

CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
AMONG MOTSWANA, CHINESE AND SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS

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Submitted in full fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Magister Technologiae (Marketing)
in the Faculty of Commerce and Governmental Studies
at the Port Elizabeth Technikon

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OCTOBER 2004

DECLARATION

I declare that this study is my own work and that all the sources referred to or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I have not previously submitted this research study for a degree at any University or Technikon.

Yuejin Li

October 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author's sincere gratitude and appreciation are extended:

- Prof Laetitia Radder, for the exceptional learning experience, constructive criticism, encouragement and patience throughout this study;
- The respondents for their co-operation and willingness to provide information;
- Mrs Blunt and Mrs Harrian (Language Practitioner) for their constructive criticism and incisive comments;
- Mr Carel Nel and Mrs Agela Nel for their encouragement and support;
- My parents and sisters, for their encouragement and financial support; and
- My boyfriend for his encouragement and support.

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October 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the global marketplace becomes more integrated and consumer specialists develop an international focus, developing useful scales to profile consumer decision-making styles in other cultures becomes important. Comparing the decision-making styles of consumers from different countries would thus contribute to the understanding of the effect of the marketing environment as well as of the cultural factors on consumer decision-making styles. It would also be significant to determine if the decision-making styles of foreign consumers differ from those of local ones.

The influx of foreign students enrolled at South African Universities and Technikons has resulted in an increase in the number of consumers who have to make purchases connected to their daily lives within a different cultural environment. An understanding of students as consumers and their decision-making processes is important to marketers, particularly as students are recognised as a specialised market segment for a variety of goods and services. It would thus be significant to determine if the decision-making styles of foreign students differ from those of local students.

This exploratory study investigates the decision-making styles among Chinese, Motswana and South African Caucasian students in a South African context, with a view of verifying the international applicability of the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986). Only students with a

Caucasian background were included in an attempt to avoid the influence of the different subcultures amongst South African students.

It was found that Sproles and Kendall's (1986) model did not fit the South African samples. It was furthermore found that differences exist among Motswana, Chinese and Caucasian students in consumer decision-making styles. The mean value for the "Novelty-fashion conscious" style was number one in the list of factors for Chinese and Motswana students and second for the Caucasian sample. "Price conscious" style, however, was number one for the Caucasian students.

KEY WORDS:

Clothing

Consumer decision-making process

Consumer decision-making styles

Culture

South Africa

Tertiary institution

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 REASONS FOR THE STUDY

Globalisation is an inevitable process in the 21st century, and so is cross-culturalisation (Tian 2004:1). Cross-cultural marketing is defined as the strategic process of marketing to consumers whose culture differs from that of the market culture in at least one fundamental cultural aspect, such as language, religion, social norms and values, education or living style (Tian 2004:1).

Cross-culturalisation also exists among the student population of the major higher education institutions in Port Elizabeth. The number of international students enrolled at the Port Elizabeth Technikon (PET) and the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) has increased since 2002. The number of foreign students registered at UPE increased from 602 in 2002 to 1191 in 2004. At PET the enrolments of foreign students increased from 544 in 2002 to 599 in 2004. The largest groups of foreign students are from Botswana (927 students) and China (235 students). The majority of the remainder of foreign students is from countries such as Germany, the United States of America and Lesotho (Port Elizabeth Technikon & The University of Port Elizabeth International Office 2004).

The influx of foreign students has also resulted in an increase in the number of consumers who have to make purchases in their daily lives within a different cultural environment. Therefore, an understanding of students as consumers and their decision-making processes is important to marketers, particularly as students are recognised as a specialised market segment for a variety of goods and services (Moschis & Moore 1979).

As the global marketplace becomes more integrated and consumer specialists develop an international focus, developing useful scales to profile consumer decision-making styles in other cultures becomes important. Comparing the decision-making styles of consumers from different countries would thus contribute to the understanding of the effect of the marketing environment as well as of the cultural factors on consumer decision-making styles. It would also be significant to determine if the decision-making styles of foreign students differ from those of local students.

In general, all consumers pass through a decision-making process before making a decision to buy a product or service. This decision-making process may be routinised or complex (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel 1998:158). However, Hafstrom, Chae and Chung (1992:256) point out that decision-making has become more complex and even more important for consumers today than in the past. Consumers are besieged by advertising, news articles, and direct mail that provide an abundance of information, much of it with mixed messages. In addition, increases in the number and variety of goods, stores and shopping

malls, and the availability of multi-component products and electronic purchasing capabilities have broadened the sphere for consumer choice and have thus complicated decision-making.

Sproles (1985:268) and Sproles and Kendall (1986:405) have been instrumental in developing and testing a Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) that could result in a new direction in decision-making research. A consumer decision-making style may be defined as “a mental orientation characterizing a consumer’s approach to making choices” (Sproles & Kendall 1986:267). It is “a basic consumer personality, analogous to the concept of personality in psychology” which can be identified by measuring general orientations of consumers towards shopping and buying (Sproles & Kendall 1986:268).

According to Hafstrom et al (1992:147), characteristics of decision-making styles, used in the CSI, can be useful in profiling an individual’s consumer style, in educating consumers, and in counselling families on financial management. Sproles and Kendall (1986:269) developed the CSI to determine the basic characteristics of consumer decision-making styles among young consumers in the United States. They identified the following as the most basic mental characteristics of consumer decision-making:

- Perfectionism or high-quality consciousness;
- Brand consciousness;

- Novelty-fashion consciousness;
- Recreational, hedonistic shopping consciousness;
- Price and “value for money” shopping consciousness;
- Impulsiveness;
- Over-choice confusion (from a proliferation of brands, stores, and consumer information, for example); and
- Habitual, brand-loyal orientation toward consumption (Sproles & Kendall 1986:268).

Comparing the decision-making styles of consumers from different countries would thus contribute to understanding the effect of the marketing environment as well as of the cultural factors related to consumer decision-making styles. It would also be significant to determine if the decision-making styles of foreign students differ from those of local students.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study will contribute to consumer decision-making literature and consumer education efforts in a South African context. Furthermore, it will assist marketers to better address the needs of students as a specialised target market. The planned research was thus important for of the following reasons:

- The number of foreign students who study in Port Elizabeth (PE) and could represent an important market segment, is growing.
- Little research has been done comparing the influence of different cultural backgrounds on the purchasing behaviour of students.
- No research could be found on foreign students' buying behaviour or decision-making styles in a South African context.
- A better understanding of the consumer decision-making styles could help retailers to more effectively market to the student segment; and
- The administration of the CSI to a student population in South African could help indicate the generalisability of the CSI to the South African situation.

1.3 OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED

Based on the background to the problem and the significance of the research, the objectives of this study were to:

- study the literature on consumer decision-making to determine the steps in the consumer decision-making process as well as the factors that might have an influence on this process;
- study the literature on consumer decision-making styles with an emphasis on the various models and dimensions used to explain these styles;
- apply the model of consumer decision-making styles developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) to the two largest groups of foreign students (Motswana

and Chinese) as well as to South African students enrolled at UPE and PET with the aim of verifying the applicability of the said model to the South African context;

- propose changes to the CSI model developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986), if required.
- compare the consumer decision-making styles of the different groups to determine if there were similarities or differences in the decision-making of these groups;
- compare the decision-making styles identified in this study with the results of the original study by Sproles and Kendall conducted in the United States;
- establish a profile of consumer decision-making styles for each group of students in the South African context;
- make recommendations to marketers of clothing products to students in PE; and
- recommend further research where appropriate.

1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

In order to make the topic manageable, the boundaries of the research were set as follows:

1.4.1 Geographic and demographic delimitation

This research was focused on higher education students who were registered at UPE and PET. Since these students were exposed to the same macroeconomic environment, such as the same shopping malls and the same marketing messages, it would allow for sample comparability.

The study focused on three different demographic groups, namely, foreign students from Botswana with an African background, those from China, with an Asian background, and local students from a Caucasian background. Only students with a Caucasian background were included in an attempt to avoid the influence of the different subcultures among South African students.

1.4.2 Conceptual demarcation

This study focused on consumer decision-making processes and styles amongst the three groups of students (as stated above), using the eight-factor conceptual framework and analytical methods proposed by Sproles and Kendall (1986:267). The study furthermore focused on decision-making styles as associated with the purchase of clothing. Apparel is commonly considered a high-involvement shopping item which consumers often buy for its symbolic meanings, image reinforcement or psychological satisfaction and is also a product category that is known to reflect the consumer's social life, aspirations, fantasies and affiliation (Blumer 1969, Solomon 1986). According to Kaiser (1990), clothes can manifest

the wearer's social status, self-image and other personality characteristics resulting from complex social influences. Thus, it was believed that the needs thought to be met through the apparel products and apparel purchase behaviour of consumers would provide appropriate indicators to reflect the social, economic and consumption experience factors that would affect consumers.

1.5 REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Although the decision-making styles of Motswana, Chinese and South African consumers had not been studied in a South African context, literature on consumer decision-making styles using United States, Chinese and Korean data could be found. Researchers in the field of consumer economics had concluded that consumers follow different styles or rules in making decisions when confronted with choices in the market (Canabal 2002, Fan & Xiao 1998, Fan, Xiao & Xu 1997, Hafstrom et al 1992, Sproles 1985, Sproles & Kendall 1986, Walsh, Mitchell & Henning-Thurau 2001). These studies further suggested that external factors such as culture might influence the way consumers develop those styles.

Sproles (1985) and Sproles and Kendall (1986) used data from samples of young consumers in the United States to measure the basic characteristics of consumer decision-making styles. They developed and validated a CSI for this purpose. Sproles and Kendall (1986) recommended that the CSI be administered to different populations to establish generalisation. Generality

could be established by identifying and testing decision-making traits for other youth and adult groups as well. They also recommended using the inventory with different population groups to determine whether it could be applied generally.

Hafstrom et al (1992:146) used the CSI to identify the decision-making styles of Korean students. Fan and Xiao (1998) applied a modified CSI with Chinese students, and Canabal (2002) employed the CSI in his focus on South Indian students. These studies found several differences among young Chinese, American and Korean consumers despite some similarities with respect to the major dimensions and item loading (Fan & Xiao 1998:155). For example, the “novelty and fashion conscious consumer” identified by Sproles and Kendall (1986:288) is not confirmed as present in the Korean study (Hafstrom et al 1992:147).

As no studies could be found that focused on Chinese students in a South African context, or on Motswana or South African students or other consumers, in a South African context, the current research was expected to fill an important gap.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In an attempt to address the objectives of the research, the following broad procedures were followed:

- A literature study consisting of books, journals, the Internet and electronic databases (such as EBSCOhost and Emerald) was conducted to provide a conceptual framework for the study;
- An empirical study of a quantitative nature employing the use of questionnaires was also undertaken. Respondents included 100 Motswana students, 100 Chinese students and 100 Caucasian South African students.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides details on the rationale for the study, the objectives to be achieved and the research design.

Chapter 2 focuses on the factors influencing the consumer decision-making process in general, while Chapter 3 deals with the dimensions of consumer decision-making style and an explanation of the CSI model and its adaptation. Chapter 4 discusses the research design in detail and also presents the major findings of the empirical study.

Chapter 5 consists of a synopsis of the study, lists the conclusions based on both the literature and empirical findings, and concludes with recommendations based on these conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to deal with the marketing environment and make purchasing decisions, all consumers, regardless of age, gender, nationality or religion, engage in a decision-making process. The focus of this process, which forms an integral part of consumer behaviour (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel 2004:142), is on how consumers spend their available resources (such as time and money) on personal and household products and services so as to satisfy their needs (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:7).

An analysis of the buying decision-making process is concerned with two problems: the types of decisions consumers make and the steps in the purchasing process. This chapter will discuss three types of consumer decision-making, namely, routine decision-making, limited decision-making and extensive decision-making (Boyd & Walker 1990:113, Howard 1994:89, Lamb et al 2004:148, Lancaster & Jobber 1994:34, Levy & Weitz 1992:120, Schiffman & Kanuk 2000, Sheth & Mittal 2004:285, Solomon 2002:257). When deciding on purchasing a particular product, the consumer passes through five steps in the decision-making process: problem or need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase behaviour (Boyd &

Walker 1990:115, Du Plessis, Rousseau & Blem 1994:47, Kotler 2000:161, Kotler & Fox 1995:265, Lamb et al 2004:142, Levy & Weitz 1992:119, Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:90, Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:443, Sheth & Mittal 2004:275, Solomon 2002:255). These five steps in the consumer decision-making process will also be discussed in this chapter.

In addition to the types of decisions and the steps in the decision-making process, the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decision-making will also be discussed.

2.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND DECISION-MAKING

Consumer behaviour is described as a study of how consumers make purchasing decisions and how they consume and dispose of the purchased products (Lamb et al 2004:142). Murray and O'Driscoll (1996:90) maintain that consumer behaviour is the belief that buyers go through some series of stages in arriving at a decision to buy and use a product or service. Howard (1994:1) argues that consumer behaviour describes how consumers differentiate among products or services, why they buy and consume products and the way they think and perform when purchasing and consuming. More specially, according to Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2002:5), consumer behaviour is concerned with how consumers acquire, organise and use information to make consumption choices. The definition by Arnould et al (2002:5) requires amplification to clarify who the consumer is, what behaviour of interest is and what the nature of the

process involved in decision-making is. From the above definitions, it can be said that consumer behaviour is a study of the decision-making process in relation to the environmental factors and their effect on the purchasing decision.

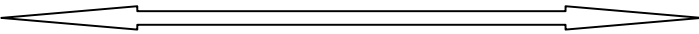
The decision-making processes that consumers use when making purchases vary, particularly with regard to the time and effort that they take to reach a decision. The type of product they buy, in turn influences the decision-making process. The next section deals with different types of consumer decisions.

2.3 THE TYPES OF CONSUMER DECISIONS

All consumers' purchasing decisions generally fall along a continuum of three categories: routine decision-making, limited decision-making and extensive decision-making (Boyd & Walker 1990:113, Howard 1994:89, Lamb et al 2004:148, Lancaster & Jobber 1994:34, Levy & Weitz 1992:120, Schiffman & Kanuk 2000, Sheth & Mittal 2004:285, Solomon 2002:257). This continuum (shown in Figure 2.1) is anchored on one end by routine response behaviour and at the other extreme by extensive decision-making. Many decisions fall somewhere in the middle and are characterized by limited decision-making. The amount of effort or involvement that goes into the decision is characteristic of the decision-making category (Lancaster & Jobber 1994:34). Involvement, on the other hand, is the amount of time and effort a buyer invests in the search, evaluation and decision process.

FIGURE 2.1

CONTINUUM OF CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

	ROUTINE	LIMITED	EXTENSIVE
	DECISION-MAKING		
			
INVOLVEMENT	low	low to moderate	high
TIME	short	short to moderate	long
COST	low	low to moderate	high
INFORMATION SEARCH	internal only	mostly internal	internal & external
NUMBER OF ALTERNATIVES	one	few	many

Source: Lamb et al 2004:148

The three types of decision-making (shown in Figure 2.1) are influenced by five factors (Boyd & Walker 1990:113, Du Plessis et al 1994:57, Howard 1994:89, Lamb et al 2004:148, Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:95):

- Level of consumer involvement;
- Length of time to make a decision;
- Value of the good or service;
- Degree of information search; and
- Number of alternatives.

The three categories of decisions and their influencing factors are now discussed in more detail.

2.3.1 Extensive decision-making

When consumers purchase a new product, an expensive product, or a seldom-bought item such as a house, they tend to conduct extensive decision-making (Lancaster & Jobber 1994:34). Lamb et al (2004:149) maintain that this process is the most complex type of consumer purchasing decision making and is linked to high involvement on the part of the consumer. Extensive decision-making also involves a high degree of information search and evaluation. As consumers want to make the right decision, they try to collect as much information as possible, both from memory (internal search) and from outside sources (external search). The evaluation is often made by considering the attributes of one brand at a time and seeing how each brand's attributes shape up to some set of desired characteristics (Solomon 2002:258). As buying very expensive or seldom bought products involves high risk and uncertainty, consumers tend to spend more time and effort deciding (Lamb et al 2004:149, Levy & Weitz 1992:120). The characteristics of extensive decision-making are shown in Table 2.1 below.

TABLE 2.1

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIMITED
VERSUS EXTENSIVE DECISION-MAKING

	Limited decision-making	Extensive decision-making
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low risk and involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk and involvement
Information search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little search • Information processed passively • In-store decision-making likely prior to store visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive search • Information processed actively • Multiple sources consulted prior to store visit
Purchase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited shopping time; often self-service • Choice often influenced by store displays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many outlets shopped at if needed • Communication with store personnel often desired

Source: Adapted from Solomon 2002:258

2.3.2 Limited decision-making

Limited decision-making (summarised in Table 2.1 above) occurs when the consumer has some prior experience with the product or service, when the risk of making an incorrect decision is moderate, or the consumer is unfamiliar with current available brands (Lamb et al 2004:149, Levy & Weitz 1992:121). Table 2.1 shows that with limited decision-making buyers tend to depend more heavily on personal knowledge than on external sources. Limited decision-making is also linked to lower levels of involvement because in this process buyers spend

moderate time and effort in searching for information or in considering several alternatives. Solomon (2002:258) agrees that limited decision-making is usually more straightforward and simple than extensive decision-making. Buyers are not as motivated to search for information or to rigorously evaluate each alternative but instead use simple decision-making rules to choose among alternatives.

2.3.3 Routine decision-making

Routine decision-making occurs when consumers deal with frequently purchased, low-value goods or services, when the risk of making an incorrect decision is low and the consumer is familiar with the current brands (Lamb et al 2004:148). Normally, consumers are familiar with many different brands in the product category but loyal to one brand (Sheth & Mittal 2004:400). Lamb et al (2004:148) point out that buyers engaged in routine response behaviour usually do not experience problem recognition until it is evoked by advertising, or they see the product displayed on a shop shelf. According to Alba and Hutchinson (in Solomon 2002:259), routine choices are automatic and performed with minimal effort and without conscious control. Customers buy first and evaluate afterwards, whereas the reverse is true for extensive decision-making. For example, a student will not stand at the pencil shelf in the store for half an hour thinking about which brand of pencil to buy. Instead, s/he will walk to the shelf, look around to find the usual brand and buy it.

The types of decision-making that consumers use to purchase a product does not necessarily remain constant. For example, if a habitually purchased product no longer satisfies, consumers may practice limited or extensive decision-making to change to another brand.

2.4 THE STEPS IN THE PURCHASING PROCESS

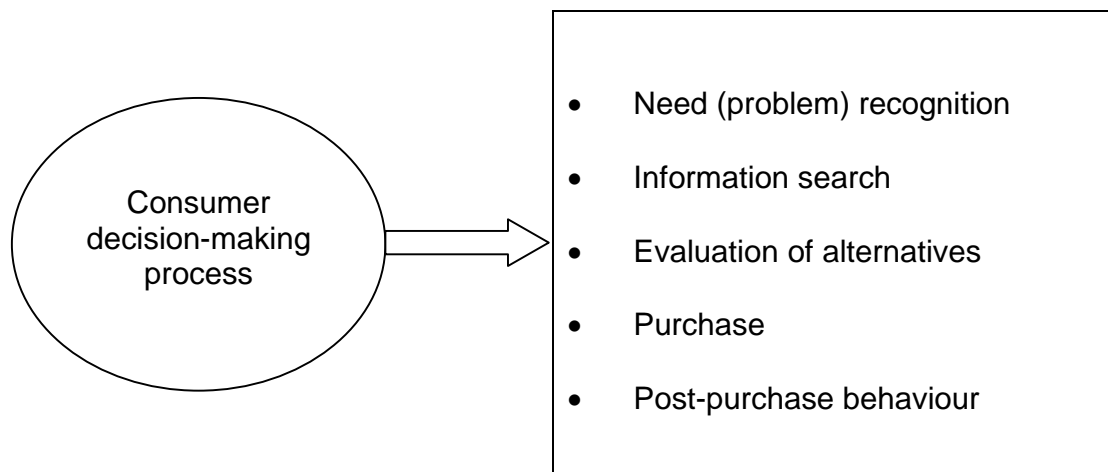
The consumer decision-making process is initiated when the consumer is faced with an *imbalance* between an actual and desired state (Lamb et al 2004:142). The actual state represents the problem or need that the consumer currently experiences and the desired state represents the position or situation that the consumer wants or needs to be in. When consumers buy particular products, they pass through five steps in the decision-making process (Boyd & Walker 1990:115, Du Plessis et al 1994:47, Kotler 2000:161, Kotler & Fox 1995:265, Lamb et al 2004:142, Levy & Weitz 1992:119, Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:90, Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:443, Sheth & Mittal 2004:275, Solomon 2002:255), as shown in Figure 2.2. The process begins with need recognition, followed by information search, then evaluation of alternatives, then the purchase phase and finally post-purchase behaviour.

The five steps shown in Figure 2.2 represent a general process that moves the consumer from recognition of a product or service need to the evaluation of a purchase. This process is a useful guideline for studying how consumers make decisions, but it does not assume that all consumers' decisions will proceed in

order through all of the steps (Lamb et al 2004:142). A consumer could end the decision-making process at any time or may not even make a purchase at all. Each of these steps is now discussed in more detail.

FIGURE 2.2

STEPS IN THE CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



Source: Adapted from Lamb et al 2004:143

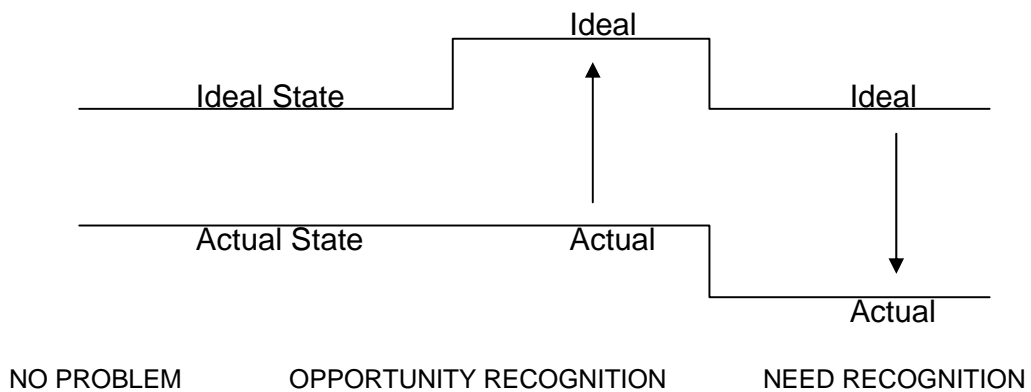
2.4.1 Problem (Need) recognition

A problem exists when a consumer recognises a problem to be solved or a need to be satisfied (Du Plessis et al 1994:47, Sheth & Mittal 2004:278). The recognition of a need is hence likely to occur when the consumer is faced with a problem (Schiffman & Kanuk 1994:566). Such a problem can be triggered through the consumer's exposure to either internal (psychological) or external

(social) influences or stimuli (Lamb et al 2004:142). Lamb et al (2004:142) and Solomon (2002:259) view this process as an *imbalance* between actual and desired or ideal states. The movement from actual or ideal states is depicted in Figure 2.3.

FIGURE 2.3

SHIFTS IN ACTUAL OR IDEAL STATES



Source: Solomon 2002:259

It can be noted from Figure 2.3 that there is no motivation to act when the perceived ideal state and the perceived actual state coincide. Problem recognition occurs only when a consumer perceives differences between ideal and actual states at some physical or socio-psychological dimension. This motivates consumers to find products or services to help bring their present state more into balance with the ideal state (Boyd & Walker 1990:116).

Lamb et al (2004:142) point out that a marketing manager's task is to get consumers to recognise an imbalance between their current state and their preferred state. Furthermore, marketing managers can create wants on the part of the consumer. A want exists when someone has an unfulfilled need and has determined that a particular product will satisfy it. Sheth and Mittal (2004:280) maintain that many marketing communications are designed to make consumers realise that they have a problem and then (conveniently) provide a solution. Consumers recognise unfulfilled wants in several ways, the three most common being (Lamb et al 2004:143):

- when a present product is not performing properly;
- when the consumer is about to become short of something that is generally kept on hand; and
- if the consumer hears about or sees that a product's features make it seem better than the one currently used.

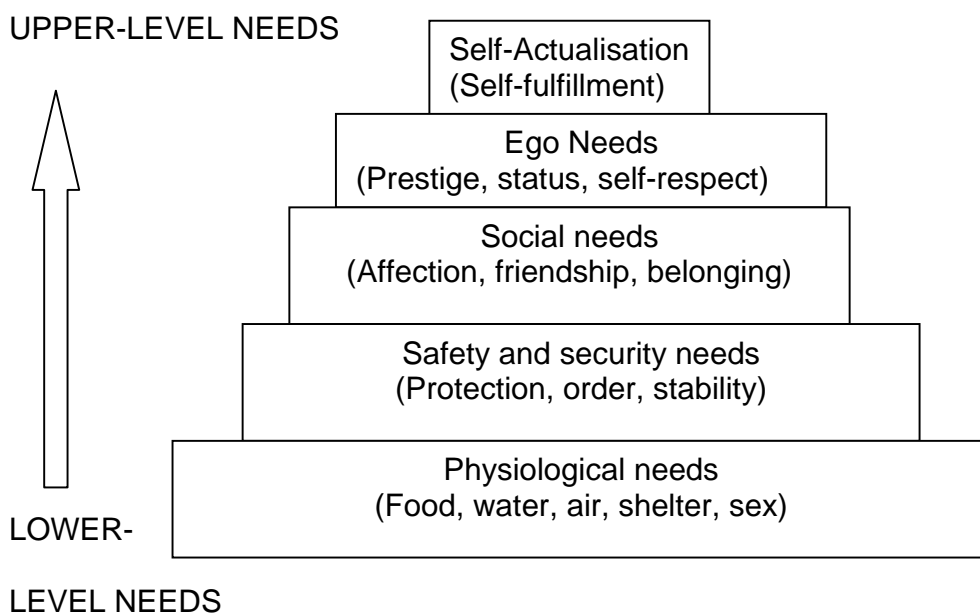
Wants are usually created by advertising and other promotional performance. For instance, a student may develop a strong desire for the newest style of costume after seeing it displayed in his or her favourite store.

Consumers are said to have different levels of needs. Maslow's theory (in Arnould et al 2002:386; Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:80, Sheth & Mittal 2004:164, Solomon 2002:108) claims five basic levels of human needs which rank in order

of importance from lower-level (biogenic) needs to higher-level (psychogenic) needs. A hierarchy approach implies that the order of development is fixed; that is, a certain level must be attained before the next, higher one is activated. For example, once a consumer feels satisfied in terms of biological and safety needs, then that person is capable of relating to other people thus pursuing social needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is shown in Figure 2.4.

FIGURE 2.4

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS



Source: Adapted from Arnould et al 2002:386

According to Maslow's hierarchy (in Schiffman and Kanuk 2000:80), human needs have to be arranged in the following order: physiological, safety, social,

ego and self-actualisation. In other words, higher-level needs are dormant until lower-level needs are satisfied.

A) Physiological needs

Physiological needs are required to sustain biological life and include food, water, air, shelter, clothing and sex. Physiological needs must be satisfied first because they are basic or crucial to survival (Sheth & Mittal 2004:164, Solomon 2002:108). For example, the needs of those people who are living below the poverty line remain perpetually less than adequately met so they never rise to higher-level needs.

B) Safety needs

Safety and security needs occur when the first level of needs is satisfied. Arnould et al (2002:386) state that safety needs include order, stability, routine, familiarity and control over one's life and environment. Marketers often exploit consumers' fears and anxieties about safety to sell their products. For instance, Volvo's advertising campaigns have featured evidence from real people who believed they could survive terrible car accidents because they were driving a Volvo (Lamb et al 1998:171).

C) Social needs

The third level of Maslow's hierarchy includes such needs as love, affection, belonging and acceptance (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:80). However, according to Arnould et al (2002:387), social needs are more important to Chinese consumers than are physiological or safety needs. The Chinese needs hierarchy is listed as follows: affiliation (belonging), physiological needs, safety and self-actualisation (Dalrymple, Cron & Decarlo 2001:435).

Sheth and Mittal (2004:164) maintain that the social motives of belonging and love are evident when consumers want to buy products that are well regarded by others so that the use of those products brings the consumers' peer approval, affection and a sense of belonging. For example, the designer logos on the clothes one wears are at least in part determined by how one's peers and significant others will look upon these choices.

D) Egoistic needs

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:80), egoistic needs can be directed both inward and outward. Inwardly directed needs mean that the ego needs reflect an individual's needs for self-acceptance, self-esteem, success, independence and so on. Outwardly directed ego needs include the need for prestige, social status and recognition from others. Egoistic needs can affect consumers' decision-making processes, as they attempt to make a decision to

satisfy the need for self-recognition or social recognition. For instance, consumers may choose particular brands of products not only because these brands provide the functional or performance benefits expected, but also because this particular brand can be used to express consumer social status (Kim, Forsythe, Gu & Moon 2002:481).

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E) Self-actualisation

Once the physiological, social and esteem needs are satisfied, people begin to explore and extend the bounds of their potential, that is, to seek self-actualisation (Sheth & Mittal 2004:164). Self-actualisation is finding self-fulfillment and self-expression; reaching the point in life at which “people are what they feel they should be.” According to Arnould et al (2002:258), different cultures have varying conceptions of the self that are likely to influence whether they value self-fulfillment.

2.4.2 Information search

Once needs have been recognised, consumers search for information about various alternative ways of solving the problem (Boyd & Walker 1990:117, Sheth & Mittal 2004:282). Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:445) point out that information search starts when a consumer perceives a need that might be satisfied by the purchase and consumption of a specific product or service. An information

search is the process by which the consumer surveys his or her environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision (Solomon 2002:260).

Sheth and Mittal (2004:283) point out that three elements characterize the information-search phase of the decision-making process, namely, sources of information, search strategies and the amount of information search.

An information search can occur internally, externally or both (Du Plessis et al 1994:51, Lamb et al 2004:144, Levy & Weitz 1992:125). Internal sources are information stored in the memory resulting from the individual's experience with the product or service (Du Plessis et al 1994:51, Lamb et al 2004:144, Levy & Weitz 1992:125, Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:445, Solomon 2002:261).

When consumers feel that their internal information is inadequate or out of date when purchasing the particular product, or when they do not have past experience with the product, an external information search would begin (Du Plessis et al 1994:51). According to Lamb et al (2004:144) and Sheth and Mittal (2004:284), the external information is the information obtained in the outside environment. Lamb et al (2004:145) point out that the external information required relies on consumers' perceived risk, self-confidence, previous experience and level of interest in products. According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:287), there are several factors that influence the amount of sought information. These include: perceived risk, involvement, familiarity, expertise,

time pressure, the functional versus expressive nature of the product or service, information overload and relative brand uncertainty.

Information sources can be either marketing controlled or non-marketing controlled (Lamb et al 2004:145, Sheth & Mittal 2004:284). A non-marketing controlled information source is not associated with marketers promoting a product or service. Information would rather come from social influences such as culture, family, opinion leaders, sub-culture, social class and reference groups (Du Plessis et al 1994:51, Lamb et al 2004:145, Sheth & Mittal 2004:284). For example, when a student wants to buy an expensive pair of Lee jeans, she may feel that the cost will affect her finances so she may ask her parents to help her make the purchase decision. In contrast, a marketing controlled information source is associated with marketers promoting the specific product (Lamb et al 2004:145, Sheth & Mittal 2004:284). Marketing controlled information sources include mass media advertising (radio, newspaper, television, magazine and Internet), sales promotions (contests, displays and premiums), sales people, product labels and packaging (Du Plessis et al 1994:51).

Cavanagh (1991:1) notes that there are two types of information available to consumers. "Hard" information consists of facts, such as weight and unit price while "soft" information refers to subjective perceptions such as quality, durability and usefulness.

Information can also be found on the products or their packaging. Manufacturers are required by law to provide certain types of information. For instance, clothing hang tags, labels or product packages must contain fiber content, care instructions, the country where the clothing was made and a registered identification number which identifies the manufacturer (Cavanagh 1997:1).

The choice of information sources depends partly on the consumer's search strategy (Sheth & Mittal 2004:285). Sheth and Mittal (2004:285) define a search strategy as "the patterns of information acquisition consumers utilize to solve their decision problems." The previous section has discussed three types of consumer decision-making, namely, routine, limited and extensive. Consumers spend more time and effort searching for information in the case of extensive decision-making than in routine and limited decision-making.

Information search is also influenced by perceived risk. Perceived risk is the degree of loss in the event that a wrong choice is made (Sheth & Mittal 2004:287). According to Solomon (2002:267), there are five types of risks, namely, psychological, social, physical, functional and monetary risk. Consumers tend to gain more information when they engage in making a significant decision and when there is some risk of making a poor decision (Levy & Weitz 1992:124). Lamb et al (2004:145) point out that consumers would like to spend more time and effort considering more alternative brands on high-risk purchases in order to reduce the risk. Levy and Weitz (1994:124) believe that students who view clothing simply as apparel used to keep warm do search for

too much information while they are purchasing clothing. However, students who desire to buy clothing that is well regarded by their reference group, spend much time and effort choosing clothing in order to gain peer approval. Information search is the greatest for high value, complex and unfamiliar products or services (Levy & Weitz 1992:124). Less search behaviour is required when consumers buy a brand-loyal, low-involvement product; however, with an expensive, high-involvement and unfamiliar item it is necessary to gather as much information as possible in order to make a right decision (Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:91).

Levy and Weitz (1992:124) explain that the amount of information search depends on the value consumers feel they will get from collecting information versus the cost of undertaking the search. The relation between the amount of information and its influence would change depending on the features of the product or the individual's characteristics. (Kotler 2000:179).

Consumers are willing to spend more time and effort on searching for information when they are choosing from different categories of products such as televisions and personal computers (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:445). Thus, companies that offer this type of product must provide enough information so that buyers will restrict their search to one product.

Levy and Weitz (1992:125) also point out that some consumers tend to want to gain more information than others. For instance, people who love shopping will

search for more information than those who do not like to shop. Also, buyers who are self-confident or have previous experience buying and using the goods or services would not spend too much time searching for information.

Relative brand uncertainty is also an important factor determining the amount of search undertaken by a consumer (Sheth & Mittal 2004:292). According to Moorthy, Rachford and Talukdar (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:292), relative brand uncertainty is uncertainty about what each brand offers. Consumers feel the need to search for information only when they experience relative brand uncertainty. Lamb et al (2004:146) note that a consumer's information search should recognise a list of brands (sometimes called the consumer evoked set), which are the consumer's most preferred alternatives. From this set the consumer will further evaluate the alternatives and make a decision.

2.4.3 Evaluation of alternatives

When potential consumers have all the necessary internal and external information on alternatives, they have to evaluate the alternatives in order to make a purchase (Boyd & Walker 1990:119, Kotler 2000:180, Lamb et al 2004:146, Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:98). Information will lead to an evoked set (familiar brands) of alternative products from which a choice will then have to be made. Boyd and Walker (1990:119) point out that consumers have three ways to evaluate potential alternatives, namely by:

- focusing on a list of familiar brands (evoked set) rather than all possible brands;
- evaluating each brand in the evoked set on a narrow number of product dimensions or attributes; and
- combining evaluation of each brand across attributes and comparing those attributes.

Consumers use several attributes when they are evaluating alternative products and they are more interested in a specific attribute that brings the sought benefits (Boyd & Walker 1990:119, Kotler 2000:180, Lamb et al 2004:146). Furthermore, Arnould et al (2002:471) point out that consumer attitudes about brands depend on the beliefs they have about a group of brand attributes.

Lamb et al (2004:146) suggest consumers may select a product attribute to exclude all products that do not have this specific attribute in order to narrow down the number of brands in the evoked set. Boyd and Walker (1990:119) develop a general list of product attributes that consumers may use to evaluate alternatives. This is shown in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2

SELECTED ATTRIBUTES CONSUMERS USE TO
EVALUATE ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

Attributes	Specific attributes
Cost attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase price • Operating costs • Repair costs • Cost of extras or options • Cost of installation • Trade-in allowance and residual value
Performance attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durability • Quality of materials • Construction • Dependability • Functional performance (acceleration, nutrition) • Efficiency • Safety and styling
Social attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation of brand • Status image • Popularity with friends • Popularity with family members • Style and fashion
Availability attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried by local stores • Credit terms • Quality of service available from local dealer and Delivery time

Source: Adapted from Boyd & Walker 1990:119

Different buyers may use different sets of attributes to select brands within the same product category (Boyd & Walker 1990:120). However, two people may not prefer the same brand, although they use the same attributes when evaluating product offerings (Boyd & Walker 1990:120). A study conducted by Eckhardt and Houston (1998:6) found that Chinese consumers use high profile brand names to provide security because of their limited experience with a modern free market system, rather than for symbolic or status reasons, as is prevalent in more developed economies.

2.4.4 Purchase phase

Kotler (2000:182) and Du Plessis et al (1994:53) point out that consumers would select the most significant information, whether it is internal, external or both, weigh the benefits of each item and make a decision to either purchase the particular product, not buy the specific product, postpone the purchase or even not purchase at all. Perceived risk (such as uncertainty and self-confidence) is the main factor that influences consumers making a purchase or not (Kotler 2000:182, Sheth & Mittal 2004:295).

2.4.5 Post-purchase behaviour

The purchasing process does not end when a consumer buys a product (Levy & Weitz 1992:132, Sheth & Mittal 2004:301). After the purchase consumers tend to evaluate their experience to decide if they are satisfied or dissatisfied when

they are consuming (Kotler 2000:182, Lamb et al 2004:147, Levy & Weitz 1992:132). The information will be used in future decision-making (Sheth & Mittal 2004:301). The performance of the product or service will be compared with consumers' expectations (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:457). There are three possible outcomes of these evaluations:

- perceived performance meeting expectations, leading to a neutral feeling;
- perceived performance exceeding expectations, causing what is known as positive disconfirmation of expectations and satisfaction (this experience may lead to consumer repeat purchase); and
- perceived performance being lower than expectations, causing negative disconfirmation of expectations and disappointment.

Consumers tend to judge their feelings against their expectations when performing a post-purchase evaluation (Kotler 2000:182, Sheth & Mittal 2004:301). A satisfactory experience may lead to a repeat purchase while a disappointment may cause a purchase postponement.

In addition, if consumers understand their decision-making processes, it may improve further decision-making. Marketers who understand the process may be assisted in their marketing efforts by being responsive to customer decision-making imperatives (Sheth & Mittal 2004:275). Consumer decision-making is influenced by several factors. These factors will be discussed in the next section.

2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

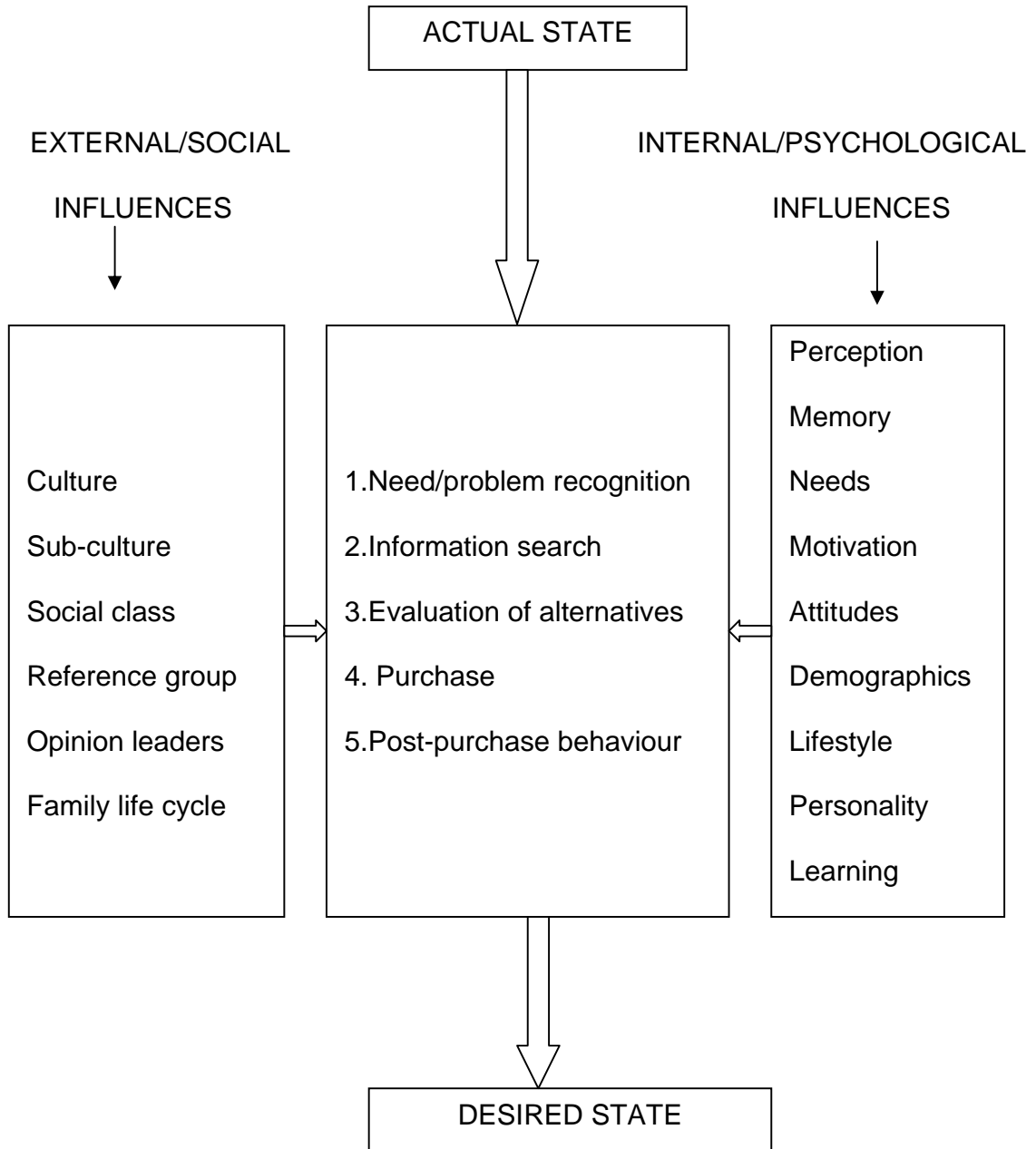
The consumer decision-making process does not occur in a vacuum (Lamb et al 2004:161). Needs and problems may be recognised through either internal or external factors. Internal, individual or psychological influences include aspects such as perception, memories or previous experiences, needs, attitudes, demographics, lifestyle, personality, motivation and learning (Solomon 2002:261). External or social influences include aspects such as culture, subculture, social class and reference groups (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:78). These factors, which have an effect from the time a consumer perceives a stimulus through to post-purchase behaviour, are illustrated in Figure 2.5. The most important factors are subsequently discussed in more detail.

2.5.1 Culture

Culture is defined as “the integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thought, speech, action, artifacts and man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary). Thus, culture is everything a person learns and shares with members of a society, including ideas, norms, morals, values, knowledge, skills, technology, tools, material objects and behaviour (Rice 1997:70, Sheth & Mittal 2004:60). To illustrate this concept more clearly, Figure 2.6 shows the relation between culture and consumer behaviour.

FIGURE 2.5

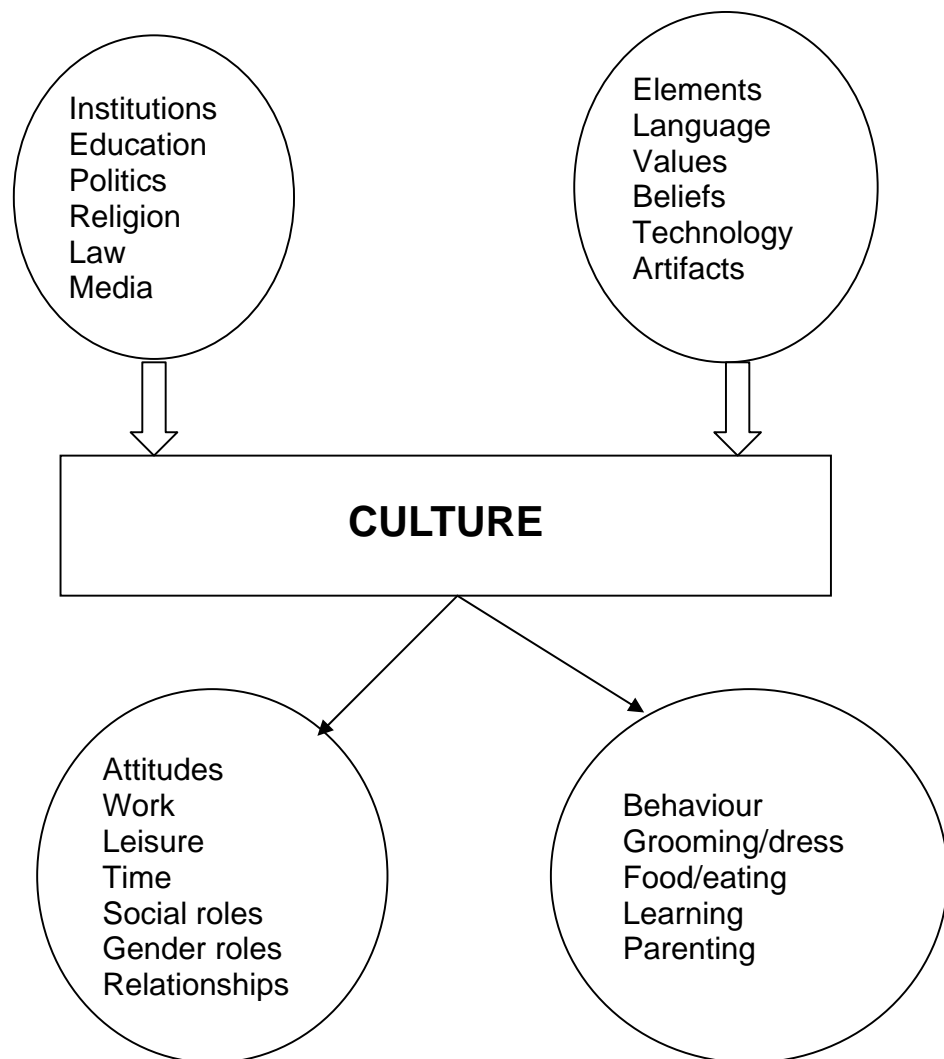
FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING



Source: Adapted from Lamb et al 2004:152 and Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:443

FIGURE 2.6

CULTURE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR



Source: Rice 1997:70

Although culture includes a host of shared beliefs and behaviours, the bedrock of culture is values (Lamb et al 2004:153, Sheth & Mittal 2004:61). People's

value systems greatly affect their behaviour. Consumers with similar value systems tend to react alike to prices and other marketing-related inducements (Lamb et al 2004:153). Vinson, Scott and Lamont (1977:55) find that broad-based cultural values such as security or happiness tend to affect general purchasing patterns more than differentiating between brands within a product category. For example, people who value group affiliation and approval place more importance on style and brand name when evaluating the desirability of clothing products (Rose, Shoham, Kahle & Batra 1994:19).

According to Hofstede and Bond (in Arnould et al 2002:147, Sheth and Mittal 2004:62), a general value dimension of considerable interest to marketers involves individualism versus collectivism. Individualism versus collectivism concerns the value individuals place on their own individual advancement and benefits versus the good of groups and institutions of which they are members (Sheth & Mittal 2004:62). A study conducted by Hofstede and Bond (in Arnould et al 2002:147) using respondents from 40 countries revealed that the United States and the English-speaking countries have high levels of individualism while Latin American and East Asian countries like China and Japan have lower levels. Another study conducted by Montreal (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:274) found that the most notable cultural characteristic of Chinese consumers was the high value the group placed on thrift and the habit of saving.

In addition, Sheth and Mittal (2004:275) note that because the implementation of the decision-making process is influenced by cultural background, it is

important that marketers understand the decision-making process for customers in different countries and for customers of different cultural backgrounds within the same country.

2.5.2 Sub-culture

A culture can be divided into sub-cultures on the basis of demographic characteristics, geographic regions, national and ethnic backgrounds and political and religious beliefs (Boyd & Walker 1990:137, Du Plessis et al 1994:159, Lamb et al 2004:157, Solomon 2002:414). Lamb et al (2004:157) state that a subculture is a group of people who share elements of the overall culture as well as cultural elements unique to their own group. More specifically, Solomon (2002:414) argues that an ethnic subculture is a self-perpetuating group of consumers who are held together by common cultural or genetic ties and identified both by members and others as falling within a distinguishable category.

According to Du Plessis et al (1994:159), South African ethnic sub-cultures have been divided on nationality, religion and race. The South Africans have been divided into Whites, Coloureds, Asians and Blacks. Solomon (2002:420) points out that there clearly are some differences between Blacks and Whites in consumption priorities and marketplace behaviours that demand marketers' attention. For example, Blacks tend to wear more clothing in the cold weather than Caucasians do. Du Plessis et al (1994:162) use the interesting example of

clothing sizes. Black ladies often do not fit into the average White woman's evening gown or string bikini and the men often need a modified cut in suit styles.

2.5.3 Social factors

Consumer behaviour is also influenced by social factors such as reference groups, family and social class (Boyd & Walker 1990:138, Du Plessis et al 1994:176, Kotler 2000:163, Solomon 2002:288). A social class is a group of people who are considered to have similar status or relatively homogeneous characteristics in a particular society (Boyd & Walker 1990:138, Kotler 2000:161, Lamb et al 2004:157, Solomon 2002:32). However, Sheth and Mittal (2004:68) argue that social class is the relative standing of members of a society so that a higher position implies a higher status than those in a lower social class.

A reference group is defined as "an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant influence upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations or behaviour" (Park & Lessig 1977:10). According to Solomon (2002:319), reference groups influence consumers in three ways. Their influence can be informational, utilitarian or value expressive. More specifically, Solomon (2002:319) points out that information influence occurs when a consumer seeks and accepts advice from someone else because of the latter's expertise on the performance characteristics of the product or service being bought. Rao and Steckel (1991:18) point out that group discussions regarding

product purchases tend to create a risky shift for low-risk items, but they yield even more conservative group decisions for high-risk products.

A study conducted by Montreal (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:274) found that Chinese consumers prefer to depend on personal sources such as friends and relatives when judging overall product quality. According to Solomon (2002:341), opinion leaders who are knowledgeable about a product and whose opinions are highly regarded tend to influence other's choices. Specific opinion leaders are somewhat hard to identify, but marketers who know their general characteristics can try to target them in their media and promotional strategies.

2.5.4 Individual factors

Personal characteristics also influence a consumer's purchasing decisions, although each individual has unique characteristics, such as gender, age, occupation, personality, self-concept and lifestyle. A lifestyle is a person's pattern of living in the world as expressed in activities, interests and ideas (Kotler 2000:168, Lamb et al 2004:163). Kotler (2000:168) points out that consumer may have different lifestyles although they share the same sub-culture, social class and occupation. The individual characteristics of consumers are generally stable over the course of a life (Lamb et al 2004:163, Sheth & Mittal 2004:56).

2.5.5 Psychological factors

An individual's purchasing decisions are further influenced by psychological factors such as perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitudes (Lamb et al 2004:163, Kotler 2000:169). Solomon (2002:42) points out that perception is the process by which an individual selects, organises and interprets the information he or she receives from the environment. According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:131), perceptions are influenced by customer characteristics such as personal knowledge and experiences.

Attitude is defined by Arnould et al (2002:459) as "a consumer's overall, enduring evaluation of a concept or object, such as a person, a brand, a service." However, Sheth and Mittal (2004:200) define attitude as "learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way." Therefore, attitudes can be used to predict behaviour. For instance, if one shows a favourable attitude toward a new product concept, then marketers predict that one would tend to buy it when the new product is made available.

2.6 SUMMARY

The consumer decision-making process occurs when consumers recognise the desired state that they want or need to be in. Thus, understanding one's own decision-making processes might improve further decision-making.

When analysing the buying decision-making process, it is very important for marketers to understand the types of consumer decision-making and the steps followed in purchasing decisions, as understanding the process helps marketers organise marketing efforts in a fashion that is responsive to customer decision-making imperatives (Sheth & Mittal 2004:275).

Consumers' purchasing decisions generally fall along a continuum of three broad categories: routine response behaviour, limited decision-making and extensive decision-making. The consumer decision-making process begins with need recognition, followed by information research, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase behaviour.

The steps in consumer purchasing behaviour are directly and indirectly influenced by internal or psychological factors as well as external or social factors. Social influences include factors such as culture, subculture, social class and reference groups. Internal influences include factors such as perception and memory, needs, motivation and attitudes, demographics and lifestyle, personality and learning.

Although several factors influence consumer decision-making, consumers are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles. The consumer decision-making styles will be discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the five steps in the consumer decision-making process. These steps, which are all influenced directly and/or indirectly by external or social influences and internal or psychological influences, in turn influence the consumer's product-related values, attitudes and behaviour. Although several factors influence consumer decision-making, consumers are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles. These styles can be grouped in what has become known as the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI). The CSI is discussed in detail in this chapter. Attention is also focused on the adaptation of the original CSI model and its regrouping from eight to five dimensions.

3.2 CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES

According to Sproles and Kendall (1986:268), a consumer decision-making style is defined as "a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making consumer choices." Broadly speaking, there are three types of approaches in studying consumer decision-making styles:

- the psychographics or lifestyle approach, which identifies hundreds of characteristics related to consumer behaviour;
- the consumer typology approach, which classifies consumers into several types; and
- the consumer characteristics approach, which focuses on different cognitive dimensions or attributes of consumer decision-making.

Based on the literature related to consumer decision-making in the field of marketing and consumer behaviour (Maynes 1976; Miller 1981; Sproles 1979; Thorelli, Becker & Engeldow 1975), Sproles (1985) developed a 50-item measuring instrument reflecting six consumer decision-making style dimensions. In a later study, Sproles and Kendall (1986) used a similar approach with a slightly revised model of consumer decision-making, this time comprising eight dimensions and 48 items. The eight dimensions included in the CSI model proposed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) are:

- Perfectionism or high-quality consciousness;
- Brand consciousness;
- Novelty-fashion consciousness;
- Recreational, hedonistic shopping consciousness;
- Price and “value for money” shopping consciousness;
- Impulsiveness consciousness;
- Over-choice confusion; and

- Habitual, brand-loyal orientation toward consumption.

The assumption underlying the consumer characteristics approach is that “consumers have several cognitive and affective orientations that determine their decision-making styles” (Sproles & Kendall 1986:268). In other words, when making a buying decision, the consumer will simultaneously consider several dimensions or attributes. These could include:

- How much information should be collected about the product (the extent of the information search)?
- How much time should be spent on searching (time and effort)? How much should be paid for the product (cost)?
- Which brand should be purchased (evoked set)?
- How much attention should be paid to the quality of the goods?

The answers to the above questions will be different because of consumers' unique characteristics. Sproles and Kendall's (1986) eight factors model can be used to measure general orientations toward shopping and buying.

Further studies by Fan and Xiao (1998) reduced the eight dimensions model to one with five dimensions. These five dimensions include: brand consciousness, time consciousness, quality consciousness, novelty-fashion consciousness and price consciousness. For the purposes of the remainder of this chapter, the *five* dimensional model will be used. Since recreational and impulsive shopping share a common denominator, namely *time*, these two dimensions are

discussed together. Furthermore, brand consciousness, over-choice confusion and habitual, brand-loyal orientation all share the concept of *branding*. Hence, these three concepts are also discussed together to facilitate their explanation.

The dimensions of the proposed five factors model are subsequently discussed in more detail.

3.3 BRAND CONSCIOUSNESS

Brand consciousness is taken to be typical of the decision-making style of consumers who, on the one hand, are oriented towards expensive and well-known national brands and feel that price is an indicator of quality (Fan & Xiao 1998:279). On the other hand, some consumers find the marketplace confusing, view brands as alike and seek help from others such as opinion leaders. These consumers are said to typically be “confused by over-choice” (Fan & Xiao 1998:279, Sproles & Kendall 1986:268). The decision-making process of both groups of consumers are, however, influenced by a mutual factor, namely, the brand. To provide more insight into the role of branding, the concepts of branding, brand equity and brand loyalty, are discussed in more detail.

3.3.1 Branding

A brand can be a name, symbol, design or a combination of these and is often a fundamental step in differentiating a product from its competitors. A brand is also

used in communicating to customers in a shorthand manner the kind of benefits they may expect to derive from using the product (Lamb et al 2004:285, Murray and O'Driscoll 1996:291).

Lamb et al (2004:298) differentiate between a brand name and a brand mark. A brand name is that part of a brand that can be spoken and could take the form of letters (NIKE), or words and numbers (7-Eleven). Boyd and Walker (1990:395) point out that the brand mark, on the other hand, could be a symbol, design or unique packaging, but cannot be expressed verbally, for example, the well-known Nike and Adidas symbols. Figure 3.1 shows examples of brand names and brand marks.

Most brands have an image attached to them. Brand image is defined as “the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the association held in the consumer’s memory” (Arnould et al 2002:440, Keller 1993:22). Positive brand image is associated with consumer loyalty, consumer beliefs about positive brand value and a willingness to search for the brand. Sheth and Mittal (2004:393) agree that when consumers have a positive use experience, they want to seek that reward again. Murray and O'Driscoll (1996:292) argue that brands represent not only the physical product and its service attributes, but also a set of emotional associations which are built up over time in the minds of consumers through the brand name, packaging, advertising, promotion and other methods of communication used to inform the public of its value.

FIGURE 3.1

COMPARISON BETWEEN BRAND NAME AND BRAND MARK

BRAND NAME	BRAND MARK
NIKE	
ADIDAS	

Source: Adapted from www.Google.com

According to Lancaster and Jobber (1994:71), branding and brand image are very important in marketing consumer products; therefore, advertising is generally thought to be the most effective promotion tool. Arnould et al (2002:348) believe that brand purchase decision-making is mainly influenced by manufacturers' advertising campaigns. Lamb et al (2004:505) state that when consumers have a neutral or favourable frame of reference toward a product or brand, advertising often positively influences them for it. A study conducted by Grover and Srinivasan (1992:89) found that when consumers are already highly

loyal to a brand, they may buy more of it when advertising and promotion for that brand increases. Sheth and Mittal (2004:389) contend “globalisation increases a strong brand’s importance when it can bridge language and cultural values.” A study conducted by the International Mass Retail Association (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:389) shows, for example, that consumers shopping for a power screwdriver are more concerned about the product having a national brand name than its price.

3.3.2 Brand equity versus functions of the brand

A brand that has high awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty among consumers has high brand equity (Lamb et al 2004:286). Brand equity is defined as “the enhancement in the perceived utility and desirability that a brand name confers on a product” (Sheth & Mittal 2004:399). According to Solomon (2002:75), a brand that has a strong positive association with high brand equity in a consumer’s memory can command a lot of loyalty as a result.

Lassar, Mittal and Sharma (1995:19) differentiate among five dimensions of brand equity, namely, performance, social image, value, trustworthiness and identification. Apart from providing equity, brands also fulfill a number of *functions*. Murray and O’Driscoll (1996:292) differentiate three functions, namely, convenience, guarantee and personal statement. However, Randall (2000:12) argues that brands perform five main functions which include: identity, shorthand summary, security, differentiation and added value. Lamb et al (2004:300) in

turn list the purposes of branding as product identification, repeat sales and new-product sales. The major functions of brands are briefly discussed below.

A) Product identification

Lamb et al (2004:302) maintain that branding helps consumers to identify products they wish to buy again and avoid those they do not. Randall (2000:13) agrees that the brand must identify itself clearly and unambiguously, so name, legal protection and design elements are important. The brand identity should therefore act as a summary of all the information the consumer holds about the brand. When consumers are faced with a range of alternative products where some have had a degree of branding or added value from marketing communication, and others have no provenance at all, consumers are not only likely to choose the brand which they have heard of, but are willing to pay a little bit extra than for other brands (Murray & O'Driscoll 1996:293).

B) Identification

Consumers identify with the value given to the brand or logo as this communicates something about themselves, for instance, emotions, status, or a need to belong. Consumers select brands that ideally match their actual or desired self -concept.

Self-concept is defined as an organised configuration of perceptions of the self (Arnould et al 2002:232). Furthermore, the self-concept includes an idea of what the person currently is and what they would like to become (Sheth & Mittal 2004:177). However, Solomon (2002:132) argues that the self-concept refers to the beliefs people hold about their own attributes and how they evaluate these qualities. For example, students feel better about themselves if they wear a well-known brand with the particular logo being displayed where others can easily see it because that projects a particular message about themselves.

C) Guarantee

According to Murray and O'Driscoll (1996:293), branding operates at a higher level of consciousness and offers a genuine bargain to consumers by a kind of unspoken guarantee. Consumers in many markets are forced into judging items by their brand names. Randall (2000:13) points out that when a consumer buys a familiar brand it should be reassuring, in other words, the brand should guarantee to provide the benefits expected. Thus, branding is particularly important when it is difficult for the consumer to measure the product quality in terms of both physical features and service (Boyd & Walker 1990:396).

A study conducted by Eckhardt and Houston (1998:6) found that Chinese consumers use high profile brand names to provide security because of their limited experience with a modern free market system, rather than for symbolic or status reasons as prevalent in more developed economies. Another study of

Pan and Schmitt (1995) shows that Chinese consumers use brands as an indicator of product function to a greater extent than United States consumers do.

D) Personal statement

Brands come to acquire certain social images through marketing communications and/or by real-world observations of who is buying what brands (Sheth & Mittal 2004:394). According to Stone (1990:1), by looking at the way a person dresses, one can often make good guesses about social and business standing, sex-role identification, political orientation, ethnicity, lifestyle and aesthetic priorities. De Chernatony and McDonald (1992:3) maintain that a brand as a symbolic device is important in certain product categories such as perfume and clothing. Clothing is a forceful and highly visible medium of communication that carries with it information about who a person is, who a person is not and who a person would like to be (Stone 1990:1).

Kim et al (2002:491) point out that consumers tend to repurchase particular apparel brands because these preferred brands fulfilled their expectations of experiential, social and functional needs to be matched through apparel products. However, they also find that Korean consumers are brand loyal because the brands provided them with appropriate social status or prestige images as well as with function/performance quality and at the same time fulfilled their experiential motivations. A study conducted by Tam and Tai

(1998:25) showed that Chinese contemporary women, for example, are very concerned about their appearance and prefer imported and branded products.

Thus, consumers may choose particular brands not only because these product brands provide the functional or performance benefits expected, but also because the particular brand can be used to express consumer social status (Kim et al 2002:481).

3.3.3 Consumer loyalty

Consumer loyalty is defined as “a consumer commitment to a brand, store or supplier based on a strong favourable attitude and manifested in consistent repatronage” (Sheth & Mittal 2004:400). According to Levy and Weitz (1992:204), consumer loyalty means not only that consumers prefer to shop at one store over another store, but also that they are committed to shopping at a particular store. For example, a student may continue to shop at Nike stores even if Adidas opens up a store nearby and offers a slightly superior assortment. The foregoing definition of consumer loyalty includes both behaviour and attitude and could result in four possible situations as shown in Figure 3.2.

FIGURE 3.2

LOYALTY NEEDS BOTH ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR

		BEHAVIOUR	
		STRONG	WEAK
ATTITUDE	STRONG	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	WEAK	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

Source: Adapted from Dick & Basu 1994:101

Figure 3.2 shows that when both attitude and behaviour are weak, no loyalty exists. Weak attitude means the consumer does not have any liking or preference for the brand and purchase of the brand is sporadic. When both liking and preference are strong, loyalty exists. According to Solomon (2002:278), for brand loyalty to exist, a pattern of repeat purchase must be accompanied by an underlying positive attitude towards the brand. In addition, Crainer (1995:34) points out that brand loyalty is a measure of the commitment or obligation felt by consumers to purchase or use a particular brand.

When behaviour is strong but attitude is weak, the consumer has spurious loyalty, that is, loyalty that is incidental and not well founded. Sheth and Mittal (2004:401) maintain that a consumer might buy the same brand again and again

or shop at the same store regularly, but feel no preferential attitude towards it. The choice of the brand or store could be due to reasons of convenience or mere inertia, since the consumer perceives all brands to be more or less the same (Sheth & Mittal 2004:401).

Finally, in the quadrant with high attitude and low behaviour (see Figure 3.2), the consumer has latent loyalty. He or she likes the brand but has been unable to buy it; the reasons might be that the price is too high and cannot be afforded anymore, or that the consumer lacks access to the brand or the store.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:185) confirm that consumers can remain loyal to a brand with which they have been satisfied instead of purchasing new or untried brands and so can avoid risk. Some companies develop several different products under the same brand name to increase consumer loyalty. For instance, Woolworths stores in South Africa offer different products under the same brand. In other words, name recognition has become so valuable that many companies are completely outsourcing production to focus on nurturing the brand (Solomon 2002:170).

As mentioned by Levy and Weitz (1992:204), consumer loyalty not only means that consumers prefer shopping at one store rather than another, but also that they prefer shopping at a particular store. Store image influences consumer loyalty. Store image is the sum total of perceptions customers have about the

store; it is determined by the merchandise, service and price factors and also by atmospherics, advertising and store personnel (Sheth & Mittal 2004:414).

According to Lancaster and Jobber (1994:73), a consumer could exhibit loyalty to the store rather than to the brand. To create store loyalty, on the one hand depends on the mix of merchandise quality, assortment, price value and store brands and on the other, relies on ease of merchandise selection, in-store information and assistance, convenience, problem resolution and personalization (Sheth & Mittal 2004:407).

Merchandise quality is generally controlled by the brand name the store offers and carries (Sheth & Mittal 2004:406). However, Levy and Weitz (1992:207) argue that it is very difficult for stores to develop consumer loyalty through merchandise because competitors typically are able to purchase and sell the same items.

While performance fit, social and emotional identification and history of use engender and contribute to brand loyalty, a set of factors detracts from it (Sheth & Mittal 2004:397). These detractors could be related to consumer factors, such as variety seeking, product involvement, price sensitivity, multi-brand loyalty, withdrawal from product category and change in needs. Some consumers like to seek variety in their experience because they are bored with the same product or life experience. More specifically, variety seeking occurs even before an individual becomes satiated or tired of their favourite product. They thus change

brands not because they may be dissatisfied with the first brand's performance, but because of other reasons. Solomon (2002:261) notes that variety seeking can influence consumers to switch from their favourite product to a less pleasurable item. Sheth and Mittal (2004:397) confirm variety-seeking to be negatively related to brand loyalty.

3.3.4 Brand loyalty

According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:399) and Solomon (2002:278), brand loyalty is a consistent re-purchase of the brand accompanied by a favourable brand attitude. Lamb et al (2004:298) describe brand loyalty as a consistent preference for one brand over all others. Solomon (2002:278) points out that this preference is a conscious decision to continue buying the same brand.

According to Beatty and Kahle (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:397), customer involvement in a product is a direct determinant of brand commitment (that is brand loyalty). Consumers are likely to develop a favourite brand and accordingly, show brand loyalty in the case of high involvement products such as clothing and cars. However, they are less likely to show a high brand loyalty on low involvement products (Sheth & Mittal 2004:397). The consumer may purchase more than one brand in the same category regularly and not be completely loyal to either (Sheth & Mittal 2004:398).

Shim and Eastlick (1998:60) show that purchase intentions, frequent shopping, number of mall visits and amount of purchase have been widely used to measure brand loyalty. In addition, Aaker (2001:170) points out the benefits of brand loyalty: it can reduce marketing costs, create barriers to competition, improve the brand image and provide time to reposition in response to competitive threats.

3.4 TIME CONSCIOUSNESS

Time consciousness is explained in terms of consumer characteristics relating to impulsive consciousness and recreational consciousness (Sproles & Kendall 1986:267). "Impulsive consciousness" describes an impulsive, careless consumer orientation; in other words, consumers do not plan shopping and are not concerned about the amount of money they spend. Recreational consciousness consumers, on the other hand, typically enjoy shopping and often shop just for the fun of it (Fan & Xiao 1998, Sproles & Kendall 1986:286). They are therefore said to be recreationally and hedonistically conscious. The two sets of shoppers (impulsive versus recreational) are now discussed in more detail.

3.4.1 Impulsive purchasing

Solomon (2002:301) and Arnould et al (2002:349) maintain that impulse buying occurs when the person experiences a sudden and persistent emotional urge to

buy immediately. Furthermore, impulse purchasing also entails a sudden mental match between the meaning of a product and a consumer's self-concept. Levy and Weitz (1992:120) argue that impulse purchase occurs when the consumer has no intention of purchasing the product before going to the store. A study conducted by Danoli (1987:93) found that more than half of all supermarket purchases are impulse purchases. In fact, this study revealed that over 80 percent of all buying decisions for sweets and gum, pickles and relishes are unplanned.

According to Arnould et al (2002:349), impulsive buyers are characterized by high emotional activation, low cognitive control and largely reactive behaviour. However, a study conducted by Rook and Fisher (1995:26) found that impulse purchasing is an urge towards immediate action and is prone to occur with diminished regard for the consequences of making the purchase. Impulsive purchasing may stimulate emotional conflict by arousing both pleasure and guilt because of financial problems, disappointment with the product or the disapproval of significant others. A study conducted by Keller (1993:22) found that more than 75 percent of impulse buyers reported that they felt better after making impulse purchases. In contrast, 16 percent reported that they felt no different and only eight percent reported that they felt worse after such a purchase.

Sheth and Mittal (2004:412) differentiate between impulsive and unplanned purchases. In the latter case consumers need not have specifically decided not

to buy those products; they may have simply not thought about the products. Unplanned buying may occur when a person is unfamiliar with a store's layout; under some time pressure, or reminded to buy something by seeing it on a store shelf (Solomon 2002:301). A study conducted by Iyer (in Solomon 2002:301) found that one-third of unplanned buying was attributed to the recognition of new needs while within the store. Unplanned purchases can be classified into three types (Sheth & Mittal 2004:412):

- **Restocking unplanned purchases:** these include items the shopper has not thought about buying at the time but has been using regularly. These products are bought because of an in-store display or special deal knowing that the item will be needed in the future.
- **Evaluated new unplanned purchases:** these include items the consumer needs but which have not been recognised prior to the purchase occasion. The consumer simply decides to buy additional units to expand the collection, such as an extra pair of shoes.
- **Impulse purchases:** these are the extreme kind of unplanned purchases and denote items, bought spontaneously and completely unpremeditatedly. Products are bought in response to feeling a sudden urge to buy something.

Unplanned purchases are initiated by several factors, such as knowledge of the store, time pressure, purchase companion and special store promotions (Sheth & Mittal 2004:413).

Sheth and Mittal (2004:291) describe time pressure as one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the consumer in the twenty-first century. Time pressure makes customers look for more convenient outlets for shopping. Therefore, One-Stop-Shopping (OSS) is conducted on its potential to provide convenience, cost saving and integrated products. Consumers value OSS because it saves time by not having to acquire related products from different suppliers or stores (Sheth & Mittal 2004:418).

In addition, a study conducted by Wright (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:291) found that time-pressed customers are likely to cut short their information search, comparison shopping and decision-making time. However, according to Arnould et al (2002:160), most people do not treat time as a resource to be saved or wasted. In Africa, for example, Western tourists may encounter this important difference in templates for action and interpretation the first time they wait half a day in line for service at an African bank or post office.

According to Bayley and Nancarrow (1998:2), impulse buying is related to various aspects of general acquisitiveness and materialism associated with overall development of consumer culture. Thus, some impulse purchases are driven by the desire to fulfill imagined future needs. This study also found that an increase in recreational shopping is probably linked to impulse purchase, since the positive mood generated in recreation may decrease self-control. Therefore, those impulsiveness consumers are not concerned about the amount of time or money they spend when purchasing.

3.4.2 Recreational purchasing

Solomon (2002:295) maintains that the recreational shopper is a person who views shopping as a fun, social activity and a preferred way to spend leisure time. Therefore, according to Bloch, Ridway and Dawson (in Sheth & Mittal 2004:414), many customers visit stores as a means of recreation when they have nothing better to do at home. In other words, this type of consumer does not suffer from time consciousness while they are shopping.

Levy and Weitz (1992:125) point out that consumers who enjoy shopping will search for more information than those who do not like to shop. Thus, this type of consumer will spend more time and effort on the information search step of the consumer decision-making process.

3.5 QUALITY CONSCIOUSNESS

This factor identifies a perfectionistic and high-quality conscious consumer. These consumers seek the very best quality products, have high standards and expectations for consumer goods and are concerned with the function and quality of products.

3.5.1 Definition of quality

Lamb et al (2004:375) describe customers value products or services' quality, that is, they expected the products be sold at prices they are willing to pay. Solomon (2002:305) points out that consumers use a number of cues to infer quality such as brand name, price and even their own estimates of how much money has been put into a new product advertising campaign.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2000:176) acknowledge that consumers like to believe that they base their evaluation of product quality on intrinsic cues (such as size, colour, flavour or aroma) because that enables them to judge their product decisions (either positive or negative) as being "rational" or "objective" product choices. A study conducted by Grewal, Krishnan, Baker and Borin (1998:52), found that when consumers are shopping for fruit and vegetables, colour, texture, firmness and aroma are all intrinsic cues used to decide whether the fruits and vegetables are fresh and ripe. However, the physical characteristics they use to justify quality have no intrinsic relationship to the product. Arnould et al (2002:327) confirm that consumers evaluate quality on the basis of extrinsic cues that are external to the product itself, such as price, brand image, manufacturer's image, retail store image, or even the country of origin.

3.5.2 Quality versus price relationship

Arnould et al (2002:327) find that consumers rely on price as an indicator of product quality, namely, higher price means better quality. When in doubt, consumers may feel that the most expensive model is probably the best in terms of quality; that is, they equate price with quality (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:175). A study conducted by Veeck and Burns (in Arnould et al 2002:328) found that there are two groups of consumers in urban China: those who believe in a price-quality relationship and are likely to pay more for products; and those who are less trusting of a price-quality relationship and are likely to pay lower prices for products. Because price is so often considered to be an indicator of quality, some product advertisements deliberately emphasise a high price to underscore the marketers' claims of quality. Thus, one of the dangers of sales' pricing for retailers is that products with lower prices may be interpreted as reduced quality.

3.5.3 Factors influencing quality

Product-country image is clouded by confusion between country of origin and country of manufacture. A study conducted by Askegaard and Ger (in Arnould et al 2002:328) found Nike products have a positive image as a United States origin brand; however, in Southeast Asian manufacturing facilities, Nike suffers from negative connotations as a company that uses low-paid labour.

Crainer (1995) maintains that in the absence of other information about a new product, people sometimes use the volume of advertising as a signal of product quality. Du Plessis et al (1994:51) point out that external information sources pass through mass media advertising (radio, newspaper, television, magazine and Internet), sales promotions (contests, displays and premiums), sales people and product labels and packaging. Products that are not new but are heavily advertised are often perceived as higher in quality than non-advertised products.

Levy and Weitz (1992:484) point out that private-label clothing has been successful because consumers perceive high quality and value in clothing that bears a well-known designer name. To create a distinctive identity, many retailers put their own labels on the clothes of popular designers. Arnould et al (2002:328) point out that private labels (retailers) and national brands (manufacturers) use both intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes to discriminate against private-label brands. A study conducted by Orwall (1996:6) found the young, discerning, educated shopper to be the private label buyer. These individuals are willing to purchase private brands because they have confidence in their ability to assess quality and value. For instance, Woolworths has successfully built a good name on their clothing products. However, according to Solomon (2004:77), consumers are often confused by look-alike packaging, in other words, look-alike is often exploited by makers of generic or private label brands who wish to communicate a quality image by putting their products in very similar packages.

Perceived quality is the key factor in determining whether consumers are satisfied or dissatisfied. According to Arnould et al (2002:327), perceived quality is defined as “the consumers’ evaluative judgment about an entity’s overall excellence or superiority in providing desired benefits.” Satisfaction is a post-consumption evaluation of the degree to which a store or product meets or exceeds customer expectations, while dissatisfaction is below consumer expectations (Levy & Weitz 1992:132; Sheth & Mittal 2004:302). Therefore, satisfaction or dissatisfaction stems respectively from the confirmation or disconfirmation of consumers’ expectations. In other words, perceived quality is a judgment derived from a comparison of performance perceptions against expectations or evaluative standards (Arnould et al 2002:327).

Niraj and Parker (1994:95) point out that a well-known brand name is used by people in many countries as their primary indicator of quality. If the product does not have this feature, price followed by the physical appearance of the item is used to judge quality. After a well-known brand name, price and physical appearance, consumers use the reputation of the retailer as an indicator of quality.

3.6 NOVELTY-FASHION CONSCIOUSNESS

The novelty-fashion conscious consumer is described as someone who gains excitement and pleasure from seeking out new things and is “conscious of the new fashions and fads” (Schiffman & Kanuk 2000:398). According to Stone

(1990:6), a fashion is a style that is accepted and used by the majority of a group at any one time, no matter how small that group.

3.6.1 Fashion

According to Arnould et al (2002:574), fashion refers to particular combinations of desirable attributes; while fads are short-lived fashions, adopted by relatively few people, often members of a common subculture. Fashion is defined as “the process of social diffusion by which a new style is adopted by some groups of consumers” (Solomon 2002:503). Fashions and fads are examples of continuous innovations. Howard (1994:69) points out that an innovation requires the consumer to engage in extensive problem solving to form a new product category concept. Furthermore, to be in fashion means that some reference group currently positively evaluates this combination (Solomon 2002:503).

3.6.2 To be in fashion

Solomon (2002:506) points out that a consumer’s purchase decisions are often motivated by his or her desire to be in fashion. There are three models of fashion that motivate a consumer to want to be in fashion, namely, psychological models, economic models and sociological models.

Psychological models of fashion are influenced by conformity, variety-seeking, personal creativity and sexual attraction; for instance, some consumers seem to

have a “need for uniqueness” (Solomon 2002:507). Economists approach fashion in terms of the model of supply and demand. Items that are in limited supply have high value, whereas those readily available are less desirable (Solomon 2002:507). For example, students are driven by peer group pressure to purchase high-priced products to be in fashion (Sheth & Mittal 2004:464). According to McCracken (1985:54), a sociological model of fashion has two conflicting forces. On the one hand, the subordinate group tries to adopt the status symbols of the groups above them as they attempt to climb up the ladder of social mobility, in other words, dominant styles thus originate with the upper classes and trickle-down to those below. On the other hand, people in the super-ordinate groups are constantly looking below them on the ladder to ensure that they are not imitated.

Park, Jaworski and MacInnis (1986) point out that experiential needs reflect consumer needs for novelty, variety and sensory gratification/pleasure and have been recognised as an important aspect in consumption, especially evoking new demands of consumer products. However, Arnould et al (2002:423) argue that economic value now turns on more than a high-quality product or good service delivery; it turns on engaging consumers in a memorable way by offering them an experience, or even better, transforming them by guiding them through an experience.

According to Stone (1990:6), a fashion is a style that is accepted and used by the majority of a group at any one time, no matter how small that group. A style

does not become a fashion until it gains some popular acceptance and it remains a fashion only as long as it is accepted. Change in fashion is the motivating factor for replacing clothes, cosmetics, furniture and so on. Fashion causes changes in consumer goods and at the same time makes people want the new products (Stone 1990:4).

Some consumers want to be in fashion to gain social status or confirm a personal statement. Kim et al (2002:481) agree that consumers may choose particular products/brands not only because these products provide the functional or performance benefits expected, but also because products can be used to express a consumer's personality, social status or affiliation or to fulfill their internal desires. Roth (1995:75) agrees that clothing is regarded as a symbolic medium to demonstrate one's social status or express one's social image. Clothing is a forceful and highly visible medium of communication that carries with it information about who a person is, who a person is not and who a person would like to be.

3.7 PRICE AND "VALUE FOR MONEY" SHOPPING CONSCIOUSNESS

This factor measures a price conscious, "value for money" consumer characteristic. This type of consumer is looking for sale prices and appears conscious of lower prices in general. Significantly, they are also concerned with getting the best value for their money and are likely to be comparison shoppers (Fan & Xiao 1998). Solomon (2002:295) describes economic shoppers as

rational, goal-oriented shoppers who are primarily interested in maximizing the value of their money.

“Price is that which is given up in an exchange to acquire a product or service.” (Lamb et al 2004:570). More specifically, price is the money exchanged for the product or service. Lamb et al (2004:292) note that consumers evaluate the value of a product not only on its price, but also relative to the value of alternatives. In value-based pricing, therefore, according to Lamb et al (2004:570), the price of the product is set at a level that seems to customers to be a good price compared with the prices of other options. The higher the price, the more valuable the product, other things being equal; thus price can stimulate the consumer’s search for information.

Price conscious consumers are also seeking value for money. A value is defined as “a belief that some condition is preferable to its opposite” (Solomon 2002:118). A person’s set of values plays a very important role in consumption activities. As a result many products and services are purchased because people believe these products will help to attain a value-related goal.

According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:466), price comprises both the initial purchase price and the cost of maintaining the product usage, or the cost of using the product. Furthermore, Howard (1994:233) points out that price has two major implications: an obvious one is that price presents cost to the consumer and so a low price is desirable, however, the price also often implies something

about product quality, for example, a high price can imply a high quality, as discussed in an earlier section.

Levy and Weitz (1992:459) agree that people use price as a cue for determining value only when little other information is available. In the absence of other information, people typically assume that prices are higher because the products contain better materials, or because they are made more carefully, or in the case of professional services, because the provider has more expertise (Lamb et al 2004:594). For example, people generally have difficulty evaluating the quality of diamonds, therefore, they conveniently equate high price with high quality. Lamb et al (2004:593) argue that consumers tend to rely on high price as a predictor of good quality when there is great uncertainty involved in the purchase decision.

According to Howard (1994:305), price has become separated from the brand image in the buyer's mind and is operating independently of that image in routine decision-making. However, the buyers in extensive decision-making and limited decision-making cases usually perceive price as a dimension of the product; thus, in extensive and limited decision-making cases, price affects attitude.

According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:134), the psychophysics of price refers to how consumers psychologically perceive price. Howard (1994:306) confirms that it is generally believed by practitioners that whether the price is "odd" or "even" -

R0.99 instead of R1.00 can make a substantial difference to the customer's response. Most South African marketers use this psychological pricing to mark their products. Noteworthy aspects of the psychophysics of price are reference price, assimilation and contrast and price as a quality cue. Reference price is the price that consumers expect to pay. If the actual price is lower than the reference price, it is perceived as good economic value.

Consumers furthermore often use price as a quality cue or as a basis for making inferences about the quality of the product or service. Such use of price is particularly likely where quality cannot be independently judged. Monroe and Krishnan (1983:8) agree that a positive price - quality relationship does appear to exist. However, Solomon (2002:275) points out that the price-quality relationship is not always justified.

In general, price is used as an indication of quality. Consumers link a store's image to price on the basis of price expectations and the quality of merchandise within the store (Sheth & Mittal 2004:406, Solomon 2002:303). Therefore, price is an important factor influencing both brand and store choice.

According to Lamb et al (2004:594), consumers also expect private or store brands to be cheaper than national brands. However, if the price difference between a private brand and a nationally distributed manufacturer's brand is too great, consumers tend to believe that the private brand is inferior. A study conducted by Niraj and Parker (1994:95) found that when the price difference

between the national brand and the private brand was less than 10 percent, people tended to buy the private brand; while when the price difference was greater than 20 percent, consumers perceived the private brand to be inferior.

According to Sheth and Mittal (2004:406), consumers do not always seek low-price merchandise; rather for the quality of merchandise they desire, they seek the lowest or near lowest price. In other words, consumers develop a standard price that they regard as fair. In addition, Sheth and Mittal (2004:406) point out that consumers do not always bother to ensure that the price they are getting is the lowest possible; they want to feel confident only that the price is comparably low, and that if there is a lower price elsewhere, it is negligibly lower.

Price expectations refer to an acceptable price range within which they will not look at substitutes or consider changing the volume they intend to buy (Du Plessis et al 1994:203). According to Assael (in Du Plessis et al 1994:204), a lower price awareness exists among low-income and less educated people, probably because they have less price information available than higher income consumers and may not be as efficient in comparative shopping. For example, people with a higher education could use the Internet as a tool to search for information. However, Du Plessis et al (1994:204) point out that a lack of price awareness does not imply a lack of price consciousness.

Certain types of consumers tend to be price sensitive. Yankelovich, Skelly and White's study (in Du Plessis et al 1994:204) shows that the most price-sensitive consumers are likely to be:

- Senior citizens;
- Single people;
- Less educated;
- Lower income; and
- Blue-collar workers.

These groups are the most likely to feel the effect of economic dislocation. However, being price-sensitive does not mean taking advantage of lower prices. A study conducted by Rousseau and Venter (1992) has shown that it is the higher income consumers who have the best information on comparative prices and bargains.

Rousseau and Venter (1992) conducted a study in South Africa that shows that the following five factors indicate consumer awareness, namely, bargain hunting, general consumer knowledge, product knowledge, information search and price consciousness. From this study it is clear that being price sensitive is but one of the factors of consumer awareness and does not necessarily imply that advantage is being taken of lower prices. Lack of basic information and restricted resources can prevent price sensitivity.

3.8 SUMMARY

Consumer decision-making styles are influenced by consumer characteristics. Consumers are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles. To understand consumer characteristics and compare the similar or opposed traits, the eight factors adopted from CSI were classified into five dimensions and discussed.

Consumers who have brand consciousness, on the one hand, are oriented towards expensive and well-known national brands and feel price is an indicator of quality. On the other hand, some consumers find the marketplace confusing, view brands as alike and seek help from others such as opinion leaders. These consumers are said to typically be “confused by over-choice”. The decision-making of both groups of consumers is, however, influenced by a mutual factor, namely, the brand. To provide more insight into the role of branding, the concepts of branding, brand equity and brand loyalty have been discussed in detail.

Time consciousness is explained in terms of consumer characteristics relating to impulsiveness consciousness and recreational consciousness. “Impulsiveness consciousness” describes an impulsive, careless consumer orientation, in other words, consumers who do not plan shopping or are not concerned about the amount of money they spend. Recreational consciousness consumers, on the other hand, typically enjoy shopping and often shop just for the fun of it. They

are therefore said to be recreationally and hedonistically conscious. The two sets of shoppers (impulsive versus recreational) were discussed in detail.

A perfectionistic and high-quality conscious consumer typically seeks the very best quality products, has high standards and expectations of consumer goods and is concerned with the function and quality of products. The novelty-fashion consumer is described as wanting to “gain excitement and pleasure from seeking out new things” and “conscious of the new fashions and fads”.

A price conscious, “value for money” consumer is looking for sale prices and appears conscious of lower prices in general. Significantly, they are also concerned with getting the best value for their money and are likely to be comparison shoppers.

Chapter 3 has discussed the details of consumer characteristics adopted from CSI. Chapter 4 will focus on a detailed description of the data collection method and technique used, a description of sampling and the questionnaire design, and provides an overview of the findings. Attention will be paid to the results of the survey regarding the consumer decision-making styles of Chinese, Motswana and South African tertiary students at UPE and PET.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two the steps in the consumer decision-making process were identified and discussed, solving the first objective, namely to:

- study the literature on consumer decision-making to determine the steps in the consumer decision-making process as well as the factors that might have an influence on this process.

Chapter three discussed and explained the characteristics that determine consumer decision-making styles. These form part of the eight-factor model of decision-making styles and the five dimensions of consumer cognitive orientation. Thus the second objective was addressed, namely to:

- study the literature on consumer decision-making styles with an emphasis on the various models and dimensions used to explain these styles.

The empirical study, the focus of this chapter, will help to address the remainder of the study objectives as discussed in Chapter one.

A detailed description of the data collection method and techniques used, the sampling method, and the questionnaire design, are now given below. This description is followed by a discussion of the findings.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research methodology will be explained in terms of the data collection method and technique, the defined target population, the sampling method and population size, the questionnaire design, the problems and limitations experienced during the research study, and the limitations thereof.

4.2.1 Data collection method

The empirical study was quantitative in nature. Struwing and Stead (2001:41) list four basic data collection methods for quantitative research: the historical, survey, analytical survey and experimental methods.

- Historical: The historical method of research involves the collection of published or secondary data from research reports and dissertations.
- Survey: In this method the data are obtained from questionnaires completed by the respondents. The reliability of survey data is dependent on the care taken in selecting a sample. More specifically, the character of the data should not be adversely influenced by imbalance or bias (such as selecting only males as respondents).

- Analytical survey: In the analytical method of data gathering the emphasis falls less on a descriptive than on a statistical analysis of the data collected, so that the detection of hidden or latent trends and meanings can be attempted.
- Experimental: The experimental method of research focuses on cause-and-effect relationships between variables.

Based on the objectives of this study (explained in chapter one) and its exploratory and descriptive nature, a survey was deemed the most appropriate data collection method. It was furthermore chosen because of its unique advantages (Hair, Bush and Ortinau 2000:254):

- The method can accommodate a large sample.
- It allows for making “generalized inferences” about the target population.
- Standardised common data can be collected which allows for “direct comparisons between responses”.
- By means of statistical analysis, patterns and trends within the data can be determined.

4.2.2 Data gathering technique

A self-administered questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate data collection technique. According to Hair et al (2000:261), a self-administered

questionnaire is a data collection technique in which the respondent reads the questions and records his or her own response without the presence of trained interviewers.

A self-administered questionnaire is similar to a drop-off questionnaire. The advantages of drop-off questionnaires pertinent to this study included the availability of a person to screen respondents and spur interest in completing the questionnaire and to answer general questions. The questionnaire was hand-delivered to the randomly selected respondents who were required to complete the questionnaire in their own time.

4.2.3 The target population, sampling method and sample size

According to McBurney (2001:412), a population is the entire collection of individuals being considered for a study. As the global marketplace becomes more integrated and consumer specialists develop an international focus, developing useful scales to profile consumer decision-making styles in other cultures becomes important. For the purpose of this study, the target population consisted of international students and local Caucasian students who were enrolled at UPE and PET. International students included Chinese students with an Asian background who came from China and Motswana students with an African background who came from Botswana. These students were chosen for three reasons, namely:

- Sample comparability because the decision-making styles among Chinese, Motswana and South African students were to be compared with those of American consumers investigated in a previous study by Sproles and Kendall (1986) using student samples.
- Convenience because of time and budget constraints.
- To allow for quota sampling. The students who participated in the study were divided according to gender, as one of the purposes of the research was to reduce the different perceptions between male and female.

In 2004, 235 Chinese students studied at UPE and PET, and 927 Motswana students enrolled at UPE and PET. The number of local Caucasian students at the two institutions was 5861. For the purposes of this study, a sample of 100 from each group was deemed to be representative of the defined target population.

A combination of quota and convenience sampling was used to draw the needed sample for this research study. Quota sampling involves selecting prospective participants according to pre-specified quotas. The criteria used were whether the student came from Botswana, China or South Africa and attended full-time or part-time at UPE or PET. The main advantage of quota sampling is that the sample generated contains specific subgroups in the proportions that are desired by the researcher (Hair et al 2000:355). Furthermore, using a relatively more homogeneous group such as tertiary

students also minimizes random error that might occur by using a heterogeneous sample such as the general public (Walsh et al 2001:77). Convenience sampling was used purely on the basis of availability. Respondents were selected because they were accessible and articulate.

4.2.4 The questionnaire design

Based on the study's research objectives, a questionnaire containing 40 Likert-scaled items scored from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) was used. The questionnaire was designed with the intended maximum self-administration, thereby eliminating the costs and potential errors associated with interviews.

The questionnaire proceeded from a cover letter (see Annexure A) that briefly introduced the respondent to the research project and the researcher, assured the respondent of anonymity and communicated the instructions.

The questionnaire started off with Section A which consisted of items regarding the level of importance of factors relevant to eight dimensions of consumer consciousness that reflect consumer decision-making styles. A design similar to that used in the study by Sproles and Kendall (1986) was used with the exception of the order of the questions. To counterbalance possible order effects, the items were rotated (Walsh et al 2001:77), resulting in an order of questions different from those of Sproles and Kendall (1986:286). The re-order method was employed using random digits from Siegel (1997:706).

Section B consisted of items regarding the demographic details of the respondents. Included were questions concerning gender, age, tertiary institution enrolled at, period of stay in South Africa and nationality of the respondent. The questionnaire was concluded with an appropriate courtesy statement.

A number of factors were considered when the questionnaire was designed and administered. These included the question type and format, pre-testing, the research population and sample, and administration of the questionnaire. These are discussed below.

4.2.4.1 Question format

Dependent on the type of information that is required, the content of the questions may vary. Five types of questions can form part of a questionnaire (Struwing & Stead 2001:92):

- Open-ended questions, which give the respondents the opportunity to respond in their own words. This format is useful when the researcher requires further clarification.
- Multiple-choice questions, which offer specific alternatives from which the respondent must choose one or more. The respondent is requested to select the one solution that best suits his/her particular situation.

- Dichotomous questions, which allow for respondents who indicate an unmistakable division, such as yes or no.
- Likert scale questions, which allow the researcher to gauge the format of a statement. This type has a scale that allows the respondent to indicate the degree to which he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement.
- Ranking questions, which supply the respondent with a list of items that relate to the question. The respondent is then asked to rank these items from the highest to lowest priority, or lowest to highest priority.

The questionnaire contained 40 Likert scale type questions, each consisting of a short, structured statement and five preferences to choose from. These ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. There were also six multiple-choice questions with single answers.

4.2.4.2 Pre-testing

After drafting and developing the questionnaire it has to be tested. A small group of people who are representative of the group that is being targeted are used for the pre-test (Struwig & Stead 2001:9). According to Jackson (1995:383), pre-testing has many functions. One objective of doing a pre-test is to identify and eliminate variation in respondents' understanding and interpretation of the questionnaire. Pre-testing also indicates how well the respondents understand the questions and which questions may be ambiguous and unclear. This

feedback can be used to eliminate ambiguity in the wording and design of the questionnaire (Jackson 1995:383). Pre-testing further assists the researcher in assessing the time involved in completing the questionnaire. This is an important issue that impacts on the response rate. Finally, pre-testing assists the researcher in identifying and rectifying any errors in the sequencing of questions and the instructions to the respondent on the method of completing the questionnaire.

Thirty respondents (ten respondents from each nationality who were representative of the population of this study) took part in the pilot study. The general feedback from these respondents was positive and after a few minor adjustments were made, the final questionnaire was ready for printing and distribution.

4.2.4.3 Response rate

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed, and the respondents answered all the questions, resulting in a response rate of 100%.

4.2.5 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are terms encountered repeatedly throughout research and are discussed in more detail below. It is important to note that the questionnaire used in the current research was already tested by the original

authors (Sproles & Kendall 1986). Further validity and reliability tests, however, were performed during the factor analysis as explained later on.

4.2.5.1 Validity

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:31), the validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Struwig and Stead (2001:136) define validity as the extent to which a research design (pre-experimental, quasi-experimental or experimental) is scientifically sound or appropriately conducted. Validity therefore looks at the end result of measurement.

There are five types of validity assessment methods (Leedy & Ormrod 2001:98, Struwig & Stead 2001:139).

- Face validity. This refers to whether the items of the test appear to measure what the test purports to measure. The questions are scrutinised to establish their relation to the subject under discussion.
- Content validity. This refers to the extent to which the items reflect the theoretical content domain of the construct being measured. The content validity of a test is determined by expert judgment in which the item domain of the test is compared with a detailed description of the domain of the construct.

- Criterion-related validity. Criterion-related validity examines the relationship between two or more tests that appear to be similar.
- Construct validity. This is the extent to which an instrument measures a characteristic that cannot be directly observed but must instead be inferred from patterns in people's behaviour. For instance, one cannot see intelligence and motivation but one may be able to infer from people's behaviour whether, in the researcher's opinion, they are intelligent and/or motivated.
- Convergent and discriminant validity. This relates to other tests that are considered to measure the same or similar constructs.

4.2.5.2 Reliability

According to Struwig and Stead (2001:130) reliability is the "extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable". Leedy and Ormrod (2001:31) define reliability as the "consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed". From the above definitions, it follows that apart from delivering accurate results, the measuring instrument must deliver similar results consistently. Reliability may be assessed by conducting a pre-test with a small sample of people similar in characteristics to the target group.

4.2.6 Data analysis procedures

The raw data was captured in MS Excel and subjected to analysis using the statistical programme Statistica Version 6. Factor analysis was performed using the principal component method with varimax rotation of factors, with the aim of identifying characteristics of consumer decision-making. According to Kim and Mueller (in Hafstrom et al 1992), factor analysis is designed to “identify a set of variables in terms of a smaller number of hypothetical variables, or to explore underlying dimensions”. Factor loadings greater than 0.30 are considered to meet the minimum level while loadings of 0.40 are considered important (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black 1998). Next, Cronbach alpha reliability tests (Struwig & Stead 2001) were conducted to test the reliability of the items. Descriptive statistics including means, percentages and standard deviations were also determined using the statistical programme Statistica Version 6.

4.2.7 Problems and limitations associated with the research

The respondents came from different countries with their own cultural backgrounds and home languages. There could therefore have been a problem with respondents understanding the statements in Section A, but no such problems were encountered.

Non-probability quota sampling was employed which meant that the probability of selection of each sampling unit was unknown. Thus, the potential sampling

error cannot be accurately known. However, the sampling approach, execution and control of the selection activities were conducted with the utmost care to increase the sample's representativeness of the defined target population.

4.3 FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This section reports on the findings of the empirical study following the outline used in the questionnaire, with the exception of the demographic details of the respondents, which will be discussed first. The remainder of this section reports on the findings relating to eight factors of consumers' characteristics that determine consumer decision-making styles when buying clothing.

4.3.1 Demographic details of the respondents

Demographic information obtained from the respondents dealt with gender, age, nationality, period of stay in South Africa, tertiary institution enrolled at and amount spent on clothing.

4.3.1.1 Gender and nationality

The questionnaire was completed by 154 female (51.3%) and 146 male (48.7%) students. Table 4.1 shows a comparison based on nationality and gender.

TABLE 4.1

STUDENTS' NATIONALITY AND GENDER

NATIONALITY	MALE		FEMALE	
	N	%	N	%
Chinese	48	33.6	51	33.1
Motswana	49	32.8	52	33.8
Caucasian	49	33.6	51	33.1
TOTAL	146	100	154	100

4.3.1.2 Students' nationality versus period of stay in SA

Question two of Section B asked the name of the tertiary institution the respondents were attending, while question three of the same section asked the students' period of stay in South Africa. Table 4.2 illustrates the findings.

It is clear from Table 4.2 that students who had the longest period of stay in South African (SA) were the Caucasian group who had all been in SA for more than five years. The reason might be that most of them were born in SA. Comparing the other two groups one finds that Motswana students had a longer period of stay in SA than Chinese students. This could be because of the different policies of the Chinese and Motswana governments. Students from China were not allowed to study in SA before 2002. Another reason might be that it is more convenient for Motswana students to stay in SA than Chinese students. The distance between Botswana and Port Elizabeth is only 1399

kilometers and these two countries are both located in Africa, while there is more than 10,000 kilometers between China and SA.

TABLE 4.2

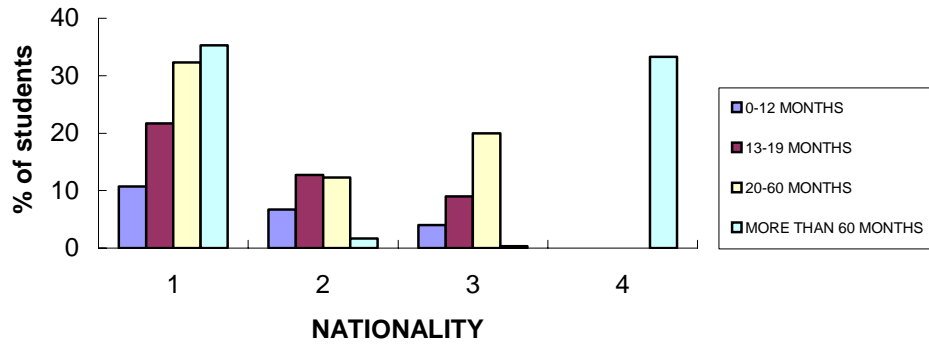
STUDENTS' PERIOD OF STAY IN SA VERSUS TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	NATIONALITY	0-12 months	13-18 months	19-60 months	>60 months
UPE		%	%	%	%
	Chinese	4.8	15.6	8.8	2.0
	Motswana	4.8	11.6	18.4	0.7
	Caucasian	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
TOTAL	100.0	9.6	27.2	27.2	36.0
PET	Chinese	8.5	9.8	15.7	1.3
	Motswana	3.3	6.5	21.6	0.0
	Caucasian	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
TOTAL	100.0	11.8	16.3	37.3	34.6
UPE & PET	Chinese	6.7	12.7	12.3	1.7
	Motswana	4.0	9.0	20.0	0.3
	Caucasian	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3
TOTAL	100.0	10.7	21.7	32.3	35.3

Figure 4.1 shows a summary of the comparison of nationality versus period of stay in SA with reference to the three nationalities.

FIGURE 4.1

NATIONALITY VERSUS PERIOD OF STAY IN SA



1: Whole group; 2: Chinese; 3: Motswana; 4: Caucasian

4.3.1.3 Amount spent on clothing with reference to gender and nationality

As clothing is perceived as a highly priced product, it was important to know much the respondents spent on clothing on average. The respondents who spent big amounts of money on clothing could be the target audience for marketing strategies. However, when analyzing the amounts of money spent on clothing, it has to be bone in mind that most Motswana students obtain a bursary which also covers subsistence fees from their government when they come to study in SA. Therefore, Motswana students might have more pocket money than Chinese and Caucasian students. Table 4.3 shows spending with regard to nationality and gender.

TABLE 4.3

GENDER AND NATIONALITY VERSUS AMOUNT SPENT ON CLOTHING

GENDER	NATIONALITY	0-200 RAND	201-500 RAND	501-1000 RAND	>1000 RAND
MALE		%	%	%	%
	Chinese	16.0	12.5	4.2	1.4
	Motswana	1.4	13.2	13.2	4.1
	Caucasian	22.9	11.1	0	0
TOTAL	100.0	40.3	36.8	17.4	5.5
FEMALE	Chinese	12.2	16.7	3.3	0.6
	Motswana	2.6	17.9	13.5	0.6
	Caucasian	17.9	9.6	3.8	1.3
TOTAL	100.0	32.7	44.2	20.6	2.5
MALE & FEMALE	Chinese	14.0	14.7	3.7	1.0
	Motswana	2.0	15.7	13.3	2.3
	Caucasian	20.3	10.3	2.0	0.7
TOTAL	100.0	36.3	40.7	19.0	4.0

Table 4.3 shows that only a few students (4%) spent more than R1000 per month on average on clothing. Most of them came from Botswana. Most Caucasian students (20.3%) spent less than R201 per month on clothing, compared with 2% of Motswana students and 14% of Chinese students in this category. No Caucasian male students spent more than R500 per month on clothing; in fact the majority of them fall into the R0-R200 category. Of the males that fall into the above R1000 category, the larger proportion was Motswana students. More Caucasian females than Motswana or Chinese females, fall into the above R1000 category. Caucasian were, however, also the largest proportion in the R0-R200 bracket.

According to the literature study, age has a significant influence on the amount of money spent on clothing, so it was important to compare the different age groups with the amount of money spent. This is shown in Tables 4.4 to 4.8.

TABLE 4.4

AGE VERSUS AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON CLOTHING
(CHINESE STUDENTS)

AGE	AMOUNT OF MOENY			
	0-R200	R201-R500	R501-R1000	OVER R1000
	%	%	%	%
< 20 YEARS	7.1	11.4	18.2	0.0
20-25 YEARS	61.9	63.6	72.7	100.0
26-30 YEARS	23.9	20.4	9.1	0.0
> 30 YEARS	7.1	4.6	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.4 shows only 20 to 25 years older students spent more than R1000 per month. In all different categories of spending, the highest proportion of students in each case was between 20 and 25 years old. this group spent the most on clothing in all of the amount categories. Table 4.4 also shows that most of the older Chinese students (> 30 years) spent less than R201 per month on clothing. Those younger than 25 was the largest group spending R501 to R1000 per month.

Table 4.5 shows spending by the Motswana students.

TABLE 4.5

AGE VERSUS AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON CLOTHING
(MOTSWANA STUDENTS)

AGE	AMOUNT OF MONEY			
	0-R200	R201-R500	R501-R1000	OVER R1000
	%	%	%	%
< 20 YEARS	16.7	4.2	5.0	0.0
20-25 YEARS	50.0	85.1	70.0	71.4
26-30 YEARS	33.3	10.7	22.5	28.6
> 30 YEARS	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Most of the Motswana students aged from 20 to 25 years (85.1%) spent between R201 and R500 per month on clothing. The largest proportion group of Motswana students who spent more than R1000 per month, is that of from 20 to 25 years old. All of the respondents who were older than 30 fell into the R501-R1000 category.

Table 4.6 shows the relationship between age and spending by the Caucasian students.

From Table 4.6 one can see clearly that *all* of the Caucasian students older than 30 years spent from R201 to R500 per month on clothing. No-one older than 25 spent more than R500 per month on clothing. Those who spent less than R200 on clothing per month were mostly aged from 20 to 25 years (78.7%). However,

this age group was also the only ones who spent more than R1000 per month on clothing.

TABLE 4.6

AGE VERSUS AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON CLOTHING
(CAUCASIAN STUDENTS)

AGE	AMOUNT OF MONEY			
	0-R200	R201-R500	R501-R1000	OVER R1000
	%	%	%	%
< 20 YEARS	14.7	25.8	33.3	0.0
20-25 YEARS	78.7	64.5	66.7	100.0
26-30 YEARS	6.6	6.5	0.0	0.0
> 30 YEARS	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

To provide an overview of the whole group of students, Table 4.7 shows the relationship between age and amount of money spent on clothing for all the groups combined.

Table 4.7 shows that in each of the age groups the highest proportion of students spent R201-R500 per month, whereas the smallest proportion spent more than R1000. No-one younger than 20 or older than 30, spent more than R1000 per month. The findings (not indicated in Table 4.7) furthermore showed that 83.3% of those who spent more than R1000 per month are 20 to 25 years old.

TABLE 4.7

AGE VERSUS AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON CLOTHING
(WHOLE GROUP)

AGE	AMOUNT OF MONEY				TOTAL
	0-200 RAND	201-500 RAND	501-1000 RAND	>1000 RAND	
	%	%	%	%	%
< 20 YEARS	38.2	44.2	17.6	0.0	100.0
20-25 YEARS	35.9	40.9	18.6	4.6	100.0
26-30 YEARS	36.4	36.4	22.7	4.5	100.0
>30 YEARS	42.8	42.8	14.4	0.0	100.0

Once all the demographic information had been analysed, it was important to determine the decision-making styles of the three groups of students. These findings are discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Analysis of decision-making styles

It is important to test if the Sproles and Kendall model fit in South African samples.

4.3.2.1 Fit of the Sproles and Kendall model

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the appropriateness of the original factor structure produced by Sproles and Kendall (1986, shown in

Annexure C). The 40-items were accordingly attributed to the respective 8 factors. The target rotation resulted in the item loadings shown in Table 4.8.

TABLE 4.8

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL
(TARGET ROTATION FOR ALL GROUPS)

Item	Factors	Item loading		
		Chinese sample	Motswana sample	Caucasian sample
	Factor 1: Perfectionistic, high-quality conscious			
1	Getting high quality is very important to me	.42	.58	.64
2	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	.67	.68	.63
3	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.63	.68	.71
4	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	.57	.76	.69
5	I really do not give my purchase much thought or care	.07	-.49	-.46
6	My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high	.42	.35	.65
7	I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough	-.13	-.52	-.13
8	A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me	.34	-.54	-.43
item	Factor 2: Brand conscious			
9	The well-known national brands are best for me	.60	.57	.73
10	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	.52	.74	.72
11	The higher the price of a product, the better its quality	.74	.50	.27
12	Nice departments and specialty stores offer me the best products	.39	.50	.37
13	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.60	.47	.76
14	The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	.09	.68	.80
	Factor 3: Novelty-fashion conscious			
15	I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style	.48	.35	.43
16	I keep my wardrobe up-to date with the changing fashions	.28	.55	.57
17	Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me	.53	.45	.35
18	To get variety, I shop at different stores and choose different brands	.16	.47	.23
19	It's fun to buy something new and exciting	-.32	.19	-.15

Factor 4: Recreational, hedonistic conscious				
20	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	.64	.64	.80
21	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	-.56	-.69	-.49
22	Shopping at other stores wastes my time	.80	.59	.51
23	I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	-.57	-.20	-.80
24	I make my shopping trips fast	.77	.38	.75
Factor 5: Price conscious				
25	I buy as much as possible at sale price	.19	.44	.75
26	The lower price products are usually my choice	.73	.53	.34
27	I look carefully to find the best value for the money	-.38	-.27	.58
Factor 6: Impulsive conscious				
28	I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do	.43	.55	.40
29	I am impulsive when purchasing	.46	-.03	.66
30	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.43	.67	.60
31	I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	-.54	-.42	-.01
32	I carefully watch how much I spend	-.63	.20	-.41
Factor 7: Confused by over-choice conscious				
33	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	.61	.53	.77
34	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	.52	.71	.59
35	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best	.40	.27	.61
36	All the information I get on different products confuses me	.73	.53	.69
Factor 8: Habitual, brand-loyal conscious				
37	I have favourite brands I buy over and over	.48	.13	.28
38	Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it	.65	.48	.69
39	I go to the same stores each time I shop	.78	.60	.68
40	I change brands I buy regularly	.25	.52	-.73

Table 4.8 shows the factor loading of the 40-item inventory for the South African sample and that obtained for the American sample by Sproles and Kendall (1986). Note that only the Caucasian sample was taken to be representative of the South African situation, as these students all had a South African background. Although the Chinese and Motswana students were studying in South African, they had non-South African backgrounds, and were therefore not deemed to be representative of the South African population.

TABLE 4.9

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL

Item	Factors	Item loading	
		U.S sample	SA sample
	Factor 1: Perfectionistic, high-quality conscious		
1	Getting high quality is very important to me	.68	.64
2	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	.66	.63
3	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.62	.71
4	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	.61	.69
5	I really do not give my purchase much thought or care	-.54	-.46
6	My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high	.54	.65
7	I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough	-.41	-.13
8	A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me	-.41	-.43
	Factor 2: Brand conscious		
9	The well-known national brands are best for me	.63	.73
10	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	.61	.72
11	The higher the price of a product, the better its quality	.59	.27
12	Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products	.57	.37
13	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.54	.76
14	The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	.48	.80
	Factor 3: Novelty-fashion conscious		
15	I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style	.75	.43
16	I keep my wardrobe up-to date with the changing fashions	.70	.57
17	Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me	.64	.35
18	To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands	.50	.23
19	It's fun to buy something new and exciting	.46	-.15
	Factor 4: Recreational, hedonistic conscious		
20	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	-.70	.80
21	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	.70	-.49
22	Shopping at other stores wastes my time	-.69	.51
23	I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	.66	-.80
24	I make my shopping trips fast	-.64	.75
	Factor 5: Price conscious		
25	I buy as much as possible at sale price	.66	.75

26	The lower price products are usually my choice	.56	.34
27	I look carefully to find the best value for the money	.54	.58
Factor 6: Impulsive conscious			
28	I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do	.55	.40
29	I am impulsive when purchasing	.53	.66
30	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.52	.60
31	I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	-.51	-.01
32	I carefully watch how much I spend	-.43	-.41
Factor 7: Confused by over-choice conscious			
33	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	.68	.77
34	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	.61	.59
35	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best	.53	.61
36	All the information I get on different products confuses me	.44	.69
Factor 8: Habitual, brand-loyal conscious			
37	I have favourite brands I buy over and over	.70	.28
38	Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it	.60	.69
39	I go to the same stores each time I shop	.58	.68
40	I change brands I buy regularly	-.48	-.73

Table 4.10 shows the Cronbach alphas for four groups, namely, U.S sample and the South African sample consisting of Chinese, Motswana and Caucasian students.

TABLE 4.10

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR EIGHT
CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS

FACTORS	Cronbach alpha				
	Consumer style characteristics	U.S sample	Chinese sample	Motswana sample	Caucasian sample
1	Perfectionistic, high quality conscious	.74	.75	.78	.76
2	Brand conscious	.75	.73	.73	.83
3	Novelty-fashion conscious	.74	-	.61	-
4	Recreational shopping conscious	.76	.77	.60	.77
5	Price-value conscious	.48	-	-	-
6	Impulsive	.48	.40	.41	.52

7	Confused by over-choice	.55	.70	.45	.76
8	Habitual, brand-loyal	.53	.70	.14	.67

Table 4.10 shows the Cronbach alphas for each of the groups compared with those of the original model by Sproles and Kendall (1986). Only values greater than 0.40 were deemed to be acceptable.

Table 4.10 shows that no Cronbach alpha values were calculated for factor 3 in the case of Chinese and Caucasian students as fewer than 3 items loaded onto this factor. Cronbach alpha values were also not calculated for factor 5 for the same reason. Factor 5 can thus not be considered a reliable factor in the identification of decision-making for any of the three groups of students in the South African context. Factor 3 likewise cannot be considered reliable in the case of Chinese and Caucasian students. Factor 8 cannot be considered reliable for Motswana students as its Cronbach alpha is below 0.40. The reliabilities are satisfactory in all cases with the possible exception of the impulsive characteristic, which has marginal reliability. Confused by over-choice characteristic also is a marginally reliable factor for Motswana students. This means that there are six factors applicable to each of the three groups in this study. These factors differ according to group.

It is therefore significant to note that similar to the Sproles and Kendall (1986) study, Factor 5 (Price –value conscious) and Factor 6 (Impulsive conscious) also had low scores in the South African study.

It can thus be deduced from Table 4.10 that the original factor structure suggested by Sproles and Kendall does not fit the South African data. For remainder of the discussion, Factor 3 and 5 as shown in Table 4.10 will be disregarded in further analysis of the Chinese sample in this section, likewise, Factors 5 and 8 will be omitted from further analysis of the Motswana sample and Factors 3 and 5 will not be included in further analysis of the Caucasian sample.

4.3.2.2 Analysis of the Chinese, Motswanan and Caucasian sample

A six-factor model resulted for each of the population groups as explained above. The six-factor solution explained a 53% of variance in the Chinese group, a 51% of variance in the Motswana group and a 60% of variance in the Caucasian group in the correlation matrix. This compares to the 35% in the studies of Fan and Xiao (1998), the 47% in the study by Hafstrom et al (1992), the 56% in Durvasula et al (1993) and the 46% in Sproles and Kendall (1986), dealing with Chinese, Korean, New Zealand and United States consumers, respectively. All eigenvalues exceeded 1.0 (the lowest was 1.5) in the current study.

Table 4.11 below shows the six reliable factors associated with the Chinese sample's decision-making style characteristic:

TABLE 4.11

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR SIX
CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES AMONG CHINESE STUDENTS

CONSUMER STYLE (FACTOR)		Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Factor 1	Recreational conscious	.77	5
Factor 2	Perfectionism conscious	.75	5
Factor 3	Brand conscious	.73	4
Factor 4	Confusion from over-choice	.70	4
Factor 5	Brand-loyal conscious	.70	3
Factor 6	Impulsive conscious	.40	4

Table 4.12 shows all the items loading onto the factors with loading value higher than 0.40 that were included to calculate the Cronbach alpha values for the six reliability factors among the Chinese students.

TABLE 4.12

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL
(TARGETED ROTATION FOR CHINESE STUDENTS)

Item	Factors	Item loading
	Factor 1: Recreational, Hedonistic conscious	Chinese sample
1	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	.64
2	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	-.56
3	Shopping other stores wastes my time	.80
4	I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	-.57

5	I make my shopping trips fast	.77
Factor 2: Perfectionistic, high-quality conscious		
6	Getting high quality is very important to me	.42
7	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	.67
8	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.63
9	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	.57
10	My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high	.42
Factor 3: Brand conscious		
11	The well-known national brands are best for me	.60
12	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	.52
13	The higher the price of a product, the better its quality	.74
14	Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products	.40
15	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.60
Factor 4: Confused by over-choice conscious		
16	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	.61
17	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	.52
18	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best	.40
19	All the information I get on different products confuses me	.73
Factor 5: Brand-loyal conscious		
20	I have favourite brands I buy over and over	.48
21	Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it	.65
22	I go to the same stores each time I shop	.78
Factor 6: Impulsive, careless consumer		
23	I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do	.43
24	I am impulsive when purchasing	.46
25	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.43
26	I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	-.54

Table 4.13 shows the Cronbach alphas associated with the decision-making styles of Motswana students.

TALBE 4.13

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR SIX CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES AMONG MOTSWANA STUDENTS

CONSUMER STYLE (FACTOR)		Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Factor 1	Perfectionism conscious	.78	7

Factor 2	Brand conscious	.73	6
Factor 3	Novelty-fashion conscious	.61	3
Factor 4	Recreational conscious	.60	3
Factor 5	Confusion from over-choice	.45	3
Factor 6	Impulsive conscious	.41	3

Table 4.14 shows all the items with values higher than 0.40 that were included to calculate the Cronbach alpha values shown in Table 4.13.

TABLE 4.14

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL
(TARGET ROTATION FOR MOTSWANA STUDENTS)

Item	Factors	Item loading
		Motswana sample
	Factor 1: Perfectionistic, high-quality conscious	
1	Getting high quality is very important to me	.58
2	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	.68
3	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.68
4	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	.76
5	I really do not give my purchase much thought or care	-.49
6	I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough	-.52
7	A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me	-.54
	Factor 2: Brand conscious	
8	The well-known national brands are best for me	.57
9	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	.74
10	The higher the price of a product, the better its quality	.50
11	Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products	.50
12	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.47
13	The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	.68
	Factor 3: Novelty-fashion conscious	
14	I keep my wardrobe up-to date with the changing fashions	.55

15	Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me	.45
16	To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands	.47
Factor 4: Recreational, hedonistic conscious		
17	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	.64
18	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	-.69
19	Shopping other at stores wastes my time	.59
Factor 5: Confused by over-choice conscious		
20	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	.53
21	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	.71
22	All the information I get on different products confuses me	.53
Factor 6: Impulsive conscious		
23	I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do	.55
24	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.67
25	I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	-.42

Table 4.15 below shows the Cronbach alpha values for the Caucasian sample.

TABLE 4.15
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR SIX
CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING STYLES AMONG CAUCASIAN STUDENTS

CONSUMER STYLE (FACTOR)		Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Factor 1	Brand conscious	.83	4
Factor 2	Perfectionism conscious	.77	7
Factor 3	Recreational conscious	.76	5
Factor 4	Confusion by over-choice	.76	4
Factor 5	Brand-loyal conscious	.67	3
Factor 6	Impulsive conscious	.52	4

Table 4.16 shows all the items loading onto the factors shown in Table 4.15 that had values higher than 0.40.

TABLE 4.16

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL
(TARGET ROTATION FOR CAUCASIAN STUDENTS)

Item	Factors	Item loading
		Caucasian sample
	Factor 1: Brand conscious	
1	The well-known national brands are best for me	.73
2	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	.72
3	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	.76
4	The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	.80
	Factor 2: Perfectionistic, high-quality conscious	
5	Getting high quality is very important to me	.64
6	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	.63
7	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	.71
8	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	.69
9	I really do not give my purchase much thought or care	-.46
10	My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high	.65
11	A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me	-.43
	Factor 3: Recreational, hedonistic conscious	
12	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	.80
13	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	-.49
14	Shopping other stores wastes my time	.51
15	I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	-.80
16	I make my shopping trips fast	.75
	Factor 4: Confused by over-choice conscious	
17	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	.77
18	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	.59
19	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose	.61
20	All the information I get on different products confuses me	.69
	Factor 5: Brand-loyal conscious	
21	Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it	.69
22	I go to the same stores each time I shop	.68
23	I change brands I buy regularly	-.73
	Factor 6: Impulsive, careless conscious	
24	I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do	.40

25	I am impulsive when purchasing	.66
26	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	.60
27	I carefully watch how much I spend	-.41

4.3.3 Comparison of the three groups across shopping styles

In an attempt to construct a profile of each of the three nationality groups based on their decision-making styles, the mean values obtained for each of the original 40 items as reported on a five point Likert-scale were analysed. For comparison purposes it was decided to use the original eight factors and 40 items, since the resulting six-factor models differed according to population groups (Chinese, Motswana and Caucasian). Scores for negatively worded statements numbered 5, 8, 20, 22, 24 and 30 were reversed. These values are reported in Table 4.17.

TABLE 4.17

COMPARING MEAN VALUES AMONG THE THREE GROUPS

Item	Factors	Mean scores		
		Chinese sample	Motswana sample	Caucasian sample
	Factor 1:Perfectionistic conscious	3.27	3.36	3.27
1	Getting high quality is very important to me	3.62	4.22	3.91
2	When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice	3.72	3.98	3.46
3	In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality	3.53	3.92	3.82
4	I make special effort to choose the very best quality products	3.59	3.68	3.51
5	I really do not give my purchases much thought or care	2.69	2.64	2.37
6	My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high	2.93	3.15	3.50
7	I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough	2.69	2.64	2.37

8	A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me	3.35	2.62	3.24
item	Factors	Chinese sample	Motswana sample	Caucasian sample
	Factor 2: Brand conscious	3.12	3.04	2.78
9	The well-known national brands are best for me	3.32	3.14	2.88
10	The most expensive brands are usually my choice	2.67	3.04	2.45
11	The higher the price of a product, the better its quality	3.30	3.70	3.24
12	Nice department and specialty stores offer me the best products	3.44	2.91	2.80
13	I prefer buying the best-selling brands	2.85	3.04	2.59
14	The most advertised brands are usually very good choices	3.12	2.39	2.70
	Factor 3: Novelty-fashion conscious	3.58	3.57	3.38
15	I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style	3.78	3.27	2.80
16	I keep my wardrobe up-to date with the changing fashions	2.94	2.82	3.00
17	Fashionable is very important to me	3.57	3.29	3.37
18	To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands	3.68	4.18	3.61
19	It's fun to buy something new and exciting	3.95	4.27	4.11
	Factor 4: Recreational, Hedonistic conscious	3.00	2.76	2.79
20	Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me	2.55	2.42	2.54
21	Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life	3.60	3.44	3.14
22	Shopping other stores wastes my time	2.51	2.17	2.22
23	I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it	3.48	3.02	3.00
24	I make my shopping trips fast	2.85	2.75	3.07
	Factor 5: Price conscious	3.31	3.38	3.51
25	I buy as much as possible at sale price	3.08	3.32	3.25
26	The lower price products are usually my choice	3.04	2.93	3.17
27	I look carefully to find the best value for the money	3.81	3.89	4.10
	Factor 6: Impulsive, careless conscious	3.17	3.32	3.05
28	I should plan shopping more carefully than I do	3.01	3.51	2.47
29	I am impulsive when purchasing	3.04	2.76	2.72
30	Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not	2.73	2.71	2.57
31	I take the time to shop carefully for best buys	3.78	3.96	3.93
32	I carefully watch how much I spend	3.27	3.66	3.55
	Factor 7: Confused by over-choice conscious	3.11	3.03	2.52
33	There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused	2.84	3.14	2.47
34	Sometimes it is hard to choose which stores to shop	3.49	3.56	3.01
35	The more I learn about products, the harder it seems to choose the best	3.06	2.80	2.42
36	All the information I get on different products	3.06	2.61	2.19

	confuses me			
	Factor 8: Habitual, brand-loyal conscious	3.33	3.15	3.27
37	I have favorite brands I buy over and over	3.52	3.55	3.38
38	Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it	3.25	2.78	3.08
39	I go to the same stores each time I shop	3.35	3.03	3.24
40	I change brands I buy regularly	3.21	3.24	3.38

4.3.3.1 Perfectionistic, high quality characteristic

Items loading on this factor describe students who sought to maximize quality, to get the best choice and value for money, who tended to watch their spending and had high standards and expectations for products. Comparison-shopping was therefore important for them.

Table 4.18 shows that the scores of Motswana students were higher than those of the other two groups on statements 1: “Getting high quality is very important to me”; 2: “When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice”; 3: “In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality”; 4: “I make a special effort to choose the very best quality products”; and 6: “My standards and expectations for products I buy are very high”. Motswana students therefore appeared to display more high-quality conscious characteristics in their decision-making styles than the other two groups. The mean factor score was also highest for the Motswana sample. Motswana students, furthermore, had a high average score on statement 7: “I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough”, hence confirming their tendency to do comparative shopping.

4.3.3.2 Brand conscious style

Consumers scoring high in this factor typically consider the well-known national brands and more expensive brands to be superior to other brands. Relatively high scores also indicate that they believe that highly advertised brands are very good.

Apart from statement 10: “The most expensive brands are usually my choice”, statement 11: “The higher the price of a product, the better its quality”, and statement 13: “I prefer buying the best-selling brands”, where Motwana students had the highest scores among the three groups, Chinese students had the highest scores.

Based on their higher scores, the shopping styles of the Chinese students seem to be characterized by a preference for well-known and well-advertised brands. These students also believed that department and speciality stores offer them the best products; these are the type of stores in Port Elizabeth that carry the well-known national brands.

4.3.3.3 Novelty-fashion conscious

Consumers who scored high on this factor were typically fashion conscious and apparently, novelty conscious as well. They were likely to gain excitement and pleasure from seeking out new things and were conscious of the new fashions

and fads. They kept up-to-date with styles as being in style was important to them. Variety-seeking also appears to be an important aspect of this characteristic.

Chinese students scored highest on statement 15: "I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style"; had an average score on statement 16: "I keep my wardrobe up-to date with the changing fashions"; and scored highest on statement 17: "Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me". These scores tend to indicate that compared with the other two groups, they are fashion conscious, keeping up to date with the latest styles. Motswana students scored highest on statements 18: "To get variety, I shop different stores and choose different brands" and 19: "It's fun to buy something new and exciting". This group seeks variety and excitement in their purchases and is not very brand loyal.

4.3.3.4 Recreational, hedonistic shoppers

These consumers tend to enjoy shopping. They consider buying a fun activity and do not mind spending time shopping.

Based on the mean factor values, the Motswana students seemed to get the least enjoyment out of shopping. They had an average score on statement 20: "Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me", lowest on statement 21: "Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life" and fairly low on statement

22: "Shopping other stores wastes my time". Of the three groups they had the lowest score on statement 23: "I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it" and the highest on statement 24: "I make my shopping trips fast".

4.3.3.5 Price conscious, value for money shopper

These consumers tended to buy as much as possible at sales prices, preferred lower priced products and looked carefully to find the best value for money. The Caucasian students had the highest scores on all the items in this factor except statement 25. This tendency is possibly reflected in the earlier finding (section 4.3.1.2) that most of the Caucasian students spent below R200 per month on clothing. They also scored very high (mean value of 4.10) on statement 27: "I look carefully to find the best value for the money". It is also clear from the values in this factor that Chinese students are not as price-conscious (factor mean score of 3.31) as the other groups. Compared with the other groups, they buy less at sales prices. They, however, do look carefully for the best value for money (mean value of 3.81).

4.3.3.6 Impulsive, careless shopper

Low scores on these factors indicate that these shoppers are not impulsive when purchasing. However, they may choose those items whose brands have been recommended by a consumer magazine or choose low priced products as possible strategies to facilitate their market decisions.

The Caucasian students had the lowest scores on item 28: "I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do "; 29: "I am impulsive when purchasing"; and 30: "Often I make careless purchases I later wish I had not," indicating that they are not impulsive shoppers. They take time to shop carefully for the best buys (statement 31) and watch how much they spend (statement 32). The mean factor score was also lowest for this group of students.

4.3.3.7 Confused by over-choice shopper

Consumers who score high on this factor, are typically confused by the number of brands and stores from which to choose and have difficulty making choices. Furthermore, they experience information overload.

Chinese and Motswana students seem to be more confused by over-choice and information overload than the Caucasian students. This may be explained by their lower level of familiarity with what is offered by the South African stores. It seems that Caucasian students do not need as much information as the other two groups, probably because they have known the macro-economic environment better than the two groups of foreign students who have only been living in Port Elizabeth for 19 months on average. Caucasian students indeed had a very low factor score, namely 2.52 compared with the 3.11 and 3.03 in the case of Chinese and Motswana students.

4.3.3.8 Habitual, brand-loyal shopper

These consumers typically have favourite brands and stores that they stick to. Chinese students had a higher score on item 38 “Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it” and 39 “I go to the same stores each time I shop” than Motswana and Caucasian students. These higher mean values might indicate that Chinese students are more loyal to a store or a brand than the rest of groups.

4.3.3.9 Factor mean values

Table 4.17 also shows the mean values for each factor. The mean value for the “Novelty-fashion conscious” style was the highest in the list of factors for the Chinese and for the Motswana students and the second highest for the Caucasian sample. “Price conscious” style had the highest mean in the case of Caucasian students, second highest for the Motswana sample and third for the Chinese students. A factor such as “Brand loyal conscious” is relatively more common among Chinese and Caucasian students than it is for the Motswana sample. Furthermore, it seems that the “Recreational conscious” style is more important for Caucasian consumers than for Motswana students. It is the most important factor for Chinese and Motswana students.

The “Impulsive/careless” style is more important for Motswana than Chinese and Caucasian consumers. On the other hand, the “Brand conscious” style is less

important for Caucasian than Chinese and Motswana consumers. According to the literature study (see section 3.3.4), the different scores on these two styles confirm that consumers have a high brand consciousness that causes them to behave more impulsively.

4.4 SUMMARY

Chapter four started off with a discussion of the research methodology and explained the process and justification for the chosen research methods. The empirical findings of the research were also discussed in chapter four. The explanation of the results of the empirical study began with a discussion of the demographic details of the respondents, focusing on gender versus nationality, students' nationality versus period of stay in SA, as well as the amount of spending on clothing versus gender and nationality. A cross-classification of age versus amount of money spent on apparel among the three groups, was also discussed.

Secondly, a verification of the 40 items included in the original factor structure suggested by Sproles and Kendall showed that eight-factor model did not fit the South African data. Only 26 items loaded with a item score of 0.40 and above with respect to the Chinese sample, 25 items had scores of 0.40 and higher for Motswana students and 27 items had scores of 0.40 and higher among the Caucasian students.

The outcome of statements and the analysis of results relating to consumer decision-making styles among eight factors characteristics, showed that six out of eight factors had acceptable reliability scores (Cronbach alpha >0.40) for each of the three groups in this study. However, The Cronbach alphas were different for the different groups.

The mean value for the 40 items as well as for the eight factors were calculated in this chapter. The mean value for the “Novelty-fashion conscious” style is number one in the list of factors for Chinese and Motswana students and second for the Caucasian sample. However, “Price conscious” style is number one for Caucasian students.

The next chapter contains a summary of the findings of the study, followed by concluding remarks and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SYNOPSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As the global marketplace becomes more integrated and consumer specialists develop an international focus, developing useful scales to profile consumer decision-making styles in other cultures becomes important. An understanding of students as consumers and their decision-making processes is important to marketers, particularly as students are recognised as a specialised market segment for a variety of goods and services. Knowing the apparel purchase behaviour of consumers would provide appropriate indicators to reflect the social, economic and consumption experience factors that would affect consumers.

The influx of foreign students has also resulted in an increase in the number of consumers who have to make purchases in their daily lives within a different cultural environment. Therefore, an understanding of students as consumers and their decision-making processes is important to marketers, particularly as students are recognised as a specialised market segment for a variety of goods and services. Characteristics of decision-making styles used in the CSI (Consumer Styles Inventory) can be useful in profiling an individual's consumer style, in educating consumers, and in counselling families on financial management. The aims of this study were therefore to:

- apply the model of consumer decision-making styles developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) to the two largest groups of foreign students (Motswana and Chinese) studying at UPE and PET as well as to South African students enrolled at these institutions; and
- establish a profile of consumer decision-making styles for each group of students in the South African context.

Chapter five provides a synopsis of the study, conclusions based on the secondary and primary findings and recommendations based on the conclusions.

5.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

Chapter one began with the reasons for the study and the significance of the research. The objectives and research design were explained and a review given of related literature. The study was demarcated and an explanation of the various chapters followed.

Chapter two took the form of a literature study, which covered the consumer decision-making process. This process begins when consumers recognise a difference between the actual situation that they find themselves in and the desired state that they want or need to be in.

It is very important for marketers to understand the types of consumer decision-making and the steps followed in their purchasing decisions, as this

understanding will help marketers to organise marketing efforts in a way that is responsive to customer decision-making imperatives.

Consumers' purchasing decisions generally fall along a continuum of three broad categories: routine response behaviour; limited decision-making and extensive decision-making. The consumer decision-making process begins with need recognition as the first step, followed by information search as the second, evaluation of alternatives as the third, the purchase phase as the fourth and post-purchase behaviour as the last step.

The steps in consumer purchasing behaviour are directly and indirectly influenced by internal or psychological influences as well as by external or social influences. Social influences include factors such as culture, subculture, social class and reference groups. The internal influences include factors such as perception and memory, needs, motivation and attitudes, demographics and lifestyle, personality and learning.

Consumers are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles. Chapter three discussed the various consumer decision-making styles influenced by consumer characteristics. To understand the consumer characteristics, eight factors adopted from the CSI (Consumer Style Inventory) proposed by Sproles and Kendall (1986) were regrouped into five dimensions, which were subsequently discussed in great detail. These dimensions were

brand consciousness, time consciousness, quality consciousness, novelty-fashion consciousness and price consciousness.

The brand consciousness dimension includes “brand awareness”, “price-quality perceptions” and a “habitual, brand-loyal orientation toward consumption”. On the one hand, consumers are oriented toward expensive and well-known national brands and feel price is an indicator of quality. On the other hand, some consumers find the marketplace confusing, view brands as alike and seek help from others such as opinion leaders.

Time consciousness includes impulsiveness consciousness and recreational consciousness consumer characteristics. Consumers who are impulsive do not plan their shopping and are generally not concerned about the amount of money they spend. Recreational conscious consumers typically enjoy shopping and sometimes shop just for the fun of it.

The third dimension, namely quality consciousness, denotes perfectionistic and high-quality conscious consumer characteristics. These consumers seek the very best quality products, have high standards and expectations for consumer goods, and are concerned with the function and quality of products.

Novelty-fashion consciousness measures novelty-fashion conscious consumer characteristics. These consumers gain excitement and pleasure from seeking out new things and are conscious of the new fashions and fads.

Price consciousness, the fifth dimension, measures a price orientated “value for money” consumer characteristic. Such consumers are looking for sale prices and appear conscious of lower prices in general. Interestingly, they are also concerned with getting the best value for their money and are likely to be comparison shoppers.

Chapter four focused on the research methodology and explained the process and justification for the chosen research methods. The explanation of the results of the empirical study started off with a discussion of the demographic details of the respondents, focusing on gender versus nationality, students’ nationality versus period of stay in SA, as well as the amount of spending on clothing versus gender and nationality. A cross-classification of age versus amount of money spent on apparel among the three groups, was also discussed. The empirical findings of the research were also discussed in chapter four.

Secondly, a verification of the 40 items included in the original factor structure suggested by Sproles and Kendall (1986) showed that the eight-factor model did not fit the South African data. Only 25 items loaded with an item score of 0.40 and above with respect to the Chinese sample, 25 items had scores of 0.40 and higher for Motswana students and 27 items had scores of 0.40 and higher among the Caucasian students.

The outcome of statements and analysis of results relating to consumer decision-making styles among the eight factors characteristics showed that six

out of eight factors have acceptable of reliability scores (Cronbach alpha>0.40) for each of the three groups in the study. However, their Cronbach alphas were different.

A six-factor model resulted for each of the different groups of students, albeit with different factors. The six-factor solution explained 53% of variance (Chinese group), 51% of variance (Motswana group) and 60% of variance (Caucasian group) in the correlation matrix compared to the 46% of the study by Sproles and Kendall (1986) for United States consumers. All eigenvalues in the current study exceeded 1.0 (the lowest was 1.6).

The chapter was concluded by a discussion of the mean values for the 40 items and for the eight factors.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are presented in the form of an adapted model of the consumer decision-making process and styles discussed in chapters two and three.

Based on the literature study it can be concluded that consumers:

- start a decision-making process when they become aware of an imbalance between the actual and desired state, recognise a problem to be solved or

a need to be satisfied. The recognition of a need is hence likely to occur when the consumer is faced with a problem. Such a problem can be triggered through the consumer's exposure to either internal (psychological) or external (social) influences or stimuli;

- go through a decision-making process, consisting of various steps, namely, need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase behaviour. This process is influenced by internal and external factors;
- are thought to approach the market with certain basic decision-making styles. Consumers have several cognitive and affective orientations that determine their decision-making styles; and
- decision-making styles can be described in terms of various models, one of which is the well-known CSI. This model consists of 8 factors describing consumer characteristics styles.

Since consumers differ and are influenced by factors in the market environment that differ from country to country, it was necessary to determine whether the CSI also applies to the South African consumer. Testing of the model amongst Chinese, Motswana and Caucasian students was thus necessary. Based on this analysis it was found that the original model needed to be adapted as will be explained below.

This exploratory study of South African consumers adds evidence to the international applicability of the Consumer Style Inventory (CSI) developed by Sproles and Kendall (1986). The decision-making styles of Chinese, Motswana and Caucasian students in the South African context were classified and several similarities and a few differences in decision-making styles were identified among South African and United States consumers.

There is some evidence in the findings of the generalisability of selected consumer decision-making styles identified by Sproles and Kendall to the South African situation as far as students are concerned. Given this finding there is reason for cautious optimism that the CSI has elements of construct validity and has the potential to be used across international students living in South African populations. However, an adaptation of the original model is required to ensure a better fit with the South African context. The original model had to be adapted for each of the three groups of students. The three resulting adapted models each consisted of only six factors, as in each case there were two factors, albeit different ones, which did not meet the requirements for reliability.

The six reliable factors for Chinese and Caucasian students identified the following characteristics: recreational conscious, perfectionism conscious, brand conscious, confusion from over-choice conscious, brand-loyal conscious, and Impulsive conscious.

The six reliability factors for Motswana students identified the following characteristics: perfectionism conscious, brand conscious, novelty-fashion conscious, recreational conscious, confusion from over-choice conscious and impulsive conscious.

The six factors for Caucasian students were: brand conscious, perfectionism conscious, recreational conscious, confusion from over-choice conscious, brand-loyal conscious and impulsive conscious.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have implications for marketers and researchers as will be explained below.

5.4.1 Implications for marketers

Marketers of clothing products to students are encouraged to:

- be aware of the typical shopping style characteristics of students and of the differences between the various population groups as this could have an influence on the effectiveness of their marketing strategies;
- develop pleasant shopping environments, as a large proportion of the respondent students enjoyed shopping just for fun;

- provide pleasant environments that will attract hedonistic consumers without neglecting quality products that are highly valued by the “perfectionists”;
- convey information about their products or brands in such a way that will make it easier for consumers to do their own comparison shopping without feeling overwhelmed by useless information. (This is the case for those who came from overseas as they were more easily confused by over-choice than local students);
- realise that “price” is a core factor for Caucasian students. They tend to buy as much as possible at sale prices, prefer lower priced products and look carefully to find the best value for money;
- be aware, on the one hand, of the mix of merchandise, that is, quality, assortment, price value and store brands, and on the other, rely on ease of merchandise selection, in-store information and assistance, convenience, problem resolution and personalization to satisfy consumers, thereby improving consumer loyalty to the store;
- develop different products under the same name to increase consumer loyalty and to meet consumer impulsive shopping styles once they are familiar with the brand;
- create One-Stop-Shopping (OSS), for its potential consumers to provide convenience, cost saving and integrated products; and

- design fashionable clothing, which can demonstrate social status or express social image, since the study showed that most students paid attention to improving their social image.

5.4.2 Implications for researchers

The fact that not all of the original factors could be confirmed in every country examined may indicate problems with the CSI in previous studies in other countries where additional qualitative research was not undertaken to explore the richness of the country's consumer behaviour. The current CSI seems unable to measure consumer decision-making characteristics effectively in all countries. The deficit could be addressed in future cross-cultural applications of the CSI.

The obvious next steps are to test the CSI for young, non-college groups and for adult, general populations in South Africa. These examinations would help to establish generality in a South African context. It is furthermore recommended that the consumer decision-making styles of Chinese consumers in a South Africa context be compared with consumers in their own market contexts; in other words, comparing CSI under different macroeconomic and cultural contexts.

Because the factor structure suggested by Sproles and Kendall did not fit the South African data, it is suggested that further research be conducted using

different or additional items to measure the eight factors of consumer decision-making styles in a South African context. Additional dimensions such as time consciousness, risk consciousness can also be investigated.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This exploratory study only focused on tertiary students in South Africa. Students were chosen because they were a homogeneous group. The South African sample was, however, not representative of all South African students as only Caucasian students were included so as to avoid the influence of sub-culture, for example among Black students.

5.6 FINAL CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations discussed in Section 5.5, the objectives of this study were met. This study contributed to global consumer decision-making literature particularly in a South African context. Furthermore, it could assist marketers to better address the needs of students as a specialised target market

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ANNEXURE A

P.O.BOX 410
HUNTERS RETREAT
6017
PORT ELIZABETH
1 MAY 2004

Dear Sir/Madam

I am studying towards an M-Tech degree in Marketing at the Port Elizabeth Technikon. As part of my studies, I am investigating the decision-making styles of students when buying clothing.

Kindly assist me by spending 10 minutes on completing the attached questionnaire. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and only aggregate figures will be reported.

Thank you for your time. Please return the completed questionnaire to the deliverer!

Yours sincerely

Yuejin Li

ANNEXURE B

CONSUMER STYLE CHARACTERISTICS: EIGHT FACTORS MODEL

SECTION A: SHOPPING STYLES

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements below, where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree, as they apply to you when shopping for clothing.

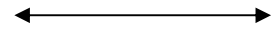
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ID

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

	←-----→					
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. I keep my wardrobe up-to date with changing fashions.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. The higher the price of a product, the better its quality.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. The most expensive brands are usually my choice.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. It's fun to buy something new and exciting.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Fashionable, attractive styling is very important to me.	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. I prefer buying well-known national brands.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. I usually choose lower priced products.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Getting very good quality is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. I enjoy shopping just for the fun of it.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. I take the time to shop carefully for best buys.	10	1	2	3	4	5
11. I have favourite brands that I buy over and over.	1	2	3	4	5	
12. I buy as much of my clothing as possible at sale price.	1	2	3	4	5	
13. I go to the same stores each time I shop for clothing.	1	2	3	4	5	
14. Once I find a brand I like, I stick with it.	1	2	3	4	5	
15. Shopping at different stores wastes my time.	15	1	2	3	4	5
16. There are so many brands to choose from that I often feel confused.	1	2	3	4	5	
17. My shopping trips are fast.	1	2	3	4	5	
18. I look carefully to find the best value for money.	1	2	3	4	5	
19. I usually have one or more outfits of the very latest style.	1	2	3	4	5	
20. Shopping is not a pleasant activity to me.	20	1	2	3	4	5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree



21. My standards and expectations for clothing I buy are high.		1	2	3	4	5
22. I shop quickly, buying the first product or brand I find that seems good enough.		1	2	3	4	5
23. The more I learn about clothing products, the harder it seems to choose the best.		1	2	3	4	5
24. All the information I get on different products confuses me.		1	2	3	4	5
25. I should plan my clothing shopping more carefully than I do.	25	1	2	3	4	5
26. I prefer buying the best-selling brands.		1	2	3	4	5
27. A product does not have to be perfect, or the best, to satisfy me.		1	2	3	4	5
28. Specialty stores offer me the best products.		1	2	3	4	5
29. I am impulsive when purchasing clothing.		1	2	3	4	5
30. The most advertised brands are usually good choices.	30	1	2	3	4	5
31. I really do not give my clothing purchases much thought or care.		1	2	3	4	5
32. I make special effort to choose the very best quality clothes.		1	2	3	4	5
33. In general, I usually try to buy the best overall quality.		1	2	3	4	5
34. To get variety, I shop at different stores.		1	2	3	4	5
35. Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.	35	1	2	3	4	5
36. I carefully watch how much I spend on clothing.		1	2	3	4	5
37. Sometimes it is hard to decide at which stores to shop.		1	2	3	4	5
38. When it comes to purchasing clothing, I try to get the very best or the perfect choice.		1	2	3	4	5
39. I regularly change clothing brands.		1	2	3	4	5
40. I often make careless purchases I later wish I had not made.	40	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION B: DEMOGRAPHICS

For the questions below, please tick the most appropriate answer.

1. Please specify your gender.

1	FEMALE	2	MALE
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2. Which tertiary institution are you currently attending?

1	The University of Port Elizabeth
2	Port Elizabeth Technikon

3. How long have you been living in South Africa?

1	0-6 months	2	7-12 months	3	13-18 months
4	19 months-5 years	5	More than 5 years		

4. How old are you?

1	Younger than 20	2	20-25	3	26-30	4	Older than 30
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5. What is your nationality?

1	Chinese	2	Motswana	3	South African
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6. On average, how much do you spend on clothing per month?

1	0-R200	2	R201-R500	3	R501-R1000	4	Above R1000
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!!!