EVALUATIVE CRITERIA APPLIED BY SELECTED FEMALE FASHION CONSUMERS IN THE VAAL REGION WHEN PURCHASING CASUAL DAYWEAR

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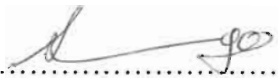
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Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Vaal University of Technology.

DECLARATION

This dissertation is the results of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed ....

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- My three children Ena, Guillaume and Judith, who often to manage without a mother for the duration of my studies. They were always patient and supportive in a tangible way.
- My husband Thys, who provided invaluable assistance with the capturing of all the data, entering of statistical results and helped with the computer programs. He is the only one who knows how difficult and emotional the road has been. Thank you for your patience, support and the humour with which you encouraged me throughout the study.
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ABSTRACT

Criteria used by fashion consumers to assess the quality of apparel products during the decision-making process are a good indication of what considerations to keep in mind for customer satisfaction. Evaluative criteria of concern to apparel customers are intrinsic attributes, involving physical features such as design/style, materials and construction and performance features such as aesthetic and functional aspects and extrinsic attributes such as price, brand, store image, label, country of origin and appropriateness for the occasion, in this case casual daywear. The broad research aim of this exploratory study was to determine which evaluative criteria were used by female fashion consumers in the Vaal Region to determine apparel quality when purchasing casual daywear, and to what extent the various criteria were applied.

A self-administered, structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Sections 1 and 2 measured the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic clothing evaluative criteria. Section 3 investigated the frequency with which the respondents bought casual daywear at various store types, namely specialty, department and discount stores, while section 4 gathered the demographic information of the respondents. A representative sample was chosen from the academic personnel of all seven tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region.

The majority of the lecturers (38.00 percent) were between the ages of 31 and 40, which can be described as relatively young, constituting a group sometimes referred to as baby busters or Generation X. Although the predominant population group was white (65.71 percent), a quarter of the respondents were black. They all had a tertiary qualification, indicating a relatively high educational level, and an average income. These respondents were predominantly married, either by orthodox or customary marriage. Regarding the application of evaluative criteria for quality assessment, these respondents used intrinsic apparel attributes to a greater extent than extrinsic attributes. Three functional performance aspects namely durability, comfort and fit were rated equal and most important for judging quality, followed closely by an extrinsic attribute namely

appropriateness for casual daywear. Three clusters of respondents could be distinguished, each with a specific disposition towards the evaluative criteria. The most popular store type for clothing was Department stores, followed by Discount and Specialty stores.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ANNEXURES

GLOSSARY AND TERMS

Casual daywear is described as casual, easy-care garments that can be worn in combination. The basic components of casual wear are tops, pants, skirts and jackets or soft shirts: blouses are often included (Bixler & Nic-Rice 1997:131, Tate 2004:417).

Construction entails workmanship details such as seams, hems, darts, collars, necklines, cuffs, pockets, sleeves, fasteners, and facings which are combined in a permanent fashion to create a garment (Kadolph 1998:545).

Critical characteristic is a feature of a product that finally determines whether the product is adopted or rejected (Sproles 1979:200, Terblanché 1998:58, Solomon & Rabolt 2004:352).

Design/style provides the map for the garment's style. It is the combination of lines, form, shape, space, colour and texture grouped into a coherent whole. The terms *style* and *design* are sometimes used synonymously (Mueller and Smiley 1995:28, Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht 2000:259, Brown and Rice 2001:47, Tselepis & De Klerk 2004:89).

Evaluative criteria are the dimensions used to judge the merits of competing options when comparing alternative products (Stamper, Sharp & Donnell 1991:85, Solomon & Rabolt 2004:365). Criteria that influence evaluation of apparel products include care requirements, product composition such as colour and style, price, brand, store image, and advertising image (Eckman, Damhorst &Kadolph 1990:13).

Extrinsic attributes are a collective group of evaluative criteria that can be changed without changing the product, such as price, brand, product image, label, country of origin, store image and appropriateness for the purpose (Brown & Rice 2001:415).

Garment quality (apparel quality) is defined not only by its aesthetic and functional properties, but also by the mechanical and physiological attributes of wear, such as the feeling of well-being in its wearing, and its proper drape and fit (Geršak 2002:169, Solomon & Rabolt 2004:366).

Generation X refers to people in the age group who are between 25 and 40 years. They are also categorised as X-ers (Johnson & Learned 2004:84, 94, Frings 2005:33, Schiffman & Kanuk 2007:440).

Intrinsic attributes include physical as well as performance features and cannot be modified without altering the manufactured goods (Brown & Rice 2001:418).

Materials comprise fabric, trims, closures and other products required for the construction or manufacturing of fashion garments (Glock & Kunz 1995:602).

Store image is a combination of the characteristics, nature, image or exclusivity reflected and presented to the fashion consumer by a store (Frings 2005:362,328).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Marketers are increasingly putting more emphasis on creating desired consumer perceptions of product features (Du Plessis & Rousseau 2003:217). Success in the retail environment depends on the ability to predict and subsequently meet the demands of the consumer, which can be achieved by assessing consumers' perceptions of the product characteristics and surrounding images that may influence the purchase decision (Khachaturian & Morganosky 1990:21). Criteria used by fashion consumers to assess quality and acceptability of apparel products during the decision-making process are a good indication of considerations which retailers and manufacturers must keep in mind to ensure customer satisfaction. Evaluative criteria are manifestations of consumers' values, attitudes and experience, as well as psychological, social and economic influences (Eckman *et al.*1990:13, Swinkler & O'Neal 2006:220).

In a model proposed by Chen-Yu and Kincade (2001:31), perceived quality, price and consumption performance are variables which are indicated as being important in creating an apparel product image during various stages of the consumer decision-making process. From the model it is clear that the apparel product image influences consumers' perception of quality and expectation of future performance at the alternative evaluation stage of the decision-making process, while the product image influences the price which consumers are willing to pay for the product at the purchase stage. Product image will influence consumer satisfaction with ultimate product performance during the post-purchase stage. The consumer evaluates apparel and identifies alternatives prior to making the final decision. According to Terblanché (1998:58) critical characteristics must be considered when the consumer approaches the decision to purchase.

When consumers assess apparel quality, they use two main categories of criteria for this purpose. Physical apparel attributes such as style, fabric, construction, colour, and general appearance, as well as performance attributes such as care, fit, durability and comfort, are classified as intrinsic criteria, which are inherent to the garment and cannot be altered without changing the product itself, while attributes such as price, brand, hangtag/label, country of origin, and store image as well as appropriateness for casual wear (an applicable criterion for this study) are classified as extrinsic criteria. Both intrinsic and extrinsic criteria are used by apparel shoppers to evaluate textile product quality (Eckman *et al*.1990:14, Abraham-Murali & Littrell 1995a:150, Brown & Rice 2001:47-48, Retief & De Klerk 2003:25).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

When buying apparel, consumers go through a series of steps called the consumer decision-making process. Various criteria are important at the different stages of this process (Chen-Yu & Kincade 2001:31). Quality is a factor which manufacturers and retailers generally employ to maintain a competitive advantage. Consumers use a number of cues to infer quality, including intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes (Brown & Rice 2001:47, Zhang, Li, Gong & Wu 2002:57). Various studies have attempted to identify criteria which apparel consumers apply to assess the quality of clothing (Eckman *et al*. 1990:13, Forsythe, Presley & Caton 1996:299, Retief & De Klerk 2003:24-25). If marketers have insufficient knowledge about the dimensions of fashion and technological quality which apparel consumers apply to make their decisions, they may mistakenly focus their attention on product attributes which are not important to consumers. World-wide, consumers are becoming concerned about what to look for in terms of quality of textile products, and the industry and the customer do not always have the same opinion about ways in which quality of apparel products should be assessed (Kadolph 1998:12)

A better understanding is needed of the quality dimensions, extrinsic as well as intrinsic, which are perceived by apparel consumers, especially South African consumers, in making judgments of clothing quality. One problem which arises with

reference to this study is that consumers differ in their perception of product quality. Another problem is that it is not known exactly which critical characteristics female apparel consumers investigate to assess apparel quality, and to what extent. Lastly, very few studies could be located on the application of comprehensive criteria for assessing clothing quality by South African female apparel consumers. This leads to the conclusion that there is an urgent need to investigate the South African consumer regarding the criteria applied when evaluating apparel with the purpose of purchasing clothing. Du Preez and Visser (2003:18) came to the conclusion that, in the 21st century, sophisticated apparel consumers will be more knowledgeable and more discerning about what they are looking for in products and services, and that a holistic view of the large number of variables influencing apparel shoppers is needed by marketers. Retief and De Klerk (2003:23-26) undertook an investigation into these problems and identified a wide range of dimensions which they organised into a useful conceptual framework, which can be used by consumers to assess the quality of textile products

For the purpose of this study, the research problem which will be addressed was formulated as follows:

Which criteria are applied by South African female consumers to assess the quality of apparel suitable for casual daywear, and to what extent?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The broad research aim of this exploratory study is to determine which evaluative criteria are used by female fashion consumers in the Vaal Region to determine apparel quality when purchasing casual daywear, as well as to what extent the various criteria are applied, and further to investigate the respondents' store choice behaviour and to determine whether distinct clusters of these consumers can be identified with reference to the investigated variables, in order to enable the researcher to make recommendations regarding consumer education as well as retail strategies.

Specific objectives for this study were set after having identified the problem, namely:

- To determine whether and to what extent *intrinsic* apparel attributes are used to evaluate apparel quality at the point of purchase of casual daywear. Specific intrinsic attributes of interest are:
  - Physical features:
  -Formal aspects (design/style, materials and construction)
  - Performance features:
  -Aesthetic aspects (colour and general appearance)
  -Functional aspects (durability, comfort, ease of care and fit)
- To determine whether and to what extent *extrinsic* apparel attributes are used to evaluate apparel quality at the point of purchase of casual daywear. Specific extrinsic attributes of interest are:
  - Price
  - Brand
  - Store image
  - Label
  - Country of origin
  - Appropriateness for casual daywear
- To determine whether relationships exist between assessment of apparel quality and selected demographic characteristics.
- To determine whether relationships exist between store choice and selected demographic characteristics.
- To determine whether relationships exist between assessment of apparel quality and store choice.
- To compare the means for various race groups and marital status with store choice.
- To determine whether distinct clusters of fashion consumers can be identified, based on the criteria applied when judging apparel quality.

1.4   THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Various conceptual frameworks and models investigating the assessment of apparel quality were studied in the literature. A model is a set of internally consistent variables and serves as a map of what makes up a specific phenomenon, in this case apparel quality (Du Preez 2003:11). The conceptual framework developed for this study was based on models used for assessment of the quality of clothing products by Mc Cullough and Morris (1980:118), Eckman *et al.* (1990:17), Brown and Rice (2001:47-53), Zhang *et al.* (2002:55) and Retief and De Klerk (2003:25).

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical point of departure for the study, reflecting areas of importance for clothing evaluation and the interrelationships of these areas. In the framework the extrinsic and intrinsic evaluative attributes relevant to the study are depicted.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Apparel quality

Personal characteristics Demographics

Intrinsic attributes

Extrinsic attributes

- Price
- Brand
- Store image
- Label
- Country of origin
- Appropriateness for casual daywear

Physical features

Performance features

Formal aspects

- Design / style
- Materials
  - Fabric
  - Accessories
- Construction
  - Seams
  - Hems
  - Darts
  - Collars
  - Cuffs
  - Pockets
  - Sleeves
  - Fasteners
  - Facings
  - Waistlines

Aesthetic aspects

- Colour
- General appearance

Functional aspects

- Durability
- Comfort
- Ease of care
- Fit

Store choice

Evaluation

Assessment of apparel quality

Recommendation

- Consumer education
- Retail strategies

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.5 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

A representative sample was chosen from the full-time female academic personnel without a clothing background of all seven tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region. Main campuses as well as satellite campuses were included. A random sample was chosen from the female lecturers so that each one would have the same chance to be selected (Strydom, H. & Venter, L. 2002:202). The final sample contained 105 respondents.

1.6 STRUCTURING OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters.

Chapter 1 presents an introduction, motivation for the study, problem statement, objectives, conceptual framework as well as the definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 includes the relevant literature reviewed for the purpose of this study. The selection of the relevant literature was determined by the conceptual framework and the objectives for this study. This chapter includes an overview of quality and a discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions used for evaluation of apparel quality.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methodology. This chapter deals with the study population and sample selection. A broad discussion on the data gathering, processing and statistical analysis is given.

Chapter 4 addresses the results and includes a discussion of the empirical study, where these results are compared with the relevant literature discussed in chapter 2.

Chapter 5 presents the summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations, limitations and further implications for retailers and consumers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE EVALUATION OF APPAREL QUALITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Consumers' perception of the garments which they consider purchasing, embraces garment analysis and the application of specific evaluative criteria in order to assess garment quality. Kadolph (1998:4, 13-14) points out that quality is a multidimensional concept which cannot be addressed by a single definition in terms of all the dimensions, areas of impact, and concerns related to quality. The focus of definitions may vary, but for the purpose of this study quality can be defined as the ability of a product to meet consumers' needs and satisfy their demands, or as the total set of attributes that contribute to consumer's expectations.

With reference to quality assessment, the category of clothing of interest to most apparel shoppers is the ready-to-wear apparel, also called ready-made or off-the-rack, which is mass produced (Brown & Rice 2001:1).

2.2 PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY

Garment quality implies a wide range of characteristics which may indicate superiority, excellence, or a perceived level of value. The specific characteristics that are perceived as quality features differ for various individuals (Glock & Kunz 1995:6) and for various clothing categories. Various authors differ in opinion regarding the selection of criteria applied by consumers for the final choice. Some regard colour as very important in attracting customers (Mueller & Smiley 1995:29), others mention style as the most important indicator for garment choice (North, De Vos & Kotzé 2003:50) while still others (Hines & O'Neal 1995:232, Fiore & Damhorst 1992:176) argue that the majority of apparel shoppers choose fabric as the

most important attribute. Fiore and Damhorst (1992:169) regard aesthetic aspects in general as the most important decisive factor when purchasing clothing. Brown and Rice (2001:48) and Zhang *et al.* (2002:53) as well as Brijball (2003:93-97) refer to price as a cue to quality. The perception of the majority of consumers is that there is an alliance between price and quality and that a fashion outfit with a high price meets high quality standards. Additional attributes that were identified in a study by Zhang *et al.* (2002:53) and which were used to assess quality of casual wear are trendiness, brand and fabric properties such as softness, thickness, permeability, warmness and fibre content. Other attributes used to assess quality in a study by Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995b:68-72) were store, labels, country of origin and appropriateness for occasion and lifestyle. Schiffman & Kanuk (2007:179) also mention country of origin as a criterion, and explain that consumers' perceptions of value, risk, trust, attitude towards the brand, satisfaction; familiarity attachment and involvement may restrain the impact of country of origin.

Engel *et al.* (1995:135) consider the consumer decision-making process a six-stage process consisting of need recognition, information search, pre-purchase alternative evaluation, purchase, consumption and post-consumption evaluation. The third stage of this consumer decision-making model is of particular importance to this study, as this stage entails four steps, namely the determination of evaluative criteria, the determination of choice alternatives, assessment of the performance of considered alternatives and the selection and application of a decision rule to make the final choice (Engel *et al.* 1995:207). This model implies a fairly exact process of decision-making, during which particular attributes (intrinsic as well as extrinsic) are applied as evaluative criteria during the first step. Baron and Byrne (1997:91) are of the opinion, however, that consumers don't necessarily follow the whole decision-making process each time. People often use a cognitive short-cut, based on existing schemata, which requires less cognitive effort to make a decision. This use of schemata is further discussed in paragraph 2.4.1, where it is linked to reference prices, which consumers retrieve from memory by making use of schemata.

9

Rosenau and Wilson (2006:282-283) explain that quality assessment takes place in two stages. The first assessment takes place when the consumer is deciding whether to buy an item or not, during which the focus is on aesthetics, including style, colour, fabric, trims, fit and construction details such as seams, stitching, and the matching of fabric patterns like stripes and plaids. According to these authors the second assessment takes place after the garment has been worn for some time, and criteria applied during this stage include *durability,* which is determined by how long the garment will retain its original appearance and shape, *comfort,* which is related to how the body feels when the garment is worn, *care,* which refers to the extent to which the recommended cleaning procedures affect the garment's dimensions, colour, and surface characteristics, and lastly, appearance retention, which is the quality that determines how the garment retains its original appearance and shape during use and care.

Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995a:155) found that consumers' perception of quality changes over time as a garment is bought and used, and that criteria used during the first (pre-purchase) stage of quality assessment differ from those used during the second (post-purchase) stage. More criteria were applied during the second stage of quality assessment, including attributes such as "gives me confidence", "fun to wear" and "fabric is sturdy and durable", indicating that consumers seem to need experience with the product before being able to conceptualise some multi-component attributes that are meaningful to them.

When considering perspectives on quality assessment, the viewpoint of the consumer as well as the viewpoint of the manufacturer is relevant (Abraham-Murali 1995a:149, Hines & O'Neal 1995:227, Rosenau & Wilson 2006:296). Quality concerns of manufacturers and merchandisers focus mainly on how to meet the consumer's needs and expectations of quality, which implies that the merchandiser has to analyse and understand the quality demands of the consumer that determine consumer satisfaction (Rosenau & Wilson 2006:296, Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Best 2007:192). According to Solomon and Rabolt (2004:451) consumers look for both

quality and value. They point out that claims of product quality have become critical in maintaining a competitive advantage.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic cues are used to assess perceived quality of apparel. *Intrinsic cues* are inherent to the product, are created during manufacturing and cannot be changed without changing the physical characteristics of the garment, such as the design/style, fabric, accessories, and construction, while *extrinsic cues* are not a part of the physical product, although product-related, such as price, brand name, product image, hangtags/label and store image (Forsythe, *et al.* 1996:299, Brown & Rice 2001:47-48). Eckman *et al.* (1990:14) reviewed 21 studies and identified 35 extrinsic and 52 intrinsic criteria that influenced consumers' judgment of apparel product quality. Hatch and Roberts (1985:341) confirm that both intrinsic and extrinsic cues are useful for differentiating among textile products with regard to quality.

For the purpose of this study, the categorisation of intrinsic and extrinsic attributes used by apparel consumers to assess clothing quality as depicted in Figure 1 will be applied.

2.3 INTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

Although both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes seem to be used by consumers to assess textile product quality, Eckman *et al.* (1990:14) in their review of the 21 studies, found that intrinsic attributes were used more often. In their study four major groups of intrinsic characteristics were identified, namely product composition, performance, quality and gender appropriateness, but more than half of the intrinsic characteristics were related to product composition, including criteria such as style, colour, fabric, appearance, and fibre content. Performance criteria mentioned were care, fit, durability, comfort, safety and colourfastness. Quality aspects in their study are described as general quality, construction, physical aspects and fabric. Figure 1 in the present study categorises intrinsic attributes as physical and performance

features, which is in correspondence with the conceptual framework proposed by Retief and De Klerk (2003:25).

2.3.1 Physical features

Physical features are intrinsic attributes which comprise a garment's tangible form and composition, including formal aspects such as design, materials, construction and finish (Brown & Rice 2001:47). The above-mentioned aspects form part of the intrinsic attributes. Various consumers tend to have differing perceptions of the many physical characteristics of which apparel products are composed.

2.3.1.1 Formal aspects

Formal aspects can be seen as representative of the physical features of garment quality (Retief & De Klerk 2003:25). They include design/style, materials such as fabric and accessories, and construction such as seams, hems, darts, collars, cuffs, pockets, sleeves, fasteners, facings and waistlines.

❑ **Design/Style**

Style can be defined as the distinguishing way in which parts of a garment are put together (DeLong, 1998:13) or as the lines that distinguish one form or shape from another (Marshall *et al.* 2000:159). According to Mueller and Smiley (1995:28), design is simply a unique version of a style. Brown and Rice (2001:47) as well as Fowler and Clodfelter (2001:58) explain that design presents the map or plan for the fashion garment's style. The terms *style* and *design* are often used synonymously (Tselepis & De Klerk 2004:89). Hayes and McLoughlin (2006:185) define design as the grouping of lines, form, shape, space, colour and textures in a logical way. These are the elements or fundamentals of design. Examples of style are shirt-waist, empire, A-line, princess and tubular styles, while design includes elements such as silhouette, texture, colour, detail and trim, which distinguish a single garment from all other garments of the same class (Sproles 1979:13, Mueller & Smiley 1995:28). Design can be divided into two components, namely structural and applied design. Structural design is formed by the construction features as the design is sewn. Structural design is part of all fashion garments because it is formed by the use of

construction detail such as collars, pockets, trims, texture, fashion fabric and colour. Applied design is obtained by surface enrichment which is added as decoration in the form of trims such as embroidery, appliqué, piping, braid and top-stitching. The importance of style/design is emphasised in the literature. Various researchers (Eckman *et al.* 1990:14, North *et al.* 2003:50) have found that style is the most important indication of quality for consumers when purchasing apparel.

❑ **Materials**

Materials include necessities such as fabrics, accessories and other items needed to construct the garment (Brown & Rice 2001:47).

• **Fabrics**

Fabric is the predominant component of any garment and makes the greatest single contribution to its cost and quality (Marshall *et al.* 2000:332, Brown & Rice 2001:173). Fabric quality can be described by variables such as fibres, yarns, fabric structure, dyeing, printing and finishing (Hines & O'Neal 1995:231, Brown & Rice 2001:174) and is directly related to garment quality (Mehta 1985:8). It is not the sole determinant of a garment's quality, although it is a critical ingredient. High quality fabric does not guarantee high quality garments but provides the base for quality. Garment fabric interlinks with other components of the garment, for example the design and aesthetics, to affect the total quality. Evaluation of the fabric is essential to the assessment of apparel quality (Hines & O'Neal 1995:232).

According to Mehta (1985:8) as well as Kadolph (2007:24-29), the physical, aesthetic, durability and comfort features, among others, determine the performance of fashion fabric. Not only one physical feature is responsible for the performance of the fabric. The interaction among the physical dimensions of the fabric determines its performance (Brown & Rice 2001:174). Carefully considered fabric choice is necessary in order to meet apparel consumers' aesthetic and functional performance expectations. Fabric performance and versatility are becoming increasingly important for the consumer. These factors strongly influence fabric choice and are also considered by apparel manufacturers when surveying the design of the garment, the

garment's intended end-use, fashion trends and cost limitations (Brown & Rice 2001:187-188, Tate 2004:11).

Textile performance properties such as strength, pilling, snagging, creasing and abrasion resistance are of high priority to the consumer (Mehta 1985:8-9, Brown & Rice 2001:164). Another fabric factor of importance is that of comfort. Collier and Tortora (2001:539) divide fabric comfort into two dimensions, namely sensorial and thermal comfort. Sensorial comfort is associated with the surface and softness characteristics of the fashion fabric and also with allergenic effects. Thermal comfort can be described as the heat-conveying and moisture-transfer properties as well as the ability of the fabric to capture air in the structure, which can be associated with both cooling and warming effects.

The care of the fashion fabric is also of major importance to the consumer. The ease with which fabrics can be laundered and soil removed, the drying time required, the wrinkle resistance and amount of ironing needed, is of crucial importance to the apparel consumer. Natural fibres such as cotton are highly absorbent and take more time to dry than, for instance, polyester fibres: they also require more ironing because of low resiliency and excessive wrinkling during washing (Kadolph 2007:41). Therefore, for casual daywear it is of great importance to choose a fabric that is easy to care for (Zhang *et al.* 2002:58).

Hines and O'Neal (1995:231) as well as Fiore and Damhorst (1992:176) found that in their studies the majority of the apparel shoppers chose fabric as the most important attribute contributing to apparel quality. Certain performance indicators of fabric such as fibre content and construction were often seen as quality indicators by the apparel shoppers.

Fabric is an essential part of the outfit and therefore it must meet the required criteria. Good quality fabric is durable and will be economical in the long run. The evaluation of fabric in the above-mentioned studies was influenced by the total appearance and performance of the garment. Geršak (2002:169) points out that it is

necessary to start from fabric mechanics to achieve harmony of the fabric used, its drape and quality of processing. Tate (2004:138) confirms the relationship between fabric quality and the wear that can be expected from a garment.

- **Accessories**

Accessories include findings, notions or sundries, therefore all materials other than fabric required to produce a garment. Examples of these are thread, trims (narrow fabrics such as ribbons, lace, bindings, edgings, cords and braids, as well as appliqué, flowers, sequins and beads), closures (buttons, zippers, snap fasteners, tuck buttons, hooks and eyes), labels, and miscellaneous materials such as elastic and shoulder pads (Glock & Kunz 1995:523-525, Brown & Rice 2001:218-235, Frings 2005:130-133). According to Mehta (1985:9) and Glock and Kunz (1995:580), sewing thread, which is an indispensable accessory, must be of high quality and should be able to generate even, consistent stitches in the fashion fabric without breaking. Good quality thread is without slubs, knots, or any defects. The colour of the thread must match the fabric and must be colourfast. Quality thread enhances the aesthetics and durability of the completed garment. Zippers are another frequently used accessory. Hook and bar, snap, hook and eye, and button closures used at the top of the zip fastener are intended to absorb all of the crosswise stress when closed (Brown & Rice 2001:310).

According to Glock and Kunz (1995:525), the aesthetic quality of trims can enhance the beauty of a garment or let it down. Brown and Rice (2001:194) also emphasise the importance of attractive trims and confirm that trims play a significant part in the aesthetic performance of the garment. Trims must complement the design/style and fabric and harmonise with the attractiveness of the fashion garment. Kadolph (1998:148) refers to the evaluative criteria of trims as very important and points out that the trims must be well-matched with the fashion fabric with reference to ease of care, durability, comfort, colour, fibre content and quality. Brown and Rice (2001:235) also provide an extensive "findings and trim quality checklist," including the above-mentioned criteria and many more. In an investigation on consumer use of criteria for evaluating women's apparel, Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995b:69)

found that less than 4 percent of female apparel consumers pay attention to accessories such as trims, zippers and buttons.

□ **Construction**

According to Fowler and Clodfelter (2001:58), garment construction entails the methods used to assemble the garment. Construction methods which will be discussed for the purpose of this study are listed in Figure 1 and include seams, hems, darts, collars, sleeves and cuffs. Specifications for construction should include details such as stitch choice, seam type, seam allowance and thread type (Kadolph 1998:348). The correct construction methods are important for quality assurance and are determined by the style (Italiano 1985:74). Construction techniques, *inter alia*, determine the price of a garment, and therefore simple construction methods must be used to bring down the cost of the fashion outfit (Italiano 1985:74).

• **Seams**

The basic construction element of any garment is the seams, which should be constructed with care (Reader's Digest 2002:85). Seam choices are determined by the fabric, style and design (Stamper, Sharp & Donnell 1991:56). Glock and Kunz (1995:216) as well as Geršak (2002:172) agree that the criteria used to evaluate seams are the flexibility, bending and shear rigidity, drape ability of the fabric, consistency of stitch formation, appropriate seam style and seam flatness. Seam style and stitch quality are crucial for visual fashion apparel appearance. The construction techniques and resiliency of the fabric affect the drape ability of the seams. Seams must be soft, flexible, flat and narrow in width (Ledbetter & Lansing 1981:113). Seams should be stitched with the correct stitch length determined by the fabric, style and garment type (Stamper *et al.* 1991:76, Marshall *et al.* 2000:238) to prevent splitting or other deficiencies.

Appropriate seam finishes add value to the appearance and strength of the garment and prevent fraying, rolling, stretching and rippling (Glock & Kunz 1995:216-217, Brown & Rice 2001: 263-286). Reader's Digest (2002:88) states that there are three important factors to bear in mind when determining the type of seam finish, namely

the fabric type and weight, wear and care of the garment and visibility of seams, like those in an unlined jacket, where a bias-binding finish (Hong-Kong) might be preferable. Seam problems can occur when seams grin and pucker, or when thread breakage and slippage occur. The best choice for a seam is the one which generates the desired appearance (Solinger 1988:185, Carr & Latham 1994:122-129).

Italiano (1985:74) and Reader's Digest (2002:88) contend that the quantity of seams is important because it determines the price of the garment. The construction technique and width of the seam are the two most important factors that establish the price. A closed seam is easier and less time-consuming to construct and therefore a garment with closed seams is cheaper to manufacture than a garment with run and fell, French, open, or Hong Kong seams (Brown & Rice 2001:275-296).

- **Hems**

Hems are commonly used to finish off the bottom edge of a garment (Brown & Rice 2001:280). Reader's Digest (2002:262) points out that there are three basic types: a turned-up edge, a faced edge and an enclosed edge. Stamper *et al.* (1991:246) categorises hems according to the amount of fabric layers used for construction. The two main categories are single-ply and enclosed hems. A further subsection is based on the depth of the hem.

Brown and Rice (2001:280-283) contend that it is very important that hems are sewn in securely and that the stitches are small and close so that they cannot rupture. Stamper *et al.* (1991:272) and Kadolph (1998:418) mention that hems must be even in width, flat and smooth with no roping, pulling, pleats or ripples. Further requirements are that constructed hems must not be observable on the right side of the fashion garment and must hang parallel to the floor during wear unless design/style dictates an uneven or diagonal hemline, and that hem width should be compatible with the fabric and style of the garment (Ledbetter & Lansing 1981:269, 361, Marshall *et al.* 2000:329).

- **Collars**

Stamper *et al.* (1991:140) indicate that a collar consists of a single or double layer of fabric, which finishes off the neckline. Collars come in many shapes and sizes but they can be categorised into three different types, namely flat, standing or rolled (Reader's Digest 2002:168). The characteristics of good collars are that the collar points must be properly shaped, flat, of equal length and the collar must fit comfortably around the neck (Marshall *et al.* 2000:313). The collar must be centred, graded, with well-defined edges, and under-stitched (Ledbetter & Lansing 1981:224, 351, Marshall *et al.* 2000:329). The neckline must not be distorted and puckered (Solinger 1988:286, 300, Kadolph 1998:419). The upper collar should roll over to the under collar to conceal the seam line, while the collar should conceal the neckline. The collar must be supported with interfacing to provide body and shape (Relis & Strauss 1997:114). The interfacing must be smoothly applied, without wrinkles, ripples or pleats (Ledbetter & Lansing 1981:224, Reader's Digest 2002:168).

- **Cuffs**

Cuffs are fabric bands, used on the lower edge of gathered, straight or pleated sleeve edges, to finish them off, or as decoration (Stamper *et al.* 1991:180). There are two major types of cuffs, namely extended cuffs and turned-back cuffs. The first type is commonly used on both long and short sleeves. Turned-back cuffs are generally attached to full-length sleeves and require a placket opening to fasten around the wrist. The most popular turned-back cuff styles are the lapped cuff, the shirt cuff and the French cuff (Stamper *et al.* 1991:180, Reader's Digest 2002:278).

The attributes of well-constructed cuffs are that the cuffs are equal in size and shape, interfaced, well graded and reinforced at the points to prevent fraying. The seams must be unobtrusive, flat and without ripples. Top stitching on the edges, if present, must be straight, with an appropriate stitch length (Glock & Kunz 1995:584, Relis & Strauss 1997:149).

- **Sleeves**

Sleeves have been a prominent fashion element throughout the centuries, and are an important feature of fashion garment design, silhouette and fit (Glock & Kunz 1995:116). Sleeve variations are innumerable, for example, short or long, full or fitted, cuffed or hemmed, gathered, ruffled, belled or pleated. The most well-known sleeve types are set-in, raglan and kimono, while the term cap sleeve refers to the length and may occur in each of the three sleeve types (Stamper *et al.*1991: 156, Reader's Digest 2002:214).

Properly inserted sleeves are a significant feature of a garment. An important criterion for the perfect fit of a sleeve is that the lengthwise grain must fall straight from the shoulder to the elbow and bend slightly to the wrist. The ease at the sleeve head must be even, smooth and a little more to the front of the sleeve (Marshall *et al.* 2000:313, 329). Ease around the top arm must be adequate for the style, size and occasion. The sleeve length must be suitable for the style, season and fashion. No diagonal lines or dimples in the cap area must arise. Sleeve seams and hems must be inconspicuous and the under-arm seam must fall smoothly on the figure without twisting or puckering. The sleeve must be adequate in size and compatible with the size indicated on the label (Ledbetter & Lansing 1981:353-354, Stamper *et al.* 1991:162, Kadolph 1998:524).

- **Pockets**

Ledbetter and Lansing (1981:311) as well as Brown and Rice (2001:310) identify three general types of pockets, namely in-seam, patch and slashed pockets. Pockets may be decorative or functional, and the structure, size and style can vary according to the fashion trends, style or design (Solinger 1988:72, Glock & Kunz 1995:116, 561).

The standards for evaluation of pockets are that functional pockets must be placed conveniently, at the same height, with matching stripes and plaids and the openings must be wide and deep enough for the person's hand or the article on which it is used (Brown & Rice 2001:133). Further, it is essential that patch pockets must be

topstitched to the garment, reinforced and backstitched where necessary to prevent tearing. The stitches must be straight, on the edge and of the correct length. The use of underlying fabrics is recommended in the case of very large patch pockets and also when used on tailored garments or limp fabrics (Stamper *et al.* 1991:112-121, Brown & Rice 2001:310-312). Specific criteria apply to slashed pockets: they must be perfectly rectangular, have even lips, be cut on grain, lips must not sag or gape (Marshall *et al.* 2000:314), the pocket area must be interfaced, the pocket bag must be made of light-weight fabric which will not press through, pockets must be faced with the fashion fabric and the ends of the slash must be reinforced. All pockets must be well pressed, interfaced, flat, without gaping. These criteria are very important and contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the fashion garment (Brown and Rice 2001:312).

- **Fasteners**

The umbrella definition for fasteners is that they are devices that secure apparel around the figure (Stamper *et al.* 1991:211, Brown & Rice 2001:218). Closures unfasten the outfit to provide extra room to dress or undress with ease. It can be functional and/or aesthetic (Glock & Kunz 1995:113, Kadolph 1998:136). According to Solinger (1988:52), fasteners can be classified into five major groups, namely buttons, buckles, hooks and eyes or hooks and grommets, snap fasteners and zippers. Buttons can be made from various materials such as wood, horn, bone, polyamide, metal, polyester, acrylic, plastic and mother of pearl (Carr & Latham 1994: 185-186).

Zippers have been an important fastener in fashion apparel science 1891. There are three different types available, namely continuous chain, regular and open-end zippers. These fasteners are manufactured to match the fashion fabrics used for apparel construction. They are available in different thicknesses, lengths, fibres and colours. Zippers can be displayed in a fashion garment as determined by the style or fashion. In any specific situation the zipper fastener becomes part of the design (Frings 2005:136). Tate (2004:65) highlights the fact that zippers are weaker than the fabric and seams and therefore they separate and break easily during wearing.

According to Mehta (1985:11), the failure of zipper fasteners can be caused by poor sewing. Attaching the garment fabric too closely to the teeth of the zipper will obstruct the slider, which will get caught inside. Reader's Digest (2002:294) emphasizes that quality, weight, colour and length of zipper fasteners are important criteria when evaluating zipper fasteners in casual daywear.

- **Facings**

Facings can be described as pieces of fabric used to finish off the raw edges of a garment at such locations as the neck, armhole, waistline and front and back openings, sleeves and hems. Reader's Digest (2002:148) and Stamper *et al.* (1991:127) agree that facings can be categorised in three main types, namely shaped, extended and bias facings. Facings are mostly designed to be unobtrusive and are commonly used on the inside of a garment to finish off, support, strengthen and stabilise the neckline, armhole, waistline and hemline. Sometimes designers use decorative facings on the outside of a garment to enhance the aesthetic look of the neckline, sleeve or hem. This construction detail can be done in contrasting fabric (Stamper *et al.* 1991:128, Brown & Rice 2001:287).

The most important evaluative criteria for facings are that they must stay in position during wear, must not show on the right side of the fashion garment and must be under-stitched or control-stitched or inconspicuously secured to seam allowances to keep them from showing and slipping to the right side. The raw edge must be finished off with an appropriate edge finish that does not ravel or show ridges on the right side of the apparel (Brown and Rice 2001:286, 287, Readers Digest 2002:148-153). Shaped facings often require interfacing for extra body and support (Stamper *et al.*1991:129).

- **Waistlines (skirts and pants)**

Waistlines determine the obtrusive effects of the silhouette and style of a garment. Garment silhouette has been determined by the position of waistlines throughout the fashion history (Stamper *et al.* 1991:186). The position of the waistline can vary from underneath the bust, to the natural waistline, to on the hips (hip huggers).

Examples of waistline finishes are banded, folded, faced, elasticised, and edge-, close- and open-casings (Stamper *et al.* 1991:193-194, Glock & Kunz 1995:116, Brown & Rice 2001:128, 129). Brown and Rice (2001:162) highlight that the fit of the waistline of a skirt or pair of pants is important for the total image. Waistlines of skirts and pants can be finished off with various techniques, namely shaped or contour facings, straight, extended, ribbon, elastic and decorative elastic waistbands (Reader's Digest 2002:194-207). The evaluative criteria for waistlines include that the waistline must fit without binding, rolling, drooping or having excess bulk. Ease of movement must be experienced to ensure comfort during wear and the waistline has to return to the natural position after arms have been raised and lowered. The waistline must be supported with interfacing or cotton tape to prevent it from stretching and losing its shape (Stamper *et al.* 1991:202).

2.3.2 Performance features

Performance features of fashion products can be defined as a garment's aesthetic and functional features and the standards it meets in order to benefit the consumer (Brown & Rice 2001:421). In their conceptual framework proposing dimensions of clothing product quality, Retief and de Klerk (2003:25) indicate that performance features form part of the intrinsic attributes of clothing. Roach (1994:494) and Brown and Rice (2001:47,48) confirm this and elaborate on how to determine the standards regarding performance features that a fashion outfit should meet in order to advantage the fashion consumer.

2.3.2.1 Aesthetic aspects.

Aesthetic aspects can be seen as one of the most important decisive factors when a garment is assessed during apparel purchasing (Fiore & Damhorst 1992:169). Fiore and Kimle (1997:4) define aesthetic experience as the appreciation of the qualities of a product or environment that give pleasure and satisfaction. Such an experience can result from simply putting together your ensemble of garments for the day. However, two people can admire the same fashion garment and differ in their appreciation. To be aware of and sensitive to beauty requires a sensitive mind. Fiore and Kimle (1997:5) emphasize that the aesthetic experience is influenced by the shopping

environment, which in turn has a definite influence on the consumer's decision to buy.

Criteria for the assessment of aesthetics incorporate several factors that deal with the consumer's idea of fashion apparel (DeLong 1998:26-27, Kadolph 1998:27). The fashion outfit consists of parts that should complement each other in such a way that the whole is aesthetically pleasing to the fashion consumer. Workmanship and its quality is an important part of aesthetic appearance: for example, the collar must be properly fused with interfacing, well graded, under-stitched and symmetrically placed on the neckline. DeLong (1998:28) adds that the visual appearance of the apparel-body whole is very important and points out that this can be linked to *Gestalt* psychologists' premise that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Aesthetic appearance could consequently be enhanced and pleasing to the consumer if the design elements (line, colour, shape and texture) harmonise with each other and with the body.

- **Colour**

Mueller and Smiley (1995:29) contend that colour is one of the most significant elements in initially attracting consumers to garments. Brown and Rice (2001:192) affirm that the pleasant appearance of colour attracts the consumer to a garment and therefore plays a major role in selecting a fashion outfit. Some research, however, found colour to be less important in determining purchase behaviour. Lee and Burns (1993:34) found colour to be less important as a purchase criterion.

According to Carr and Pomeroy (1992:5), some characteristics influence the appearance of colour, such as texture (plain versus twill), lustre (shine versus dull) and pattern (checks, prints and directionality caused by piles and suedes). Certain colours are usually considered more suitable for certain times of the year and different climates (Tate 2004:164). During summer people prefer lighter and brighter colours. Colour as well as its attractiveness is determined by fashion, individuality, surroundings and the understanding of design fundamentals and values. Tate (2004: 164) explains that people have either a warm-toned skin with yellow undertones or a

cool-toned skin with blue-pink undertones. Consumers should choose colours that complement the skin undertone. The climate also influences colour choice. Hot climates encourage people to wear bright colours.

❑ **General appearance**

According to Tate (2004:2), appearance reflects a total impression created by physical characteristics, emotional state and clothing and it reveals a great deal about a person and elicits immediate reaction before a word is spoken. An analysis and evaluation of one's life-style and work style are the important steps towards one's ideal appearance.

Aesthetic features such as lustre, drape, texture and hand can alter the visual aspects of a design and can have a big impact on general appearance (Govindara, Pastore, Upadhyay, Metaxas, Huang & Raheja 2003:8 Brannon 2005:208, Kadolph & Langford 2002:281-282, 285-286). Lustre is the amount of light reflected by the fibre and is appealing in some apparel but unappealing in other. Fashion trends can increase or decrease the consumer acceptance of bright or dull fabrics (Kadolph and Langford 2002:282). The umbrella definition for drape is the hang or fall of the fabric or bending thereof over a three-dimensional shape. It determines whether the fabric hangs away from the body or fits tightly to the body (Collier & Tortora 2001:269, Kadolph & Langford 2002:285 Brannon 2005:208). DeLong (1998:144) points out that the weight of the fabric influences the drape ability and hang of the fashion fabric as well as the interaction of the fabric with the body. Collier and Tortora (2001:454) state that fabric texture is also important for the consumer when selecting apparel. Texture of fabric can vary from hard and coarse to soft and fuzzy to dull and matte, to shiny. Fabric hand refers to the touch or feel when a fabric is touched, squeezed or rubbed. It is essential for fashion consumers to touch or feel the fabric before considering or selecting it (DeLong 1998:143, Collier & Tortora 2001:269, Brannon 2005:208).

Innovation in yarns and fabric finishing is used to change the appearance, characteristics, performance, hand, texture and drape of the fashion fabric (Brannon 2005:208-209).

2.3.2.2 Functional aspects.

Functional performance includes performance features other than appearance, such as garments' utility and durability. Utility attributes mentioned by Brown and Rice (2001:48) are durability, comfort, ease of care and fit.

- **Comfort**

Comfort is multifaceted and includes physical, physiological and psychological factors. Kadolph (1998:30) and Kadolph and Langford (2002:24) emphasise that it is obvious that a comfortable article is the article or garment that the consumer will choose to wear without thinking or being frustrated and irritated with the outfit during wearing. This attribute involves several dimensions, such as comfort in styles, sufficient moving ease in garments, comfort of textiles and construction techniques that prevent irritation (Stamper *et al.* 1991:298, Glock & Kunz 1995:154, Kadolph 1998:193, 346, Brown & Rice 2001:126, Kadolph 2007:29).

Physical comfort refers to aspects such as moving ease and styles which are not restricting. Various authors emphasise the importance of sufficient ease in sleeve caps and a big enough armscye to allow free movement of the arms, as well as fitting ease around the chest, waist and hips (Stamper *et al.* 1991:298, Kadolph 1998:346, Brown & Rice 2001:158). Loose-fitting styles like smocks, and certain sleeve styles like raglan and kimono can also be very comfortable (Brown & Rice 2001:128-132). Construction techniques like certain kinds of seams may also cause discomfort, as when thick or stiff fabrics are used for French or flat-felled seams. Rigid seams can cause body discomfort and irritation (GLock & Kunz 1995:218, Brown & Rice 2001:265). Linings can increase bodily comfort by preventing abrasion, providing tactile comfort and facilitating dressing and undressing (Glock & Kunz 1995:477, Kadolph 1998:147, Brown & Rice 2001:126).

fusing techniques, materials like thread, findings, fasteners and trims used, and by the fabric (Kadolph 1998:28-29, Rosenau & Wilson 2006:283).

According to Belck *et al.* (1984:61-70), Collier and Tortora (2001:52-53,58,168, 246,354) and Kadolph (2007:25-29) durability properties of textile fabrics include strength/tenacity, abrasion resistance, cohesiveness or spinning quality, elongation, elastic recovery, flexibility/pliability and dimensional stability. Durability can be substantially influenced by the way in which a textile item is used, cleaned and stored.

□ **Ease of care**

According to Kadolph (2007:12) care of textile products entails the treatment needed to maintain the original appearance (new or nearly new look) and cleanliness of a garment during use. Brown and Rice (2001:199) argue that a fashion fabric is easy to care for if the fabric conforms to the following requirements: soil resistant, abrasion resistant, strong, resilient, absorbent, dimensionally stable, colour fast and resistant to heat and chemicals. A further classification of care properties as given by Belck *et al.* (1984:20-26), Collier and Tortora (2001:53-57, 145, 480) and Kadolph (2007:25-28, 33), includes resiliency, dimensional stability, flammability, chemical reactivity, absorbency, heat tolerance, biological resistance, light resistance and age resistance. Care instructions are given by means of the care labels.

Appropriate care of fashion garments that require special treatment and therefore daily or periodic care such as dry cleaning, will help to extend the life span of the fashion item (Marshall *et al.* 2000:353), but these garments are not favoured by the fashion consumer owing to the fact that caring for them is time consuming and expensive (Marshall *et al.* 2000:365). Abraham-Murali & Littrell (1995b:70) confirm that consumers are careful not to purchase a garment that needs special care and is costly to take care of. The fashion consumer prefers easy-care garments, especially for casual wear, because of time constraints as well as the costs of dry cleaning. Therefore, the fashion textile industry frequently manufactures fabrics with no-iron finishes and wash-and-fold cotton fabrics (Frings 2005:60).

□ **Fit**

According to Brown and Rice (2001:153), good fit of a garment implies that it conforms to the three-dimensional human body. Stamper *et al* (1991:295) define a well-fitted garment as comfortable and suitable for the specific figure type. Good fit is one of the most important attributes of a garment that contributes to the comfort and looks good on the wearer (Zhang *et al*. 2002:56, Alexander, Connell & Presley 2005:52-53). Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995b:70) found that poor fit was the chief reason for the returning of fashion garments. A study by Alexander *et al*. (2005:52) also focuses on fit as a quality feature, especially as related to comfort, and emphasize the importance of labelling in this context. They conclude that understanding of the preferences of female apparel shoppers with regard to fit could help apparel companies to meet the demands for comfortable and well-fitting clothes.

When evaluating good fit the aesthetic qualities should also be considered in order to complement the figure. The aesthetic characteristics of the casual daywear garment are determined by the fabric, style/design, construction and size. This will influence the fit and appearance of the garment with regard to the functional and sensory aesthetic dimensions of fitting demonstrating the intrinsic attributes (Rasband 2002:364). According to Kadolph, Langford, Hollen and Saddler (1993:7) fabric is an important intrinsic factor which should be linked to the fit of the garment as well as to suitability for a specific posture, because different materials react differently depending on the stretch ability of the fashion fabric. When using stretch fabric for a garment, less design ease will be needed to establish proper fit.

When considering specific criteria for good fit, the following guidelines are given in the literature: a fashionable garment should be free of unnecessary pleats and fullness, without restricting movement. In this way the garment will conform to fashion and aesthetics. When wearing too tightly fitting clothes, figure problems will be more obvious. Brown and Rice (2001:156) identify five elements of fit, namely grain, set, line, balance and ease, but other authors mention additional elements. Balance, appearance and the ability to move easily according to the requirements of your activity are three factors also related to fit, which should be kept in mind when

buying a fashionable garment. A well-balanced garment can be related to the elements of grain and line. The seams of such a garment should be planned according to the fabric grain, to ensure that the garment hangs and fits properly (Liechty, Pottberg & Rasband 1992:56-58).

According to Brown and Rice (2001:157), ease refers to fitting ease or so-called movement ease and design ease. The ease required for a comfortable fit should allow a person free movement when walking, sitting, bending and climbing stairs. A casual daywear outfit without fitting or movement ease is uncomfortable, appears tight and wrinkled and wears out quickly. A certain amount of fitting ease around the bust, hips and waist is required for casual wear to ensure simple movements and comfort. Alexander *et al.* (2005:52-53) point out that fitting ease is required vertically from the shoulders to waist, waist to crotch and also around the neck and arms. Another important factor for good fit is style/design. Although style is influenced by high fashion it must be suitable for a person's figure. Styles will differ for different figure shapes. It is obvious that not only ease of movement and fabric choice should be considered for a specific style, it is also of vital importance that the specific figure form should be complemented (Rasband 1994:20, Tate 2004:65). This view is also shared by Huck, Maganga and Kim (1997:45-61). Brown and Rice (2001:159) confirm that fitting problems may be caused by faulty design or construction such as poorly constructed seams, puckering, bulges or droops and wrong stitch length. Furthermore few consumers know their correct size and therefore sizing of garments is of vital importance (Delk & Cassill 1989:18). Size labelling suggests to consumers the suitability of a garment for their body shapes. Delk and Cassill (1989:18) suggest that elusive fit is an issue for consumers, because they do not know their size. There can be a difference between the same-labelled size in different brands and styles however, which may confuse consumers as to the correct size for their figure (Brown & Rice 2001:42).

2.4 EXTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

Extrinsic attributes are those textile product characteristics that are not constituent parts of the fashion product, but that are allocated to the product by the manufacturer or retailer, such as price and brand, which are two of the most frequently used extrinsic attributes used by apparel consumers to assess clothing quality. (North *et al.* 2003:42). Extrinsic attributes seem to play a slightly less important role than intrinsic attributes when consumers judge apparel quality (Eckman *et al.* 1990:14), although this viewpoint is debatable (Schiffman & Kanuk 2007:178).

2.4.1 Price

Consumers' perception of price plays an important role in purchase intentions and purchase satisfaction. Hayes and McLoughlin (2006:85) are of the opinion that materials are the most expensive components of fashion garments and represent 40-50 percent of the price. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007: 177) point out that reference prices are often used by consumers as a basis for comparison in judging prices. References prices can be determined externally, as when a product is advertised as cheaper than it is everywhere else. External reference prices are understood by most consumers and they are influenced by these prices, but do not always believe them, because some retailers may have originally set prices that were too high and are then compelled to lower the prices due to low sales (Hawkins *et al.* 2007:613). Internal reference prices are prices which consumers retrieve from memory. Price information can be retrieved from the long-term memory. The most popular theory about the functioning of the long-term memory is the information-processing theory, according to which the memory is organised in the form of an associative network consisting of a series of nodes or representative concepts, and links, which are associations between nodes (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1995:350-351). It is generally believed that information processing takes place in stages, during which information is first stored in the sensory store, where it is lost immediately if not processed further, then in the short-term memory, where it is retained only briefly, and upon rehearsal it is transferred to the long-term memory, where it is associated with prior knowledge which is organised in the above-mentioned associative

that is compatible with the desired product position. External, internal and situational influences must be considered, such as whether it is necessary to lower the price in order to obtain a competitive advantage, whether price will be perceived as an indicator of status, whether price plays a significant role in the segment's attitude towards the brands in the product category and, especially, whether price is an important evaluative criterion.

2.4.2 Brand

Brand image can be defined as the schematic image of a brand, which represents the target market's understanding of the product's attributes, advantages, consumption situation, users and manufacturer/marketer characteristics. Easey (2002:1640 mentioned that brand names are important to the consumer because it provided them with assurance regarding the quality and consistency of standard. A brand reflects what people experience when they hear or see a brand name and is a combination of associations that consumers have learned about the brand (Hawkins *et al.* 2007:346).

Well-known brands seem to be associated with fame and fortune, and claims that Americans like to watch rich and famous people and use the products that they use. He adds that brands' symbols can transcend individuals and points out that according to Bob Horwitz, president of the Minneapolis-based Idea Workshop, right branding means offering identifiable value to the users and the brand must reflect "an image, an expected quality or performance level, a lifestyle and status differentiation that provides the purchaser with confidence and a perceived value built into the brand". Hawkins *et al.* (2007:46) confirm that brands take on parts that extend well beyond the intrinsic attributes of the product and convey messages such as "I am just like you".

Hoyer and McInnes (2007:202-203) contend that brand names are often recalled during internal searches for information in order to make purchase decisions. Tselepis (2005:22) points out that extrinsic attributes of a product are often used as a symbol of specific intrinsic attributes. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:178) also claim that consumers choose to believe that they apply intrinsic cues to judge product

quality, as that allows them to substantiate their product choices, but that more often than not they use extrinsic attributes for this purpose (Vahie & Paswan 2006:8). In a comparative study by Bae, Lee and Park (2003:53) it was found that brand labels were used by both Korean and U.S. students to evaluate the intrinsic attributes of jackets. Jacoby and Mazursky (1984:105) confirm that consumers form an impression of stores, brands and manufacturers and this impression could impact significantly on shopping behaviour. There is plenty of evidence in the literature to suggest that brand names are used to judge quality and value of products (Engel *et al.* 1995:209, Auty & Elliott 1998:112-113, Teas & Agarwal 2000:279, Easey 2002:164, Frings 2005:60). Clifton and Simons (2003:13) as well as Van Eck, Grobler and Herbst (2004:3) define branding as a unique identifier, but theoretically a trademark. Stone (1999:162) lists five kinds of brands used by the fashion industry, namely national/designer brands, private label, retail store brand, all other brands and non-brands. The fashion consumer recognises only a few of them as brands. National/designer brands are owned by manufacturers. National brands such as Levi's, Reebok and Koret dominate the fashion industry.

Fashion consumers struggle to use the term *brand* correctly. According to Frings (2005:60) brands are the manufacturer's way of identifying the product. The majority of fashion consumers buy brands because of their reputation for styling or fit. Frings (2005:60) points out that the fashion designer Giorgio Armani feels strongly that brand names are important on condition that they are merged with an appropriate relationship between quality and price.

Taylor (2003:7) contends that brand is not any longer a short-lived image wrapper or a managerial blueprint for value creation, as research indicates that brands tend to promise more than they deliver. A research finding of particular importance for this study was made by a *Women's Wear Daily* commission. They found that brand names are specifically significant for the casual wear category, and in the first place for jeans, followed closely by suits and dresses (Solomon and Rabolt 2004:370). According to Roach (1994:488), a customer who is satisfied with the performance of a product will develop a degree of brand loyalty, but an unsatisfactory purchase will

result in the vivid remembering of the brand name, implying that attaching a brand label to a product brings about a great accountability regarding the quality and performance of the product.

2.4.3 Store image

Store image is an array of ideas or the overall perception the consumer has about the store's milieu (Dunne & Lusch 2008:433). Amirani and Gates (1993:30-31) define store image as the total range of the consumers' ideas of the store attributes. A wide range of store attributes that contribute to apparel store image was identified from the literature by Kleinhans (2003:44-48). This author identifies nine main attributes, each consisting of several sub-factors. Hawkins *et al.* (2007:609) identify exactly the same nine attributes which are perceived by consumers to form an opinion about a store's image. They are *merchandise,* which entails general quality and assortment, styling and fashion, guarantees, pricing, sales and presentation, *service* which refers to general satisfaction with service, salespeople's service, self-service presence and efficiency, ease with which products can be returned and credit facilities *clientele,* including social class appeal and self-image congruency *physical facilities,* with reference to available facilities, store layout and architecture *convenience,* entailing general convenience when shopping, location of store, transportation, parking and trading hours *promotion,* including sales promotion, advertising, displays, trading stamps, symbols and colours as well as special events exhibits *store atmosphere,* which is affective in nature and refers to general atmosphere/congeniality *institutional factors* such as projection, reputation and reliability and lastly *post-transaction satisfaction,* entailing merchandise in use, adjustments to apparel, complaint handling and general consumer satisfaction (Hu & Jasper 2006:25,28-31).

A typical shopper may visit a store briefly and make a quick judgment of its value. As a result, that store may be placed on the consumer's list of acceptable stores, or it may be rejected and never considered again (Solomom & Rabolt 2004:446). Companies should aim to have a consistently good performance to keep up the image their customers prefer. Good services rendered will result in more consumers becoming regular clients. Companies may often be forced to change their store image

as a result of competition or unexpected events (Rabolt & Miler 1997:33). Reaching consumers and succeeding in motivating customers is not easily achieved, because of a highly competitive market. According to Kim and Han (2000:58), the market place often becomes so crowded that retailers decide to change their store image so that it will appeal to a certain sector of the population.

Research findings on the influence of store image on consumers' perceptions of quality are inconsistent. Some studies found that customers perceived the quality of specific apparel products to be of lower quality when they were told that the product came from a low-prestige store, than when they were told that the product was from a high-prestige store. It was also found that store prestige was inversely related to perceived risk. Other studies found that the effect of store image on perceived quality of products was small and statistically insignificant (Griffin & O'Neal 1992:176). Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:188) are of the opinion that if they have no other information, consumers rely on store image for quality, as they trust the buyers of trustworthy stores to select the products carefully, and they also expect that products will have been tested and that the store will provide good service, return privileges and correction in case of dissatisfaction.

2.4.4 Labels

Cooklin (1997:117) state that labels are of huge benefit to the fashion consumers. Labels provide information about clothing items and also serve as identification for garments. Different types of labels are used in clothing items. Blignault, Bouer, Nawrotzki & Rein (1987:326) mention two types of labels, namely fabric labels sewn onto the garments and paper labels or hang tags that can be taken off. They point out that fabric labels have the advantage that they are permanent and are always available if washing instructions are needed. From reviewed literature, Hatch 1993:142, Cooklin 1997:117 and Kadolph 1998:150, mentioned that a typical textile label should include the following information: content of the fabric used to make up the product the country of origin, care instructions and the name or the registration number of the manufacturer. Frings (2005:214) adds that hangtags may be hung on the side of a garment by means of plastic staples, barbs or string. She points out that

the main purpose of these types of labels is to draw attention to the garment and to show brand names, while additional information like style number colour, size and other product information like price is often also included.

Information that may appear on apparel labels includes the name of the product, like *Girl's Spencer*, the trade name, like *Princess* guarantees size, fibre construction, like *Textured yarn* performance attributes like *Light-resistant* or *pre-shrunk*, brand names like *Billabong* or *Levi* quality symbols like *SABS* fibre content, like *60% cotton/40% polyester*, grade of quality, like *Virgin wool* or *Pure wool* country of origin, like *Made in Hong Kong* directions for use and care, like *Dry flat*, and care symbols (Van Zyl Groenewald & De Bruin 1986:226, Blignault *et al.* 1987:326, Glock & Kunz 1995:86, Frings 2005:214).

Different categories of labels are identified in the literature. Private labels are used to sell merchandise exclusive to specific stores, and are also called private brands, store brands or house brands, like Woolworths (Glock & Kunz 1995:51, Brown & Rice 2001:38). A second category is that of national labels, used by manufacturers that sell their merchandise to various stores nationwide at a consistent price, like Levi. A third category is designer labels, which carry well-known designers' names and logos, like Calvin Klein (Marshall *et al.* 2000:408-409).

2.4.5 Country of origin

In this age of global sourcing and international competition, many jobs are lost to cheaper foreign labour in various countries, and the country where a product is manufactured has become a matter of concern among many consumers (Engel *et al.* 1995:210). Solomon and Rabolt (2004:504) point out that many consumers today are intensely aware of labour abuses in some countries and concentrate on checking labels and even on boycotting products from some countries for this reason.

Another perspective is the matter of quality. Sometimes there might be a general perception that imported apparel is of higher quality, in which case the country of origin is a significant part of the label. In other cases, the knowledge that a product is

imported may lower the perception of the product quality, for instance when the import is from a third world country (Solomon & Rabolt 2004:370). Chen-Yu and Kincade (2001:38) as well as Khachaturian and Morganosky (1990:21) report several research studies which also found a significant relationship between country of origin and assessment of apparel quality. On the other hand, consumers who are more globally orientated, especially younger ones, may not deem the country of origin important when making a purchase decision (Brown & Rice 2001:24). Ahmed & D'Astous (2004:193) found that, in addition to age, demographic variables such as income and education were also strongly related to the evaluation of apparel products in terms of the country of origin. Hawkins *et al.* (2007:305) confirm that consumers may interpret the quality of products more positively when manufactured in a country that they perceive positively. Product image is often influenced by its country of origin, which in turn contributes to determination of its "brand personality" (Solomon & Rabolt 2004:3).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:132, 179, 458) are of the opinion that consumers with a low level of knowledge about a specific product are more strongly influenced by country-of-origin perceptions than consumers with more knowledge. They point out that research findings show that consumers use their knowledge of country-of-origin when making purchase decisions. In particular, quality fashion products are often associated with France and designer clothing with Italy.

2.4.6 Appropriateness for casual daywear

Several authors and researchers (Kefgen & Touchie-Specht 1986:446, Cassill & Drake 1987:24, Tselepis & De Klerk 2004:90, Frings 2005:60) contend that it is very important that fashion consumers find suitable or acceptable fashion apparel for specific occasions or to meet the needs of their lifestyles. The female fashion consumer welcomes and enjoys the greater freedom and comfort offered by many new casual styles. However, Amiel and Michael (2001:7, 8, 15, 24) warns that fashion consumers have to ask themselves if casual is not too casual, and when casual is appropriate. Wearing casual fashion clothing there seems to bring about a tendency for behaviour to become casual as well.

Clothing consumers should take into account their apparel needs for work and leisure-time activities, as well as appropriateness for their figure type, personality, the time, the place, their age and the standards of fashion. Appropriateness also entails the suitability and comfort of the style, fabric, freedom of movement, durability, ease of care and attractiveness (Frings 2005:60).

In a study on apparel selection criteria, Cassill and Drake (1987:24) found that appropriateness correlated positively with self-confidence, attractiveness/ fashionableness and satisfaction with life, while it correlated negatively with the economic criterion factor. To obtain a "good buy", women were willing to sacrifice appearance-related criteria such as suitability, fit, attractiveness, quality and appropriateness for the occasion. In a cross-national comparative study, Hsu and Burns (2002:251) found that Taiwanese students placed more emphasis on appropriateness of clothing for campus wear than did their United States counterparts. Fiore and Damhorst (1992:174) found that aesthetic attributes were related to situational appropriateness, while consumers in a study by Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995b:71) related the appropriateness of a garment to lifestyle.

2.5 STORE CHOICE FOR APPAREL SHOPPING

Sometimes consumers go through complex decision-making processes in selecting stores, while in other cases, store loyalty may develop and determine the selection of a store. Low-involvement decision making is applied when consumers select a certain store simply when time is limited and the effort to shop around is too demanding, in which case stores are selected for their location or on grounds of frequent advertising, while image advertising may lead to high-involvement decision making with reference to store choice (Assael 1992:629).

Several studies have found that the store where a product is bought may have a considerable impact on apparel consumers' perception of the quality of the clothing item, as the type of store, such as department stores, specialty stores and discount stores, reflects a certain image which may influence perception of quality. The

intended use of a garment may, however, moderate the effect of store type and store image on perception of quality (D'Astous & Saint Louis 2005:306).

Several authors distinguish between different types of retail stores. Frings (2005:284) points out that different types of stores were created to serve different consumers' needs. According to Donnellan (1996:59), a main categorisation of store types linked to merchandising and apparel includes department stores, specialty stores and discount stores.

2.5.1 Department stores

This type of store caters for multiple needs of several consumer groups. These stores carry an extensive variety of merchandise in different price and quality ranges. The fashion products may include family clothing, jewellery and cosmetics. These stores are very familiar to the public and are convenient one-stop shopping venues (Moore & Carpenter 2006:268-270). Products sold by department stores usually represent the newer trends, higher quality and price, and brand-name fashions. Their target market is the upper to middle income group (Mueller & Smiley 1995:333, Donnellan 1996:300, Rabolt & Miler 1997:3, Diamond & Diamond 1997:434, Easey 2002:159, Alexander *et al.* 2005:58, Frings 2005:286, Hayes & McLoughlin 2006:46).

2.5.2 Specialty stores

This category of store usually stocks one or more related lines of fashion merchandise such stores they often own a private label and merchandise manufactured by them. The size of the store can vary from small to a large, multi-department, multilane chain store which specialises in a specific line such as apparel. Examples of specialty stores include shoe stores, jewellery stores, maternity wear stores and boutiques. Products are very fashionable, with a prominent fashion image, exclusive and unique. Generally, this type of store provides the customer with special services (Nam, Hamlin, Gam, Kangh, Kim, Kumphai, Starr & Richards 2007:105). The high fashion apparel lines are very expensive. These store types target a narrowly defined group of customers based on gender, income, taste levels and income. Amongst others, affluent young people shop here (Donnellan 1996:36,

Rabolt & Miler 1997:4, Diamond & Diamond 1997:437, Alexander *et al.* 2005:58, Frings 2005:284, Hayes & McLoughlin 2006:46).

2.5.3   Discount stores

Discount stores are characterised by a variety of merchandise which is sold at low prices. These lower-than-average prices can be maintained because of low operating expenses. These stores offer minimal services and plain, but efficient facilities. They keep their overheads low, usually have checkout counters and rely on self-service. Volume and size of trading, as well as quick turnover of merchandise are used to compensate for low mark-ups. These stores cater for the lower end of the market and are often located at low-cost premises (Donnellan 1996:18, Rabolt & Miler 1997:4, Stone 1999:405, Easey 2002:158, Frings 2005:287).

2.6 SUMMARY

Consumers are becoming increasingly discerning, informed and knowledgeable about products which they intend to buy, and they tend to be more aware of the quality of products. Marketers are not always certain of consumers' demands and needs. This chapter focused on the clothing consumer with regard to quality, and the dimensions of clothing quality which the apparel consumer considers when shopping for clothing, including intrinsic attributes such as physical and performance features, and extrinsic attributes such as price and brand. Store types may also influence perceptions of quality. The discussion was presented in correspondence with the conceptual framework given in Figure 1.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the procedures and methods used in the study. The study can be described as quantitative, descriptive and exploratory in nature, with one main objective. The broad research goal of this exploratory study was to determine which evaluative criteria are used by academic female consumers in the Vaal Region to determine apparel quality when purchasing casual daywear, and to what extent the various criteria are applied. The specific objectives for the study are given in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.3 page 4. The quantitative research method was chosen because it is an economical and practical way of assessing group opinions by means of a structured questionnaire which for this study was delivered by hand, this method saved much time and produced high response rates because of the personal contact and the fact that respondents could fill in the questionnaire at their own convenience (Fouché & Delport 2002:174).

The research project was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: A literature study was undertaken to gather information on how apparel consumers evaluate clothing quality. Guidelines for conducting a review of literature as suggested by Fouché and Delport 2002 (129-131), were followed, including the delineation of the theme investigated, the reading of several introductory text books such as Stamper *et al.* (1991), Glock and Kunz (1995), and Brown and Rice (2001) on the topic of evaluative criteria for judging garment quality, a methodical selection of relevant journal articles, an overview of relevant dissertations and theses, a thorough literature search on various databases available at the university library, selection and sifting of the sources, and establishment of a logical filing system by means of which the bibliography could systematically be stored.

When a structured questionnaire is to be used, it is of utmost importance to have a sound knowledge of the content domain under investigation, as only then can a content-valid measuring instrument be compiled. Murphy and Davidshofer (2001:148) point out that content validity can be ensured when the behaviours sampled by a test are representative of the research area. Further, it is important to determine the boundaries of the content domain to make sure that all the test items are content valid.

Phase 2: Opinions of female lecturers at tertiary institutions, regarding the importance of evaluative criteria when purchasing casual daywear, were determined quantitatively by means of a structured questionnaire.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A self-administered structured questionnaire (Annexure A & B) was compiled and used to collect the data. The process of questionnaire development as suggested by Murphy and Davidshofer (2001:215) was followed. The first stage involved item writing, while the second stage comprised standardisation of the measuring instrument. The questionnaire or series of questions was comprehensive and included all the evaluative criteria that were encountered in the literature on previous studies on the topic of evaluation of apparel. The questionnaire consisted of different sections and was compiled in accordance with the study objectives and the research framework discussed in Chapter 1 (Fig. 1).

The content domain was established by studying research articles in this field of study. The clothing-evaluative criteria were selected from those identified as most important by previous researchers such as Stamper *et al.* (1991:176), Brown & Rice (2001:47), Hines & Swinker (2001:74), Zhang *et al.* (2002:55) and North *et al.* (2003:42). The questionnaire statements were based on five selected casual daywear articles, namely top, jacket, pants, blouse and skirt sketches of which were presented in the questionnaire.

Section 1 consisted of questions or statements measuring the importance of intrinsic clothing-evaluative criteria for female apparel consumers. Sub-sections measured the importance of formal aspects such as design/style, materials, and construction detail; aesthetic aspects, namely colour and general appearance; and functional aspects, namely durability, comfort, ease of care and fit.

Section 2 measured the importance of extrinsic attributes, namely price, brand, store image, labels, country of origin and appropriateness for casual daywear. The constructs in sections 1 and 2 were operationalised in correspondence with guidelines given by Babbie (2007:44-45). The author postulates that an operational definition provides the process involved in measuring a variable and specifies the concrete and specific description of a concept. For this study, descriptions of the above-mentioned variables were obtained from authoritative literature on the various topics. Categories and subsets of evaluative criteria applicable to casual daywear, which were used in the questionnaire, are displayed in Table1.

Section 3 investigated the frequency with which the respondents bought casual daywear in twenty stores of various types, namely specialty stores, department stores and discount stores, while section 4 was compiled to gather the demographic information of the respondents, namely age, population group, highest formal qualification, marital status, expenditure on clothing per month, frequency of buying casual daywear and income group.

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES AND SUBSETS OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

CATEGORY	SUBSET	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TOTAL PER CATEGORY
Intrinsic attributes Physical features Formal aspects	Design/Style Materials Construction (seams, hems, darts, collars, cuffs, pockets, sleeves, fasteners, facings, waistlines)	3 4 37	44
Performance features Aesthetic aspects Functional aspects	Colour General appearance Durability Comfort Ease of care Fit	3 3 3 3 5 6	23
Extrinsic attributes	Price Brand Store image Store choice Label Country of origin Appropriateness for casual daywear.	5 5 4 20 10 3 3	50

Criteria for selection of questions as given by Rikhotso (2004:36) were applied, namely

- Inclusion of the various sections as identified in research literature
- Applicability of the items to evaluative criteria for casual daywear
- Clarity of questions to respondents
- Applicability of the questions to the study population

The respondents had to reply on a five-point Likert-type scale varying from 5 to 1 (5 = very important, 4 = quite important, 3 = not sure, 2 = of little importance, 1 = not important at all). The questionnaire was not translated into other languages as all the respondents could read and understand English well.

3.3 PILOT TESTING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was pre-tested under the same conditions as the main research. The most important purpose of the pilot study was to identify any potential problems

and make sure that respondents could understand the questions and whether the 30 minutes allocated for completing the questionnaire were adequate. Ten lecturers from three different tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region, who did not participate in the final study, were requested to fill in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to comment on any problems experienced or unclear terminology they encountered by making notes on the questionnaire. The researcher coordinated the completion of the questionnaires during lunch and tea times. After the pre-test, a number of amendments were made: for example "suitability" was changed to "appropriateness for casual daywear" and "co-ordination with other clothing" was changed to "compatible with other items already in the wardrobe", in order to make the questionnaire clearer to the respondents.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

A representative sample was chosen from the academic personnel of all the tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region. There are seven tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region and, in conference with the statistical consultation services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom, and all the institutions were selected for the study population. The criteria for inclusion into the sample were:

- female lecturers without a clothing background
- full-time female lecturers at tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region

Main campuses as well as satellite campuses were included, although one satellite campus which was supposed to be part of the sample, at that stage had no full-time female lecturers. The researcher contacted the Human Resources Departments of all the institutions to request their support and willingness to participate in the study and to obtain the number of female lecturing staff employed by each institution. All the tertiary institutions provided the researcher with the necessary information.

The random sampling method was chosen for this study. A random sample was chosen from the teaching female academics so that each one would have the same chance to be selected (Strydom & Venter 2002:202). A complete name list of all the full-time female lecturers employed by the various tertiary institutions, as well as an indication of the

department where they worked, was obtained from the Human Resources Department of each institution. A number was assigned to each person on the list. Every third person on the list was chosen for the sample. The list with the random numbering was strictly used by the researcher (Strydom & Venter 2002:203). The final sample contained 105 respondents. Table 2 portrays the distribution of respondents between the different tertiary institutions.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

N	TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN VAAL REGION	n	%
105			
	Damelin College	5	4.76
	Flavius College - Sasolburg Campus	6	5.71
	North-West University -Vaal Triangle Campus	14	13.33
	Sedibeng College - Lekoa Campus	3	2.86
	Sedibeng College - Vanderbijlpark Campus	10	9.52
	Sedibeng College - Vereeniging Campus	11	10.48
	Vaal University of Technology	56	53.33

According to Table 2, more than half of the respondents were lecturing at the Vaal University of Technology, which means that this institution has by far the biggest number of female lecturers at tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region, followed by the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University with 13.3 percent and the Sedibeng College Vereeniging campus, with 10.5 percent of the sample. All the other tertiary institutions had fewer female lecturers.

3.5 QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION AND DATA GATHERING

The individuals chosen for the sample were personally contacted by the researcher and a verbal agreement to participate in the study was obtained from each person. The questionnaires were distributed among the participants with the help of the secretaries of the various departments where the respondents worked. They also collected the completed questionnaires which the researcher then collected from the secretaries. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were handed out and one hundred and five were returned.

3.6 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

No suitable existing measuring instrument that was standardised could be found to measure the importance of the comprehensive range of evaluative criteria for this study. The researcher compiled a new instrument which had to be standardised. The validity of this instrument was investigated by construct validity and content validity, while reliability was investigated by computing alpha coefficients. The procedures and the results will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Ethical considerations comprised treating the respondents with respect, dignity and courtesy. The researcher made use of ethically correct procedures during the survey (Huysamen 1994:178). Consent to participate in the study was obtained from all respondents, who were informed as to the nature and purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary and anonymous.

3.7 DATA PROCESSING AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

After the questionnaires were completed the data was edited and the researcher tried to clarify obscurities and identify possible errors in the completion of the questionnaire. Raw data were checked and mistakes were corrected before data analysis commenced. The data were entered into the computer by people experienced in data fixation.

Statistical analyses were performed by the Department of Statistical Services of the North-West University, with the use of the SAS statistical package (SAS Institute Inc. 2002-2005). All the analyses were done in consultation with the head statistician, Prof. H.S Steyn, who also performed the processing of the data.

The following analyses were performed:

- Frequency analyses for all the sections of the questionnaire (results in Chapter 4)

- Confirmatory factor analysis for Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaire to determine the construct validity of each of the evaluative criteria used in the study (method and results discussed in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.1.1)

- Reliability testing by computing alpha coefficients for sections 1, 2 and 3 (results in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.2.1)

- Determination of correlations between evaluative criteria and demographic characteristics, evaluative criteria and store choice, and demographic characteristics and store choice, by computing Pearson's correlations coefficients (results in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.7)

- Cluster analysis according to Ward's method, to determine whether different groups of apparel consumers could be distinguished, based on importance of evaluative criteria (results in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.8.1)

3.8 SUMMARY

Analyses of the data for this study were performed in correspondence with the aims and objectives of the study, and expert advice from the Department of Statistical Services (North-West University) was sought on how to investigate these aspects. The broad research goal was to determine which evaluative criteria are used by female consumers in the Vaal Region to judge apparel quality, and to what extent. Frequency analyses rendered the required answers. Objectives included determination of relationships between assessment of importance of evaluative criteria and personal characteristics, between importance of evaluative criteria and store choice, and between store choice and personal characteristics. Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed for this purpose. Another objective was to determine whether distinct clusters of apparel consumers could be identified, based on the use of evaluative criteria for assessment of the quality of casual daywear. The

measuring instrument was tested for construct validity and reliability by performing factor analysis and computing alpha coefficients.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the criteria used by female apparel consumers lecturing at tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region to judge quality when purchasing casual daywear. A questionnaire was compiled and distributed among the study population of female lecturers at tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region to determine how they perceived the importance of selected evaluative criteria when purchasing fashion garments. In chapter 3, the research design and methodology of this exploratory study was described. The procedure which was followed to select the random sample, method of questionnaire development, validation of the measuring instrument, the procedure for data collection and statistical analysis was discussed.

In chapter 4 the composition of the sample will be given, the demographic characteristics of the respondents will be presented and analysed and the results of the study will be given and discussed. The findings will be compared to research findings reported in the literature, as outlined in chapter 2. The validity and reliability of the findings will be investigated. Relationships between selected variables will be portrayed, as well as cluster analysis of the respondents' responses on certain aspects of judgment of the quality of casual daywear.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

It is made clear by Bae *et al.* (2003:46-52) that various demographic characteristics of consumers, such as age, do influence their decisions making when purchasing clothing. Various age groups have been differently influenced at critical points in history. Zhang *et al.* (2002:58) point out that age has a significant influence on the perception of the importance evaluation and preference formation of various apparel features, such as fit, comfort, style, colour, price, brand and fibre content. Older people tend to focus more on these features, except for brand, implying that they are more realistic, while younger

people focus more on symbolic features such as brand and trendiness. Yoo (2003:59) adds that aesthetics with reference to fashion items are influenced by age. North *et al.* (2003: 50) confirm a relationship between age and style as well as brand preference.

Table 3 reveals that the majority of the lecturers (24.7 percent) are between the ages of 31 and 35, which can be described as relatively young and belonging to an age group smaller in number than the preceding and the following age groups, and are referred to as baby busters or Generation X. The next age group, which comprises those between 36 and 40 years of age (13.3 percent) are also categorised as X-ers (Johnson & Learned 2004:84-94, Frings 2005:33). This generation, being career- and family-oriented, invests more in housing, home goods, family activities and education, with less spending on fashion. Littrell and Halepete (2005:407) emphasised that the X-ers revealed less interest in fashionable clothing. Zemke, Raines and Filipczak (2000:99) describe them as a group with a family focus and balanced outlook who simply want to "work to live". The second biggest group of respondents (20 percent), aged between 46 and 50, is middle-aged and referred to as postwar baby boomers, the biggest and now the fastest-growing segment of the population in the USA.

They spend more on clothing than other age groups but are not well represented in the fashion industry (Zemke *et al.* 2000:63, Frings 2005:33). Johnson and Learned (2004:102) warn that marketers should take nothing for granted with this group, as they might not even be as brand loyal as supposed. Comfort, quality and service are important to these clients (Frings 2005:33).

TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Q 98	N-105	AGE (Years)	n	%
		Younger than 25	5	4.76
		25-30	12	11.43
		31-35	26	24.76
		36-40	14	13.33
		41-45	13	12.38
		46-50	21	20.00
		51 years and older	14	13.33
Q 99	105	POPULATION GROUP		
		Asian / Indian	6	5.71
		Black / African	27	25.71
		Coloured	3	2.86
		White / Caucasian	69	65.71
Q 100	101	HIGHEST FORMAL QUALIFICATION		
		Diploma	23	22.77
		BTech	29	28.71
		Honours Degree	13	12.87
		MTech	8	7.92
		M Degree or higher	28	27.72
Q 101	105	MARITAL STATUS		
		Cohabitation / living together	7	6.67
		Married/traditionally married	69	65.71
		Never married	19	18.1
		Divorced / separated	8	7.62
		Widow	2	1.90
Q 102	105	MONEY SPENT ON CASUAL DAYWEAR (per month)		
		Less than R99	10	9.52
		R100-R300	43	40.95
		R301-R600	30	28.57
		R601-R800	13	12.38
		More than R800	9	8.57
Q 103	105	HOW OFTEN CASUAL DAYWEAR IS BOUGHT		
		Monthly	26	24.76
		1 x per year	6	5.71
		2 x per year	15	14.29
		3 x per year	21	20.00
		Only when needed	37	35.24
Q 104	104	INCOME GROUP		
		High income group	6	5.77
		Middle income group	93	89.42
		Low income group	5	4.81

Four population groups,pured and Caucasian/White, were represented in the sample. The predominant population group was Caucasian / White (65.71 percent), followed by African (25.71 percent), Asian (5.71 percent) and Coloured (2.86 percent). According to Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:331), ethnic groups in South Africa have specific buying patterns and specific preferences and the diversity of the population confronts marketers with unique challenges (Terblanché 1998:28, Du Plessis & Rousseau 2003:49). It is important to observe that the black consumer market in particular is growing fast and information on its purchasing patterns and preferences has become crucial to enable clothing manufacturers and marketers to enable them to maintain a competitive advantage (Van Eck *et al.* 2004:2). Taylor and Cosenza (2002:396) as well as Frings (2005:36) confirm that people from different cultural backgrounds apply different criteria when buying fashion products, while Yoo (2003:59) points out that assessment of design elements is influenced among other things, by ethnicity. Preferences for other clothing features such as fit are also influenced by culture (Alexander *et al.* 2005:62). In the South African retailing situation, marketers have to deal with a wide variety of subcultures and population groups which differ widely in terms of income, education, values, needs, goals and other variables (Du Plessis & Rousseau 2003:49,403). It is clear that various population groups will set different standards as criteria for evaluating consumer goods such as clothing and it is crucial that marketers must be sensitive to these needs.

The biggest group (28.71 percent) of respondents had a BTech. degree, while a nearly equal number (27.72 percent) had a Master's degree or higher qualification and 12.87 percent an Honours degree, indicating a relatively high educational level. In a study by Zhang *et al.* (2002:59) it was found that the higher the educational level, the more importance was placed on attributes such as fit, comfort, style, colour, brand and fibre content. They point out that higher educational levels may imply more attention to appearance and to the symbolic features of clothing, such as style, colour and brand name. The probability that they know more about textiles explains the importance they place on fibre content. Huddleston and Cassill (1990:260) found a direct relationship between apparel brand orientation and educational levels, implying a more brand-oriented approach with higher educational levels. Specifically with regard to casual

wear, Zhang *et al.* (2002:59) found that the assessment of six attributes, namely fit, comfort, style, colour, brand and fibre content was significantly influenced by the level of education. Consumers put more emphasis on these attributes when they had a higher level of education, perhaps indicating that they paid more attention to appearance and the symbolic characteristics of clothing. They may also be more knowledgeable about textile materials.

These respondents were predominantly married or traditionally married (65.71 percent), while quite a high percentage (18.1 percent) were never married. Zhang *et al.* (2002:59) found that marital status impacts considerably on the importance of three attributes in particular: price, ease of care and durability. Married people seem to perceive price and durability as more important, while they consider ease of care to be less important, possibly because married people with children have heavier financial responsibilities.

The majority (40.95 percent) spent between R100 – R300 per month on clothing. Kleinhans (2003:82) gave a possible explanation for the relatively low amount spent on clothing, namely that the respondents are mostly young people (31-35 years of age) in the middle income group. In this study, just more than a third bought clothing only when they needed it (35.24 percent) while a quarter (24.76 percent) bought monthly.

The vast majority (89.4 percent) were of the opinion that they fell in the middle income group. Du Preez and Visser (2003:18) point out that income is one of the variables which influence the choice of apparel items. Zhang *et al.* (2002:59) found that family income significantly influences judgments on comfort, price and brand, and that consumers with higher incomes focus less on price, but more on comfort and brand when purchasing casual wear.

4.3 PSYCHOMETRICAL PROPERTIES OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

4.3.1 Validity

Validity is a psychometric property of the measuring instrument, which determines whether a test measures what it is supposed to measure and determines whether that test can be used in making accurate decisions (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2001:145). Construct validity refers to the extent to which one can be sure the instrument represents the construct or attribute under consideration (Babbie & Mouton 2001:123).

Construct validity for this study was assessed by means of confirmatory factor analysis, as described by Van Aardt and Steyn (1991:47). Each of the subscales (apparel quality assessment criteria) was subjected to a factor analysis, using principal components for factor extraction. The FACTOR procedure of SAS Institute Inc. (1990) was used for this analysis. According to Smith and Barnard (1988:20), a scale displays good construct validity when one factor (the ideal) is extracted or when only a few factors, which together explain a substantial proportion of the variance are extracted, and when high communalities are obtained for each statement.

4.3.1.1 Construct validity

The number of factors extracted, the percentage of total variance explained by these extracted factors and the range of communalities on the statements for each attribute subscale are given in Table 4.

Although the ideal is to extract only one factor, this is seldom achieved in practice. The extracted sub-factors in Table 4 together explained a substantial proportion of the total variance for each of the subscales. The Mineigen criterion was used to determine how many factors were extracted. The communality on each statement comprised more than half of the total variance for most of the statements. Only ten of the statements out of 97 items in all the factors yielded communalities of less than 0.5.

TABLE 4: FACTORS EXTRACTED, TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED AND RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES ON THE STATEMENTS FOR EACH QUALITY ASSESSMENT FACTOR

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FACTOR	SUB-FACTORS EXTRACTED	TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY EXTRACTED SUB-FACTORS (%)	RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES
Design/style	1	43.85	0.16-0.63
Materials	1	50.10	0.43-0.61
Seams	1	64.84	0.42-0.76
Hems	1	72.79	0.58-0.84
Darts	1	75.56	0.76-0.76
Collars	1	67.29	0.54-0.73
Cuffs	1	81.55	0.79-0.84
Pockets	1	57.21	0.47-0.71
Sleeves	1	71.31	0.51-0.82
Fasteners	1	68.03	0.60-0.76
Facings	1	78.93	0.71-0.84
Waistlines	1	76.93	0.68-0.84
Colour	2	70.77	0.58-0.90
General appearance	1	45.27	0.21-0.63
Durability	1	85.23	0.83-0.89
Comfort	1	71.67	0.67-0.76
Ease of care	2	57.73	0.46-0.72
Fit	1	53.37	0.42-0.60
Price	1	43.69	0.20-0.64
Brand	1	70.36	0.55-0.79
Store image	1	65.23	0.46-0.75
Labels	2	59.96	0.41-0.77
Country of origin	1	83.33	0.82-0.84
Appropriateness for casual wear	1	83.33	0.82-0.84

As the factor analysis for this instrument complies with the requirements for good construct validity to a large extent, the researcher is of the opinion that the measuring instrument has satisfactory construct validity.

Content validity was also investigated for this section of the questionnaire. According to Murphy & Davidshofer (2001:150), content validity is demonstrated when all test items seem to measure the construct which appears as the heading of a group of items, which is the case in this section of the questionnaire used in this

study. Furthermore, all items in this instrument correspond with those in other measuring instruments (Fiore & Damhorst 1992:173, Abraham-Murali & Littrell 1995b:69, Hsu & Burns 2002:249, Retief & De Klerk 2003:25, North *et al.* 2003:44) which measured similar constructs and which were investigated for validity. Also, the total set of behaviours in this section was appropriate for measuring the characteristic behaviour of the specific respondents in this study, which is another requirement for content validity (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2001:148). The content validity could consequently be deemed satisfactory.

4.3.2 Reliability

A reliable measuring instrument displays internal consistency, which refers to the tendency of the different items on the scale to give the same response from any given respondent on a single administration of the test (Henerson, Morris & Fritz-Gibbons 1978:146, Babbie & Mouton 2001:119). Test reliability can be determined in many ways. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a suitable measure for tests with multiple-scored items which are administered once, as was used in this study. The procedure comprises the determination of the variance of all individuals' scores for each item and the addition of these variances across all items (Anastasi, 1988:124).

4.3.2.1 Results of reliability determination

The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the various apparel attribute factors are given in Table 5.

From Table 5 it is clear that the reliability coefficients for most of the factors were quite high. For the overall scale, the alpha coefficients for the various factors were mostly above 0.74. The factors displayed satisfactory to very good reliability, except for three factors, namely design/style, colour and general appearance, which yielded alpha coefficients lower than 0.6.

In conclusion, it can be said that this section of the questionnaire, which tested quality assessment of apparel attributes, was found both valid and reliable, and could consequently be used with minor changes. All the original statements were retained.

TABLE 5: COEFFICIENT ALPHA FOR APPAREL QUALITY ASSESSMENT FACTOR

QUALITY ASSESSMENT FACTORS	NUMBER OF ITEMS	COEFFICIENT ALPHA
Design/Style	3	0.21
Materials	4	0.66
Seams	5	0.86
Hems	4	0.87
Darts	2	0.66
Collars	5	0.88
Cuffs	3	0.89
Pockets	4	0.74
Sleeves	3	0.79
Fasteners	4	0.84
Facings	4	0.91
Waistlines	3	0.85
Colour	3	0.08
General appearance	3	0.31
Durability	3	0.91
Comfort	3	0.79
Ease of care	5	0.55
Fit	6	0.81
Price	5	0.66
Brand	5	0.89
Store image	4	0.82
Labels	10	0.87
Country of origin	3	0.90
Appropriateness for casual wear	3	0.80

4.4 INTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

Intrinsic attributes include physical as well as performance features (see Fig. 1).

❑ **Physical features**

Physical features comprise formal aspects used to assess garment quality.

4.4.1 Formal aspects of apparel quality

The formal aspects which are categorised under physical features include design/style, materials and construction or workmanship.

4.4.1.1 Importance of design/style

According to Brown and Rice (2001:47) design provides the map for the garment's style. The terms *style* and *design* are sometimes used synonymously (Tselepis & De Klerk 2004:89). The results pertaining to design/style are given in Table 6.

TABLE 6: IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN / STYLE

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
1. Currently highly fashionable	103	16	32	31	19	5	48	31.00	24	3.3	1.1	3
		15.53	31.07	30.10	18.45	4.85	46.6	30.10	23			
2. Design / style is unique and creative	104	34	37	22	9	2	71	22.00	11	3.9	1.0	2
		32.69	35.58	21.15	8.65	1.92	68.3	21.15	11			
3. Design / style complements my figure	105	81	19	5	0	0	100	5.00	0	4.7	0.5	1
		77.14	18.10	4.76	0.00	0.00	95.2	4.76	0			

As depicted in Table 6, the importance of style/design as an evaluative criterion when shopping for clothes was rated fairly high. The most important aspect of style/design seemed to be that it should complement the figure, with a mean score rating of 4.7 and 95.2 percent of the respondents finding this aspect very important or quite important. The second most important aspect was the condition that the design/style must be unique and creative. Highly fashionable styles/designs did not seem to be all that important, with a mean score rating of 3.3. The importance of style when consumers assess quality of clothes is emphasised in the literature. Various studies found style to be the most important attribute when garments were evaluated (Eckman *et al.* 1990:14,

Fiore & Damhorst 1992:174, North *et al.* 2003:48), while other studies found style to be amongst the two, three or four most important attributes considered when assessing a fashion product (Abraham-Murali & Littrell 1995a:152, Forsythe *et al.* 1996:303, Herbst & Burger 2002:41, Hsu & Burns 2002:249, Taylor & Cosenza 2002:399).

4.4.1.2 Materials

Materials include fabric, trims, closures and other products required for producing garments (Glock & Kunz 1995:602).

- **Fabric**

Fabric can be seen as the basic construction element of a garment. A number of studies found that intrinsic cues such as fabric are more important than extrinsic cues when assessing quality of clothing (Eckman *et al.* 1990:14), and more specifically, fabric quality (Griffin & O'Neal 1992:173,186).

- **Other material components and accessories**

No research could be found on the importance of other materials such as support fabrics and notions or findings such as buttons, other fasteners and trims, but both Glock and Kunz (1995:465-540) and Brown and Rice (2001:213-235) confirm the importance of these materials as indicators of quality in clothing. Kadolph (1998:136-150) also recognises and discusses the importance of other materials such as zippers, buttons, hooks and eyes, snaps, thread, elastics, trims and support materials in quality assessment of apparel.

TABLE 7: IMPORTANCE OF MATERIALS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	N	n	n	n	n	N	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
4. Overall pleasingness of fabric	105	56	36	8	5	0	92	8.00	5	4.4	0.8	1
		53.33	34.29	7.62	4.76	0.00	87.6	7.62	4.8			
5. Fibre content	105	18	30	28	21	8	48	28.00	29	3.3	1.2	4
		17.14	28.57	26.67	20.00	7.62	45.7	26.67	28			
6. Quality of fasteners	105	43	30	19	10	3	73	19.00	13	4.0	1.1	2
		40.95	28.57	18.10	9.52	2.86	69.5	18.10	12			
7. Quality and attractiveness of trims	102	30	42	19	6	5	72	19.00	11	3.8	1.1	3
		29.41	41.18	18.63	5.88	4.90	70.6	18.63	11			

Table 7 shows that respondents in this study rated the importance of materials quite highly when inspecting garments with the intention of possibly buying the item. Overall attractiveness of the fabric was rated most important, with a mean score rating of 4.4, followed by quality of fasteners, quality and attractiveness of trims and lastly, and least important, fibre content of the fabric. Griffin and O'Neal (1992:173,186) concluded that the most prominent attributes used by consumers as indicators of fabric quality were colour/print/design, fibre content, weight/fineness, hand and ease of care. It is notable that fabric is a very important attribute when evaluating clothing quality (Eckman *et al.* 1990:18, Fiore & Damhorst 1992:174-176, Hines & O'Neal 1995:231, Forsythe *et al.* 1996:302, Hsu & Burns 2002:249).

4.4.1.3 Importance of construction

Construction entails workmanship details such as seams, hems, darts, collars, necklines, cuffs, pockets, sleeves, fasteners, facings and waistlines. Gersăk (2002:172) points out that construction of a garment can influence its shape or form. Eckman *et al.* (1990:18) found that consumers refer to workmanship as an evaluative criterion more often when discussing garments in general than specifically.

- **Seams**

Seams are the basic structural components of any fashion garment. Nearly all the major categories of apparel structures, such as necklines, sleeves, waistband and neckline treatments, relate in some way to seams for their determining characteristics. Table 8 displays the importance of seams as an evaluative criterion when assessing apparel quality.

TABLE 8: IMPORTANCE OF SEAMS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
8. Seams flat, smooth and neat	102	44	30	22	5	1	74	22.00	6	4.1	1.0	2
		43.14	29.41	21.57	4.90	0.98	72.55	21.57	5.88			
9. Seams are strong and well finished	104	44	32	23	3	2	76	23.00	5	4.1	1.0	2
		42.31	30.77	22.12	2.88	1.92	73.08	22.12	4.81			
10. Seams are well pressed, no ridges	104	40	39	16	8	1	79	16.00	9	4.0	1.0	3
		38.46	37.50	15.38	7.69	0.96	75.96	15.38	8.65			
11. Plaids and stripes match at seams	104	38	39	17	10	0	77	17.00	10	4.0	1.0	3
		36.54	37.50	16.35	9.62	0.00	74.04	16.35	9.62			
12. Seams must not irritate the skin	100	56	22	11	1	1	78	11.00	2	4.5	0.8	1
		56.00	22.00	11.00	1.00	1.00	78	11.00	2			

From the results it is clear that all the dimensions of seams listed in Table 8 were rated quite important to very important by the respondents, with mean score ratings of 4.0-4.5. The most important aspect chosen was the fact that seams should not irritate the skin and 78.0 percent rated this dimension very important or highly important. In a study by Forsythe *et al.* (1996:303) consumers indicated that seams and stitching are intrinsic attributes which contribute to the sturdiness/durability of a garment, an aspect which was rated second most important in this study. Stamper *et al.* (1991:76), state that seams should be smooth and flat with no puckers or pulls.

• **Hems**

Respondents' opinion of the importance of hems in the evaluation of apparel quality are given in Table 9.

TABLE 9: IMPORTANCE OF HEMS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
13. Hem hangs evenly	102	60	28	8	4	2	88	8.00	6	4.4	0.9	1
		58.82	27.45	7.84	3.92	1.96	86.27	7.84	5.88			
14. Even width	103	44	34	16	8	1	78	16.00	9	4.1	1.0	3
		42.72	33.01	15.53	7.77	0.97	75.73	15.53	8.74			
15. Hem flat, smooth and inconspicuous	103	45	33	16	7	2	78	16.00	9	4.1	1.0	3
		43.69	32.04	15.53	6.80	1.94	75.73	15.53	8.74			
16. Free from frays or loose threads	101	54	31	13	2	1	85	13.00	3	4.3	0.9	2
		53.47	30.69	12.87	1.98	0.99	84.16	12.87	2.97			

Table 9 displays the rating of four criteria for evaluation of hems. The respondents obviously were of the opinion that all four criteria listed in Table 9 were of great importance and nearly equally significant, with mean score ratings of 4.1-4.4, when assessing the quality of garment hems. Apparently the most important aspect to them was the condition that hems should hang evenly, with a mean score rating of 4.4 and 86.27 percent finding this aspect very important or quite important, followed by the statement that hems should be free from frays or loose threads. Van Zyl *et al.* (1986:421) confirm the importance of the first three criteria in Table 9 for neat hems. The results consequently reveal that the respondents are aware of construction requirements for hems to ensure a successful end-product

- **Darts**

Darts add three-dimensional shape to fabric and allow the fabric to conform to body curves occurring at the bust, shoulders, hips and waist to ensure proper fit (Reader's Digest 2002:101). The respondents' opinions regarding the importance of darts in judging apparel quality are represented in Table 10.

TABLE 10: IMPORTANCE OF DARTS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
17. Darts fit figure well	103	66	31	5	1	0	97	5.00	1	4.6	0.6	1
		64.08	30.10	4.85	0.97	0.00	94.17	4.85	0.97			
18. Darts identical	103	52	31	18	1	1	83	18.00	2	4.3	0.9	2
		50.49	30.10	17.48	0.97	0.97	80.58	17.48	1.94			

Results in Table 10 reveal that the respondents judged the importance of the two criteria given for gauging the quality of darts as quite high, with a mean score rating of 4.3 and 4.6 respectively. They indicated that the most important requirement for darts was that they should fit the figure well and 94.17 percent rated this aspect very important or quite important. They are obviously of the opinion that darts are very important when assessing the quality of casual wear. Reader's Digest (2002:101) points out that darts are one of the most basic structural elements in clothing construction, used to build a distinct shape that will permit the fabric to mould to the shape of the body, thereby confirming the importance of darts and their role in good fit.

- **Collars**

Collars of fashion apparel are one of the most important factors in determining the style and price range of a garment (Stamper *et al.* 1991:140). The respondents' view on the importance of collars in judging the quality of a garment is given in Table 11.

TABLE 11: IMPORTANCES OF COLLARS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not immum at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
19. Collar interfaced and smooth	103	37	38	23	5	0	75	23.00	5	4.0	0.9	4
		35.92	36.89	22.33	4.85	0.00	72.82	22.33	4.85			
20. Under collar not visible	103	40	30	24	6	3	70	24.00	9	4.0	1.1	4
		38.83	29.13	23.30	5.83	2.91	67.96	23.30	8.74			
21. Outer edge smooth and defined	103	40	40	17	4	2	80	17.00	6	4.1	0.9	3
		38.83	38.83	16.50	3.88	1.94	77.67	16.50	5.83			
22. Symmetrically placed on the neckline	103	51	33	15	2	2	84	15.00	4	4.3	0.9	2
		49.51	32.04	14.56	1.94	1.94	81.55	14.56	3.88			
23. Lapels / collar's points identical	100	58	25	12	4	1	83	12.00	5	4.4	0.9	1
		58.00	25.00	12.00	4.00	1.00	83	12.00	5			

From Table 11 it is clear that collars are also looked upon as a quite to very important criterion when evaluating garment quality with a minimum mean score rating of 4.0. The two most important criteria were that lapels and collar points should be identical, with 83.0 percent of the respondents finding this aspect very important or quite important, and that they should be symmetrically placed on the neckline, with 81.55 percent identifying this aspect as very or quite important. The requirement that the collar should be interfaced and smooth did not seem that important, although Reader's Digest (2002:161) states that interfacing is an essential part of any collar because it helps to define the collar and support its shape.

- **Cuffs**

Cuffs are intentionally visible and can therefore serve to decorate the lower edge of the sleeve (Stamper *et al.* 1991:180). The respondents' opinion of the importance of cuffs in evaluating apparel quality are given in Table 12.

TABLE 12: IMPORTANCE OF CUFFS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
24. Cuffs interfaced to give body	105	26	43	21	12	3	69	21.00	15	3.7	1.0	3
		24.76	40.95	20.00	11.43	2.86	65.71	20.00	14.3			
25. Cuff and plackets neat	104	34	44	17	7	2	78	17.00	9	4.0	1.0	2
		32.69	42.31	16.35	6.73	1.92	75	16.35	8.65			
26. Buttons and buttonholes aligned	103	50	34	11	6	2	84	11.00	8	4.2	1.0	1
		48.54	33.01	10.68	5.83	1.94	81.55	10.68	7.77			

Table 12 shows that the respondents did regard cuffs as important, but not as important as some of the other criteria. Two aspects received a minimum mean score rating of 4.0, with 81.55 percent being of the opinion that alignment of buttons and buttonholes on cuffs is very important or quite important, while fewer of the respondents perceived the third dimension of cuffs (being interfaced) as important, with a mean score rating of 3.7. Reader's Digest (2002:230) suggests that cuffs should be interfaced.

- **Pockets**

Pockets are fashion elements and can serve as decorative and/or functional additions to fashion apparel. Pockets must be aesthetically pleasing, well constructed and positioned in an eye-catching manner. They add a professional touch and elegance to a design and form an important part of the evaluative criteria used when assessing apparel quality (Stamper *et al.* 1991:103). The respondents' opinions of the importance of pockets in judging apparel quality are given in Table 13.

TABLE 13: IMPORTANCE OF POCKETS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
27. Pockets neat and identical	105	57	40	7	1	0	97	7.00	1	4.5	0.7	1
		54.29	38.10	6.67	0.95	0.00	92.38	6.67	0.95			
28. Aesthetically pleasing	104	50	39	13	2	0	89	13.00	2	4.3	0.8	2
		48.08	37.50	12.50	1.92	0.00	85.58	12.50	1.92			
29. Stitching straight and neat	104	40	38	18	8	0	78	18.00	8	4.1	0.9	3
		38.46	36.54	17.31	7.69	0.00	75	17.31	7.69			
30. Pocket corners reinforced	104	32	31	23	15	3	63	23.00	18	3.7	1.1	4
		30.77	29.81	22.12	14.42	2.88	60.58	22.12	17.3			

Table 13 displays how important the respondents considered pockets when evaluating the quality of casual daywear. The first two of the four aspects of pockets listed in Table 13 are related to aesthetic appearance and obtained mean score ratings of 4.5 and 4.3 respectively, with 92.38 percent and 85.58 percent of the respondents respectively being of the opinion that these aspects are very or quite important, while the last two aspects related to workmanship were not regarded as important, with mean score ratings of 4.1 and 3.7. It can possibly be concluded that workmanship was less important to these respondents than aesthetic appearance. Reader's Digest (2002:235-239) puts great emphasis on the importance of construction techniques for pockets, such as the reinforcement of pocket corners, to ensure a pleasing and sturdy end-product.

- **Sleeves**

Sleeves are an important part of the fashion silhouette and through the centuries have formed a strong fashion element (Stamper *et al.* 1991:156). The opinions of the consumers in this study regarding the role of sleeves in the assessment of apparel quality are given in Table 14.

TABLE 14: IMPORTANCE OF SLEEVES

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
31. Sleeves hang straight	104	46	47	7	2	2	93	7.00	4	4.3	0.8	2
		44.23	45.19	6.73	1.92	1.92	89.42	6.73	3.85			
32. Sleeve cap smooth	105	46	37	16	4	2	83	16.00	6	4.2	0.9	3
		43.81	35.24	15.24	3.81	1.90	79.05	15.24	5.71			
33. Comfortable ease around arm	103	71	28	4	0	0	99	4.00	0	4.7	0.6	1
		68.93	27.18	3.88	0.00	0.00	96.12	3.88	0			

Sleeves seemed to be of utmost importance to these respondents in the evaluation of apparel quality, with all three dimensions listed in Table 14 obtaining mean score ratings of 4.2-4.7. Comfortable ease around the arm seemed to be vital, with 96.12 percent of the respondents rating this aspect as very important or quite important. Blignault *et al.* (1987:446) confirm the importance of sufficient width in the sleeve and armhole to ensure a comfortable fit. Reader's Digest (2002:216-220) also mentions the importance of the wearing comfort of sleeves.

• Fasteners

Respondents' views on the importance of various aspects of fasteners when evaluating apparel quality are given in Table 15. This table reveals that all four aspects of fasteners listed here obtained mean score ratings of 4.3-4.5, implying that all aspects are of considerable and nearly equal importance to the respondents. Adequate zipper length was perceived as very important or quite important to 90.82 percent of the respondents, while buttons that fit buttonholes well were very or quite important to 86.54 percent of these consumers.

TABLE 15: IMPORTANCES OF FASTENERS

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	N	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
34. Buttons and buttonholes aligned	104	55	34	8	6	1	89	8.00	7	4.3	0.9	3
		52.88	32.69	7.69	5.77	0.96	85.58	7.69	6.73			
35. Sewn on securely	105	56	31	15	3	0	87	15.00	3	4.3	0.8	3
		53.33	29.52	14.29	2.86	0.00	82.86	14.29	2.86			
36. Buttons fit buttonholes well	104	62	28	12	1	1	90	12.00	2	4.4	0.8	2
		59.62	26.92	11.54	0.96	0.96	86.54	11.54	1.92			
37. Zipper length adequate	98	59	30	4	5	0	85.58	4.00	5	4.5	0.8	1
		60.20	30.61	4.08	5.10	0.00	90.82	4.08	5.1			

Van Zyl *et al.* (1986:432,433) confirm the importance of alignment of buttons and buttonholes, as well as the correct size of buttonholes. Stamper *et al.* (1991:239) point out that zippers provide a way of expanding the smaller areas of a garment, for example the neckline and waistline, so that dressing and undressing can take place more easily. It is therefore of great importance that the zipper fastener must be adequate in length to ensure comfortable dressing and undressing. Tate (2004:138) emphasizes that buttons and other fasteners should be sewn on securely.

- **Facings**

The opinions of consumers participating in this study regarding the role of facings in assessment of apparel quality are given in Table 16. From this table it is clear that the respondents were of the opinion that facings are important when assessing apparel quality. Three of the four aspects of facings, particularly those to do with appearance, obtained mean score ratings of 4.0-4.4, with 84.62 percent of the respondents indicating that it is very important or quite important that facings should fit properly. The least important aspect, with a mean score of 3.8, seemed to be that facings should be

TABLE 17: IMPORTANCE OF WAISTLINES

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
42. Waistline hugs and fits	105	57	36	7	2	3	93	7.00	5	4.4	0.9	1
		54.29	34.29	6.67	1.90	2.86	88.57	6.67	4.76			
43. Waistline sturdily faced	104	46	33	21	2	2	79	21.00	4	4.1	0.9	3
		44.23	31.73	20.19	1.92	1.92	75.96	20.19	3.85			
44. Waistband interfaced	104	47	37	12	5	3	84	12.00	8	4.2	1.0	2
		45.19	35.58	11.54	4.81	2.88	80.77	11.54	7.69			

The results in Table 17 show that the respondents perceived waistlines as an important aspect in casual wear, possibly because casual daywear often comprises separates such as skirts, pants and shorts. All three aspects listed in Table 17 pertaining to waistlines obtained mean rating scores of 4.1-4.4, demonstrating that they are seen to be quite important. That waistlines should hug and fit the figure was apparently the most important criterion with 88.57 percent of the respondents indicating that this aspect was very or quite important. Reader's Digest (2002:184) emphasises the importance of well fitting waistlines, whether closely or loosely fitted. In a study by Fiore and Damhorst (1992:175), the subjects also mentioned the importance of waistlines in the context of quality of pants.

To conclude the discussion on the results pertaining to formal aspects of apparel quality, it can be said that darts, sleeves, fasteners, hems, collars, waistlines, pockets, seams, waistlines, design/style and cuffs, in this order, were all important in assessment of apparel quality, while fabrics and accessories were judge least important among formal aspects.

❑ Performance features

The performance characteristics of apparel establish the standards it meets and delineate the benefits of the garment for the consumer. Performance features entail the garment's aesthetic as well as functional performance (Brown & Rice 2001:47).

4.4.2 Aesthetic aspects of apparel quality

Aesthetic aspects, including colour and general appearance for the purpose of this study, will first be discussed. According to Griffin and O'Neal (1992:187) aesthetic attributes appear to be more important to the female consumer than functional attributes. Aesthetic aspects involve preference formation by consumers, with evaluation being the end of the process. It entails people's responses to their values, views and reactions to the apparel-body-construct (DeLong 1998:339). Brown and Rice (2001:47,48) conclude that aesthetic performance refers to attractiveness.

4.4.2.1 Colour

Table 18 portrays the importance of colour as an aesthetic aspect when assessing fashion apparel, as viewed by the female consumers in this study.

TABLE 18: IMPORTANCE OF COLOUR

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
45. The colour should be fashionable	104	24	30	31	16	3	54	31.00	19	3.5	1.1	3
		23.08	28.85	29.81	15.38	2.88	51.92	29.81	18.3			
46. Colour must compliment features	103	78	21	4	0	0	99	4.00	0	4.7	0.5	1
		75.73	20.39	3.88	0.00	0.00	96.12	3.88	0			
47. Colour must not fade	104	64	27	9	4	0	91	9.00	4	4.5	0.8	2
		61.54	25.96	8.65	3.85	0.00	87.5	8.65	3.85			

Three criteria for the evaluation of colour are listed in Table 18. To the respondents the most important requirement was that colour should complement the personal features, obtaining a mean score rating of 4.7 with 96.12 percent being of the opinion that this aspect is very important or quite important, followed by the statement that colour should not fade, with a mean score rating of 4.5. The requirement that the colour should be fashionable did not seem to be that important, with a mean score rating of 3.5 and only about half of the respondents feeling that this aspect was very important or quite important. Tate (2005:189) confirms that colour in relation to features is an important evaluative criterion for the fashion consumer. Tate and Edwards (1991:46) point out that it is very important to choose colours that are fashionable and flattering to the figure. Zhang *et al.* (2002:59) reveal that well educated people are more aware of colour, style, fashion and brand names. Eckman *et al.* (1990:19) state that purchasers most often apply colour as a positive criterion and conclude that colour may be one of the more important criteria in encouraging a consumer to make a purchase decision. Colour was one of five attributes among 15 features relevant to casual wear which first came to consumers' minds in a study in which Zhang *et al.* (2002:61) investigated consumer behaviour with respect to buying casual wear. Yoo (2003:59) found that design elements impact significantly on aesthetic evaluation of apparel and recommended that studies with colour as a variable should be undertaken in the future.

4.4.2.2 General appearance

Visual appearance seemed to be of utmost importance to these respondents in the evaluation of apparel. Their views on the importance of this aspect in the context of apparel quality are given in Table 19.

TABLE 19: IMPORTANCE OF GENERAL APPEARANCE

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
48. Attractive appearance / visual appeal	103	79	22	2	0	0	101	2.00	0	4.7	0.6	1
		76.70	21.36	1.94	0.00	0.00	98.06	1.94	0			
49. Outfit must elicit compliments	102	48	28	17	6	3	76	17.00	9	4.1	1.1	3
		47.06	27.45	16.67	5.88	2.94	74.51	16.67	8.82			
50. Outfit compatible with items in wardrobe	105	63	31	8	1	2	94	8.00	3	4.4	0.8	2
		60.00	29.52	7.62	0.95	1.90	89.52	7.62	2.86			

Results in Table 19 reveal that two particular aspects listed in the Table were regarded as important evaluative criteria, namely the requirements that the outfit must have an attractive appearance, with a mean score rating of 4.7 and 98.06 percent of the respondents being convinced that this aspect is very important or quite important, and that the item must be compatible with other items in the wardrobe, with a mean score of 4.4 and 89.52 percent respondents finding this aspect very or quite important. The respondents are obviously of the opinion that visual appearance is rather important when assessing the quality of fashion apparel. Tate (2004:65) confirms that a garment that conceals figure problems and flatters the face and body will elicit compliments, another aspect which was found quite important by these respondents. According to Tate and Edwards (1991:2) clothing elicits an instant reaction and therefore this aspect is looked upon as quite an important evaluative criterion. Tate and Edwards (1991:34) as well as Fiore and Damhorst (1992:174) found that great emphasis was placed on the fact that an outfit must integrate and coordinate with items in your wardrobe. Eckman *et al.* (1990:18) confirm that appearance was one of the most frequently mentioned criteria for evaluating fashion apparel in a study on criteria for evaluating women's apparel. Taylor and Cosenza (2002:393) found that for older female teens look was one of the three most important attributes assessed when shopping for clothing.

resistance, seam strength and tear resistance contribute to durability. The findings indicate that all three aspects listed in Table 20 were looked upon as highly important durability factors, and that durability was an important criterion when assessing apparel quality. These findings correspond with those of Forsythe *et al.* (1996:303).

4.4.3.2 Comfort

The opinions of consumers in this study regarding the importance of comfort are given in Table 21.

TABLE 21: IMPORTANCE OF COMFORT

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
54. Garment style is comfortable (ease)	104	75	26	2	1	0	101	2.00	1	4.7	0.6	1
		72.12	25.00	1.92	0.96	0.00	97.12	1.92	0.96			
55. Fabric is comfortable for the season	104	64	33	4	3	0	97	4.00	3	4.5	0.7	3
		61.54	31.73	3.85	2.88	0.00	93.27	3.85	2.88			
56. Fabric must not irritate the skin	104	77	18	4	5	0	95	4.00	5	4.6	0.8	2
		74.04	17.31	3.85	4.81	0.00	91.35	3.85	4.81			

Table 21 reveals that all three aspects of comfort listed here obtained mean score ratings of 4.5-4.7, implying that all these aspects were of very grate importance to the respondents, but ease in the garment style was found to be most important, with 97.1 percent being of the opinion that this criterion was very important or quite important. Stamper *et al.* (1991:309) highlight that garment style must have enough ease to be comfortable, especially if the garment is in the casual daywear range. In a comparative study Hsu and Burns (2002:250) found that subjects from the United States (36 percent) as well as Taiwanese respondents (24 percent) selected garment comfort as the most important criterion for apparel quality. Brown and Rice (2001:198-200) as well as Kadolph (1998:30) mention that fabric with a rough, coarse texture and stiff threads,

such as clear plastic (synthetic) threads used during construction, make an outfit uncomfortable to wear. According to Kadolph (1998:30) fabric hand forms an important part of comfort, and fabric in contact with the skin must have a softer hand than fabric that is not in contact with the skin.

4.4.3.3 Ease of care

The viewpoints of consumers in this study regarding the importance of ease of care when assessing apparel quality are represented in Table 22.

From Table 22 it is clear that the most important requirement regarding ease of care was the dimensional stability of a garment, with a mean score rating of 4.6 and 94 percent finding this aspect very important or quite important. Kadolph (2007:25-28) confirms the importance of garment dimensional stability as a characteristic of casual daywear.

Two other aspects listed in Table 22 which were rated highly, were that garments should be machine washable and the cost and time involved in the care of the garment, with mean score ratings of 4.4 and 4.1 respectively, and more than 75 percent of respondents finding these aspects very or quite important.

TABLE 22: IMPORTANCE OF EASE OF CARE

	N	Very important 5	Quite important 4	Not sure 3	Of little importance 2	Not important at all 1	Positive 4+5	Neutral 3	Negative 1+2	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %	n / %			
57. Machine washable	105	62 / 59.05	27 / 25.71	10 / 9.52	6 / 5.71	0 / 0.00	89 / 84.76	10.00 / 9.52	6 / 5.71	4.4	0.9	2
58. Cost / time involved in care	104	39 / 37.50	39 / 37.50	20 / 19.23	5 / 4.81	1 / 0.96	78 / 75	20.00 / 19.23	6 / 5.77	4.1	0.9	3
59. Dry-cleanable	103	11 / 10.68	21 / 20.39	23 / 22.33	28 / 27.18	20 / 19.42	32 / 31.07	23.00 / 22.33	48 / 46.6	2.8	1.3	5
60. Not only dry-cleanable	104	45 / 43.27	30 / 28.85	15 / 14.42	6 / 5.77	8 / 7.69	75 / 72.12	15.00 / 14.42	14 / 13.5	3.9	1.2	4
61. Dimensionally stable	100	71 / 71.00	23 / 23.00	5 / 5.00	1 / 1.00	0 / 0.00	94 / 94	5.00 / 5.00	1 / 1	4.6	0.6	1

The importance of ease of care reflected in these findings is consistent with Griffin and O'Neal's (1992:185) findings. That apparel should be dry-cleanable did not seem very important to these respondents. Contradictory findings of studies in this regard are reported in the literature. Forsythe *et al.* (1996:303) found that the care variable was not significant for predicting apparel quality when subjected to regression analysis, while Zhang *et al.* (2002:58) found that females especially placed significant emphasis on ease of care, among other considerations when evaluating casual wear before making the final purchase decision. Abraham-Murali and Littrell (1995a:156) tested the impact of various composite factors on evaluation of apparel quality and found that the factors containing care items emerged as important dimensions of quality at various evaluation stages.

4.4.3.4 Fit

The opinions of the respondents regarding the importance of fit when evaluating apparel quality are depicted in Table 23.

TABLE 23: IMPORTANCE OF FIT

	N	Very important	Quite important	Not sure	Of little importance	Not important at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
62. Good overall fit	104	88	14	1	1	0	102	1.00	1	4.8	0.5	1
		84.62	13.46	0.96	0.96	0.00	98.08	0.96	0.96			
63. Style lines flatter figure	103	79	20	3	1	0	99	3.00	1	4.7	0.6	2
		76.70	19.42	2.91	0.97	0.00	96.12	2.91	0.97			
64. Size of figure corresponds with label size	104	67	22	10	4	1	89	10.00	5	4.4	0.9	3
		64.42	21.15	9.62	3.85	0.96	85.58	9.62	4.81			
65. Shoulder line in correct position	104	58	31	11	3	1	89	11.00	4	4.4	0.9	3
		55.77	29.81	10.58	2.88	0.96	85.58	10.58	3.85			
66. No gaping at neck or armhole	103	75	23	5	0	0	98	5.00	0	4.7	0.6	2
		72.82	22.33	4.85	0.00	0.00	95.15	4.85	0			
67. The fit is what you anticipated	103	77	19	7	0	0	96	7.00	0	4.7	0.6	2
		74.76	18.45	6.80	0.00	0.00	93.2	6.80	0			

Table 23 shows that all the criteria listed for good fit obtained high mean score ratings, but the respondents indicated that they found a good overall fit the most important requirement of all these aspects, with a very high mean score rating of 4.8, and 98.08 percent of these consumers finding this aspect very important or quite important. The three following criteria, namely the fit being what they anticipated, style lines flattering the figure and no gaping at neck or armhole, were rated equally important, with a mean score rating of 4.7 each. The last two criteria, namely that the shoulder line should be in the correct position and that the label size should correspond with the figure size, were also rated equally important, with a mean score rating of 4.4 each and 85.5 percent of the respondents finding these aspects very important or quite important, but not as important as the other four criteria. Eckman *et al.* (1990:18) found that fit, styling, colour and appearance are the most repeatedly selected criteria for the evaluation of fashion apparel. Taylor and Cosenza (2002:399) also report findings indicating that fit is one of the three most important features when judging a fashion garment. Roach (1994:491) mentions that there is a greater than ever emphasis on the fit of a garment.

A study by Anderson, Brannon, Ulrich, Jenkins, Early, Grasso and Gray (1998:2) indicated that the fit of fashion apparel is not meeting the demands of fashion consumers and that fit is consistently listed as one of their major dissatisfactions with garment purchases.

4.5 EXTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

Extrinsic attributes are a collective group of evaluative criteria that can be change without changing the product: they include price, brand, product image, label, country of origin, store image and appropriateness for casual daywear.

4.5.1 Price

Table 24 portrays the importance of price as an evaluative criterion when assessing apparel quality.

TABLE 14: IMPORTANCE OF PRICE

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	N	n	n	n	N	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
68. Price is an important criterion	104	48	30	9	14	3	78	9.00	17	4.0	2.0	2
		46.15	28.85	8.65	13.46	2.88	75	8.65	16.3			
69. Price is a good indicator of quality	105	23	28	30	19	5	51	30.00	24	3.4	1.2	3
		21.90	26.67	28.57	18.10	4.76	48.57	28.57	22.9			
70. Casual daywear must not be too expensive	103	39	39	15	8	2	78	15.00	10	4.0	1.0	2
		37.86	37.86	14.56	7.77	1.94	75.73	14.56	9.71			
71. One can benefit from sales	104	42	37	13	10	2	79	13.00	12	4.0	1.0	2
		40.38	35.58	12.50	9.62	1.92	75.96	12.50	11.5			
72. Casual wear should be worth the money paid	104	63	32	7	2	0	95	7.00	2	4.5	0.7	1
		60.58	30.77	6.73	1.92	0.00	91.35	6.73	1.92			

TABLE 26: IMPORTANCE OF BRAND

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
73. Important criterion	105	12	23	25	24	21	35	25.00	45	2.8	1.3	2
		11.43	21.90	23.81	22.86	20.00	33.33	23.81	42.9			
74. Brand names lend prestige	103	14	27	16	24	22	41	16.00	46	2.9	1.4	1
		13.59	26.21	15.53	23.30	21.36	39.8	15.53	44.7			
75. It is a shopping time-saver	104	11	22	22	26	23	33	22.00	49	2.7	1.3	3
		10.58	21.15	21.15	25.00	22.12	31.73	21.15	47.1			
76. Elicit approval from others	104	13	23	29	19	20	36	29.00	39	2.9	1.3	1
		12.50	22.12	27.88	18.27	19.23	34.62	27.88	37.5			
77. It is a short cut in decision making	103	14	22	16	21	30	36	16.00	51	2.7	1.4	3
		13.59	21.36	15.53	20.39	29.13	34.95	15.53	49.5			

The relatively low mean scores (2.7-2.9) obtained for all five statements regarding brand indicates that these consumers did not consider brand very important when evaluating clothing quality. Nearly half of the respondents (46.0-49.5 percent) strongly or mildly disagreed with the statements that claim that brand names are important when evaluating clothing quality that they lend prestige, that a brand name is a shopping time-saver and that it can be used as a short-cut in decision making. Less than 14 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with any of the statements maintaining that brand name can be an important criterion when inspecting a garment with the intention of possibly buying it. These findings are not consistent with those of Bae *et al.* (2003:53) who found that evaluations of the intrinsic attributes of jackets were affected by the brand labels. d'Astous and Saint-Louis (2005:307) found that if garments are to be worn every day (like casual wear) brand name may have less importance than if garments are purchased for special occasions. In a South African study by Van Eck, *et al.* (2004:11) it was found that black adolescent males and females perceive branded clothing more positively than unbranded clothing. In another South African study by Herbst and Burger (2002:43), brand, with an importance of 32.2 percent, was found to

and Saint-Louis (2005:307) found that store image may, among with other aspects have an impact on evaluation of clothing, although this may be less important in the case of everyday wear.

4.5.4 Labels

The importance these consumers assigned to labels as a criterion when buying casual wear is depicted in Table 27.

TABLE 27: IMPORTANCE OF LABELS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
82. Information on labels is a very important criterion	102	29	43	14	10	6	72	14.00	16	3.8	1.1	4
		28.43	42.16	13.73	9.80	5.88	70.59	13.73	15.7			
83. Correct care implies definite retention of shape	104	44	35	11	13	1	79	11.00	14	4.0	1.1	2
		42.31	33.65	10.58	12.50	0.96	75.96	10.58	13.5			
84. Care instructions indicate costliness of care	103	29	46	15	9	4	75	15.00	13	3.8	1.1	4
		28.16	44.66	14.56	8.74	3.88	72.82	14.56	12.6			
85. Fibre content is an indication of ease of care	103	22	37	34	8	2	59	34.00	10	3.7	1.0	5
		21.36	35.92	33.01	7.77	1.94	57.28	33.01	9.71			
86. Fibre content is an indication of the comfort	103	22	34	38	6	3	56	38.00	9	3.6	1.0	6
		21.36	33.01	36.89	5.83	2.91	54.37	36.89	8.74			
87. Fibre content is an indication of the comfort	104	25	37	34	5	3	62	34.00	8	3.7	1.0	5
		24.04	35.58	32.69	4.81	2.88	59.62	32.69	7.69			
88. Fibre content can be an indication of cost	104	23	33	35	10	3	56	35.00	13	3.6	1.0	6
		22.12	31.73	33.65	9.62	2.88	53.85	33.65	12.5			
89. Fibre content is related to appearance	103	23	39	29	10	2	62	29.00	12	3.7	1.0	5
		22.33	37.86	28.16	9.71	1.94	60.19	28.16	11.7			
90. It is important to know your size	104	37	38	19	6	4	75	19.00	10	3.9	1.1	3
		35.58	36.54	18.27	5.77	3.85	72.12	18.27	9.62			
91. Size is important for consumer satisfaction	97	57	33	2	5	0	90	2.00	5	4.5	0.8	1
		58.76	34.02	2.06	5.15	0.00	92.78	2.06	5.15			

Table 27 shows that these consumers were slightly more positive about labels than about store names as an important criterion when purchasing casual wear, with mean score ratings varying between 3.6 and 4.5. The correct size indication on the label seemed to be most important to them, with a mean score rating of 4.5 and 92.78 percent strongly or mildly in agreement with this statement, while 75.96 percent strongly or mildly agreed that following care instructions would warrant retention of the garment's shape and appearance. Nearly equal numbers of respondents strongly or mildly agreed with the four statements related to fibre content, namely that fibre content is an indication of the ease of care of garments (57.28 percent), fibre content is an indication of the comfort to be expected from the garment (59.62 percent), fibre content is related to garment appearance (60.19 percent) and fibre content can be an indication of garment cost (53.85 percent). These fibre content-related statements all obtained a mean score rating of 3.6, indicating that fibre content was of slightly more than moderate importance to these consumers.

4.5.5 Country of origin

The importance attached to country of origin as a measure of quality by these respondents is depicted in Table 28.

TABLE 28: IMPORTANCE OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
92. Country of origin is an important criterion	105	6	23	26	24	26	29	26.00	50	2.6	1.2	2
		5.71	21.90	24.76	22.86	24.76	27.62	24.76	47.6			
93. Country of origin is an indication of quality	104	6	34	29	15	20	40	29.00	35	2.9	1.2	1
		5.77	32.69	27.88	14.42	19.23	38.46	27.88	33.7			
94. One should try to detect the country of origin	104	3	23	23	31	24	26	23.00	55	2.5	1.2	3
		2.88	22.12	22.12	29.81	23.08	25	22.12	52.9			

From the results in Table 28 it can be detected that the respondents were not convinced that the country of origin of garments was an important criterion when buying casual wear. More than half (52.9 percent) were negative about the necessity of making an effort to detect the country where the garment was made, nearly half (47.6 percent) did not find the country of origin an important criterion and 61.58 percent were negative or neutral as to whether the country of origin is an indication of garment quality. The mean score rating for all the statements with regard to country of origin varied between 2.5 and 2.9, confirming that the respondents did not esteem this an important criterion when buying casual wear.

4.5.6 Appropriateness for casual daywear

These consumers' opinions regarding the importance of the appropriateness of outfits for the purpose when buying casual daywear are depicted in Table 29.

TABLE 29: IMPORTANCE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR CASUAL DAYWEAR

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
	N	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
95. Appropriateness of style / design is important	105	43	45	13	3	1	88	13.00	4	4.2	0.8	3
		40.95	42.86	12.38	2.86	0.95	83.81	12.38	3.81			
96. Style / design should be comfortable	104	62	33	8	1	0	95	8.00	1	4.5	0.7	1
		59.62	31.73	7.69	0.96	0.00	91.35	7.69	0.96			
97. Appearance of garment compatible with idea	103	55	38	8	2	0	93	8.00	2	4.4	0.7	2
		53.40	36.89	7.77	1.94	0.00	90.29	7.77	1.94			

From Table 29 it is clear that these respondents found it quite important that outfits bought for casual daywear should be appropriate for the purpose. As many as 91.3 percent strongly or mildly agreed that the style/design of casual daywear should be comfortable, with a mean score rating of 4.5, while 90.29 percent strongly or mildly

agreed that the appearance of the outfit should be compatible with the idea of casual daywear, with a mean score rating of 4.4.

4.6 IMPORTANCE OF STORE CHOICE WHEN BUYING FASHION APPAREL

The importance of store choice was measured to determine which kinds of clothing stores were visited by the respondents, and how frequently. Twenty well-known clothing stores, were listed and grouped into three different categories, namely specialty, department and discount stores to measure the regularity with which the fashion respondents shopped at different store types. The fashion respondents had to indicate how often they buy at different clothing stores. A four-point scale was used, varying from "never" to "more frequently than 5-7 times per year."

The frequency with which these respondents visited various types of stores is depicted in Table 30.

		More frequently	5 - 7 Times per year	1 - 4 times per year	Never	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev.	Ranking Order
Department stores											
Ackerman's	97	8	14	44	31	22	44	31	1.99	0.90	6
		8.25	14.43	45.36	31.96	22.68	45.36	31.96			
Edgars	100	24	16	43	17	40	43	17	2.47	1.04	2
		24.00	16.00	43.00	17.00	40	43	17			
Jet	98	6	8	34	50	14	34	50	1.69	0.87	7
		6.12	8.16	34.69	51.02	14.28	34.694	51.02			
Sedgars	100	3	4	33	60	7	33	60	1.50	0.70	12
		3.00	4.00	33.00	60.00	7.00	33.00	60			
Woolworths	103	41	24	32	6	65	32	6	2.97	1.00	1
		39.81	23.30	31.07	5.83	63.11	31.07	5.83			
Discount stores											
Pep Stores	98	7	5	23	63	12	23	63	1.55	0.90	10
		7.14	5.10	23.47	64.29	12.24	23.47	64.29			
Mr. Price	100	14	15	39	32	29	39	32	2.11	1.00	5
		14.00	15.00	39.00	32.00	29.00	39.00	32			

Table 30 shows that the two most popular *specialty stores* were Truworths, where 37.62 percent of the respondents bought their casual daywear five to seven times per year or more frequently, and Foschini, where 31.31 percent of the respondents bought their casual daywear frequently. All the other specialty stores were less popular, with Joan's being the least popular (1.03 percent). A *department store,* namely Woolworths, where 63.11 percent of the respondents bought their casual daywear five to seven times per year or more frequently, was the most popular of all the stores, while another department store namely, Edgars was visited frequently by 40.00 percent of the respondents. Sedgars, was less popular, with 7.00 percent of the respondents visiting frequently. Mr Price was the most popular *discount store* with 29.00 percent of the respondents frequently buying their casual daywear there, while only 12.24 percent of the respondents visited Pep stores frequently

CORRELATIONS

Correlations among evaluative criteria and selected personal characteristics were computed, with the aim of investigating possible relationships between the above mentioned variables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used in all the computations. P-values $\leq$ 0.05 indicate statistically significant correlations. Correlation coefficients are displayed in the first line and p-values in the second line for each variable in Tables 31, 4.30 and 4.31. Shaded areas indicate statistical significance at a 5 percent level.

TABLE 31: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN EVALUATIVE CRITERIA AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic characteristic	Design/Style	Materials	Construction	Colour	General appearance	Durability	Comfort	Ease of care	Fit	Price	Brand	Store image	Labels	Country of origin	Appropriateness for casual daywear
Age	-0.17	0.11	0.11	-0.20	-0.23	-0.04	0.05	0.01	0.09	-0.05	-0.20	-0.18	0.08	0.45	0.08
	0.83	0.26	0.26	0.04	0.02	0.67	0.64	0.93	0.38	0.61	0.04	0.07	0.44	0.65	0.43
Qualification	-0.19	-0.17	-0.07	-0.08	0.04	0.08	-0.05	0.12	0.20	0.00	-0.18	-0.11	-0.17	-0.17	-0.03
	0.05	0.83	0.50	0.41	0.67	0.38	0.65	0.25	0.05	0.98	0.73	0.28	0.10	0.08	0.80
Spending	0.46	-0.03	-0.08	0.14	0.03	0.00	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.18	0.30	-0.21	0.05	0.24	0.19
	0.00	0.80	0.42	0.89	0.80	0.96	0.80	0.75	0.75	0.08	0.00	0.04	0.60	0.02	0.05
Frequently buying	-0.13	0.02	-0.04	-0.13	-0.23	-0.20	-0.10	-0.04	-0.03	0.09	-0.10	0.04	-0.04	0.00	-0.06
	0.19	0.88	0.72	0.19	0.02	0.05	0.31	0.67	0.78	0.36	0.32	0.68	0.69	0.98	0.56
Income	-0.14	0.10	-0.10	0.17	0.02	0.73	0.20	0.08	0.06	0.19	0.05	0.04	-0.04	0.01	-0.17
	0.15	0.31	0.85	0.10	0.85	0.47	0.05	0.42	0.53	0.06	0.62	0.71	0.68	0.92	0.10

There were thirteen statistically significant relationships between evaluative criteria and demographic characteristics, as depicted in Table 31. It must be pointed out, however, that the correlations were very small, varying between 0.19 and 0.46. Regarding age, statistically significant relationships ($p< 0.05$) were found between age and colour ($r = -0.20$), general appearance ($r = -0.23$) and brand ($r = -0.20$), implying that the older these respondents were, the less important they deemed colour, general appearance and brand. Regarding qualifications, statistically significant relationships ($p< 0.05$) were found between qualification and design/style ($r = -0.19$) as well as fit ($r = -0.20$), which indecates that the more highly qualified the respondents, the less important they considered design/style and fit. With reference to amount spent on casual daywear per month, statistically significant relationships ($p< 0.05$) were found between spending and design/style($r = 0.46$), brand ($r = 0.30$), store image ($r = -0.21$) country of origin ($r = 0.24$) and appropriateness of casual daywear ($r = 0.19$), implying that the more these respondents spent on casual daywear per month, the less importance they placed on store image. Furthermore, the more they spent on casual daywear per month the more important they consibered design/style, brand, country of origin and appropriateness for casual daywear. Regarding frequency of buying casual daywear, statistically significant relationships ($p< 0.05$) were found between colour ($r = -0.23$) and general appearance ($r = -0.20$), implying that the more often these respondents bought casual daywear, the less important they deemed general appearance and durability. With regard to the income group in which the respondents fell, a statistically significant relationship ($p< 0.05$) was found between income and comfort ($r = 0.20$), implying that the higher the income the more important the respondents judged comfort in casual daywear.

TABLE 32: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND STORE CHOICE

Demographic characteristics / Store choice	Age	Qualification	Spending	Frequency buying	Income
Specialty stores	-0.01	-0.06	0.17	-0.02	-0.04
	0.93	0.57	0.09	0.88	0.69
	-0.18	0.05	0.15	-0.22	-0.15
Department stores	0.07	0.66	0.13	0.02	0.12
	-0.13	-0.16	-0.16	-0.12	0.03
Discount stores	0.20	0.17	0.12	0.25	0.73

Table 32 portrays only one statistically significant correlation, namely an inverse relationship between *department stores* and frequency of buying, implying that the more frequently respondentsbought casual daywear, the less they shopped at *department stores*. However, the relationship is very small. All the other relationships are very small and none of them are statistically significant. In a study by Shim and Kotsiopulos (1992:62), they also found no relationship between store choice and personal characteristics.

TABLE 33: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN EVALUATIVE CRITERIA AND STORE CHOICE

Evaluative Criteria / Store choice	Design/Style	Materials	Construction	Colour	General appearance	Durability	Comfort	Ease of care	Fit	Price	Brand	Store image	Labels	Country of origin	Appropriateness for casual wear
Specialty stores	0.25	-0.01	-0.02	0.05	-0.10	-0.10	0.05	0.02	-0.13	0.07	0.09	-0.08	-0.08	-0.01	-0.06
	0.01	0.94	0.81	0.65	0.31	0.31	0.61	0.81	0.20	0.50	0.39	0.39	0.44	0.95	0.57
Department stores	0.12	0.00	-0.04	0.09	0.09	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.04	0.10	0.12	0.10	0.04	-0.09	-0.06
	0.24	0.97	0.71	0.39	0.34	0.83	0.95	0.88	0.65	0.32	0.24	0.33	0.66	0.35	0.58
Discount stores	0.11	-0.16	-0.09	0.11	0.14	-0.19	-0.10	0.13	-0.11	0.23	-0.11	-0.29	-0.15	-0.20	-0.08
	0.07	0.12	0.39	0.26	0.17	0.07	0.31	0.20	0.26	0.03	0.29	0.00	0.14	0.05	0.45

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked how often they bought casual daywear at twenty different stores. These stores were subsequently categorised as *specialty, department* and *discount stores*. Correlations were computed between evaluative criteria and store choice according to the above-mentioned categories and are displayed in Table 33. There were only two statistically significant relationships between evaluative criteria and store choice. A statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) was found between style/design ($r = 0.25$) and *specialty stores*, meaning that the more often the respondents bought casual daywear at *specialty stores,* the more important they considered design/style. The second statistically significant correlation was found between country of origin and *discount stores,* meaning that the more often respondents bought casual daywear at *discount stores,* the less important they regarded country of origin.

Correlations between store choice and demographic characteristics namely race and marital status could not be computed owing to the fact that the latter two variables are nominal data, but the means for various race and marital status groups are compared in Table 33 with reference to store choice.

TABLE 34: POPULATION GROUPS, MARITAL STATUS AND STORE CHOICE*

Demographics / Store types	Population groups				Marital status				
	Asian	African	Coloured	White	Cohabitation	Married	Never married	Divorced	Widow
Specialty stores	1.45	1.65	1.74	1.46	1.63	1.50	1.58	1.50	1.11
	0.22	0.31	0.30	0.27	0.43	0.29	0.26	0.23	0.05
Department stores	2.38	2.29	2.83	2.16	2.25	2.22	2.28	2.19	2.13
	0.82	0.56	0.14	0.51	0.56	0.55	0.60	0.44	0.53
Discount stores	2.08	1.80	2.50	1.79	2.17	1.80	1.83	1.67	2.50
	0.92	0.73	0.87	0.72	1.13	0.67	0.75	0.61	2.12

*

Means are given above the broken line and standard deviations underneath.

Regarding population groups, Coloureds most frequently bought casual daywear at *specialty stores*, with a mean score of 1.74 on a four-point scale, followed by Africans, Whites and Asians. Coloureds also bought most frequently at *department stores*, with a mean score of 2.83, followed by Asians, Africans and Whites. The same frequency buying pattern was followed for *discount stores*, as Coloureds once again bought there most frequently, with a mean score of 2.50, followed by Asians, Africans and Whites. The data may be misleading, however, as there were only three Coloured and six Asian respondents in comparison with 27 African and 69 White respondents. The most popular store type for all four races was *department stores*, followed by *discount stores* and *specialty stores*.

Regarding marital status, respondents living together most frequently bought casual daywear at *specialty stores*, with a mean score of 1.63, followed by those never married, while married and divorced respondents bought casual daywear at *specialty stores* with the same frequency. Those that were never married most frequently bought casual daywear at *department stores*, while respondents living together and married

ladies bought there with equal frequency, followed by divorced ladies and widows. *Discount stores* were the most popular amongst widows, with a mean score of 2.50, followed by those living together, those never married, married ladies and divorced respondents. When observing all the forms of marital status, those living together, married, never married and divorced, all visited *department stores* most frequently, followed by *discount stores* and specialty stores (Nam *et al.* 2007:102). Only widows indicated discount stores as their favorite store, with a mean score rating of 2.50, followed by *department* and *specialty stores*. Once again the data may be misleading as there were only 2 widows, 7 living together, 8 divorced, 19 never married and 69 married respondents.

4.8 Cluster analysis

Cluster analysis is a statistical technique which investigates a collection of variables to determine whether individuals could be clustered into a natural system of groups (Kirkwood & Sterne 2003:106).

4.8.1 Cluster analysis with reference to evaluative criteria factors.

Table 4.33 presents the mean cluster scores and standard deviations for evaluative criteria. Three clusters could be distinguished, each with a specific disposition towards the evaluative criteria listed in the questionnaire.

TABLE 35: CLUSTER SCORES WITH REFERENCE TO EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Clusters / Evaluative criteria	Mean Cluster Scores					
	Cluster 1 (n=10)		Cluster 2 (n=42)		Cluster 3 (n=53)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Design/Style	3.97	0.60	3.87	0.64	4.11	0.53
Materials	2.44	0.48	4.05	0.57	3.97	0.62
Construction	3.19	0.64	4.43	0.46	4.19	0.49
Colour	3.72	0.57	4.17	0.44	4.38	0.50
General appearance	4.13	0.53	4.44	0.56	4.48	0.54
Durability	3.47	0.59	4.77	0.36	4.67	0.48
Comfort	3.57	0.83	4.71	0.39	4.71	0.45
Ease of care	3.44	0.58	4.01	0.56	4.02	0.62
Fit	4.25	0.52	4.65	0.44	4.66	0.50
Price	3.50	0.83	4.06	0.56	4.06	0.69
Brand	2.54	1.00	1.86	0.67	3.64	0.78
Store image	2.68	1.03	2.74	0.96	3.80	0.81
Labels	3.16	0.78	4.11	0.51	3.75	0.70
Country of origin	1.67	0.87	2.46	1.00	3.04	1.06
Appropriateness for casual wear	4.00	0.59	4.43	0.57	4.38	0.69

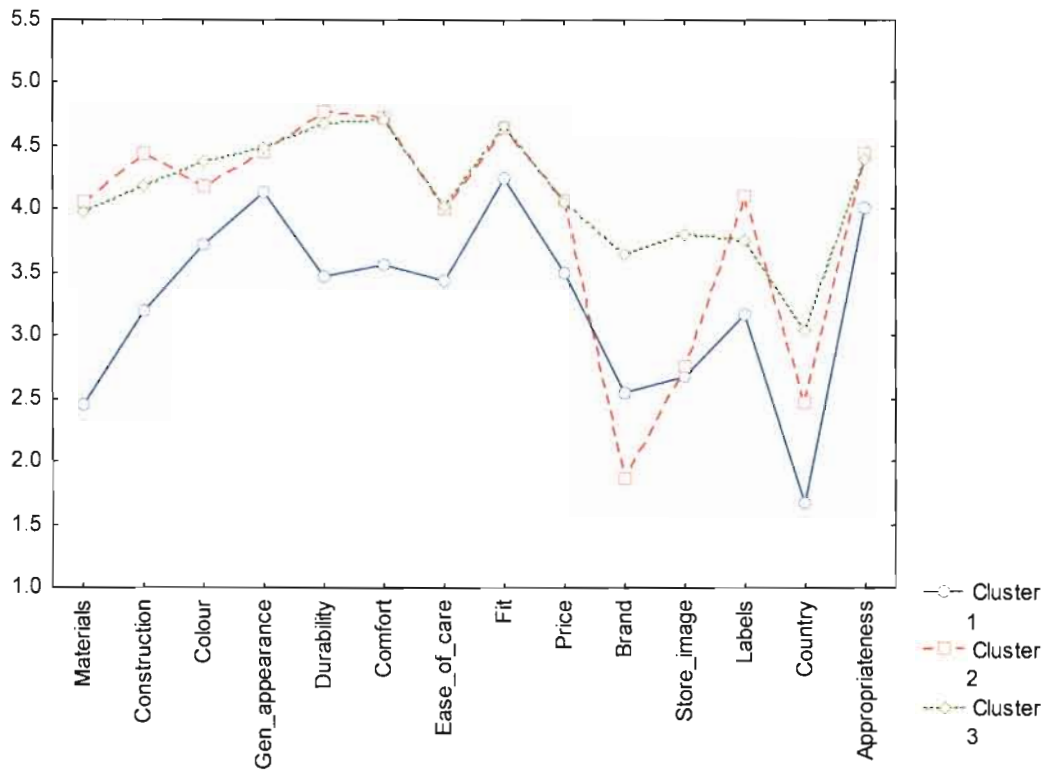The results are also graphically depicted in Figure

FIGURE 2 CLUSTER ANALYSIS FOR EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FACTORS

Group 1 – Unconcerned shoppers   (n=10)
Group 2 – Non status-conscious shoppers (n=42)
Group 3 – Intensive evaluating shoppers (n=52)

Clusters 2 and 3 displayed similar tendencies, while cluster 1 clearly differed from clusters 2 and 3 regarding assessing of the evaluative criteria.

Cluster 1: Unconcerned shoppers

The female consumers in this cluster, which was the smallest cluster (n = 10), evaluated thirteen out of the fourteen listed attributes lower than the other two groups, which is an indication that they were not as concerned about these evaluative criteria as the other groups. These respondents in cluster one were least concerned

97

about *country of origin*, with a mean score of 1.67. They were also not very concerned about *materials, brand* and *store image*, which were all rated lower than 2.68. However, they were passionate about a good overall *fit* which they rated *fit* as the most important requirement of all these aspects, with a high mean score rating of 4.25. *General appearance* was also deemed an important evaluative criterion by them (mean score 4.13). The respondents were obviously of the opinion that visual appearance is nearly as important when assessing the quality of fashion apparel, which corresponds with the view of Tate (2004:63, 64). *Durability, comfort, ease of care* and *price* were of nearly equal importance to them, with mean score ratings varying between 3.44 and 3.50. In this cluster the majority of respondents have a BTech degree and higher or higher qualification, and 90 percent were married or traditionally married. In this cluster 90 percent were White/Caucasian and only 10 percent were coloured.

Cluster 2: Non status-conscious shoppers

In the second biggest cluster (n = 42) 61.90 percent were married / traditionally married, 14.29 percent were living together, 11.90 percent never married, 9.52 percent were divorced and only one was a widow. In this group the majority of respondents had a diploma, followed by 23.08 percent who had a Btech degree and 15.38 percent who had a Masters or higher degree. As in cluster 1 Whites / Caucasians were by far the largest group (73.81 percent), followed by Africans (21.43 percent). This cluster was more concerned with intrinsic attributes and put high and comparable importance on quite a few of these attributes, namely *material, construction, colour, general appearance, durability, comfort* and *fit,* with mean score ratings varying between 4.05 and 4.65. This cluster did not regard extrinsic attributes such as *brand* very important (mean score < 2.0) nor were *store image* and *country of origin* important to them when evaluating clothing quality, highlighting the fact that for them, practicality was an important factor in choosing casual daywear.

Cluster 3: Intensive evaluating shoppers

This cluster followed nearly the same tendency as group 2 in application of intrinsic evaluative criteria. Four ex*trinsic* criteria (*brand, store, labels, and country of origin*) were of average importance to them. *Comfort* and *fit* were of approximately equal but utmost importance to this group (mean score 4.66 – 4.71). Hsu and Burns (2002:250) found that subjects from the United States (36 percent) as well as Taiwanese respondents (24 percent) selected garment *comfort* as the most important criterion for apparel quality.

The third and biggest cluster (n = 52) of respondents were married (64.15 percent) and this correlates with the other two groups. In this biggest group 30.19 percent of respondents had a Masters or higher degree, while the rest of the respondents were well represented in other tertiary qualification levels, indicating a relatively high educational level.

All four population groups, namely Asian (9.43 percent), African (33.96 percent), Coloured (1.89 percent), and Caucasian/White (54.71 percent), were represented in this cluster.

Du Plessis and Rousseau (1999:331) mention that ethnic groups in South Africa have specific buying patterns and specific preferences. The diversity of the population confronts marketers with unique challenges (Terblanché 1998:28, Du Plessis & Rousseau 2003:49).

4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the sample was explained and demographic characteristics of the 105 respondents were discussed, as well as the importance of the various intrinsic and extrinsic evaluative criteria applied by the respondents when shopping for causal daywear. In addition, the popularity of specialty, department and discount stores was investigated. The validity and the reliability of the measuring instrument were discussed and relationships between various sets of variables were determined. To investigate possible similar and differing decision-making behaviour of respondents, cluster analysis was performed. Three groups of respondents, which differed in their use of evaluative criteria, could be distinguished, implying that these respondents could be

divided into three market segments with different interests when shopping for casual daywear. The next chapter will deal with the conclusions of this exploratory study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The broad research aim of this exploratory study is to determine which evaluative criteria are used by female fashion consumers in the Vaal Region to determine apparel quality when purchasing casual daywear, and to what extent the various criteria are applied.

Chapter 1 presented the research problem and objectives of the study. In chapter 2, a literature review was given in correspondence with the research framework, and variables which figured in this study were discussed. Chapter 3 explained the research methodology. Results were discussed, interpreted and compared with findings in relevant literature in chapter 4.

In this final chapter, a summary of the main findings of the study is presented. Conclusions are drawn and the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and implications for clothing retailers are discussed.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Apparel consumers differ with regard to the criteria which they apply when evaluating clothing quality with the intention of making a purchase. In chapter 2, intrinsic and extrinsic criteria which are generally applied by consumers globally to judge apparel quality, were analysed and discussed. Intrinsic apparel attributes include physical features such as design/style, materials and construction as well as performance features such as aesthetic and functional aspects. Extrinsic attributes include price, brand, store image, label, country of origin and appropriateness for occasion, which in this study is casual daywear.

The conceptual framework developed for this study was based on models used for assessment of the quality of clothing products by Mc Cullough and Morris (1980:118), Eckman *et al.* (1990:17), Brown and Rice (2001:47-53), Zhang *et al.* (2002:55) and Retief and De Klerk (2003:25). The study population for this study was female lecturers at tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region. Data was gathered by means of a structured questionnaire. The psychometric properties of this instrument, which tested quality assessment of apparel attributes, were investigated and it can be concluded that the instrument was found both content and construct-valid as well as reliable, and could consequently be used with minor changes. All the original statements were retained.

A demographic profile of the selected sample of respondents was compiled. The South African economy is growing at a satisfactory rate, income levels are rising, population growth is steady and the prospects for apparel retailing are beginning to look positive. Demographic realities are consequently of great importance to manufacturers and retailers. The increase in the number of professional and career women creates new opportunities for clothing retailing, and it is important to take note of these trends which influence clothing buying behavior.

The majority of the lecturers (38.00 percent) were between the ages of 31 and 40, which can be described as relatively young, a group referred to as baby busters or Generation X. This generation, being predominantly career and family oriented, spends more on family activities and education, and less on fashion, implying that quality might be important to them if they have a limited wardrobe, especially considering that colour, brand and general appearance showed a statistically significant correlation with age.

Although the predominant population group was white (65.71 percent), a quarter of the respondents were black, and with indications that the black consumer market is growing fast, it can be assumed that in the near future this target market will be of great importance to retailers and manufacturers. In order to maintain a competitive

advantage, they will need to consider carefully the needs and preferences of this sub-cultural group with regard to apparel quality.

Considering the nature of these respondents' work, it follows that they all had a tertiary qualification, indicating a relatively high educational level and an average income. It can consequently be assumed that they will pay more attention to appearance, which was confirmed by the fact that the correlation between design/style and fit and qualification was statistically significant.

These respondents were predominantly married or traditionally married. According to the literature, marital status impacts considerably on the importance of three particular attributes, namely price, ease of care and durability. In this study, respondents seemed to perceive durability as very important, while they judged ease of care as less important, possibly because married people have personnel who take care of the laundering of their clothing, and they also regard price as less important, maybe perhaps because they place a high premium on quality despite the price.

The vast majority (89.4 percent) were of the opinion that they fell in the middle income group. Comfort was the only attribute which correlated positively and statistically significantly with perceived income, possibly because specialised fabrics with a high comfort rating, and styles that provide comfort without forfeiting elegance are more expensive and can be afforded by those with a higher income. Studies in the literature also report that income significantly influences judgments on comfort.

Regarding the application of evaluative criteria for quality assessment, these respondents used intrinsic apparel attributes to a greater extent than extrinsic attributes. Three functional performance aspects namely durability, comfort and fit were rated equal and most important in judging quality, followed closely by an extrinsic attribute, namely appropriateness for casual daywear. These respondents are lecturers and probably are of the opinion that they should set an example for the students and command respect, and to do so, fit, which is related to appearance, and

appropriateness of clothing would be most important. Moreover, their career is demanding with regard to mobility, so comfort is an important attribute, while durability would assure that the garment retains its original form, appearance and attractiveness, which would further command the students' respect. Aesthetic aspects, including general appearance and colour, were rated third most important, followed by construction in the fourth place, all of which are intrinsic attributes which might contribute to the lecturers' aesthetic image. Among the extrinsic attributes, as mentioned before, appropriateness was rated most important, followed by labels and price, which can possibly be explained by the fact that these academics are rational and reason cognitively about their quality judgments. Brand and country of origin were rated much lower than all the other attributes, which could attributed to a low need for status among these academics.

Upon cluster analysis to investigate whether individuals could be clustered into a natural system of groups based on the respondents' perception of the importance of evaluative criteria used to assess apparel quality, three clusters could be distinguished, each with a specific disposition towards the evaluative criteria listed in the questionnaire. Cluster 2, named *Non status-conscious shoppers,* and consisting of 42 respondents and Cluster 3, named *Intensive evaluating shoppers* and consisting of 52 respondents, displayed similar tendencies, while cluster 1, named *Unconcerned shoppers,* consisting of 10 respondents only, clearly differed from clusters 2 and 3 regarding the importance of the evaluative criteria. All three groups considered appropriateness for casual daywear as the most important criterion, while country of origin was identified least important by clusters 1 and 3, and second last in importance by cluster 2. Cluster 3, the *Intensive evaluating shoppers*, rated all the criteria, internal and external, as much more important than did cluster 1 (the *Unconcerned shoppers*), while cluster 2 , the *Non status-conscious shoppers,* rated all the attributes except brand and store image more highly than did cluster 1 (the *Unconcerned shoppers*). In general, cluster 1 considered all the criteria, except for brand, far less important.

Specialty stores, department stores and discount stores were compared with reference to the frequency with which they were visited. Findings displayed a clear picture regarding store choice. The respondents added negligibly few stores to the list of stores provided in the questionnaire. Department stores, which offer a wide variety of merchandise in different price and quality ranges and are convenient for one-stop shopping, were found most popular, with Woolworths visited by far the most frequently, followed by discount stores, which sell a large variety of merchandise at lower than average prices, among which Mr. Price was visited with moderate frequency, and specialty stores, which carry one or more related categories of expensive, exclusive and highly fashionable clothing, in the last place, among which Truworths was visited most frequently, but far less frequently than Woolworths. Correlations between store choice and use of evaluative criteria revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between specialty stores and design/style, indicating that the needs of customers with a particular interest in design or style of garments will frequent specialty stores when shopping for casual daywear. This narrowly defined group of customers will probably prefer garments with a prominent fashion image. Another interesting finding is that the popularity of discount stores has a negative and statisticant relationship to country of origin, implying that customers who frequent discount stores are not concerned with country of origin, as their other needs, probably for casual apparel which is available in abundance at lower than average prices, are met at these store types.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

One limitation was the fact that the study sample was small, although it included randomly selected respondents from all seven tertiary institutions in the Vaal Region. The sample was limited in number and also not extended to bigger geographical areas owing to restrictions on time and costs, with the implication that the results cannot be generalised to all female lecturers at tertiary institutions in South Africa.

Another limitation is the fact that no types of organisations other than tertiary institutions were included in the study population, so the findings of this study

regarding quality assessment of casual daywear may therefore not be applicable to female employees working at other organisations.

A third limitation was that the distribution of population groups in the sample was not randomly representative of all the population groups in South Africa, so the findings may be biased regarding cultural influences.

Fourthly, the way the questionnaires were administered could be regarded as a limitation to the study. The researcher did not have any direct access to the respondents because of their work circumstances and not all the questionnaires distributed were returned. A total of 150 questionnaires was distributed to heads of Departments and to secretaries for further distribution, but only 105 (70 percent) were returened and could be used.

In the fifth place, practically no South African studies on the use of assessment criteria for evaluating apparel could be found. The findings of the current study could consequently not be compared to findings of similar studies in South Africa.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is a shortage of comprehensive theoretical models dealing with assessment criteria used for evaluating apparel quality. Also, in the few models that could be located, insufficient explanations is given about how consumers compare and perceive the importance of product attributes when making purchasing decisions for apparel. Research on the development and explanation of such models as applicable to South African consumers is consequently recommended.

Studies on various age groups could generate valuable information which could be used for segmenting future markets, especially as consumer groups like the youth or the aged are currently emerging as very prominent apparel shopper groups.

Studies could also be conducted to investigate how male consumers assess various clothing attributes before purchase decisions are made.

Future studies in this field could be conducted amongst different cultural groups to investigate the difference in importance which they assign to the various clothing characteristics when evaluating apparel with the intention of buying.

Consumers employed by other organisations or involved in other careers, for instance students, could be investigated with regard to their perception of the importance of various clothing attributes when making decisions about purchasing apparel.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR CLOTHING MANUFACTURERS AND RETAILERS

Apparel manufacturers and retailers should take note of the outcomes of studies like this one in order to understand consumers' selection criteria when purchasing apparel.

In-depth information on apparel consumer preferences could help retailers to plan their merchandise mix more efficiently.

When planning methods of conveying marketing messages as well as the contents of these messages during promotional activities, information on apparel consumers' use of evaluative criteria should be considered.

Retailers should guide and prepare their sales personnel to address and highlight the apparel attributes of importance to various consumer groups when giving sales assistance.

Information on preferences of different apparel consumer groups could be used by marketers and retailers to identify niche markets and to develop targeting strategies.

Retailers could, in co-operation with consumer educational authorities, develop educational opportunities during which consumers could be made aware of the importance of using a wide variety of applicable evaluative criteria in order to make responsible apparel purchase decisions.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Trends in the fashion market are changing rapidly and marketers are not always aware of contemporary needs of different consumer groups. Changes in social patterns and lifestyle are reflected in clothing. Higher educational levels, better transport which increases mobility, the changing role of women who are increasingly filling career positions and changing value systems, lead to changes in fashion trends and ways in which apparel is evaluated. More leisure time as a result of workers' demands for shorter working hours and a culture of going on holiday have created a need for casual clothing. The understanding of preferences and needs in casual wear and of the criteria used for assessing the quality of casual wear is consequently a very relevant concern which has been addressed in this study and which should receive more attention in future research.

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PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU USE SPECIFIC EVALUATIVE CRITERIA WHEN PURCHASING CASUAL WEAR.

To all respondents

Mrs. Sandra Hugo is currently conducting research on the way in which female lecturers at tertiary institutions evaluate clothing when purchasing casual wear. We need your support and contribution to be able to complete this study. Your participation is **voluntary** and information will be handled **anonymously** and with **confidentiality.** The numbers on the questionnaire are solely for administrative purposes and will not be used for identification.
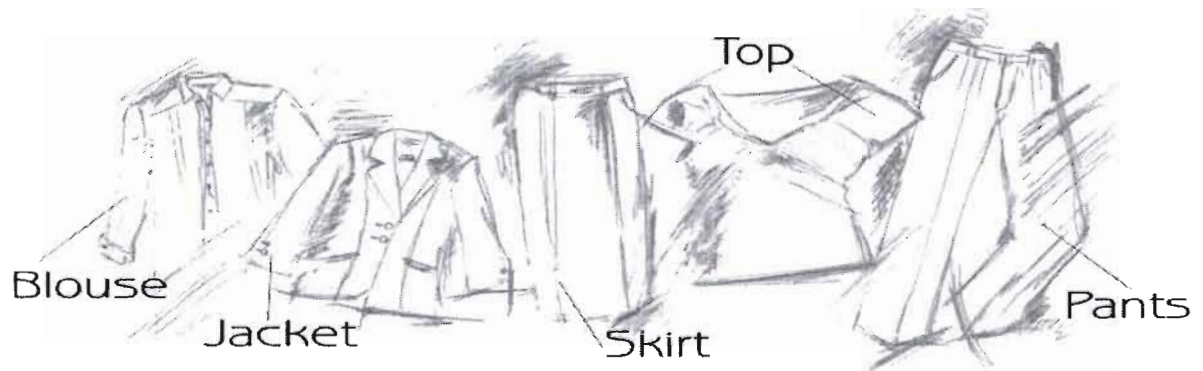
Please read the following questionnaire and complete the questions asked. It will not take more than 30 minutes of your time. Please make sure you answer **all** the questions objectively. There are no right or wrong answers. You have to indicate to what extent you look at specific garment features when buying casual wear. **For example**:

We trust that the research will benefit you as a consumer of casual wear. The result of this study will be available from the researcher, should you be interested.

Thank you for your co-operation and support.

Mrs. Sandra Hugo	Study Leader
Lecturer: Fashion/Clothing	Prof A. M. Van Aardt
Vaal University of Technology	Vaal University of Technology

Questionnaire no.

Name of Tertiary Institution:

For casual wear, how important are the following criteria to you when you inspect the garment with the intention of possibly buying it? Please use the following scale:
Very important: **5** Quite important: **4** Not sure: **3** Not of little importance: **2** Not important at all: **1**

I INTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

SECTION 1: FORMAL ASPECTS

	Very important 5	4	3	2	Not important at all 1
A DESIGN / STYLE	5	4	3	2	1
1. Currently highly fashionable					
2. Design / style is unique and creative					
3. Design / style complements my figure					
B MATERIALS	5	4	3	2	1
4. Overall pleasingness of fabric (feeling, texture, appearance)					
5. Fibre content (composition, e.g. 65%polyester / 35% cotton)					
6. Quality of the fasteners (buttons, zips, Velcro, snap fasteners, etc.)					
7. Quality and attractiveness of trims (ribbons, braids, etc.)					
C CONSTRUCTION CRITERIA					
SEAMS	5	4	3	2	1
8. Seams are flat, smooth and neat					
9. Seams are strong and well finished					
10. Seams are well pressed, not visible on right side, no ridges					
11. Plaids and stripes match at seams					
12. Seams must not irritate skin					
HEMS	5	4	3	2	1
13. Hem hangs evenly					
14. Even width					
15. Hem flat, smooth and inconspicuous					
16. Free from frays or loose threads					
DARTS	5	4	3	2	1
17. Darts fit figure well					
18. Darts on either side of center line identical in size, position and angle					
COLLAR	5	4	3	2	1
19. Collar interfaced with appropriate interfacing (smooth)					
20. Under-collar not visible from the right side					
21. Outer edge smoothly curved and well defined					
22. Symmetrically placed on the neckline					
23. Lapels / collar points identical in shape, size and length					

CUFFS	5	4	3	2	1
24. Cuffs interfaced to give body, support and strength					
25. Cuffs and plackets (sleeve opening) neat, even in size and shape					
26. Buttons and buttonholes on cuffs aligned and positioned correctly					
POCKETS	5	4	3	2	1
27. Pockets neat (identical, same height, matching stripes, plaids)					
28. Aesthetically pleasing					
29. Stitching straight, with correct stitch length					
30. Pocket corners reinforced					
SLEEVES	5	4	3	2	1
31. Sleeves hang in straight alignment, no draglines					
32. Sleeve cap smooth, no dimples, pleats or indents					
33. Comfortable ease around the upper arm					
FASTENERS	5	4	3	2	1
34. Buttons and buttonholes aligned and located at stress points					
35. Sewn on securely					
36. Buttons fit buttonholes well					
37. Zip length adequate for ease during dressing					
FACINGS (neckline, waistline of skirts and pants)	5	4	3	2	1
38. Facing fits properly, without ripples and puckers					
39. Facing not visible on right side					
40. Facing interfaced					
41. Facing edge finished with suitable, flat finish, no fraying					
WAISTLINE	5	4	3	2	1
42. Waistline hugs and fits the figure					
43. Waistline without waistband sturdily faced					
44. Waistband interfaced and neat					

SECTION 2: AESTHETIC ASPECTS

COLOUR	5	4	3	2	1
45. The colour should be fashionable					
46. Colour must complement my personal features					
47. Colour must not fade during use and care (e.g. cotton fades easily)					
GENERAL APPEARANCE	5	4	3	2	1
48. Attractive appearance / visual appeal					
49. Garment / outfit must elicit compliments from others					
50. Garment compatible with items already in my wardrobe					

SECTION 3: FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

DURABILITY	5	4	3	2	1
51. Garment must retain shape and appearance during use and care					
52. Construction must be strong					
53. Trims, zips and buttons must not break in use (sturdy)					
COMFORT	5	4	3	2	1
54. Garment style is comfortable for wear (enough ease, etc.)					
55. Fabric is comfortable for the season					
56. Fabric must not cause skin irritation or itching					

EASE OF CARE	5	4	3	2	1
57. Machine washable					
58. Cost / time involved in care					
59. Dry-cleanable					
60. Not only dry-cleanable					
61. Dimensionally stable (will not shrink or stretch)					

FIT	5	4	3	2	1
62. Good overall fit					
63. Style lines of design flattering for figure					
64. Size of figure corresponds with label size					
65. Shoulder lines match wearer's shoulders					
66. No gaping at neck or armhole					
67. The fit is what you anticipated					

To what extent do you agree / disagree with the following statements regarding price, brands, labels, country of origin, store image and appropriateness of casual wear?

Use the following scale:
Strongly agree: **5** Mildly agree: **4** Not sure: **3** Mildly disagree: **2** Strongly disagree: **1**

Strongly agree ◄ 5 4 3 2 1 ► Strongly disagree
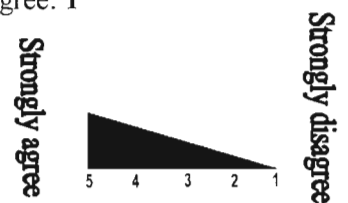
I I EXTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES.

PRICE	5	4	3	2	1
68. Price is an important criterion when buying casual wear					
69. Price is always a good indicator of quality					
70. Casual wear should not be too expensive					
71. One can benefit economically from sales					
72. Casual wear should be worth the money paid for it					
BRAND	5	4	3	2	1
73. Brand name is an important criterion when buying casual wear					
74. Brand names lend prestige to the wearer					
75. Buying brand names is a shopping time-saver					
76. Brand names elicit approval from others					
77. Buying brand names is a short cut in decision making					
STORE IMAGE	5	4	3	2	1
78. Store name is an important criterion when buying casual wear					
79. Store name is a good indicator of quality					
80. Buying at certain stores renders prestige					
81. Preference for a certain store can save time when buying casual wear					
LABELS	5	4	3	2	1
82. Information on labels is a very important criterion when buying casual wear					
83. Following care instructions implies warranted retention of garment shape and general appearance					
84. Care instructions indicate how costly and time-consuming the care of the garment will be					
85. Fibre content (e.g. 65% polyester / 35% cotton) is an indication of the ease of care					
86. Fibre content is an indication of the durability of the garment					
87. Fibre content is an indication of the comfort to be expected from the garment					
88. Fibre content can be an indication of garment cost					

89. Fibre content is related to garment appearance					
90. It is important to know your size for different retailers					
91. Correct size is important for consumer satisfaction					
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	5	4	3	2	1
92. Country of origin is an important criterion when buying casual wear					
93. Country of origin is an indication of quality					
94. One should try to detect the country of origin					
APPROPRIATENESS FOR CASUAL WEAR	5	4	3	2	1
95. Appropriateness of style / design is important when buying casual wear					
96. Style / design should be comfortable for casual wear					
97. The general appearance of the garment should be compatible with the idea of casual wear					

SECTION 4: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION. (STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS)

Please put a cross (x) in the applicable box.

98. AGE IN YEARS		
Younger than 25		1
25 – 30		2
31 – 35		3
36 – 40		4
41 – 45		5
46 – 50		6
51 years and older.		7
99. POPULATION GROUP		
Asian		1
African		2
Coloured		3
Caucasian/White		4
Indian		5
100. HIGHEST FORMAL QUALIFICATION		
Certificate		1
Diploma		2
Btech		3
MTech		4
M Degree or higher		5
Other (specify)_____		6
101. MARITAL STATUS		
Cohabitation / living together		1
Married / Traditional married		2
Never married		3
Divorced / separated		4
Widow		5
102. APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND ON CASUAL WEAR PER MONTH?		
Less than R99		1
R100-R300		2
R301-R600		3
R601 – R800		4
More than R800		5
103. HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY CASUAL WEAR?		
Monthly		1
1 x per year		2
2 x per year		3
3 x per year		4
Only when needed		5

104. IN YOUR OPINION, WITHIN WHAT INCOME GROUP DO YOU FALL?		
High income group		1
Middle income group		2
Low income group		3

SECTION 5: STORE CHOICE
IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STORES DO YOU BUY CLOTHES, AND HOW OFFEN?

	Never 1	1 - 4 Times per year 2	5 - 7 Times per year 3	More frequently 4
105. Ackerman's				
106. Donna Claire				
107. Edgars				
108. Exact				
109. Fashion World				
110. Foschini				
111. Jet				
112. Joan's				
113. Judy's Pride				
114. Milady's				
115. Mr. Price				
116. Pages				
117. Pep Stores				
118. Queenspark				
119. Riandi Boutique				
120. Saleshouse				
121. Sedgars				
122. Topics				
123. Truworths				
124. Woolworths				

Other, please specify the name of the store and how often you buy there.   For office use