted. They then handed the questionnaires to shoppers as they entered the retail shops. They further collected the forms when shoppers left the retail shops. A convenience sampling method was used, whereby all respondents who were in the same retail shop as the fieldworkers had a probability of being chosen (Wiid & Diggens, 2009:200). That raw data then came in the form of answers to the measuring instruments, which were already formulated in a five-point Likert scale (Whitley, 2011:91) for ease of analysis. This collected data was then be brought in for clean-up and analysis.

### d. Data analyses

After collection of the questionnaires from the respondents, the raw data from the measuring instruments was uploaded on an Excel spreadsheet for coding into meaningful data to be analysed, according to Zikmund *et al* (2010:462). It was coded and cleaned in Excel. After that, a computer statistical software program called SPSS was used to transform data into descriptive statistics such as frequency tables. This will aid to make visual sense of the data collected in reporting.

Data was further analysed by Prof Suria Ellis, a research consultant from the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The results from these analyses were used to check the research model fit based on the data collected. Furthermore, it will also check confirmatory factor analysis and path modelling. The measuring instruments must be able to stand the reliability and validity tests (Welman *et al*., 2011:13); this refers to the quality of measurement procedure that provides repeatability and accuracy.

## 1.10 Limitations of the study

This study looks at the relationships or effects of salesperson trust and commitment towards the store trust, satisfaction and customer purchase intention. The focus is from a purchasing customer’s point of view. Despite its usefulness as stated above, there could have been more insightful findings had there been time and resources to also collect data from the salesperson perspective.

Furthermore, this study is only limited to retail industry sales people and does not include corporate industry sales people, such as manufacturing, construction and even housing agents. It would be interesting to compare the retail industry with other sales people in an effort to see whether purchase intentions are also based on sales people’s trust and commitment.

These considerations, however, remain an area that could further be investigated in future to establish the effects of these relationships.

## 1.11 Definitions of key terms

a. Salesperson trust is his character trait that projects honesty and reliability in business dealings with clients. This is a trait that is brought about by past experience with the buying organisation.

b. Salesperson commitment is another character trait of sincere and steadfast fixity of purpose and obligation towards product or service delivery to the consumer

c. Store trust is complete confidence and dependence on the salesperson and his ability to fulfil and satisfy the expectations and commitments he has towards the store.

d. Store satisfaction is the contentment that the store has based on services and products delivered by the salesperson.

**e.** Customer purchase intention is the consumer’s preparedness and willingness to purchase the product or service brought about by his trust and satisfaction of the store and salesperson.

## 1.12 Research report layout

This research report is structured as a mini-dissertation, which consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: An overview of the study

This chapter provides an introduction and overview of this research study. The researcher further presents insight into the research problem and clarifies the objectives of the study. It also includes a brief overview of the scope of this study as well as the limitations to this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This research focused on the theoretical understanding of the proposed variables by different authors. These topics are discussed in detail and it is from these that the basis of the questionnaire to be used in the empirical study is formed.

Chapter 3: Research design

Chapter 3 outlines research methodology. Research design, sampling design, target population, sampling frame, sampling method and sampling size are discussed in detail. The measuring instruments are formulated and a questionnaire is designed.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

Here, the researcher presents the empirical results, and the findings of this study are explained. This is where collected data is interpreted into meaningful results. Data is analysed using descriptive statistics, analyses of variant models and correlation calculations.

Chapter 5: Research findings, conclusion and recommendations

In this chapter, the researcher concludes the study by highlighting the findings in relation to the objectives of the study, providing conclusions and making recommendations for future research.

## 1.13 Conclusion

Chapter 1 provided the background, the problem statement and the overview of the entire study. The following chapter builds on and examines the theoretical study of all the variables used in this study.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

Businesses are increasingly focusing on the development of long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with customers, other organisations and employees. The importance of salespeople understanding how to properly build relationships in today's competitive environment is critical. When strong relationships are built between customers and salespeople, both parties may benefit from the strength of the relationship. Salespeople and their businesses may benefit by increases in consumers' positive word-of-mouth communications, favourable buyer purchase behaviours (Stanko *et al.*, 2007:1099), and increases in performance (Lohtia *et al.,* 2005:1012) due to their trust and satisfaction. The focus of this study therefore focuses on the relational aspects of the relationship as opposed to the economic aspects of this relationship. It is the interpersonal relationship that takes centre stage in this study.

This study focuses on five variables as conceptualised in the model (Figure 1.1) in Chapter 1. Firstly, the predictor variables, which are salesperson trust and salesperson commitment, are discussed. Then follows a discussion of the mediator variables, namely store trust and store satisfaction. Finally, a discussion of the outcome variable, which is the customer purchase intention, is undertaken.

A great deal of reviewed literature shows that some of the essential ingredients in successfully achieving these long-term relationships stated above are the establishment and maintenance of trust and commitment from the salesperson perspective. For the selling organisation, trust and satisfaction have been proven to lead to not only customers' intention to purchase, but also repurchase intention as well as store loyalty. The emphasis on these aspects has widespread applicability to a cross-section of organisations, including organisations selling to businesses, the final consumer, as well as non-profit and governmental agencies (Zhoba & Voorhees, 2006:381).

In the following sections, the five variables, as identified in the conceptual model in Chapter 1, will be explored in more depth.

## 2.2 Salesperson trust

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005:1256) defines trust as "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something." Despite this seemingly simple nature of the definition, trust is perhaps one of the most highly challenging terms, whose concepts are hardly agreed upon by researchers within diverse academic disciplines. Such disagreements are rooted in the differences in viewpoints about the concept. Trust in marketing involves a consumer's perceived reliability on the brand, products, or services of a merchant (Flavian *et al.,* 2006:12), whereas trust, within the context of politics or international relations, reflects a situation where one party does not betray another party in pursuit of financial or other imminent interest. In general terms, trust is defined as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (Chai & Kim, 2010:410; Meyer *et al.,* 1993:540). For this reason, the trustor may engage in activities where there may exist risks (Gefen, 2000:730). Therefore, accepting trust involves taking a certain degree of risk.

Trust is a governance mechanism in exchange relationships characterised by uncertainty, vulnerability and dependence (Jarvenpaa *et al.,* 2000:51). Because trust has been found to affect the buying behaviour of consumers (Abdul *et al.*, 2012:307), and to serve as a key determinant of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:135), it has become crucial for salespeople to be trustworthy.

Salesperson trust therefore is the inclination to be relied upon by the other party, which is the buyer or the buying organisation in this case. The buying organisation is vulnerable to the behaviour of the salesperson (McKnight *et al*., 2002:340). It is the expectation held by the buying organisation that the salesperson is dependable and can be relied upon to deliver on his promises. It is the belief that the salesperson will be honest, fair and reliable.

## 2.3 Salesperson commitment

Commitment can be defined as one’s enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. Commitment has been conceptualised as consisting of three components. Meyer *et al.* (1993:550) define these components as: (1) *instrumental,* where one party takes some action to demonstrate commitment; (2) *attitude,* which signifies one’s intent to continue the relationship; and (3) *temporal,* suggesting that commitment means something over time. The conceptualisation of loyalty (Koo, 2003:60), based on attitude and repeat patronage, is very consistent with this definition of commitment. Therefore, we suggest that from a salesperson perspective, commitment exists as a sign of loyalty (Knox & Walker, 2001:115) to the buying organisation consisting of both positive attitudes and willingness to render the best service.

Salesperson commitment is the desire of the salesperson believing that an ongoing relationship with the buyer is so important as to warrant maximum effort to maintain it. That implies that the committed salesperson believes the relationship is worth working on, to ensure that it endures indefinitely. The salesperson’s continued hard work towards the buyer yields expected results for both parties.

Increased salesperson commitment has a positive effect on buyers’ trust and satisfaction, leading to the buyers’ favourable purchase behaviour (Stanko *et al*., 2007:1100), buyers’ favourable word-of-mouth, and buyers’ propensity to stay in the relationship.

## 2.4 Store trust

As has already been alluded to in section 2.2 above, trust is the assurance that the other party will perform as expected. Trust is formed when the store has a belief that the salesperson will behave with goodwill and in a favourable way, although the acceptance of trust involves taking certain risks (Doney & Cannon, 1997:40). Articles that provided an explicit definition of trust were examined and the finding is that stores hold a belief that the salesperson should have both the necessary competence and motivation to be relied upon. A customer is any person who had, has or can have some interaction with a salesperson or salespersons. The ‘customer’ can include final consumers, any member of an organisational buying centre, or very broadly any shopping or buying role partner of a salesperson or salespeople in general.

Store trust is associated with the belief that the seller, who happens to be the salesperson in this case, will be honest, dependable and reliable in his dealings with the store. Therefore, this means that the store is in a vulnerable position and will trust that the salesperson will fulfil his part of the bargain. Perhaps the best definition is the one provided by Pan and Zinkhan (2006:332), which states that salesperson trust is an attitude that leads the store into committing to a possible loss contingent on the future behaviour of the salesperson.

## 2.5 Store satisfaction

Satisfaction is regarded as a key outcome of buyer-seller relationships (Anderson & Weitz, 1992:22). Satisfaction is seen as a store's affective state resulting from an overall appraisal of their relationship with a seller or salesperson (Anderson & Weitz, 1989:320). Oliver (2000:250) defines economic satisfaction as economic rewards that flow from the relationship, such as sales volume and margins. He defines non-economic satisfaction as a "positive affective response to the non-economic, psychosocial aspects of its relationship, in those interactions with the exchange partner is fulfilling, gratifying, and easy".

Based on the discussion above, this study then focuses on non-economic satisfaction, which is brought about by the relationship with the salesperson. It is psychosocial aspects such as store attitude that ultimately mediate the effects of satisfaction on purchase intention.

Therefore, it is proposed that there is a relationship between satisfaction and salesperson competence. Weitz (1981:93) suggested that the use of high-pressure selling tactics may sacrifice the store's long-term satisfaction. Supporting this, Scheer and Stern (1992:130) found that more dominating influence types result in less satisfaction. Therefore, the use of low-pressure selling tactics is thought to increase satisfaction.

## 2.6 Customer purchase intention

Customer purchase intention is defined here as the willingness or intention of the buyer to purchase a particular brand of product. A buyer who has higher levels of trust in the salesperson and the manufacturer with which he/she has had experience (satisfaction) is more likely to purchase that brand than the customer with lower levels of trust and/or satisfaction. Pappas *et al.* (2013:192) found that one of the outcomes of both trust in the salesperson and trust in the company is purchasing loyalty. The buyer's trust in the salesperson and the company is seen to influence the buyer's purchase intentions.

A large number of studies have been conducted to investigate the determinants of purchase intentions. Results of these studies suggest that trust and satisfaction are some of the most powerful predictors of intentions to purchase. In their early study on consumer trust, Jarvenpaa *et al.* (2000:70) found that stores' trust in the selling partner affects their attitude and perceived risk, which, in turn, influence their willingness to buy. Gefen (2000:733) reported that stores' satisfaction with the processes, products and relationship with the seller influenced their intentions to purchase from them. Gefen's (2002:734) subsequent study also found that overall trust in the seller and its integrity influenced purchase intentions.

From a controlled simulation study, Yoon (2002:49) concluded that website trust, website satisfaction, and website awareness have a significant causal impact on online purchase intention. Van der Heijden *et al.* (2003:45) conducted an empirical study to find factors influencing online purchase intention based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Their findings indicate that there are negative relationships between trust and perceived risk and between perceived risk and attitude towards online purchasing, while there is a positive relationship between attitude towards purchasing and purchase intention. Zhu *et al.* (2009), who also used the TAM theory to develop a consumer trust model, concluded that trust, as well as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and perceived risk significantly impact consumers' purchase intention.

The related literature suggests that store trust and satisfaction do affect customer loyalty as well as purchase intentions.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Chapter 2 consisted of secondary research, which provided theoretical definitions of the five variables, namely salesperson trust, salesperson commitment, store trust, store satisfaction and customer purchase intention. Different sources were consulted in review of available literature for these variables. The next chapter deals with the actual process followed to conduct primary research, which is research design and methodology.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an exploratory research methodology that was followed to determine whether there is any influence of salesperson trust and commitment on store trust and satisfaction on purchase intention. It also provides the measuring instruments derived from the literature review from the previous chapter, which were used in conducting data collection. A questionnaire (Appendix A) was also formulated using these measuring instruments for data collection. Each step is described in detail in the sections that follow.

## 3.2 Research design

After the questionnaire is formulated, it is of paramount importance to collect the data from the respondents that form part of the identified group. Because it is not always possible to interview the entire population, it is critical that the researcher decides on whom to interview and how many units will form a sample from the target group or population (Wiid & Diggens, 2009:54).

For this study, the researcher chose a population from the retail industry as a whole in Gauteng. A non-probability sampling method was used to arrive at a list of retailers in the Vaal Triangle. These retail stores were Pick n Pay, Checkers Hyper, Spar, Makro, President Hyper and Game.

## 3.3 Sampling design

Sample design is the method and process of selecting and identifying the sample from the target population (Webb, 2002:61). It has to do with all aspects of how the samples in the survey is specified and selected. The design of samples is a particularly important aspect of survey methodology, and provides a basis for the sound measurement of economic and social phenomena from surveys of businesses and households. Sampling design covers the following topics:

a. Target population
b. Sampling frame
c. Sampling method

d. Sampling size

All these topics are defined below and the process followed for this study is explained under each topic.

### 3.3.1 Target population

Target population refers to a group of people from whom information is needed. It consists of a comprehensive number of individuals, units or items that can become objects for observation. A target population can also be defined as including all people or items with the characteristic one wishes to understand, meaning that the population can consist of a group of individuals, households, families, businesses, manufacturers, farmers and professional people from whom data is required (Baines & Chanserkar, 2002:149). This is the group of individuals or objects in which the researchers are interested in generalising the conclusions for.

As the research topic states, this study is interested in understanding the effects of salesperson trust, cooperation and commitment on store trust and satisfaction on the customer’s intention to purchase. This study’s target population comprises all the customers who do interact with sales persons in the retail stores from which they buy. This research will target the Vaal Triangle population of retail customers.

### 3.3.2 Sampling frame

The sampling frame is a list of all population units. It is a comprehensive list of elements of the population, from which the sample will be drawn and all do stand an equal chance of being chosen as a sample. It can either be a list, an index or any population record. A sample frame must meet the following requirements (Hague, 2002:91)

a. All the elements of the population must be well represented, including among others, but not limited to gender, age, geographical area and employment group.
b. It must be up to date
c. The details of each entry must be complete and correct.
d. There must be no duplication of entries.

e. It must be accessible and the information must be arranged in such a way that the sample can easily be drawn from it.

f. It should ideally contain additional information that facilitates stratification.

Because this research project is directed towards the customers, whose specific names cannot be listed *per se*, the sample frame then is all the customers who were at the retail store at the time of data collection. The following retail stores have been identified to identify and list our sample frame: Pick n Pay, Shoprite, Checkers Hyper, Spar, Makro, President Hyper and Game. Permission to conduct the study was requested from all the stores and granted by management of the said stores.

### 3.3.3 Sampling method

The sampling method is the scientific procedure of selecting those sampling units that would provide the required estimates with associated margins of uncertainty, arising from examining only a part and not the whole. Sampling methods can be divided into two categories, i.e. probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Churchill, 1999:519).

In probability sampling, each unit of the population has a known positive probability of being selected as a unit of the sample. In non-probability sampling methods, the probability that a specific unit of the population will be selected is unknown and cannot be determined. Non-probability sampling is based on the judgement of the researcher.

The basic difference of the two sampling methods is that in the probability sampling method, the sample error of a given sample size can be estimated statistically if the sample meets certain requirements, while in the non-probability sampling method, no indication can be given of possible bias or error margins of estimates of population characteristics.

Based on the discussion above, it is clear then that the best method to use is the probability sampling method. This is not to say that the non-probability methods cannot yield good results. However, what it means is that the user of non-probability sampling methods is unable to give any indication of the reliability of the results that are obtained.

Some of the known non-probability sampling methods are convenience sampling, judgement sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. As already stated, these methods will not be used in this research; instead, among the following probability sampling methods, simple random probability sampling will be used. Probability sampling has the following methods: simple random probability sampling, cluster sampling, stratified sampling and systematic sampling (Hague, 2002:91).

Probability sampling methods

a. In a simple random probability sampling process, units of the population are selected individually and directly by means of the random process. The selection is done in such a way that each unit has the same probability as any other unit in the population of being selected. Therefore, each element of the population has a known and equal chance of being selected.

b. The cluster method is the method that is used when it is difficult, impractical or even impossible to compile a sampling frame of the elements. It can involve two steps, whereby, firstly, the population is divided into mutually exclusive and comprehensive groups or clusters. Then, a simple random sample is drawn from each of the selected clusters.

c. Stratification is a two-step process. Firstly, the heterogeneous population is grouped into homogeneous strata that are mutually exclusive and comprehensive. Then, a random sample of elements is drawn independently from each stratum using either random sampling or systematic sampling. Effective stratification requires knowledge of the composition of the population, which can be stratified according to variables such as gender, age, income and level of education.

d. In systematic sampling, the sample elements are drawn systematically from a complete list of the population elements. It is used when the subjects or respondents in the study are arranged in a systematic or logical manner.

Out of the four discussed methods, for this study, the simple random sampling method was used. The main reason of using this method was because of its advantage over the others. It is easy to understand, but most importantly it is easy to apply.

### 3.3.4 Sampling size

The sample size is the number or quantity of units or people that are going to be subjects of the study (Shao, 1999:99). It is the number of people who are going to be answering or filling out the questionnaire. Determining the sample size is often a matter of judgement rather than calculation. Therefore, the researcher must choose a sample that is big enough to yield a relatively precise estimate of the population values, but at the same can be executed economically and practically.

For this study, the sample size, as chosen by the researcher, was 160. This means 160 questionnaires were printed and distributed to the same number of respondents. The expectation was that all these questionnaires would be filled in fully and brought back as they are. However, only 150 samples could be used because 10 were considered damaged or unusable as they were not fully filled out and others were incorrectly marked.

## 3.4 Measurement instruments

Measurement instruments are the most important in the data collection phase of the research process. This is because they have the greatest influence on the reliability and validity of data (McDaniel & Gates, 2001:248). These are the questions or data-collection tools and measurement devices and they must be properly developed to ensure that they collect the required data from the respondents. Sometimes, these measurement instruments can be adopted from other prior studies, in which case the source and number of items must be provided.

For this study, a five-point Likert scale is used ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to express the degree of agreement.  Five variables are used in this study and each variable has its measurement instruments. “Sales person trust” is measured using three measurement instruments adapted from Macintosh (1997:489) (Yilmaz & Hunt, 2001:338). “Salesperson commitment” is measured using two measurement instruments adapted from Wong and Sahol (2002:39).

“Store trust” is measured using three measuring instruments adapted from Macintosh (1997:492). “Store satisfaction” is measured using three measuring instruments adapted from Chiu (2012:840). Lastly, “customer purchase intention” is measured using three measuring instruments adapted from Hong and Cho (2011:472).

**Table 3.1: Measuring instruments**

| VARIABLES | MEASURING INSTRUMENTS | SOURCES |
|---|---|---|
| Salesperson trust | • My salesperson can be counted on to do what is right<br>• My salesperson has high integrity<br>• My salesperson can be trusted | Macintosh (1997:490)<br>Abdul *et al*. (2012:310) |
| Salesperson commitment | • The salesperson is committed to helping customers<br>• The salesperson expends effort on behalf of the retail store to help it succeed | Wong & Sahol (2002:42) |
| Store trust | • My favourite retail store can be trusted at all times<br>• My favourite retail store can be counted on to do what is right<br>• I believe I can trust my favourite retail store to do what is best for me | Macintosh (1997:489) |
| Store satisfaction | • I feel good regarding my decision to purchase products from this retail store.<br>• I think that purchasing products from this retail store is a good idea.<br>• Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of purchasing products from this retail store. | Chiu (2012:842) |
| Purchase intention | • I would return to this retail store again<br>• I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next three months<br>• I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next year | Hong & Cho (2011:475) |

## 3.5 Data collection procedure

Data collection is the actual process of distribution of questionnaires to respondents and collecting those questionnaires from the respondents (Shao, 1999:111). It involves recruitment of manpower to ensure that all the questionnaires reach the respondents. These recruits have to be trained and controlled to ensure efficiency of the research.

In terms of the fieldworkers, firstly they have to be individuals who are capable and have integrity. Four fieldworkers were recruited and the researcher was the fifth fieldworker distributing the questionnaires. Preparation for the fieldwork is crucial and before it can be undertaken, thorough discussions must be embarked upon to ensure that everyone understands their role and know what to do before the actual process begins. It means that the questionnaires have to be printed beforehand, and the fieldworkers are taken through the documents to ensure that they are well trained to be able to assist the respondents in cases where clarity is sought.

For this study, the procedure was as follows:

a. The sample in this study is customers within a stated sample frame, who are chosen from the population of all customers of the retails stores within the Vaal Triangle. Therefore, the first step in this procedure was to make the necessary arrangements with these retail stores and to get permission to conduct this research on their premises. The objective was to conduct this survey on a Sunday around month end. The main reason for this is that on Sundays people are not in a hurry, and month end brings along many useful consumers who are representative of our target population.

b. Secondly, the team was trained efficiently on how to conduct themselves and distribute the questionnaires. Part of the training included the general background of the sample survey, which included the objectives, type of questions asked and the sampling method used. This training also included the way they must conduct themselves, the way respondents must be approached, the way to end the discussion, and the importance of honesty in research.

c. Thirdly, early on a Sunday morning, the team of five, including and reporting to the researcher, each with 32 questionnaires, reported to respective identified stores so that management and hopefully also staff know that the team is there. Then the team is divided into those strategic locations within the stores’ entrances and exits, to ensure that the customers are not inconvenienced in any manner. They are given the questionnaires to fill out while they are standing in the queue to the tills. The method used, the simple random sampling method, ensures that every person entering the store had a probability of being given a questionnaire to fill out.

d. After the respondents have filled out these questionnaires, they were collected by the team and compiled together and handed to the researcher for data analysis.

## 3.6 Conclusion

The process stated was followed and data was compiled and handed back to the researcher. The researcher then cleaned the data and compiled it on a spreadsheet. Data was then sent through to the Statistical Consultation services of the NWU for data analysis, which follows in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Introduction

The influence of salesperson trust and commitment on store trust and satisfaction leads to customer purchase intention. The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of two very important traits of the salesperson. These are their trust and their commitment. The study looked at whether these have any influence on the store trust and its satisfaction. It went further to investigate whether these do lead to customer purchase intention or not.

The results, as shall be seen in the sections to follow, i.e. descriptive analysis, structural equation modeling and path modeling, show a very positive result, indicating that they indeed are in agreement with or confirm that salesperson trust and commitment do influence store trust and satisfaction to lead to customers' intention to purchase.

A sample size of 160 subjects was chosen and all subjects responded positively to the request. 10 of the questionnaires ware spoiled or incomplete, and as such, were discarded. The results of data analysis are as follows:

## 4.2 Descriptive analysis results

### 4.2.1 General information results

#### 4.2.1.1 Gender

This section deals with the gender of the respondents and out of the total of 150 subjects, 92 of them are male, reflecting 61.3%, and 58 are female, representing 38.7%, reflecting that majority of respondents were male, while females were in the minority. This is an interesting phenomenon, considering a public perception that it is mostly females who often do their shopping. This is presented in a Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Gender**

| GENDER | | FREQUENCY | PERCENT | VALID PERCENT | CUMULATIVE PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | 92 | 61.3 | 61.3 | 61.3 |
| | Female | 58 | 38.7 | 38.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

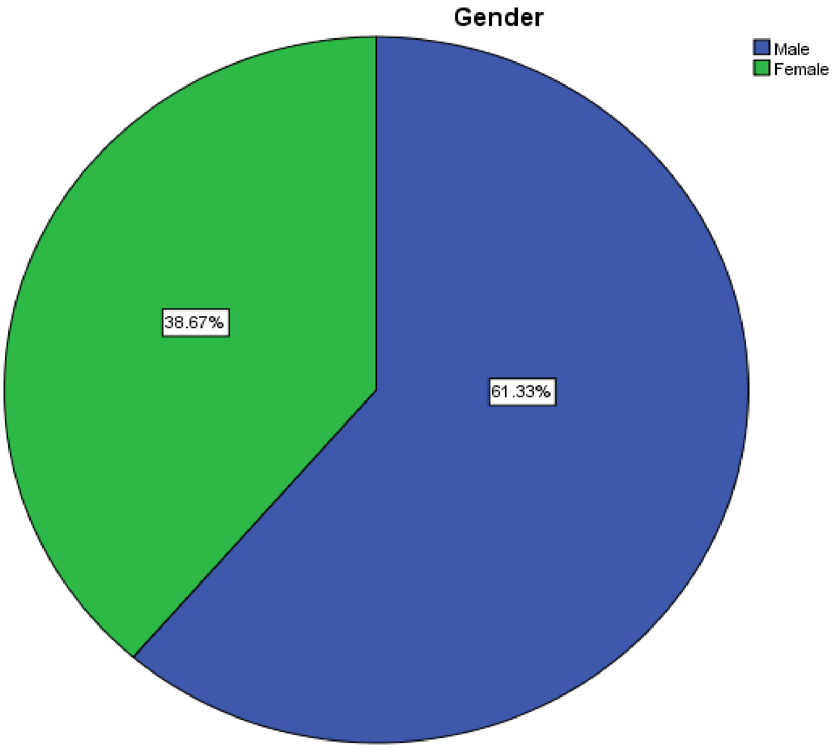


**Figure 4.1: Gender**

### 4.2.1.2 Age

In terms of the age range of the sample, of the 150 respondents, 30 were between the ages 20 and 25; this represents 20% of the total sample. 36 of them were between the ages 26 and 35, and they represent 24% of the sample. 52 of them were between the ages 36 and 45, and they represented 34.7% of the sample, which is the biggest percentage. 20 of them were between 46 and 55 years old, and they represent 13.3%. The last portion was 12 people from 56 years and above, representing 8%. This is the smallest percentage of them all. These are also presented in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Age category**

|  | FREQUENCY | PERCENT | VALID PERCENT | CUMULATIVE PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20-25 | 30 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 20.0 |
| 26-35 | 36 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 44.0 |
| 36-45 | 52 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 78.7 |
| 46-55 | 20 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 92.0 |
| 56- > | 12 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

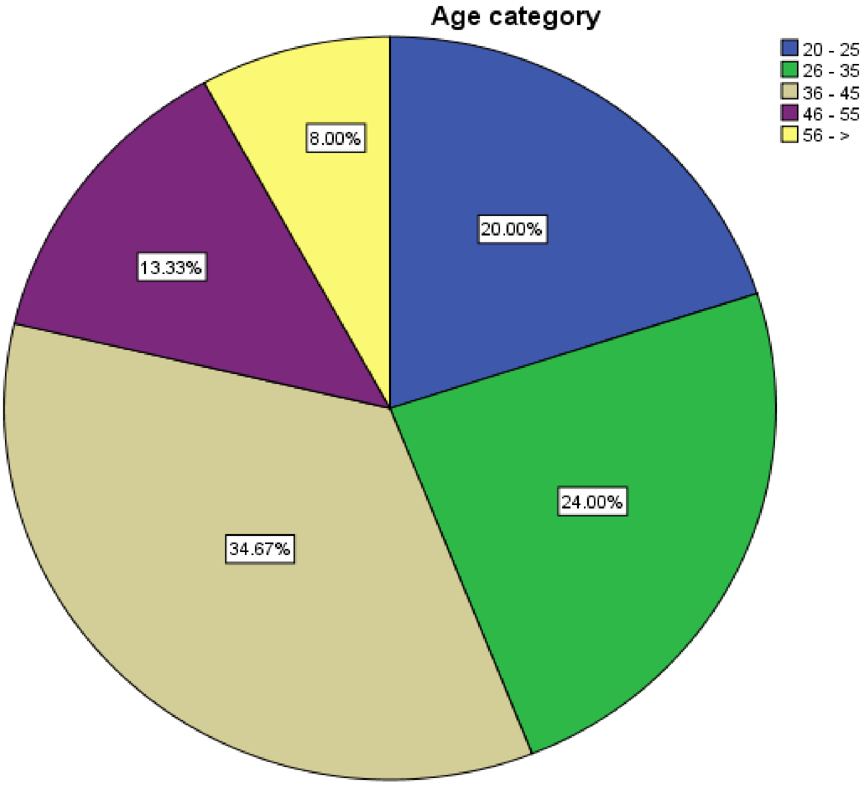


**Figure 4.2: Age category**

### 4.2.1.3 Home language

Regarding home languages of the respondents, this study found that 27 people from the sample spoke English as home language, and this number represents 18% of the sample. Four of them were Afrikaans speaking and they represent 2.7%. isiZulu-speaking people were 37 and they represent 24.7%. The largest representation was that of Sesotho-speaking people, who were 58 in number; they represented 38.7%. The smallest percentage was that of Tshivenda-speaking people, at 2%. This was reflected by the three people who responded. Nine people were isiXhosa speaking, and they represented 6%. All other South African languages were represented by 12 people, which reflected 8% of the sample.

**Table 4.3: Home language**

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENT | VALID PERCENT | CUMULATIVE PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 27 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 18.0 |
| Afrikaans | 4 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 20.7 |
| isiZulu | 37 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 45.3 |
| Sesotho | 58 | 38.7 | 38.7 | 84.0 |
| Tshivenda | 3 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 86.0 |
| isiXhosa | 9 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 92.0 |
| Other | 12 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

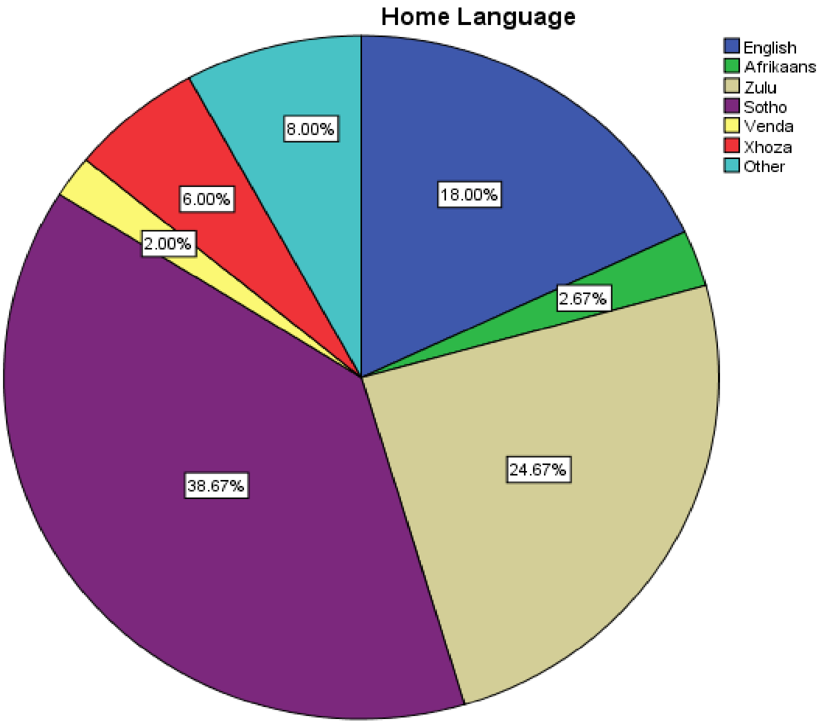


Figure 4.3: Home language

### 4.2.2 Research variable results

#### 4.2.2.1 Salesperson trust

**Table 4.4: Salesperson trust**

| SCALE | B1: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | B2: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | B3: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 3: 2.0% | 2: 1.3% | 5: 3.3% |
| Disagree | 12: 8.0% | 17: 11.3% | 23: 15.3% |
| Moderately agree | 52: 34.7% | 56: 37.3% | 55: 36.7% |
| Agree | 53: 35.3% | 48: 32.0% | 36: 24.0% |
| Strongly agree | 30: 20.0% | 27: 18.0% | 31: 20.7% |

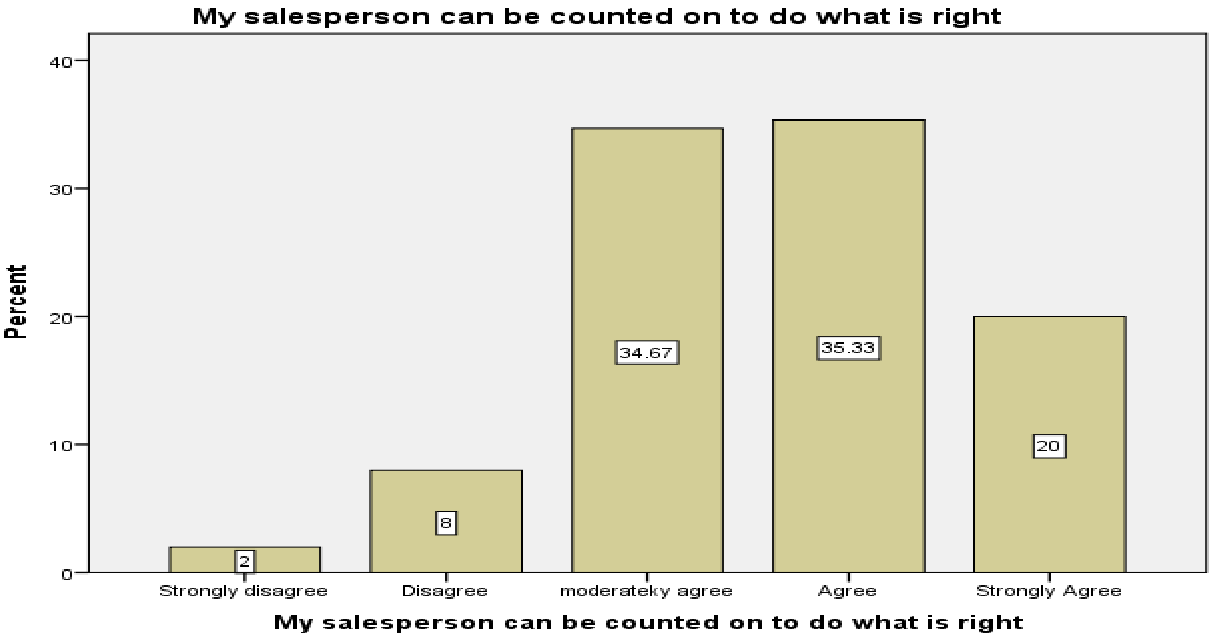


**Figure 4.4: Salesperson trust**

Of the 150 respondents, three people, representing 2%, strongly disagree with the statement that their salesperson can be counted on to do what is right. This is the minority view. It is followed by 12 people, representing 8%, who disagree with the statement. 52 respondents moderately agree with the statement and they represent 34.7% of the sample. 53 respondents agree with that statement and these, just above one thirds of the total percentage, represent the majority view at 35.3%. Lastly, 30 people, representing 20%, strongly disagree with the statement. It is safe then to conclude that the overwhelming majority believes that salespeople can be trusted to do what is right. The table and bar chart above present this information.

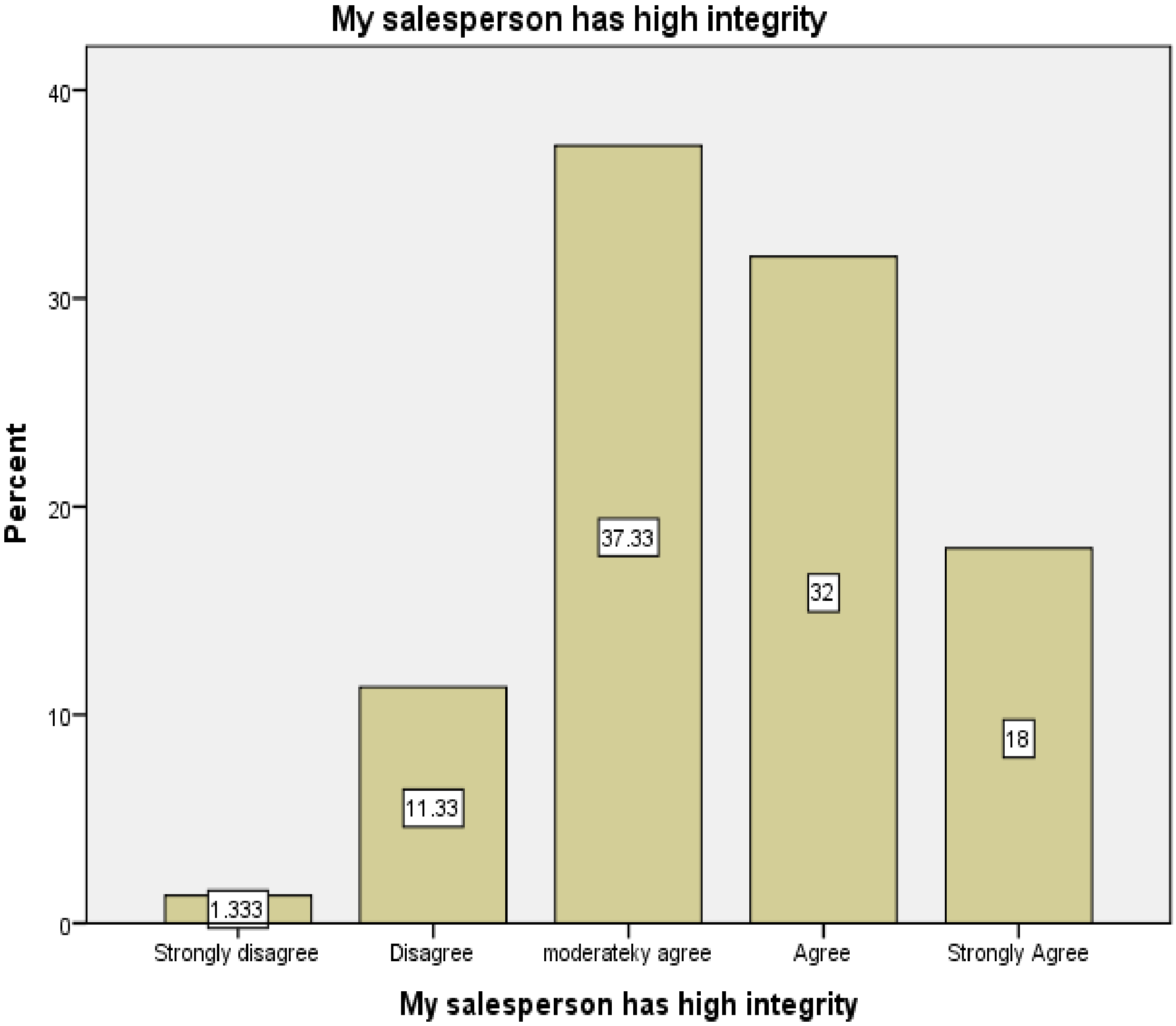


**Figure 4.5: Salesperson trust (integrity)**

Figure 4.5 above shows that 1.3%, represented by two people, strongly disagree with the statement. This, however, is the minority view. 17 respondents, representing 11.3%, disagree with the statement. 56 respondents, representing 37.3%, moderately agree with the statement. 48 respondents, representing 32%, agree with the statement. Finally, 27 respondents strongly agree with the statement. The overall result is that the majority of the people are more inclined to agree with the statement.

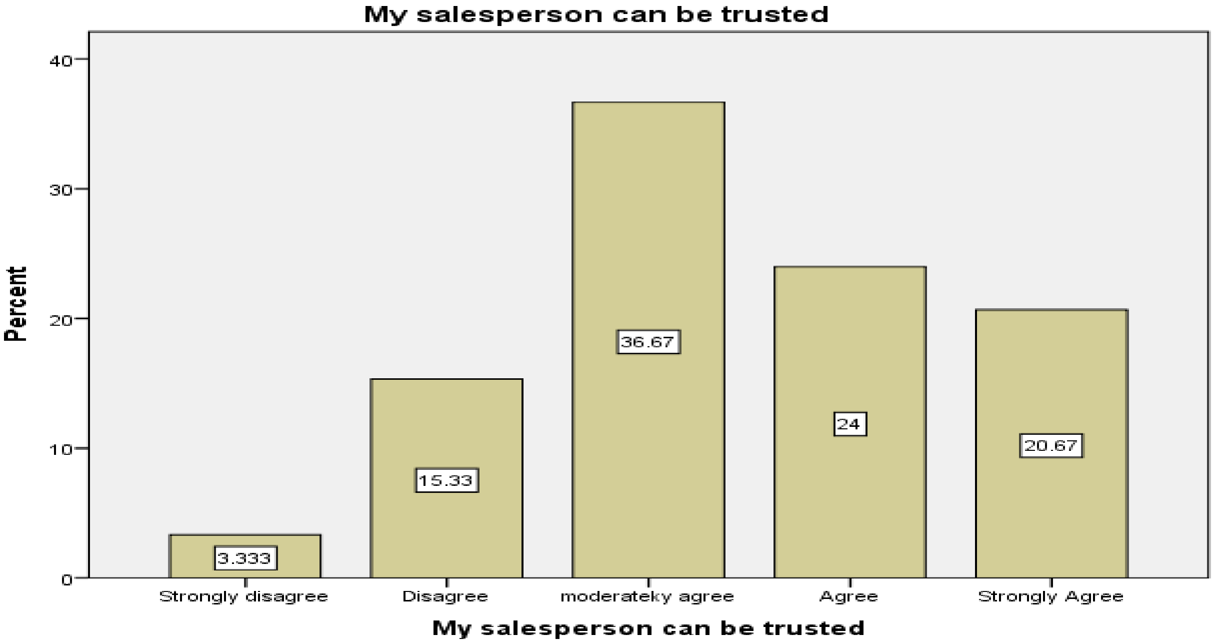


**Figure 4.6: Salesperson trust (trusted)**

Figure 4.6 above shows that five respondents, representing 3.3%, strongly disagree and this is the minority view. 23 of them disagree with the statement, and this represents 15.3% of the sample. 55 of them, the majority (at 36.7%), moderately agree. 36 represent 24%, and they agree with the statement. Lastly, 31 of them, representing 20.7%, strongly agree with the statement. Again, a larger percentage is more inclined to agree with the statement.

#### 4.2.2.2 Salesperson commitment

**Table 4.5: Salesperson commitment**

| SCALE | C1: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | C2: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 4: 2.7% | 5: 3.3% |
| Disagree | 9: 6.0% | 7: 4.7% |
| Moderately agree | 43: 28.7% | 37: 24.7% |
| Agree | 60: 40.0% | 59: 39.3% |
| Strongly agree | 34: 22.7% | 42: 28.0% |

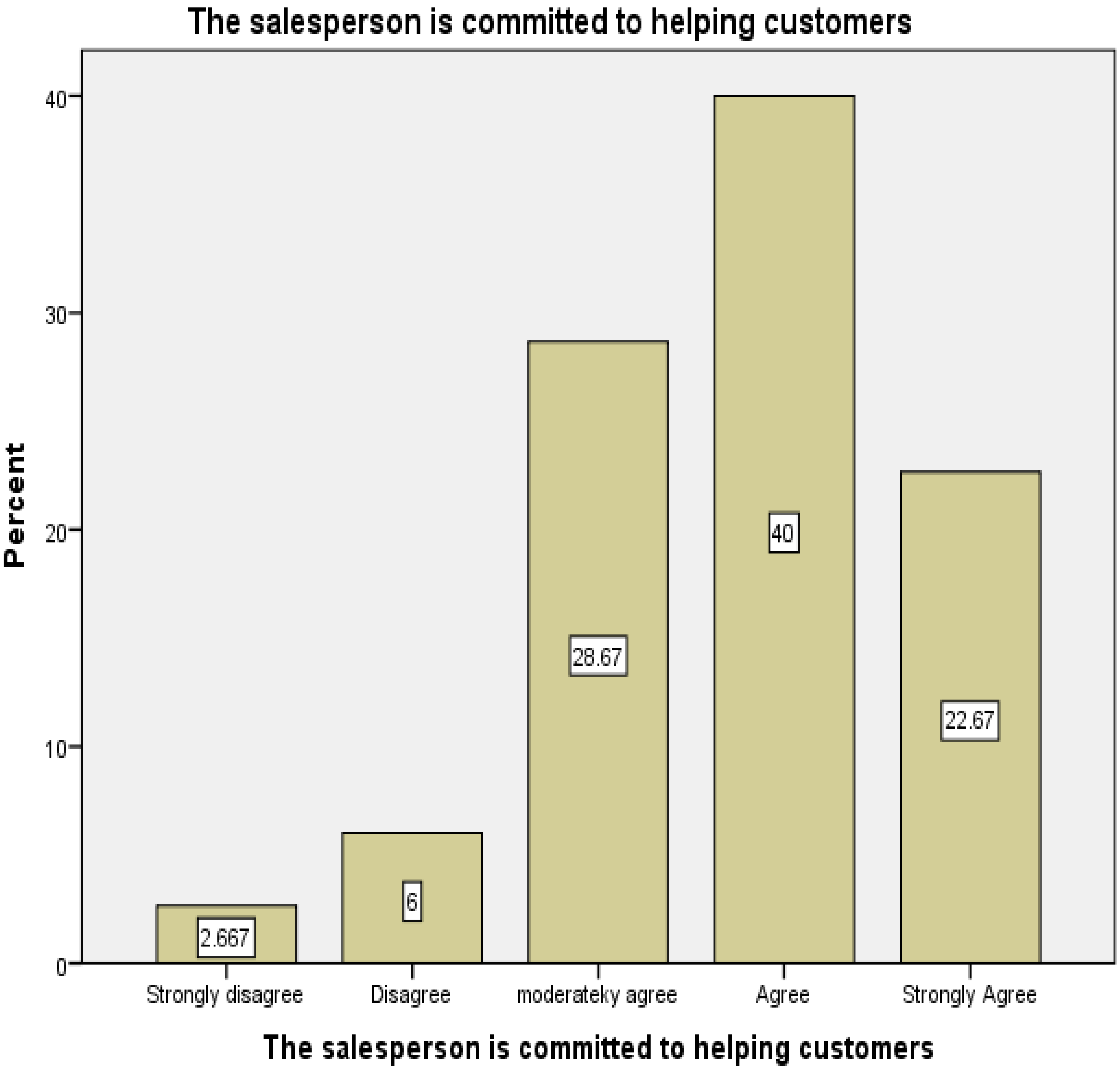


Figure 4.7: Salesperson commitment

Figure 4.7 above shows that four people, representing 2.7%, strongly disagree with the statement that salespeople are committed to helping customers. Nine of them, representing 6%, disagree with the statement. 43 of them, representing 28.7%, moderately agree with the statement. A majority of 60 respondents, representing 40%, agree with the statement, and 34, representing 22.7%, strongly agree.

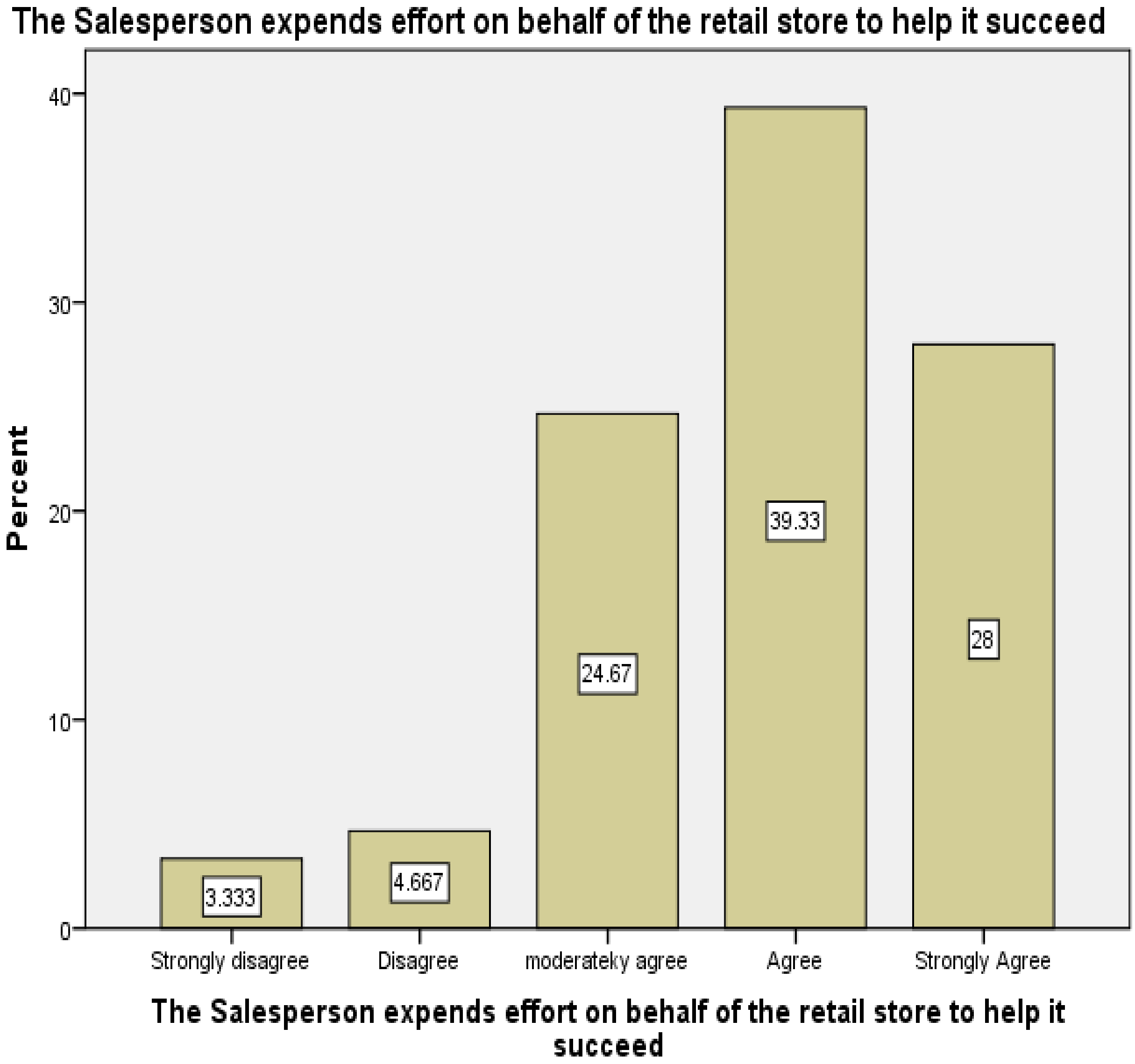


**Figure 4.8: Salesperson effort**

Five respondents, representing 3.3%, strongly disagree with the statement that the salesperson expends effort on behalf of the retail store to help it succeed. These are followed by seven people who disagree with the statement and represent 4.7%. 37 respondents, representing 24.7% of the respondents, moderately agree. The majority of respondents are 59 who agree, and represent 39.3% of the total respondents. Lastly, 42 respondents, representing 28%, strongly agree with the statement.

#### 4.2.2.3 Store trust

**Table 4.6: Store trust**

| SCALE | D1: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | D2: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | D3: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 4 : 2.7% | 1 : 0.7% | 1 : 0.7% |
| Disagree | 18 : 12.0% | 16 : 10.7% | 11 : 7.3% |
| Moderately agree | 44 : 29.3% | 53 : 35.3% | 56 : 37.3% |
| Agree | 61 : 40.7% | 57 : 38.0% | 60 : 40.0% |
| Strongly agree | 23 : 15.3% | 23 : 15.3% | 22 : 14.7% |

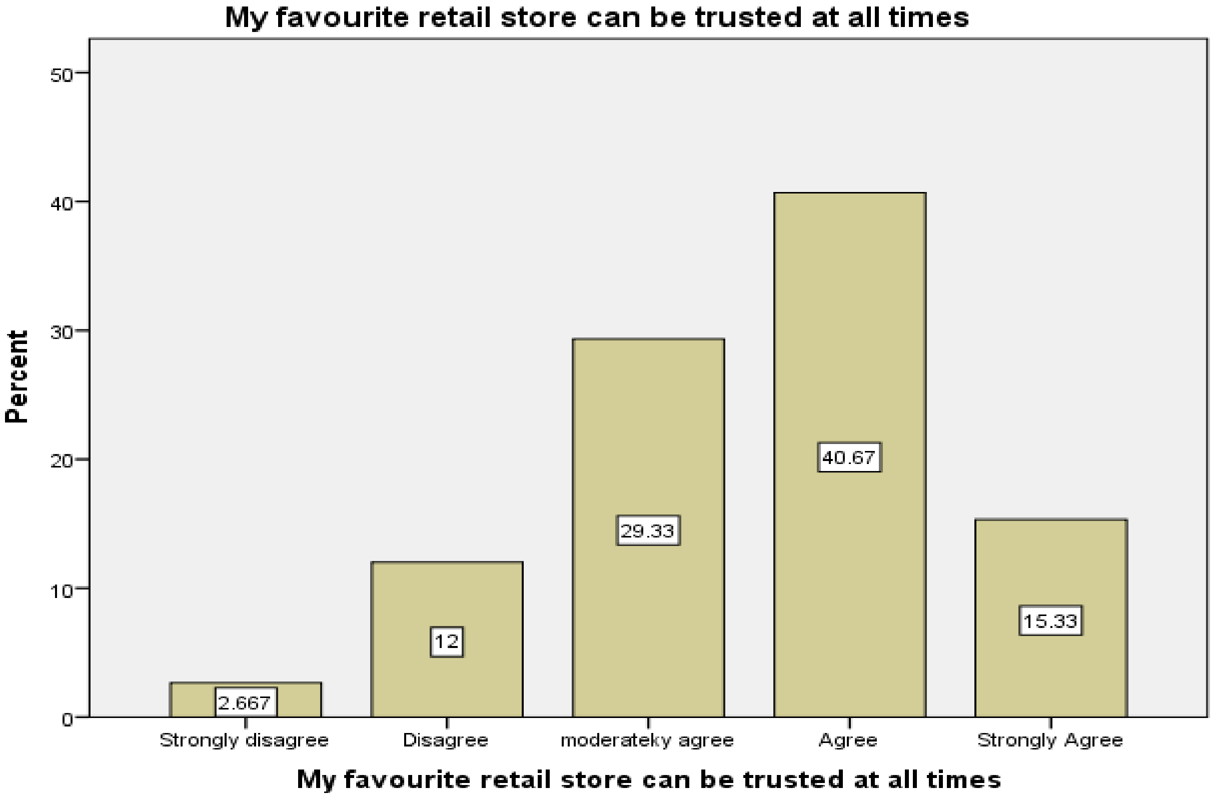


Figure 4.9: Store trust

Figure 4.9 above shows that four out a sample of 150 respondents, representing 2.7%, strongly disagree with the statement that says that my favourite retail store can be trusted at all times. These are followed by 18 respondents, representing 12%, who disagree with the statement. 44 respondents, representing 29.3%, moderately agree with the statement. The majority view is that 61 respondents, representing 40.7%, agree with the statement. The final group is that of 23 respondents, who represent 15.3%, and strongly agree with the statement.

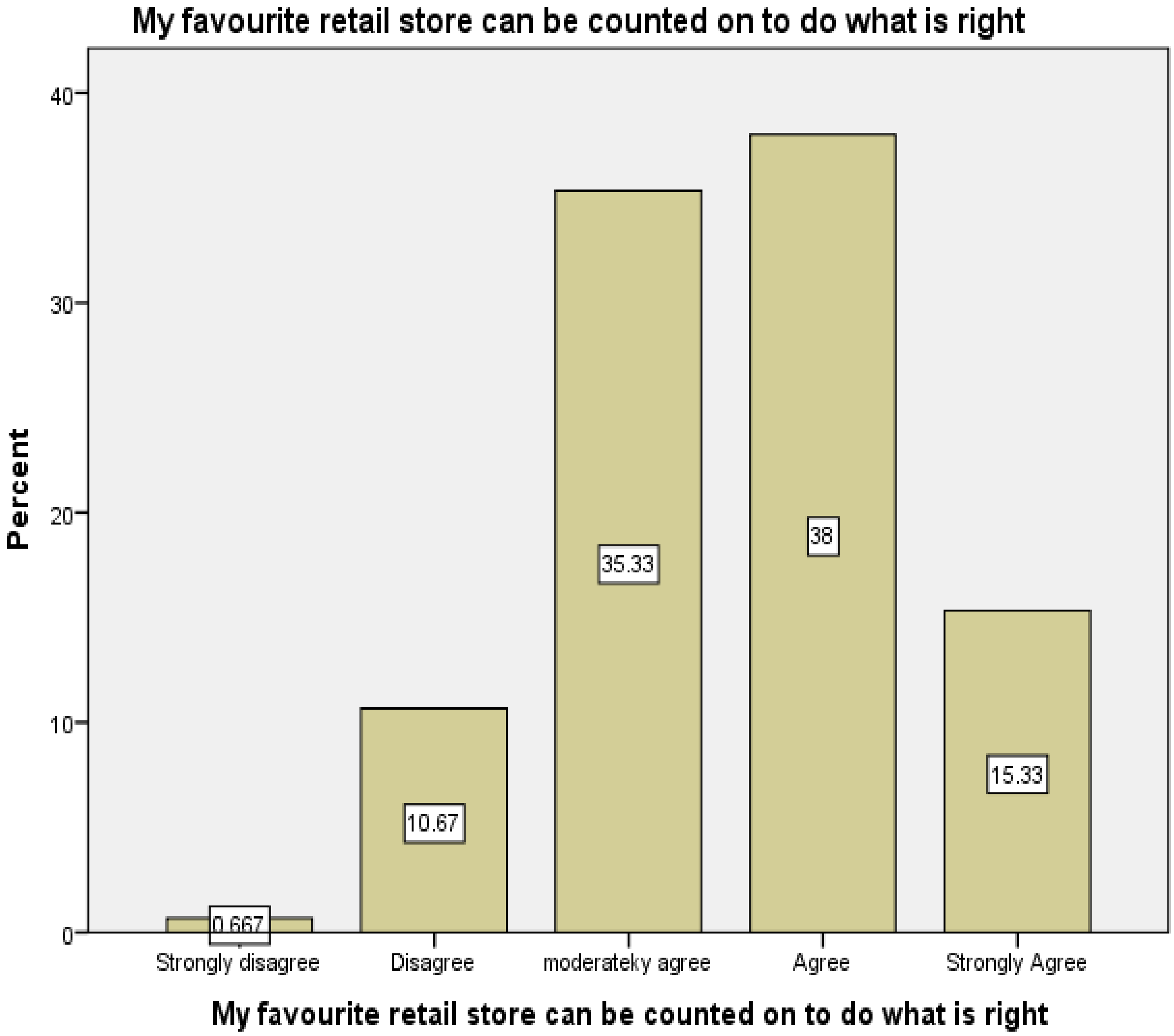


**Figure 4.10: Store trust (counted)**

Figure 4.10 above shows that only one respondent, representing 0.7%, strongly disagrees with the statement and is obviously a minority view. This is followed by 16 respondents, who represent 10.7%, who disagree. Those who moderately agree are 53 and they represent 35.3%. 57 respondents are the majority, who agree and represent 38%. The final group consists of 23 respondents who represent 15.3% and strongly agree with the statement.

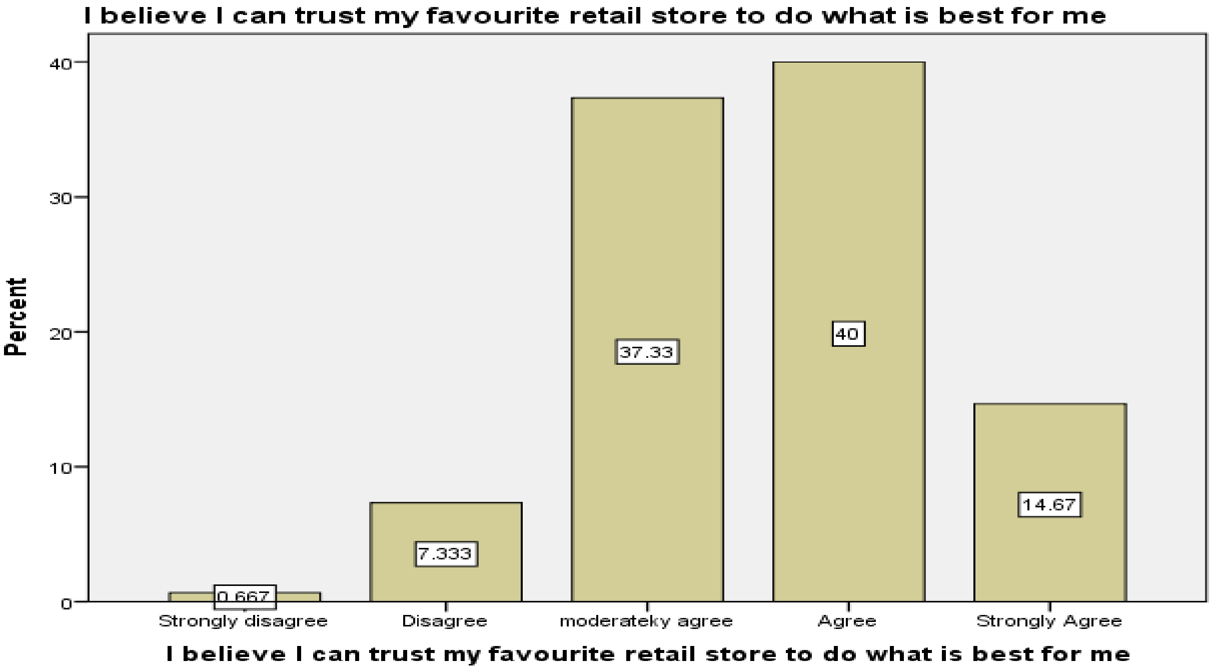


**Figure 4.11: Store trust (favourite)**

Figure 4.11 above also shows only one respondent who strongly agrees, representing 0.7%. 11 of them represent 7.3% and they disagree with the statement. 56 respondents represent 37.3% and they moderately agree with the statement. Majority view is that of 60 respondents representing 40% and they agree with the statement. Finally, 22 respondents, representing 14.7%, strongly agree with the statement.

#### 4.2.2.4 Store satisfaction

**Table 4.7: Store satisfaction**

| SCALE | SS1: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | SS2: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | SS3: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 2: 1.3% | 0: 0% | 3: 2.0% |
| Disagree | 5: 3.3% | 11: 7.3% | 13: 8.7% |
| Moderately agree | 45: 30.0% | 53: 35.3% | 35: 23.3% |
| Agree | 61: 40.7% | 58: 38.7% | 58: 38.7% |
| Strongly agree | 37: 24.7% | 28: 18.7% | 41: 27.3% |

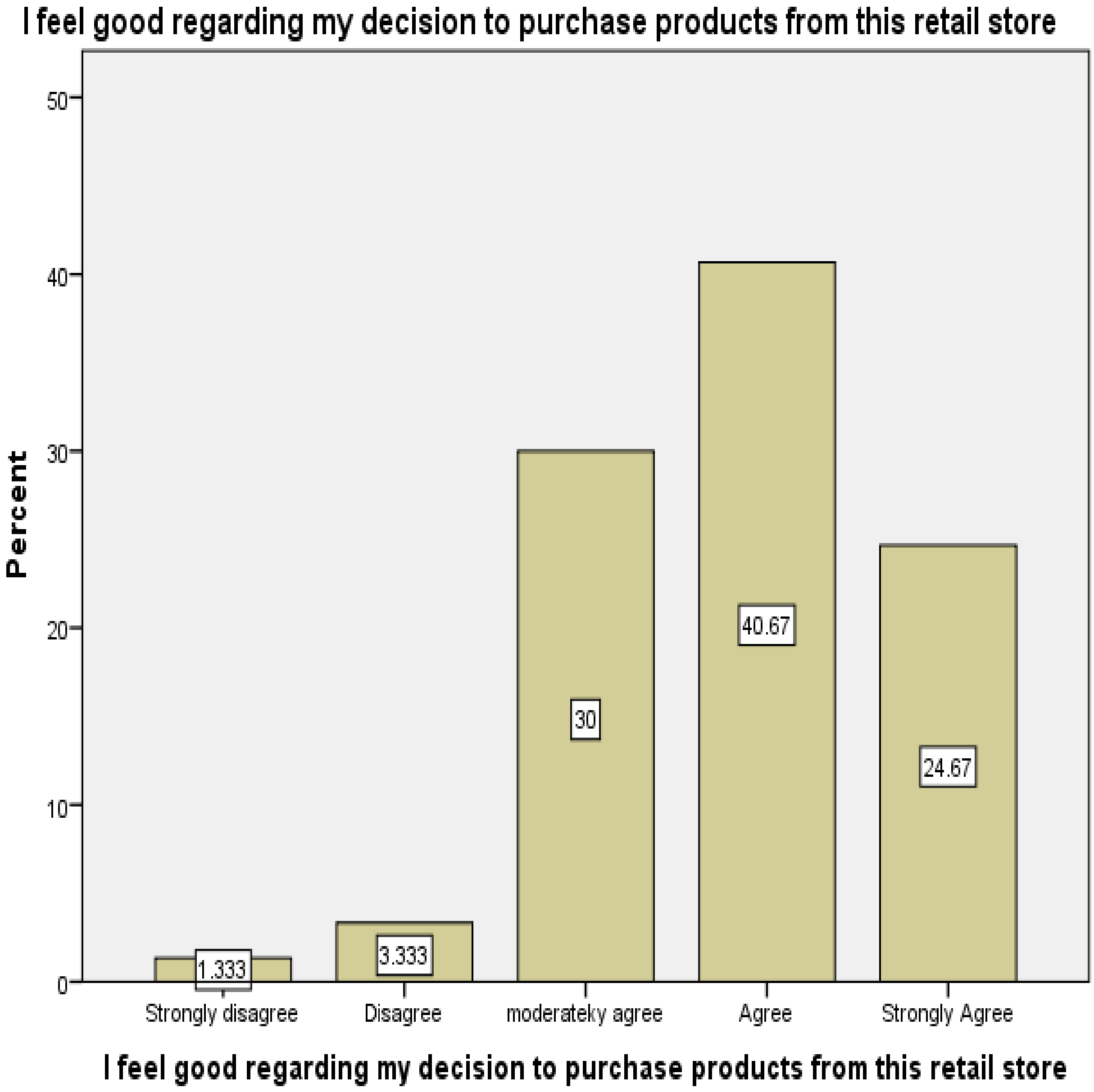


**Figure 4.12: Store satisfaction**

Figure 4.12 above shows that two respondents, representing 1.3%, strongly disagree with it, while five respondents, representing 3.3%, disagree with the statement. 45 respondents, representing 30%, moderately agree with the statement. The majority of the respondents are the 61, who represent 40.7%, who agree with the statement, while the last group is that of 37 respondents, who represent 24.7%, and strongly agree with the statement.

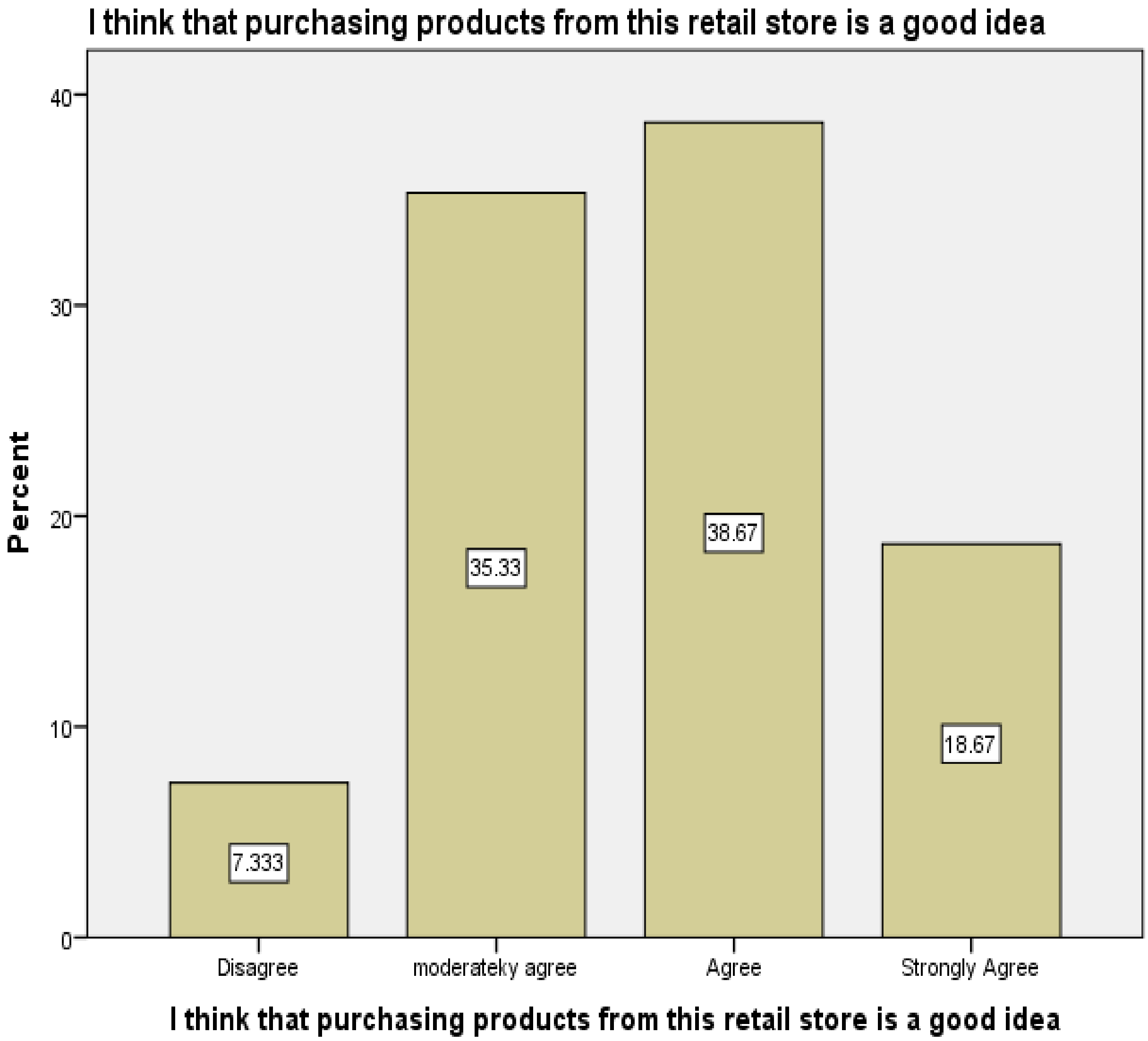


**Figure 4.13: Store satisfaction (good idea)**

Figure 4.13 above shows that none of the respondents strongly disagree. 11 respondents, representing 7.3%, disagree with the statement. 53 people, representing 35.3%, moderately agree with the statement. 58 of the respondents are those who agree with the statement, and represent 38.7%. The last group is one of 28 respondents, representing 18.7%, and they strongly agree with the statement.

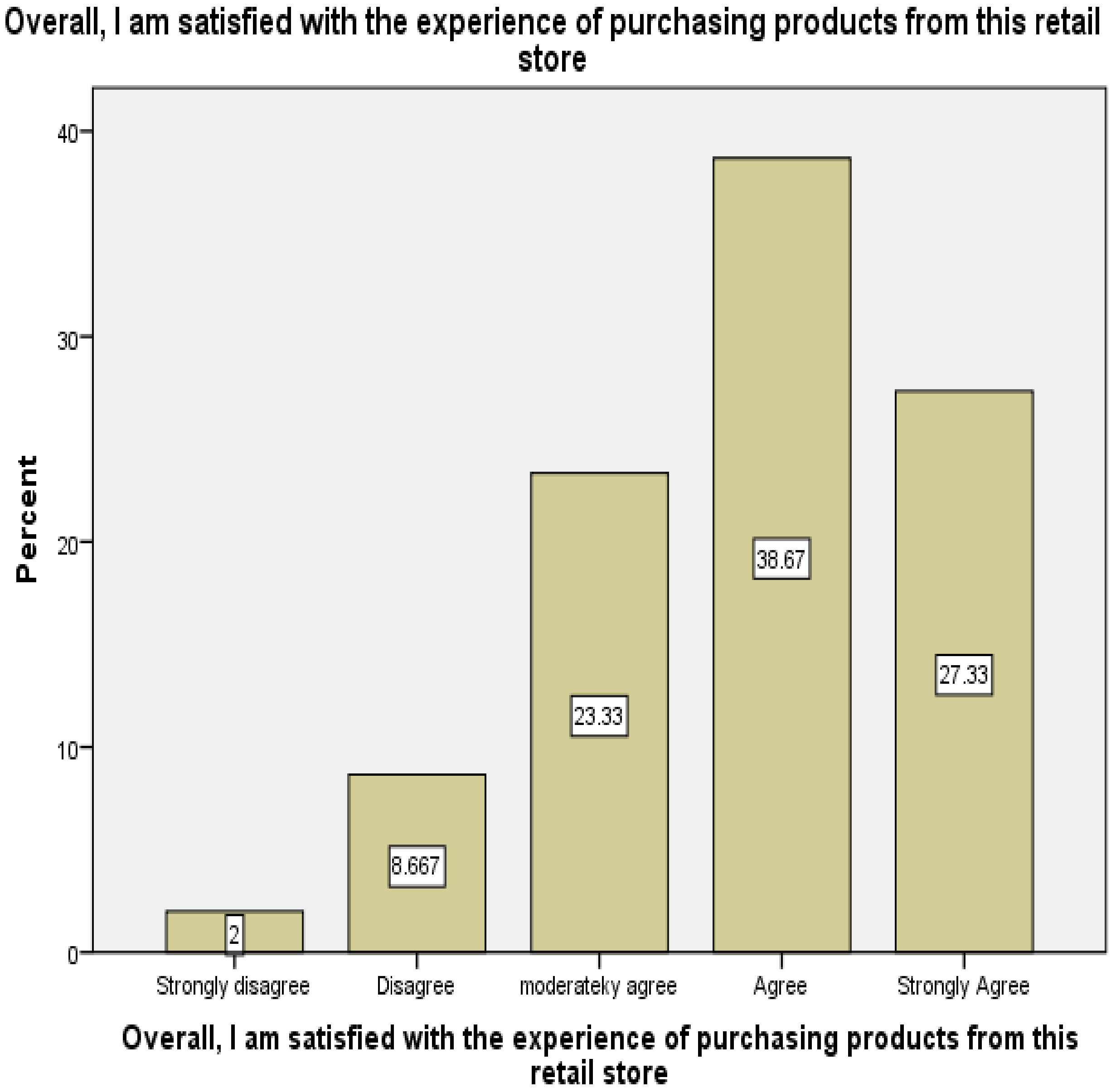


**Figure 4.14 Store satisfaction (satisfied)**

Figure 4.14 above shows that three of the respondents, who represent 2%, strongly disagree with the statement. 13 of them, representing 8.7%, disagree with the statement. 35 of them, representing 23.3%, moderately agree with the statement. The majority of 58 respondents, representing 38.7%, agree with the statement. The last group is that of 41 respondents who strongly agree, and represent 27.3% of the sample size.

#### 4.2.2.5 Customer purchase intention

**Table 4.8: Customer purchase intention**

| SCALE | CPI1: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | CPI2: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE | CPI3: FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 1: 0.7% | 7: 4.7% | 6: 4.0% |
| Disagree | 13: 8.7% | 7: 4.7% | 12: 8.0% |
| Moderately agree | 43: 28.7% | 47: 31.3% | 39: 26.0% |
| Agree | 50: 33.3% | 55: 36.7% | 51: 34.0% |
| Strongly agree | 43: 28.7% | 34: 22.7% | 42: 28.0% |

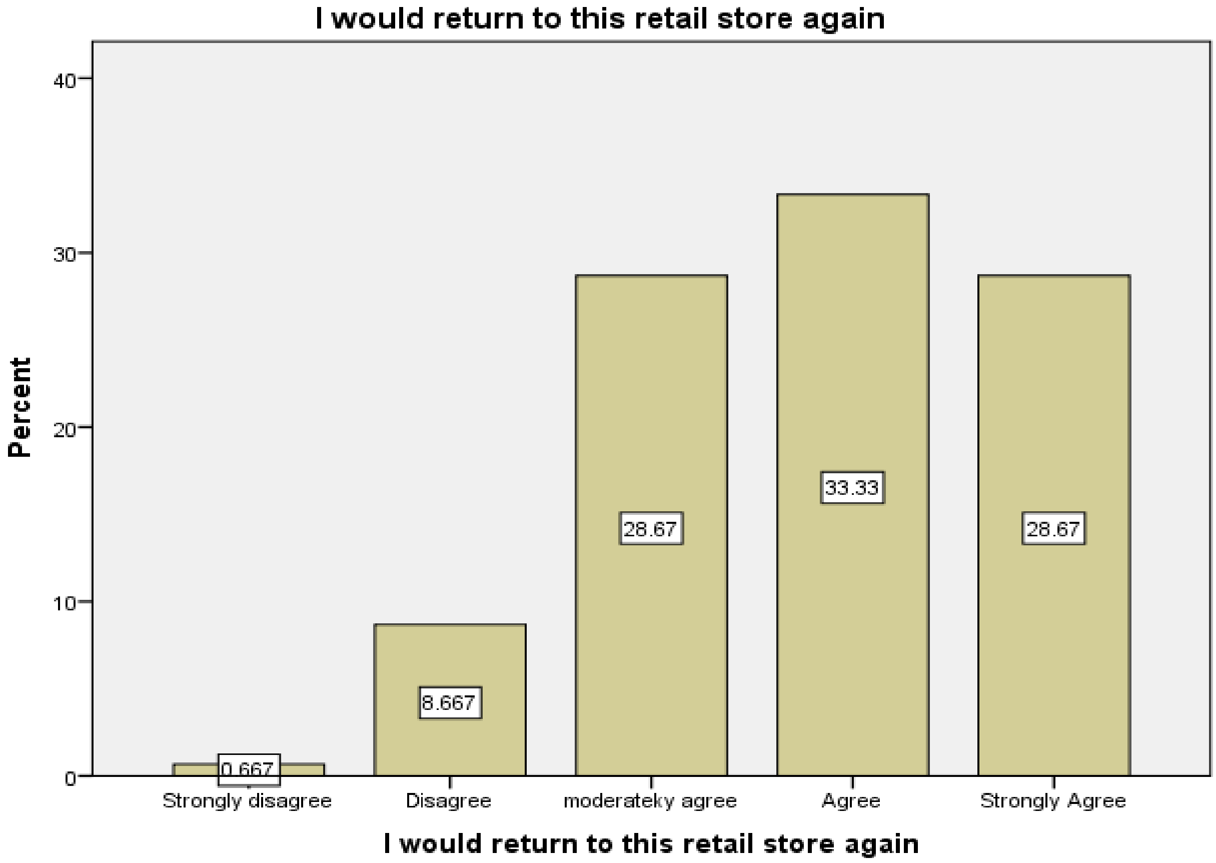


**Figure 4.15 Customer purchase intention**

Figure 4.15 above shows that only one respondent strongly disagrees with the statement below and it reflects 0.7% of the total sample size. This is followed by 8.7%, which is made up of 13 respondents, who disagree with the statement. 43

people, representing 28.7%, moderately agree with the statement. 50 of them, representing 33.3, are the majority who agree with the statement. The last group is that of 43 respondents, representing 28.7%, who strongly agree with the statement.

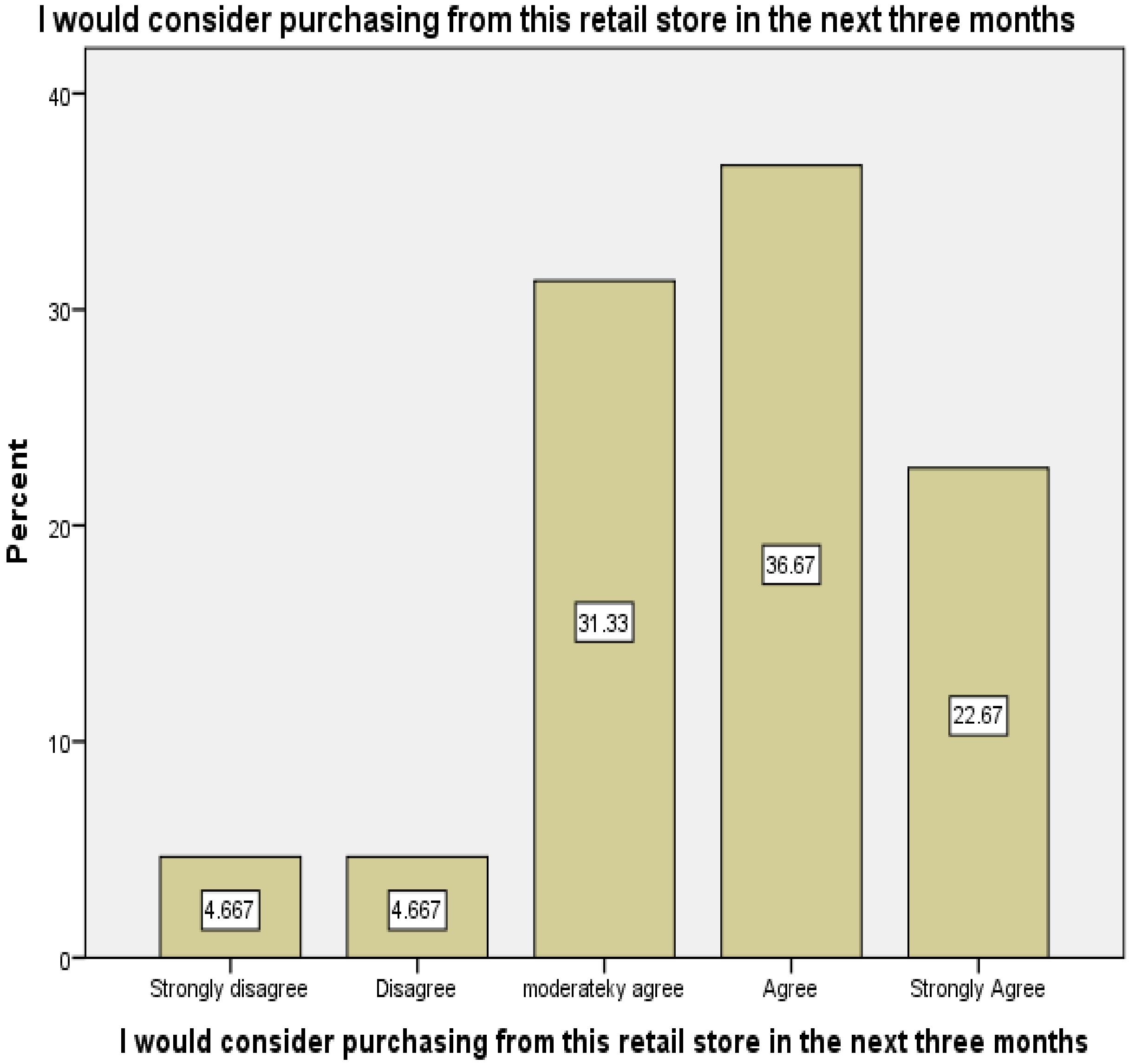


**Figure 4.16: Customer purchase intention (consider – three months)**

Figure 4.16 above shows that seven respondents, representing 4.7%, strongly disagree with the statement below and the same percentage also disagree with the very statement. 47 respondents, representing 31.3%, moderately disagree. The majority group is that of 55 respondents, representing 36.7%. The last group is that of 32 respondents, representing 22.7%.

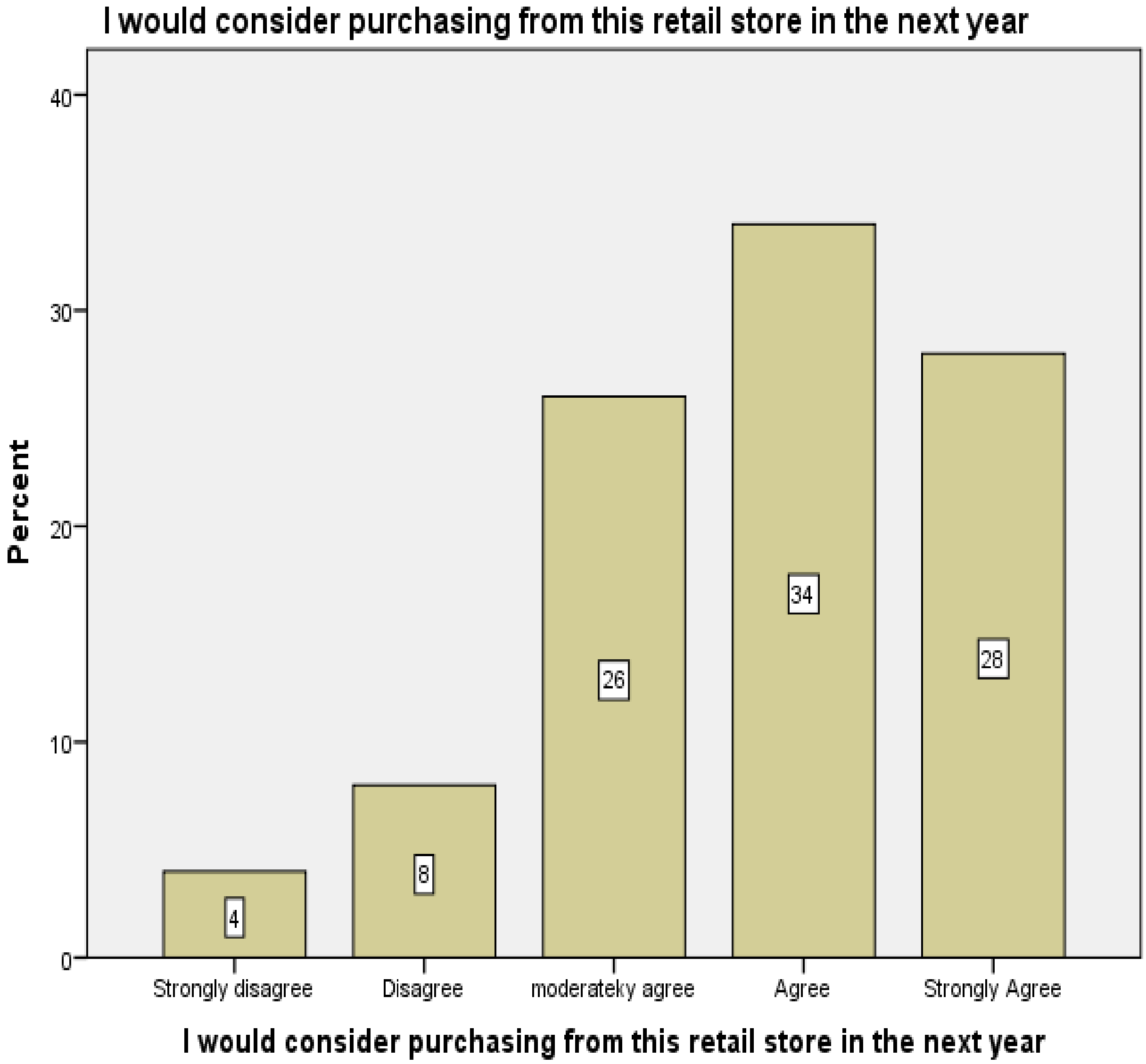


**Figure 4.17: Customer purchase intention (consider – next year)**

Figure 4.17 above shows that six of the respondents, who represent 4%, strongly disagree with the statement. 12 of them, representing 8%, disagree with the statement. 39 of them represent 26%, and they moderately agree with the statement. The majority of 51 respondents, representing 34%, agree with the statement. The last group is that of 42 respondents who strongly agree and represent 28% of the sample size.

## 4.3 Reliability analysis results

According to Pallant (2010:5), it is important to assess the consistency and reliability of the constructs under study. This refers to the quality of a measurement procedure that provides repeatability and accuracy. Reliability estimates are used to evaluate the stability of measures administered at different times to the same individuals or using the same standard or the equivalence of sets of items from the same test in terms of internal consistency or different observers scoring a behaviour or event using the same instrument. Hair *et al*. (2013:165) state that reliability is the degree to which measures are free from error and yield consistent results. For the current study, the researcher looked at Cronbach alpha, total item statistics as well as item statistics for each variant to test the reliability of results.

### 4.3.1 Cronbach's alpha results

Cronbach alpha was utilised to measure the reliability of each of the variables in the study. According to Yuksel *et al.* (2006:18), Cronbach alpha coefficient values above 0.6 indicate good internal consistency reliability.

#### 4.3.1.1 Salesperson trust

**Table 4.9: Reliability statistics**

| CRONBACH'S ALPHA | CRONBACH'S ALPHA BASED ON STANDARDISED ITEMS | NUMBER OF ITEMS |
|---:|---:|---:|
| .869 | .871 | 3 |

The Cronbach alpha for salesperson trust is 0.871.

#### 4.3.1.2 Salesperson commitment

**Table 4.10: Reliability statistics**

| CRONBACH'S ALPHA | CRONBACH'S ALPHA BASED ON STANDARDISED ITEMS | NUMBER OF ITEMS |
|---:|---:|---:|
| .800 | .801 | 2 |

Cronbach's alpha for salesperson commitment was 0.801.

#### 4.3.1.3 Store trust

**Table 4.11: Reliability statistics**

| CRONBACH'S ALPHA | CRONBACH'S ALPHA BASED ON STANDARDISED ITEMS | NUMBER OF ITEMS |
|---:|---:|---:|
| .770 | .773 | 3 |

Cronbach's alpha for store trust was 0.773.

#### 4.3.1.4 Store satisfaction

**Table 4.12: Reliability statistics**

| CRONBACH'S ALPHA | CRONBACH'S ALPHA BASED ON STANDARDISED ITEMS | NUMBER OF ITEMS |
|---:|---:|---:|
| .807 | .809 | 3 |

Cronbach alpha for Store Satisfaction was 0.809.

#### 4.3.1.5 Customer purchase intention

**Table 4.13 Reliability statistics**

| CRONBACH'S ALPHA | CRONBACH'S ALPHA BASED ON STANDARDISED ITEMS | NUMBER OF ITEMS |
|---|---|---|
| .884 | .885 | 3 |

Cronbach's alpha for customer purchase intention was 0.885.

It is evident from the results above that each of the constructs showed a Cronbach alpha above 0.6, which indicates very high levels reliability of the data. It is possible, however, that an instrument can be reliable without being valid. The section below verifies the validity of the measuring instruments used in this study.

### 4.3.2 Item total statistics

It is important to also ensure that the measurement instruments do measure what they were meant to measure (Pallant, 2010:7). A good measurement tool or procedure does a good job when it measures that which it purports to measure. For this study, item-total correlation values were assessed to measure convergent validity.

### 4.3.2.1 Salesperson trust

**Table 4.14: Item-total statistics**

| | SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE VARIANCE IF ITEM DELETED | CORRECTED ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION | SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION | CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My salesperson can be counted on to do what is right | 6.973 | 3.583 | .735 | .540 | .831 |
| My salesperson has high integrity | 7.067 | 3.499 | .765 | .585 | .804 |
| My salesperson can be trusted | 7.173 | 3.097 | .759 | .579 | .812 |

All measurements are above 0.5, which shows that they correlate with each other.

### 4.3.2.2 Salesperson commitment

**Table 4.15: Item-total statistics**

| | SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE VARIANCE IF ITEM DELETED | CORRECTED ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION | SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION | CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The salesperson is committed to helping customers | 3.840 | .994 | .668 | .446 | . |
| The salesperson expends effort on behalf of the retail store to help it succeed | 3.740 | .932 | .668 | .446 | . |

All measurements are above 0.5, which shows that they correlate with each other.

#### 4.3.2.3 Store trust

**Table 4.16: Item-total statistics**

| | SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE VARIANCE IF ITEM DELETED | CORRECTED ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION | SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION | CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My favourite retail store can be trusted at all times | 7.173 | 2.413 | .577 | .353 | .728 |
| My favourite retail store can be counted on to do what is right | 7.147 | 2.421 | .678 | .460 | .608 |
| I believe I can trust my favourite retail store to do what is best for me | 7.107 | 2.794 | .568 | .347 | .731 |

All measurements are above 0.5, which shows that they correlate with each other.

### 4.3.2.4 Store satisfaction

**Table 4.17: Item-Total Statistics**

| | SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE VARIANCE IF ITEM DELETED | CORRECTED ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION | SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION | CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel good regarding my decision to purchase products from this retail store | 7.493 | 2.815 | .629 | .396 | .762 |
| I think that purchasing products from this retail store is a good idea | 7.647 | 2.794 | .669 | .450 | .724 |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of purchasing products from this retail store | 7.527 | 2.372 | .676 | .460 | .719 |

All measurements are above 0.5, which shows that they correlate with each other.

#### 4.3.2.5 Customer intention to purchase

**Table 4.18: Item-Total Statistics**

| | SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED | SCALE VARIANCE IF ITEM DELETED | CORRECTED ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATION | SQUARED MULTIPLE CORRELATION | CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would return to this retail store again | 7.420 | 3.829 | .765 | .625 | .845 |
| I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next three months | 7.547 | 3.458 | .835 | .704 | .780 |
| I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next year | 7.487 | 3.567 | .729 | .549 | .878 |

All measurements are above 0.5, which shows that they correlate with each other.

All measurement instruments from each variable converge well with each other, as they are all above 0.5, thereby showing that they are valid and therefore measure what they are supposed to measure.

### 4.3.3 Item statistics

Once reliability and validity have been confirmed, the mean scores for each of the measuring instruments of the constructs were calculated, based on the five-point Likert scale used to gather data, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (moderately agree), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). The results of which are as follows:

### 4.3.3.1 Salesperson trust

**Table 4.19: Item statistics**

| | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| My salesperson can be counted on to do what is right | 3.633 | .9583 | 150 |
| My salesperson has high integrity | 3.540 | .9598 | 150 |
| My salesperson can be trusted | 3.433 | 1.0832 | 150 |

The first two instruments are above 3.5, but below 4.45 in mean, indicating that the respondents agree with those measurement instruments. The last instrument is just below a 3.5 mean, which indicates that the respondents moderately agree with it.

### 4.3.3.2 Salesperson commitment

**Table 4.20: Item statistics**

| | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| The salesperson is committed to helping customers | 3.740 | .9654 | 150 |
| The salesperson expends effort on behalf of the retail store to help it succeed | 3.840 | .9972 | 150 |

Both measuring instruments here are confined between 3.5 and 4.5. This mean indicates that the respondents agree with the instruments.

#### 4.3.3.3 Store trust

**Table 4.21: Item statistics**

| | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| My favourite retail store can be trusted at all times | 3.540 | .9805 | 150 |
| My favourite retail store can be counted on to do what is right | 3.567 | .9005 | 150 |
| I believe I can trust my favourite retail store to do what is best for me | 3.607 | .8506 | 150 |

All instruments here are confined between 3.5 and 4.5. A mean between these two figures indicates that the respondents agree with the instruments.

#### 4.3.3.4 Store satisfaction

**Table 4.22: Item statistics**

| | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| I feel good regarding my decision to purchase products from this retail store | 3.840 | .8829 | 150 |
| I think that purchasing products from this retail store is a good idea | 3.687 | .8603 | 150 |
| Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of purchasing products from this retail store | 3.807 | 1.0013 | 150 |

All instruments here are confined between 3.5 and 4.5. A mean between these two figures indicates that the respondents agree with the instruments.

#### 4.3.3.5 Customer Intention to purchase

**Table 4.23: Item statistics**

| | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| I would return to this retail store again | 3.807 | .9741 | 150 |
| I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next three months | 3.680 | 1.0253 | 150 |
| I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next year | 3.740 | 1.0771 | 150 |

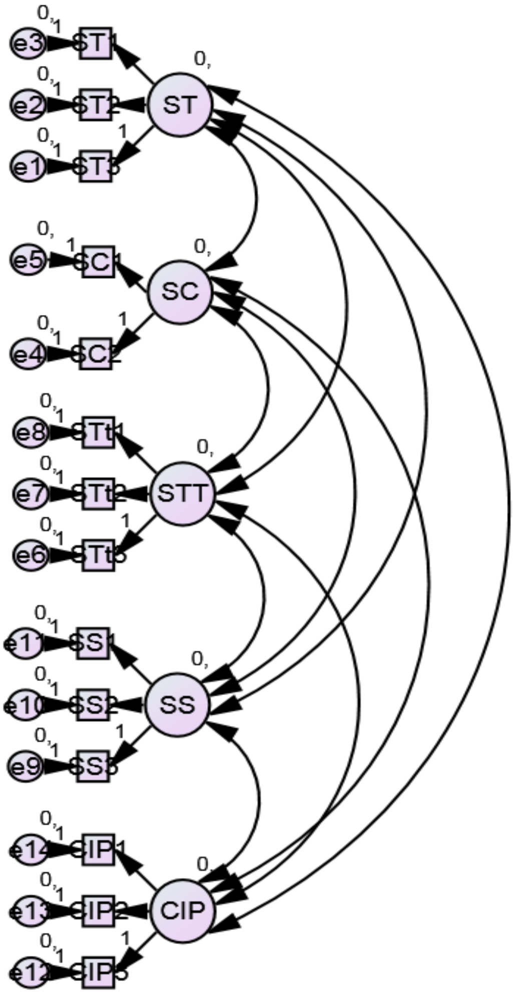
All instruments here are confined between 3.5 and 4.5. A mean between these two figures indicates that the respondents agree with the instruments.

It is evident from the above results that all measuring instruments have a mean above 3.5, which indicates that respondents agree with the measuring instruments. This is except for one measuring instrument under salesperson trust, which asks whether the salesperson can be trusted. This one measuring instrument indicates a mean score just below 3.5, indicating that respondents moderately agree with that statement. In general, average mean scores indicate that respondents agree with the measurement.

### 4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the measurement properties with regard to the variables of the proposed theoretical model below.

### 4.4.1 CFA model


e3
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SC1
e4
SC2
SC
e8
STt1
e7
STt2
e6
STt3
STT
e11
SS1
e10
SS2
e9
SS3
SS
e14
CIP1
e13
CIP2
e12
CIP3
CIP

**Figure 4.18: CFA Model**

This model identifies the relationships between all variable. There are five variables, each with its respective measuring instruments.

### 4.4.2 Model fit results

**Table 4.24: Model fit results**

| CFA | CHI-SQUARE | GFI | CFI | TLI | IFI | RMSEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INDICATOR VALUE | 3 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.08 |
| DEFAULT VALUE | 1.229 | 0.779 | 0.904 | 0.763 | 0.817 | 0.059 |

The above table indicates how well the observed data fits the proposed model. A CFI of 0.904 indicates an acceptable fit.

#### 4.4.2.1 CMIN

**Table 4.25: CMIN**

| MODEL | NPAR | CMIN | DF | P | CMIN/DF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 52 | 195.229 | 67 | .000 | 2.914 |
| Saturated model | 119 | .000 | 0 | | |
| Independence model | 28 | 1431.929 | 91 | .000 | 15.735 |

Acceptable data for CMIN/DF is less than 3. The results above show 2.914, which means that the data does fit the model.

#### 4.4.2.2 RMR, GFI

**Table 4.26: RMR, GFI**

| MODEL | RMR | GFI | AGFI | PGFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .193 | .779 | .673 | .527 |
| Saturated model | .000 | 1.000 | | |
| Independence model | .421 | .247 | .131 | .214 |

#### 4.4.2.3 Baseline comparisons

**Table 4.27: Baseline comparison**

| MODEL | NFI Delta1 | RFI rho1 | IFI Delta2 | TLI rho2 | CFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .864 | .815 | .906 | .870 | .904 |
| Saturated model | 1.000 |  | 1.000 |  | 1.000 |
| Independence model | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |

Baseline values below 0.9 indicate unreliable data; therefore, a result of 0.904 indicates reliable data.

#### 4.4.2.4 RMSEA

RMSEA indicates an absolute fit index for the measurement model

**Table 4.28: RMSEA**

| MODEL | RMSEA | LO 90 | HI 90 | PCLOSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .113 | .095 | .132 | .000 |
| Independence model | .314 | .300 | .329 | .000 |

### 4.4.3 Factor loadings

#### 4.4.3.1 Standardised regression weights: (Group number 1: Default model)

Standard regression weights are shown below. Table 4.19 indicates the factor loadings (estimates) for all the different variables. According to Cohen (1988:284), standard regression weights with values <0.10 mean that there is a small effect, and those around 0.30 could be said to indicate a medium effect, while the ones equal to and above 0.50 indicate a large effect.

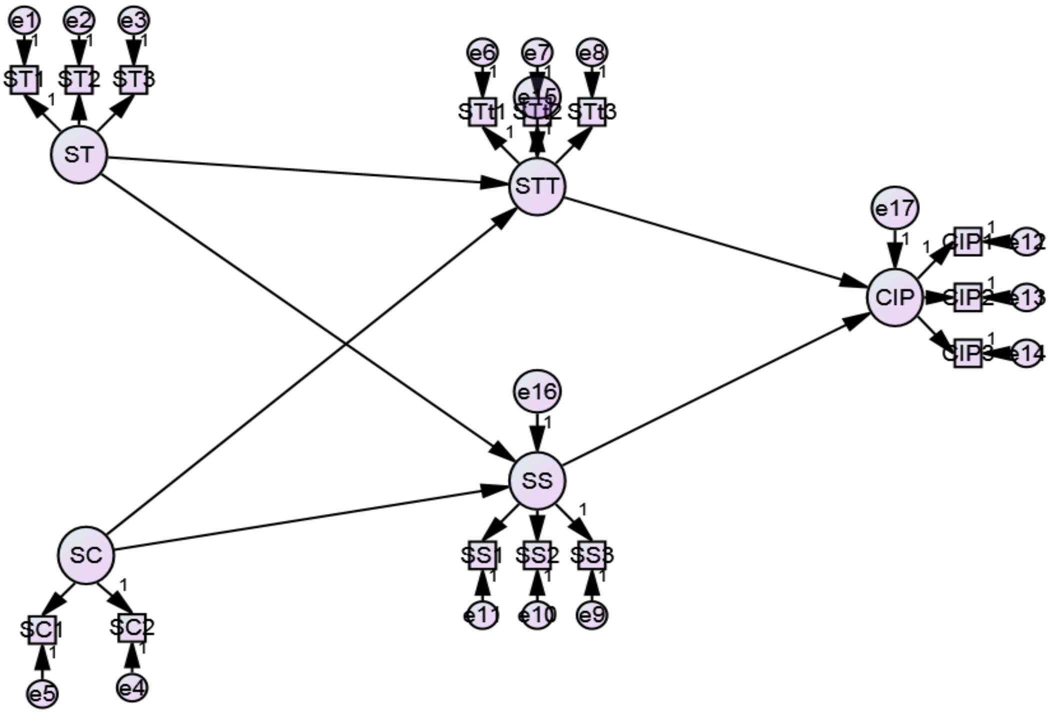
**Table 4.29: Standard regression weight**

| | | | ESTIMATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ST3 | <--- | ST | .837 |
| ST2 | <--- | ST | .871 |
| ST1 | <--- | ST | .783 |
| SC2 | <--- | SC | .762 |
| SC1 | <--- | SC | .876 |
| STt3 | <--- | STT | .739 |
| STt2 | <--- | STT | .787 |
| STt1 | <--- | STT | .669 |
| SS3 | <--- | SS | .754 |
| SS2 | <--- | SS | .827 |
| SS1 | <--- | SS | .708 |
| CIP3 | <--- | CIP | .828 |
| CIP2 | <--- | CIP | .895 |
| CIP1 | <--- | CIP | .835 |

According to the standardised regression weights in Table 4.29 above, all the factor loadings indicate a large effect above the recommended minimum, according to Mpinganjira *et al.* (2014:7). As a matter of fact, all of them are above 0.70. It can therefore be concluded that variables are measuring what they are supposed to measure and they do converge well.

## 4.5 Path modelling

### 4.5.1 Research model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e16
SS
SS1
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SS3
e11
e10
e9
SC
SC1
SC2
e5
e4
1

Figure 5.1: Research model – Path model

This model has five variables with three measurement instruments, except one variable, which only has two instruments.

### 4.5.2 Model fit results

The fit indices in Table 4.30 below represent the overall model fit for the data in this research study.

**Table 4.30: Model fit results**

| CFA INDICATORS | CHI-SQUARE | GFI | CFI | TLI | IFI | RMSEA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INDICATOR VALUE | 3 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.08 |
| DEFAULT VALUE | 1.499 | 0.667 | 0.917 | 0.763 | 0.799 | 0.072 |

### 4.5.3 Path modelling results

#### 4.5.3.1 Regression weights (Group number 1: Default model)

**Table 4.31: Path modelling results**

| | | | ESTIMATE | S.E. | C.R. | P | LABEL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STT | <--- | ST | .162 | .071 | 2.272 | .023 | par_1 |
| SS | <--- | SC | 1.443 | .241 | 5.984 | *** | par_2 |
| SS | <--- | ST | .133 | .068 | 1.956 | .051 | par_5 |

The results above indicate a significant relationship between the variables. This is reflected by the asterisk on the P values.

#### 4.5.3.2 Standardised regression weights: (Group number 1: Default model)

**Table 4.32: Standardised regression weights**

| | | | ESTIMATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| STT | <--- | ST | .199 |
| SS | <--- | SC | 1.071 |
| SS | <--- | ST | .142 |

The results above indicate a positive relationship between the variables. The second one shows both positive and significant relationships.

#### 4.5.3.3 Covariance (Group number: Default model)

**Table 4.33: Covariance**

| | | | ESTIMATE | S.E. | C.R. | P | LABEL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ST | <--> | SC | .481 | .088 | 5.440 | *** | par_10 |
| CIP | <--> | ST | .455 | .090 | 5.078 | *** | par_11 |
| ST | <--> | STT | .318 | .067 | 4.735 | *** | par_12 |

### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the statistical analysis of the empirical study based on the different variables. Firstly, descriptive analysis results were presented, stating the gender of the respondents, their age groups and analysis of each variable in detail. Then, reliability analysis results were presented. This included Cronbach’s alpha results, item-total statistics and item statistics. That was followed by confirmatory factor results, which looked at model fit and factor loadings. Path modelling then followed, stating regression weights, standard regression as well as the covariance.

The following chapter will conclude this study by providing an interpretation of the statistical results and discussing the findings in relation to the hypotheses made at the beginning of the study.

# CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured mainly by a discussion of the research findings obtained during the research. Important points that this research brought forth will be highlighted. Data analysis results will also be provided in an interpreted manner in terms of the expectation and the actual findings thereof. These will be followed by the conclusion in terms of whether the results of this study were positive and significant, but also to importantly respond to the empirical objectives and answer the research question. A recommendation will then follow the conclusion and finally the limitations of the study will be stated.

## 5.2 Research findings

The retail industry is a huge contributor to South African GDP. This is brought about by the fact that the retail industry serves the daily needs of millions of people in the country and indeed around the world. This study centred on the retail customers as a focal point with regard to their motivation and their intentions to purchase. A customer is an important stakeholder of a business and research has shown that it is more difficult to gain one customer than it is to keep one already existing customer. Therefore, it is important then that while customers have in the recent years understood and demanded more from their favourite stores, the retail industry also understands what it is that customers want as well as what motivates them to keep coming to the same stores.

The whole objective of this study was to establish the influence of salesperson trust and commitment on store trust and satisfaction to customer intention to purchase from their store. The two predictor variables are salesperson trust and salesperson commitment. The mediator variables are store trust and store satisfaction. Lastly, the outcome variable is customer intention to purchase.

A sample of 150 consumers responded and represented the target population from the selected sample frame. A simple random sampling method was used to select this sample with a team of trained fieldworkers. After the collection of data, it was taken to the Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU for analysis, where descriptive analysis, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path modelling were used to analyse the data.

The results are as follows:

### 5.2.1 Descriptive analysis

Based on the descriptive analysis in Chapter 4 above, it can be deduced that a sample profile of a typical respondent who participated in this study could be said to be a male aged between 36 and 45 and Sesotho speaking.

The majority of respondents agree that salesperson trust and salesperson commitment are important attributes that ultimately have a bearing on their decision to visit the store again.

This empirical study also depicts that majority of respondents who believe that their retail stores can be trusted to do the right things and also do what is best for them as customers. They seem satisfied with the services and products they get from their respective retail stores.

Finally, the majority of respondents seem content with their store, and show some level of loyalty, as they state that they would be happy to purchase from their respective stores once more in the future.

These findings seem to confirm the hypotheses made at the beginning of this study and discussed in 5.3.5 below.

### 5.2.2 Reliability analysis

The results seem to be reliable because, for all the variables measured, Cronbach’s alpha is above 0.6. Salesperson trust shows 0.871, salesperson commitment shows 0.801, store trust shows 0.773, store satisfaction shows 0.809, and customer intention to purchase shows 0.885. These results also show that discriminant validity for the measuring instruments used. All measuring instruments have a correlation above 0.5, stating that they converge well.

### 5.2.3 CFA analysis

CMIN/DF is less than 3, which is acceptable because the results demonstrated 2.914, which means that the data does fit the model. Baseline values should also be above 0.9 to be reliable, and therefore 0.904 confirms that reliability. GFI, CFI, TLI, IFI and RMSEA all show results below 0.9. All this means that collected data does indicate a good fit for the research model.

### 5.2.4 SEM results

The results here indicate a significant relationship between the variables. This is reflected by the asterisk on the P values. The results above indicate both a positive relationship as well as a significant relationship. CMIN/DF is below 3. GFI is 0.779, TLI is 0.763 and IFI is 0.817, all of which are below 0.9., which indicates that they also fit the model.

### 5.2.5 Hypotheses testing

The following hypotheses were formulated at the beginning of this study:

**H1:** The higher the level of salesperson trust, the higher the level of store trust will be. This hypothesis has been proven true and, as such, is accepted.

In terms of the empirical objective as well as the research question, it can be concluded that salesperson trust has a significant and positive influence on store trust.

**H2:** The higher the level of salesperson trust, the higher the level of store satisfaction will be. The hypothesis is correct and cannot be rejected.

The empirical objective and research question have been satisfied by the significant and positive influence of salesperson trust on store satisfaction.

**H3:** The higher the level of salesperson commitment, the higher the level of store trust will be. This hypothesis has been proven true and is accepted.

The empirical objective and the research question have been found to be true in that a salesperson has a significant and positive influence on store trust.

**H4:** The higher the level of salesperson commitment, the higher the level of store satisfaction will be. This is true and accepted.

The empirical objective and research question have been found to be true in that salesperson commitment has a significant and positive influence on store satisfaction.

**H5:** The higher the level of store trust, the greater the chances of purchase intention. This hypothesis has been found to be true and is therefore accepted.

The empirical objective and research question have been satisfied in that it is evident from the data analysis in Chapter 4 that store trust has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.

**H6:** The higher the level of store satisfaction, the greater the chances of purchase intention. This hypothesis is also accepted as true.

The empirical objective and research question have shown that store satisfaction has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention.

## 5.3 Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of salesperson trust on customer behaviour. Theoretical objectives were satisfied through a literature review, which looked at all five different variables. It was in the process of the literature review that measuring instruments were formulated. That led to the empirical study, which involved undertaking a quantitative survey that sought to investigate the influence of different variables on others, as depicted in the theoretical model proposed in Figure 1.1 of Chapter 1. The conclusions are therefore as follows:

### 5.3.1 Salesperson trust

Based on the empirical study conducted, it can be concluded that salesperson trust is an important aspect to customers because customers need to feel that they can trust the salesperson to assist them in the store. Customers further felt that they can trust the salespeople in their respective stores to do the right things and to have integrity. A customer who feels valued and respected will most likely return again the next time for a purchase. The manner in which salespersons conduct themselves has a great deal of bearing on the success of the store. It can therefore be concluded that trust exists in salesperson as considered by customers.

### 5.3.2 Salesperson commitment

Results from this empirical study led the researcher to conclude that the retail buyer puts his trust in the salesperson based on his dealings with such a buyer. A committed salesperson, based on the finding above, is one who is able to assist the consumers as they move around in the store. It further shows that it is those salespeople who will go an extra mile to even suggest other potential material to the buyer, who is seen as committed. In that regard, a buyer who has been dealt with badly by the salesperson, or who feels that he has been cheated or robbed, will not shop from the same retail store again. It can therefore be concluded that the consumers see their salespeople as committed.

### 5.3.3 Store trust

It is evident, based on the empirical study above, that trust is something that is earned. As such, the study has proven that the store has to prove that it has the best interest of the customers at heart. This is seen through the customers’ experience in the store as well as the customers’ view that things, such as prices of the products, reflect the store’s interest for costs saving on the customers’ part. The results of this study show that the majority of the respondents feel that the stores they buy from can be trusted to do the right thing and that they have the best interest of the customers at heart. It can therefore be concluded that there is a trust by the consumers of their respective stores.

### 5.3.4 Store satisfaction

Based on the empirical research, it is evident that the buyer-seller relationship is important. On the measuring instrument that asked whether customers felt good about their decision to buy from their particular retail stores, the majority confirmed their satisfaction and also that their experiences in those particular retail stores were satisfactory. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant amount of satisfaction by respondents with their stores.

### 5.3.5 Purchase intention

Purchase intention is based on the decision made by the buyer that they are prepared to spend their hard-earned cash on something or some store. It is evident from the results above that if the customer is satisfied with the store and ultimately the salesperson, based on the service that he gets, he will not only spent his money in the present time, but also in the future. This is depicted by the responses from the questions that asked whether the customer would consider spending his money in these particular stores in the next three months or in the next year. It can therefore be concluded that the respondents exhibit intentions to buy from their respective stores.

In light of the reliability analysis above, it can then be concluded that the results are both reliable and valid. As far as CFA results are concerned, it is also evident that the results fit the theoretical research model. SEM results also show data that fits the conceptualised model. It can therefore be concluded that, based on all the findings above, these results are credible, valid, reliable and justified by the data collected. However, most importantly, they positively validate the hypotheses made at the beginning of this study.

## 5.4 Recommendations

In light of the results obtained, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between predictor variables, the mediator variables as well as the outcome variables. Considering that the sampling frame was just a small fraction of the target population, it would have been interesting to see what a wider frame scope would show in order to verify the current findings.

### 5.4.1 Recommendations for the store

Based on the findings and conclusions above, it is clear that the salesperson plays a very critical role in the success of the retails store. Furthermore, the buyer places much value in how he is dealt with by the salesperson, which ultimately leads to his satisfaction and decision to spend money in that particular store. As such, it is recommended that retail stores should ensure that their salespeople are trained well to understand the impact of their dealings with customers.

This research has also highlighted the fact that the buyer places emphasis on the store and wants to know that the store does have their best interest at heart. It is therefore further recommended that the stores should communicate all important things they do for the buyers such as cost saving drives and other benefits that customers can get by buying from those retail stores.

Without the customer, business does not exist, and unhappy customers affect profitability in business. The store should regularly conduct customer satisfaction surveys to check and ensure that their customers are still happy with the services and products they supply. Repeat purchases also mean satisfaction with either the store or with the product. Therefore, these surveys should specifically address these two aspects to provide the store with the necessary knowledge of the areas that need improvement.

### 5.4.2 Recommendations for future research

The current study focused on retail stores and their consumers. Future research should incorporate corporate salespeople as well as corporate buyers. It would very interesting to see whether such a study would reveal the same results as this one. It would also be interesting to see whether corporate salespeople are viewed in the same light as retail ones by their customers.

Equally important would be to see whether corporate buyers are motivated by the same things as the individual buyers in the retail space. More so because corporate buyers are also individual buyers who do use the retail industry when they buy for their own personal needs. Is the approach the same in respect to their different buying roles?

It is further recommended that time and resources should be allocated to further investigate a wide sample frame from different provinces. It would be interesting to see whether consumers in different provinces and different areas of the country are motivated by the same things or not.

## 5.5 Limitations of the study

Time was the greatest challenge of this study. It took a great deal of time to conduct the literature review, and then train the fieldworkers, to conduct the survey and then the data clean-up.  These were the most time-consuming elements of this study.

Financial resources were the other limitation that meant only a certain number of questionnaires could be issued. As such, the current sample is only a small representation of the entire population. If time and budget were not limitations, a bigger sample including more retailers and even corporate space could have been conducted.

## 5.6 Summary

Chapter 1 was an overview of this research study. It provided an introduction as well as the overview of this entire study. The researcher presented insight into the research problem and clarified the objectives of the study. It also included a brief scope of this study as well as the limitations thereof.

Chapter 2 presented the literature review. The researcher reviewed and focused on the theoretical understanding of the proposed variables by different authors. These topics were discussed in detail and the questionnaire used in the empirical study was formed.

Chapter 3 is the research design. It outlined the research methodology that was undertaken. The research design, sampling design, target population, sampling frame, sampling method and sampling size were discussed in detail. The measuring instruments were formulated and a questionnaire designed.

Chapter 4 was all about data analysis. Here, the researcher presented the empirical results, and findings of this study were explained. This is where the actual data was interpreted into meaningful results.

Finally, Chapter 5, as the closing chapter of the study, was concerned with the findings of the study, where the researcher concludes the study by highlighting the findings in relation to the objectives of the study. He continues to provide the conclusion as well as recommendations to both the retail industry and for further research.

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# ANNEXURE A

## QUESTIONNAIRE

## The influence of salesperson trust on customer behaviour

My name is Sabata Sera, a final-year MBA student at NWU. I am conducting an academic research for the purpose of gathering information regarding the influence of salesperson trust and commitment on store trust and satisfaction and as to whether these lead to purchase intention or not. I, therefore, request your assistance in completing the questionnaire below. This data will not be used for any other purpose, safe academic, and as such confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed. It will take you approximately five minutes to complete this questionnaire.

## Researcher: Sabata Sera

## SECTION A

### General information

The section requests for your background information. Please indicate your answer by ticking (✓) the appropriate block.

A1: Please indicate your gender

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | |
| Female | |

A2: Please indicate your age category

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 -25 | | 26-35 | | 36-45 | | 46-55 | | 56 & > | |

A3: Please indicate your home language

| | |
|---|---|
| English | |
| Afrikaans | |
| isiZulu | |
| Sesotho | |
| Tshivenda | |

| | |
|---|---|
| isiXhosa | |
| Other (specify) | |

Kindly use the legend below to answer all the questions in sections that follow. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements by ticking the corresponding number.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Moderately agree | Agree | Strongly agree |

## SECTION B

**Salesperson trust**

Please tick only one number for each statement

Considering all the time that you have been dealing with your salesperson, how would you rate their trust?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B1 | My salesperson can be counted on to do what is right | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| B2 | My salesperson has high integrity | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| B3 | My salesperson can be trusted | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |

## SECTION C

**Salesperson commitment**

Please tick only one number for each statement

Considering all the time that you have been dealing with your salesperson, how would you rate their commitment?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C1 | The salesperson is committed to helping customers | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| C2 | The salesperson expends effort on behalf of the retail store to help it succeed | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |

## SECTION D

### Store trust

How would you rate your store trust?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D1 | My favourite retail store can be trusted at all times | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| D2 | My favourite retail store can be counted on to do what is right | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| D3 | I believe I can trust my favourite retail store to do what is best for me | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |

## SECTION E

### Store satisfaction

How would you rate your store satisfaction?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E1 | I feel good regarding my decision to purchase products from this retail store | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| E2 | I think that purchasing products from this retail store is a good idea | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| E3 | Overall, I am satisfied with the experience of purchasing products from this retail store | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |

## SECTION F

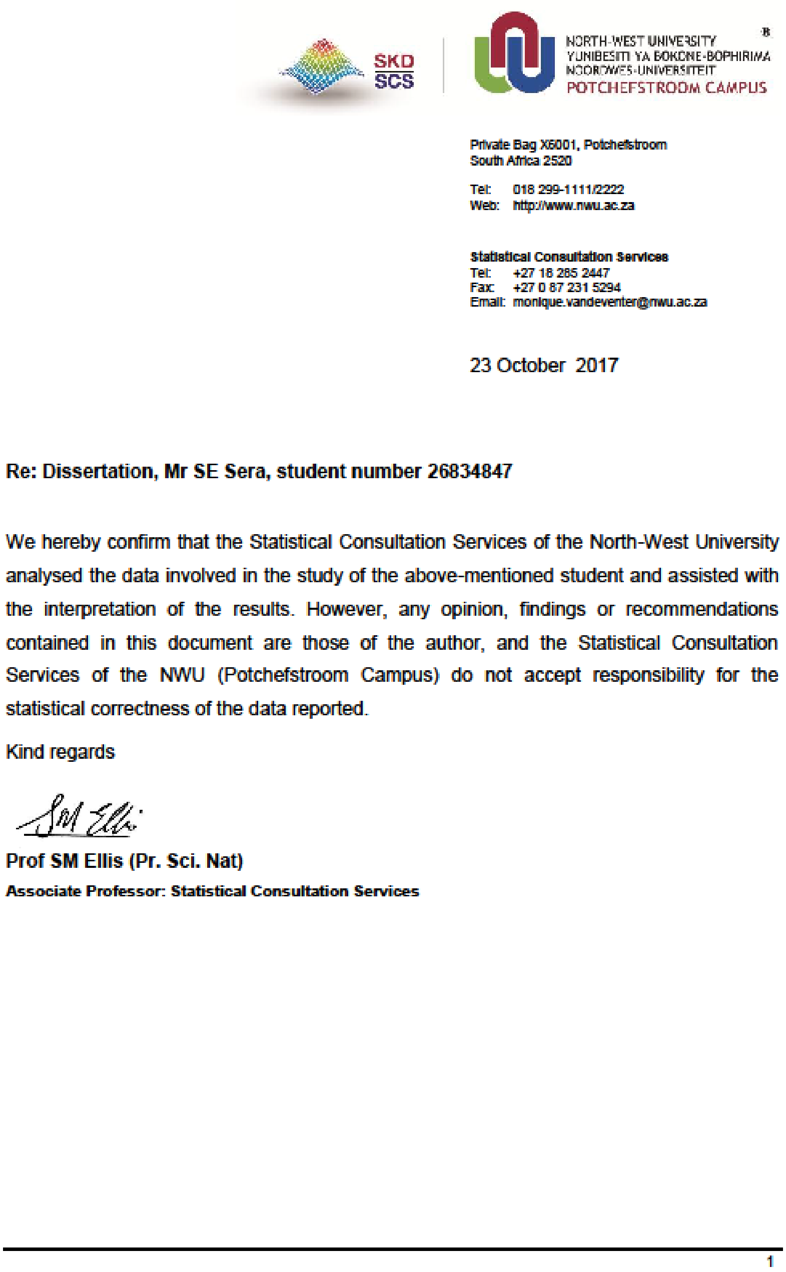
### Customer intention to purchase

Would you say you are more inclined to purchase from the store?

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F1 | I would return to this retail store again | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| F2 | I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next three months | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |
| F3 | I would consider purchasing from this retail store in the next year | Strongly disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly agree |

**I thank you for taking part in this study**.

# ANEXURE B



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23 October 2017

**Re: Dissertation, Mr SE Sera, student number 26834847**

We hereby confirm that the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University analysed the data involved in the study of the above-mentioned student and assisted with the interpretation of the results. However, any opinion, findings or recommendations contained in this document are those of the author, and the Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU (Potchefstroom Campus) do not accept responsibility for the statistical correctness of the data reported.

Kind regards

SM Ellis

**Prof SM Ellis (Pr. Sci. Nat)**
**Associate Professor: Statistical Consultation Services**

# ANNEXURE C

## LANGUAGE EDITING FEEDBACK

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of dissertation: (The influence of salesperson trust on customer behaviour)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned mini-dissertation by Sabata Sera (student number: 26834847).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

Cecile van Zyl

Language practitioner

BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)
SATI number: 1002391