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**-RESEARCH ARTICLE-**

# THE MOTIVATION FACTORS AFFECTING SHOPPER BEHAVIOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE

**K M Makhitha**

Department of Marketing and Retail Management
Unisa
Email: makhikm@unisa.ac.za

**T Mbedzi**

Department of Marketing and Retail Management
Unisa

## —Abstract—

South Africa's population is diversified, with 80.9% classed as black. Because of the magnitude of these individuals' purchasing power, retailers must understand emerging consumer behaviour. This study aimed to ascertain which store attributes developing market consumers value most while shopping for apparel. Additionally, the research sought to discover whether there is a correlation between the demographics of emerging market consumers and clothes shop features. The study recruited people using a convenient non-probability sampling strategy. To accomplish the research objectives, 250 developing market customers shopping apparel at the Thavhani Mall in Venda, Limpopo, were surveyed. The social sciences (SPSS) statistical package was used to analyse the data (Version 27 for Windows). The study's findings indicated that emerging market buyers prioritised merchandise over physical facilities and marketing. Considerations of store attribute also varied by gender, but not by age, income, or shopping frequency. This study helps researchers and merchants better understand the clothing shop features that developing market consumers value and the relationship between these consumers' demographics and clothing store attributes.

**Keywords**: Emerging market consumers, clothing stores, store choice, store attributes, demographics

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa's garment sector employs between 60 000 and 80 000 people and contributes 8% to the country's GDP (Cluster, 2017; Makgopa, 2018). In 2005, the clothes retail sector rose to R12.7 billion. Between 2007 and 2012, R11.7 billion and R11.8 billion in growth was restored. Clothing retail revenue increased by R13.5 billion in 2013, owing to government support and merchants' strong marketing (Makgopa, 2018). A store of apparel, accessories, and footwear sells ready-to-wear garments. Some of these clothes boutiques sell financial items and cell phones (Kühn, 2016). Edcon Limited, Truworths, Foschini Group, Woolworths Limited, Mr Price Group Limited, and Pepkor Holdings Limited dominate the South African apparel sector.

While local retailers such as Woolworths, Mr Price, and Edgars have dominated the South African clothing sector, multinational competitors such as Zara, Cotton On, and H&M have increased competition (Authority, 2015; Deloitte, 2015, 2018). International stores operate outside their native nations and have locations in several other countries (Authority, 2015). Zara established its first store in Sandton in 2011 and presently has eight locations throughout South Africa, including one at the Mall of Africa (Jadezweni, 2021). Cotton On, a fast-fashion retailer, based in Australia, has established 180 locations in South Africa. H&M, a Swedish fast-fashion shop specialising in clothing for women, men, teenagers, and children, has established ten locations in the last two years (Pick, 2017). While multinational brands have increased competition in South Africa's clothes retail business, stores like Stuttafords have shuttered after 159 years. Top Shop in the United Kingdom and Mango in Spain have also closed their freestanding locations due to weak sales (Marais, 2017).

Due to the retail clothing industry's competitive nature, research has been conducted to determine the specific clothing store qualities that shape consumer perceptions and affect consumer decisions. For instance, Yang et al. (2020) discovered that they consider price, service, and quality when customers shop. Bellini et al. (2015) discovered that shoppers place a premium on time savings (more accessible access to stores, store layout, and self-service), the quality of the shopping experience (items, environment, and consumer service), cost savings, and merchant trustworthiness. According to Makgopa (2018), the most significant considerations are quality, variety, and trendy products, with cleanliness coming in a close second when choosing a clothing store. Marques et al. (2016) discovered that the essential feature of salespeople was their friendliness. According to Malik (2015), the most critical features were product quality and variety, store hours, and payment simplicity. As a result of the above investigations, it can be concluded that consumers examine various factors while selecting a retailer.

Numerous research has been published on apparel shop qualities (Chang et al., 2015; Makgopa, 2018; Thompson et al., 2018), but none have focused on emerging market consumers. Additionally, there is a dearth of information on what emerging-market buyers look for in a clothes store. Based on his (Cooper, 2010) proposed a comparative study among different age groups and geographic areas. Makgopa (2018) demonstrated that a comparative study across emerging market customers of all genders and ages is necessary by assessing the importance of store features among consumers by age and race. Kühn (2016) stated that future studies should focus on distinct age groups (Kühn, 2016). Thus, this study intended to close gaps in the literature by studying consumer apparel store selection in a province other than Gauteng, specifically the Venda region of Limpopo, and involving consumers aged 18 to 65.

Additionally, multinational retailers have entered the South African clothes retail sector (Authority, 2015), resulting in increased rivalry during tough economic times. As a result, independent retailers must develop clothes stores that are attractive and profitable (Chhabra, 2017; Kovač et al., 2018). As such, the current study's objective is to uncover critical store qualities that developing market customers consider when making clothes store selections and the relationship between demographic parameters and store attributes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The term "positioning theory" refers to the theoretical underpinnings of the investigation. The positioning theory was established in response to separating a product from similar ones. People cannot recall all of a product's characteristics due to the enormous number of products on the market; as a result, consumers recall via association (Garachkovska et al., 2021). According to positioning theory, marketers should position offerings by focusing on the most relevant characteristics to their specific target markets to influence behaviour (Thompson et al., 2018) Thus, the study's objective is to ascertain critical shop qualities that emerging market consumers consider while making a purchase decision.

### 2.2 Emerging Market Consumers

Cooper (2010, p. 4) described a customer as an individual who identifies a need and purchases a product or service to meet that need. Personal use, household use, or a gift for a friend are all acceptable uses for the products and services. This study examined consumers that comprise the largest of South Africa's four population categories, namely the black population, referred to as emerging market consumers. In South Africa (SA), emerging markets account for 80.9% of the population and are predicted to number 46.7 million (Tech, 2018). Previously, developing market customers were not regarded as the primary market since firms believed they lacked the necessary income to be potential consumers (Yang et al., 2020). However, many developing market consumers have risen from poverty to middle-class status due to economic growth following the first democratic election in 1994. (Cooper, 2010). This is why, in the post-apartheid era, many developing market consumers have access to better education and higher-paying, more professional jobs, which results in their decisive purchasing power (Cooper, 2010; Ndlovu et al., 2022).

## 2.3 Clothing Store Attributes Influencing Consumer Choice

Store selection entails consumers comparing and assessing numerous store qualities, which results in consumers selecting or avoiding a particular store. Store must attribute closely fit consumer perceptions of what a store should be, as this affects whether or not people will shop there (Mwai et al., 2018). When consumers decide which store to visit, they take store attributes into account (Marques et al., 2016). To remain competitive, clothing stores must identify the characteristics buyers value most (Bellini et al., 2015).Store attributes are defined as features that a consumer will consider when making a purchase choice (Deloitte, 2018; Ramly et al., 2016). Stores must place themselves following these characteristics (Makgopa, 2018). Brito et al. (2019) and McKay et al. (1972) models suggest that consumer characteristics such as demographics affect the perceived relative value of store qualities. Consumers value aspects such as physical facilities, merchandise, service, convenience, promotion, and store atmosphere, according to Chang et al. (2015), Cooper (2010), Singh et al. (2011), and Thompson et al. (2018). These factors can affect a consumer's store selection and purchase decision. The sections below examine the shop attributes in greater detail.

## 2.4 Physical Facilities

The term "facilities" refers to the infrastructure to facilitate and enhance the shopping experience Hasan et al. (2015). Consumers have a favourable opinion of stores with adequate facilities Plumeyer et al. (2019). Stores should prioritise the following amenities to differentiate themselves from competitors: points of entry and departure; dressing rooms; waiting for places; check-out points; trolleys and baskets for carrying clothing; and in-store moving space (Chang et al., 2015; Cooper, 2010; Plumeyer et al., 2019). A dressing room's functionality is determined by its size, arrangement, and furniture.

Consumers also value store entrances and exits as physical sub-attributes (Mathaba et al., 2017). Additionally, buyers value the ability to move freely between products in a store to avoid colliding with one another (Mathaba et al., 2017). Additionally, shoppers value cleanliness and hygiene in stores (Friedmann et al., 2018).

## 2.5 Merchandise

Merchandise refers to the products or services given by a store. Consumers want to acquire products tailored to their specific requirements and interests (Cooper, 2010; Hasan et al., 2015). Consumers examine goods characteristics like quality, price, variety, brand, colour, size, and style while selecting a clothes retail store from which to purchase (Cooper, 2010; Makgopa, 2018).

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According to Rodgers et al. (2021), buyers place a premium on product quality and price when purchasing items. Stores with a diverse assortment of items have a better chance of addressing client requirements and desires Cooper (2010). Consumers desire a range of sizes and fashionable styles in-store at the time of purchase and believe advertised items must be available in-store when they purchase. Additionally, tags and labels should be easy to locate and read (Kamiyama et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2018) investigated female opinions of the essential store qualities and discovered that women prioritised goods quality, followed by merchandise availability, styling, selection, and accessories.

## 2.6 Consumer Service: Store Personnel and Value-Added Services

Consumer service is described as identifiable yet subtle activities performed in stores that are offered in addition to the products and services sold (Cooper, 2010). Cooper continued, “It encompasses variables like as knowledgeable and friendly sales associates, delivery rules, post-purchase follow-up, and lay-buy services, all of which have a significant impact on the whole retail experience.” Chang et al. (2015), Cooper (2010), and Plumeyer et al. (2019) all emphasised the importance of sales assistants since they provide services that influence consumers’ store decisions (Plumeyer et al., 2019), with friendliness being the most critical feature of their service (Friedmann et al., 2018). Additionally, they must be kind and helpful while assisting sales or while consumers remain in the store.

Another aspect of customer service is payment choices, including credit cards, shop cards, and lay-buy arrangements. By promoting consumer convenience, these payment choices would add value to a store’s consumer service. To further enhance their consumer service, retailers could offer value-added services such as selling cell phones, airtime, and related accessories, making it easier for consumers to acquire all of these things in one location. Additionally, stores should offer free modifications on apparel purchased (T. S. Arora et al., 2016).

## 2.7 Convenience

Convenience can be described as the instant satisfying of a consumer’s need with minimal energy and time expenditure on the client’s part. Hours of operation, parking near entrances, location, accessibility to public transportation to and from a business, and the opportunity to purchase online all contribute to guaranteeing consumer convenience (Chang et al., 2015; Cooper, 2010; Graciola et al., 2020). The store’s location is critical, as it cannot be changed. Consumers’ travel time to a store is influenced by their location and their ability to access the store via public transit. These are critical factors for consumers when deciding which store to visit, and the closer they are to a store, the more likely they are to make a purchase. On the other side, shoppers are less inclined to purchase from a further away store (U. Arora, 2021).

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## 2.8 Promotion and Store Displays

Promotion is a form of marketing used to publicise a retail brand to ensure a positive image of the store in the minds of consumers. It improves a store's image among consumers (Hasan et al., 2015). Promotional components involve sales activities like displays and in-store advertising that entice consumers to purchase. According to Mathaba et al. (2017), posters displayed in stores constitute in-store advertising, whilst window and in-store displays serve as visual showcases for the items sold by stores. Kühn (2016) concurred, adding that window displays may be used to tell customers about a store's offers and promotions and that the apparel used in window displays could be seasonal to increase relevance and necessity. For instance, in January, "back-to-school" apparel can be displayed (Mathaba et al., 2017). Sales promotions, such as discounts, are also used to entice consumers into stores (T. S. Arora et al., 2016), and Hasan and Mishra (2015, p. 13) backed up the argument that promotions help retailers increase sales. According to Kühn (2016), consumers want discounts to obtain rapid gratification with little or no money invested.

## 2.9 Store Atmosphere

The first impression a consumer has of a store is formed by what they see and hear (Cooper, 2010). Thus, atmospherics, or the atmosphere or mood established in a store, is the process of designing a space to impact a consumer's sensory experience (Graciola et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2015; Plumeyer et al., 2019). While retailers historically neglected aesthetics, growing competition today demands them to offer delightful shopping experiences to attract consumers. This implies that retailers should employ attractive scents and music to facilitate happy experiences (Cooper, 2010). Rodgers et al. (2021). 's study of consumer shopping experiences revealed that huge crowds make it difficult for consumers to discover things to purchase.

Additionally, exiting stores may become time-consuming. Additionally, consumers expressed a desire for fresh air, moderate noise levels, adequate illumination, and the lack of unpleasant odours. Retailers should consider pleasant smells, enough lighting, and gentle music to enhance the shopping experience. Graciola et al. (2020) backed up these findings, stating that a pleasant aroma in a store encourages positive consumer behaviour by motivating consumers to remain longer and purchase more items.

As a result, one could conclude that background aesthetics can influence consumers' emotions and inspire them to evaluate in-store products and businesses differently.

## 2.10 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

A conceptual framework represented in Figure 1 has been built using the literature studied. The conceptual framework visually depicts the hypotheses being tested in the investigation. The conceptual framework comprises four hypotheses, which are discussed numerically in the same sequence as in the conceptual framework.

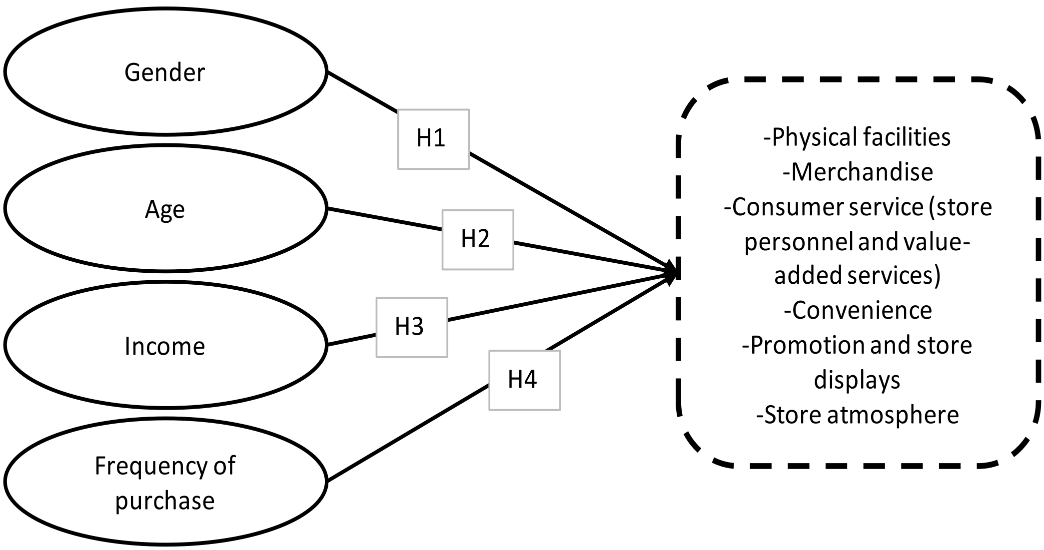


**Figure 1:** A proposed conceptual framework

Research showed that there is a relationship between consumer demographics and store attributes. The relationship between consumer demographics and store attributes is discussed in the subsections below to realise the study's hypotheses.

## 2.11 Relationship Between Gender and Store Attributes

Friedmann et al. (2018) explored how supermarket consumers in Australia value store qualities. According to their findings, male customers place a lower premium on convenience store locations than female consumers. Additionally, females valued regular discounts, weekly specials, and promotional pricing. The results indicated that female consumers prioritised easy parking above male consumers. Additionally, female consumers valued a store's cleanliness and adherence to hygiene procedures. As a result of these data, the following hypothesis was formed:

$H^1$ *There is a significant relationship between emerging market consumers' gender and the store attributes considered when choosing a clothing store for purchases.*

## 2.12 Relationship Between Age and Store Attributes

(Lee et al., 2018) researched female perceptions of significant shop features. Consumer service was evaluated worse by younger consumers (aged 20–29) than by older consumers (aged 30–54). This could be because younger consumers are accustomed to receiving less-than-satisfactory service. Friedmann et al. (2018) found that age and occupation affected the significance placed on store convenience and trading hours. Older consumers placed less importance on trading hours since they had more time to shop during the day, whereas younger consumers had limited shopping time. As a result, retailers must consider extended shopping hours Friedmann et al. (2018). Graciola et al. (2020) confirmed that convenience and store operation hours affected consumers of all ages.

The findings of the preceding study led to the following hypothesis:

H[2] *There is a significant relationship between emerging market consumers' age and the store attributes considered when choosing a clothing store for purchases.*

### 2.13 Relationship between Income and Store Attributes

Numerous scholars examined the effect of income on store features and came to conflicting conclusions.Verma et al. (2015) discovered a statistically significant difference in the link between income groups and the relevance of shop attributes. Mahlangu et al. (2019) showed that income level affected shop attribute perceptions. In contrast to these findings, Makhitha and Khumalo (2019, p. 23) and Parker et al. (2019) observed that wealth did not affect the traits viewed as necessary by customers.

These observations provided evidence in favour of the following hypothesis:

H[3] *There is a significant relationship between emerging market consumers' income and the store attributes considered when choosing a clothing store for purchases.*

### 2.14 Relationship Between Frequency of Purchase and Store Attributes

Consumers who visit a particular store are more likely to be educated about it due to their favourable experiences with its quality, shopping environment, service, and ambience (Graciola et al., 2020) discussed how excellent in-store experiences improved customers' impressions of a store, (Makhitha, 2014) discovered that store features affected shopping frequency.

As a result, the following theory was devised:

H[4] *There is a significant relationship between emerging market consumers' purchase frequency and the store attributes being considered when choosing a clothing store for purchases.*

Against this backdrop, it is crucial to ascertain whether the relationship between consumer demographics and store qualities holds for South African apparel stores.

## 3. RESEARCH STRATEGY

### 3.1 Research Design

As was the case with prior studies on the subject (Kim, 2018), quantitative research was used to conduct the study. It was the most appropriate approach for this study since a bigger sample size was required to corroborate and define the shop features valued by developing market consumers in South Africa. According to Babbie (2010), quantitative research enables respondents to choose the most appropriate response from a pool of available responses and the researcher to compare responses.

## 3.2 Sampling and Population of the Study

This study employed a convenience non-probability sampling technique. That was appropriate, as all shoppers at the Thavhani Mall in Venda, Limpopo, were stopped and asked to complete the questionnaire to aid the researcher in attaining the study's objectives. Additionally, convenience sampling is simple to conduct, takes less time, and is more cost-effective (Cooper, 2010).

## 3.3 Data Collection and Measuring Instrument

The existing research was used to develop the questionnaire items necessary to accomplish the study's aims. Numerous attributes were examined, and the following questionnaire items were adapted from the studies cited: physical facilities (Plumeyer et al., 2019; Vermaak et al., 2017), merchandise (Cooper, 2010; Kamiyama et al., 2019), customer service (Cooper, 2010; Plumeyer et al., 2019), convenience (T. S. Arora et al., 2016; Cooper, 2010), promotion and store displays (Cooper, 2010) (Hasan et al., 2015; Plumeyer et al., 2019). Fifty-two questionnaire items assessed the following six variables: Eight categories assessed physical facilities, four assessed customer service, four assessed convenience, four assessed value-added services, three assessed promotion, three assessed in-store displays, and three assessed store atmosphere. Demographic data about the respondents were also gathered, as detailed in the following sections. A Likert scale was used to collect data, using a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating strong agreement and 1 indicating strong disagreement. Gender was determined using dichotomous questions, whereas age, income, and purchase frequency were determined using multiple-choice questions. At the mall, two trained field workers gathered data. Shoppers passing through the mall were stopped and asked to complete voluntary questionnaires. Each shopper answered a questionnaire on their own. There was no monetary compensation associated with the completion of the questionnaires. More than 300 surveys were distributed, with 250 being filled.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Version 27 for Windows). Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and ANOVA were used in the statistical study (analysis of variance).

## 3.5 Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was utilised to determine the reliability of the study by determining the reliability of the items used to test the store attribute variables. All six variables measuring store attributes were reliable: physical facilities (0.852), consumer services (0.843), Convenience (0.788), Value-added services (0.742), Merchandise (0.718),

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promotion (0.802), store display (0.728) and store atmosphere (0.706). Overall dependability was 0.867, which was likewise satisfactory.

Additionally, there was a strong Pearson correlation between the constructs, with most correlations having a minimum cut-off value of 0.30. (Kyriazos, 2018). To ensure the questionnaire's content validity, it was created utilising previously published material, as detailed in the research methodology section above. Additionally, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to validate the factors. This study established a minimum of 0.5 for commonalities, exceeding the Child's stated minimum of 0.2. (2006).

## 4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Demographic Profiling of Clothing Store Shoppers

The age group 18–29 years comprised the largest sample, with 68% (n=144) of the respondents falling in that age group. The 30–40 years group followed, representing about 23% (n=51) of the respondents. Males were more represented than females (at about 60% of the respondents [n=125]). Most of the respondents were unmarried (77% [n=169]). Most respondents had educational qualifications (degrees 33% [n=73] and diplomas 28% [n=62]), and the sample population comprised a high percentage of buyers with an income of R2 500 and below, with more than 45% (n=101) falling in that category, followed by those earning between R2 500 and R5 000 (just over 17% [n=39] of the respondents).

In addition to the above, respondents visited certain stores more than others. For example, visits to Mr Price comprised (17%, n=36), followed by Sportscene (10%, n=22), Markhams (9.9%, n=21) and Truworths (9.4%, n=20).

Most respondents did not shop for clothes frequently (31%, n=68), with 30% (n=66) shopping for clothes monthly, followed by 25% (n=54) shopping for clothes three to four times a year. Most respondents visited three to four stores (29.3%, n=66) per mall visit, followed by those who visited between five and six stores (25%, n=56) and more than six stores (27.6%, n= 62) per visit.

### 4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was used to minimise the dimensionality of the data, in conjunction with IBM SPSS Statistics 27 to explore patterns of association between the questions used to determine which store qualities are most important when browsing at a clothes store. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the factorability of the correlation matrix. Numerous coefficients of 0.3 and above were seen in the correlation matrix. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin coefficient was 0.790, significantly more than the suggested minimum value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) gained statistical significance, p.001. As a result, the correlation matrix was shown to be factorable.

After subjecting 52 items to PCA, a 15-factor solution was identified that explained 71.626% of the variance in the data. Nineteen variables were excluded from the solution because they did not contribute to it in any way, including items loading effectively equally on multiple factors, one item loading alone on a factor, items not loading on any factor with a loading of.4, and a factor with only two items that are not well correlated or internally consistent.

The remaining 33 items produced an eight-factor solution that accounted for 63.765% of the variation in the data. Varimax rotation was used to minimise correlations between latent components. Excluding factor loadings smaller than 0.4 resulted in a simple structure (Thurstone, 1947),with each of the eight factors exhibiting several significant loadings, as illustrated in Table 1 below. As evidenced by Cronbach's alpha coefficients in Table 1, all extracted components exhibit good/acceptable internal consistency. The eight variables were as follows: Factor 1 (physical facilities, eight items), Factor 2 (service, four items), Factor 3 (convenient, four items), Factor 4 (value-added, four items), Factor 5 (merchandise, four items), Factor 6 (promotion, four items), Factor 7 (promotion, three items), and Factor 8 (store environment, three items.

As seen in Table 1, respondents prioritised the merchandise given by clothes stores over other variables. The high mean score of 4.30 (n=228; standard deviation [SD] =0.56) reflects this. Promotions were rated as the second most important quality (M=4.23; n=228; SD=0.72), followed by store personnel services in clothes stores (M=4.12; n=228; SD=0.77). The retail environment, convenience, and additional value were evaluated as least important, with mean scores of 3.45 (n=228, SD=1.09), 3.55 (n=228; SD=0.89), and 3.79 (n=22, SD=0.82), respectively. According to Kamiyama et al. (2019), the most significant store attribute is merchandise, followed by service. The study's conclusions highly back this that the most crucial attribute while shopping for clothing is the merchandise.

Thompson et al. (2018) also discovered that merchandise is the essential attribute of a clothes store, followed by value for money. It is also worth mentioning that, while consumers examine a variety of store features while shopping for apparel, merchandise is the most prevalent, and thus most essential, clothing store attribute to consider. This is true, as merchandising comprises many factors, including the brand names supplied in-store, the quality and variety of things available in a clothing retail store, and the store's cleanliness (Makgopa, 2018). In contrast to the findings of this study, Selema et al. (2018) found convenience to be the most critical factor influencing store selection, while Thompson et al. (2018) found convenience to be the least important factor influencing store selection. Thompson et al. (2018) similarly discovered that store atmosphere is the least essential store characteristic. Dabija and Babut (2019) discovered that store advertising, employees, and assortment contribute to the study's conclusions.

**Table 1: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

| **Variables** | **Physical facilities** | **Service: Store personnel** | **Convenience** | **Value added services** | **Merchandise** | **Promotions** | **In-store displays** | **Store atmosphere** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easy access to store exit | **.828** | | | | | | | |
| Enough light in dressing rooms | **.775** | | | | | | | |
| Ease of movement between products in the store | **.699** | | | | | | | |
| Availability of trolleys or baskets to carry clothing | **.682** | | | | | | | |
| Enough light in the store | **.669** | | | | | | | |
| Enough check-out points | **.615** | | | | | | | |
| Easy access to store entrance | **.597** | | | | | | | |
| Full-length mirrors in dressing rooms | **.522** | | | | | | | |
| Sales assistants that are knowledgeable about products in store | | **.810** | | | | | | |
| Friendly sales assistants | | **.803** | | | | | | |
| Helpful sales assistants | | **.772** | | | | | | |
| Enough sales assistants | | **.711** | | | | | | |
| Clothing store close to home | | | **.860** | | | | | |
| Clothing store close to work or school | | | **.782** | | | | | |
| Other clothing stores located nearby | | | **.698** | | | | | |
| Convenient store hours | | | **.503** | | | | | |
| The store sells cell phones and accessories | | | | **.810** | | | | |
| The store offers lay-buy services | | | | **.698** | | | | |
| Availability of a store card | | | | **.661** | | | | |
| Store sells airtime | | | | **.655** | | | | |
| Variety of clothing styles sold | | | | | **.818** | | | |
| Variety of clothing sizes sold | | | | | **.749** | | | |
| Variety of brand names sold | | | | | **.715** | | | |
| Fashionable styles | | | | | **.558** | | | |
| Availability of discounts offered by a store | | | | | | **.810** | | |
| Being able to find real bargains | | | | | | **.801** | | |
| Being able to find items on sale | | | | | | **.786** | | |
| Visible in-store advertisements | | | | | | | **.783** | |

**Table 1: Continued**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Window displays of clothing in-store | | | | | | | **.712** | |
| In-store display of clothing | | | | | | | **.679** | |
| Crowds in-store | | | | | | | | **.844** |
| Smells in-store | | | | | | | | **.785** |
| The loudness of music playing in-store | | | | | | | | **.671** |
| **Mean score** | **4.01** | **4.12** | **3.55** | **3.79** | **4.30** | **4.23** | **4.03** | **3.48** |
| **Standard deviation** | **0.62** | **0.77** | **0.89** | **0.82** | **0.56** | **0.72** | **0.70** | **1.09** |
| **Cronbach alpha, Overall= 0.867** | **0.85** | **0.85** | **0.79** | **0.74** | **0.72** | **0.80** | **0.73** | **0.71** |

**Demographic Factors and Clothing Store Attributes**

***Gender and store attributes***

The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether gender significantly affects the importance of clothing store attributes. As appears in Table 2 below, gender has a significant effect on how vital *service – in-shop assistance* ($t(209)=-2.002$, $p<.05$) and *merchandise* ($t(208)=-2.659$, $p<.001$) are when choosing a clothing store from which to buy. The practical significance of the differences is small to medium, as can be seen from the effect sizes in the following table. On average, Females (M=4. 236, n=86) attach significantly more importance to *service–in-shop assistance* than Males (M=4. 024, n=125). On average, Females (M=4. 413, n=86) attach significantly more importance to the *Merchandise* than Males (M=4. 203, n=124).

According to Chowdhury (2020), females have unique viewpoints and motivations for their purchases, corroborated by this study's result that attribute importance varied by consumer gender. Previous research has discovered that gender and age affect the shop qualities consumers prioritise while making clothes purchases (Mihić et al., 2018). Kotze, North, Stols, and Venteret (2012) discovered significant gender disparities. Thompson et al. (2018) also discovered disparities in the features males and females seek when shopping, consistent with Parker et al. (2019) finding that males and females perceive store attributes differently.

## 4.3 Age and Clothing Store Attributes

The one-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether age has a significant effect on how important the respondents consider store attributes. Note that the age variable had very few cases in the over 50 groups and was recoded to have a single group for those over 50. The one-way ANOVA test found that age has a significant effect on how important the respondents consider *service–in-shop assistance* ($F(4)= 2.558$, $p<.05$) to be. However, no significant differences were found in the pair-wise comparisons. This appears in Table 3 below. This result is corroborated by the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, which indicates that there is no significant effect of Age on Service–in–*shop assistance.*

The above findings are supported by Dabija et al. (2019), who found that store advertising, personnel and assortment influence store choice. However, Dabija et al. (2019) findings differ from this study in that only personnel was found to influence store choice and no other factors among the different age groups. The findings concerning the significant role of age contradict the findings of (Dhiman et al., 2018),who also found that the importance of clothing store attributes differed across age groups. Parker et al. (2019) also reported differences in the importance of store attributes among different age groups.

**Table 2: Independent Samples Test- Gender**

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Physical facilities | Equal variances assumed | .503 | .479 | -1.538 | 209 | .125 | -.13313 | .08654 | -.30374 | .03748 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.513 | 172.091 | .132 | -.13313 | .08797 | -.30676 | .04051 |
| Service - in-shop assistance | Equal variances assumed | .661 | .417 | -2.002 | 209 | .047 | -.21147 | .10565 | -.41974 | -.00319 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.986 | 177.715 | .049 | -.21147 | .10649 | -.42160 | -.00133 |
| Convenience | Equal variances assumed | .330 | .566 | .035 | 206 | .972 | .00452 | .12744 | -.24674 | .25578 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .035 | 167.286 | .972 | .00452 | .12924 | -.25062 | .25967 |
| Service - value add | Equal variances assumed | .609 | .436 | -1.486 | 204 | .139 | -.17540 | .11803 | -.40811 | .05730 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.479 | 170.826 | .141 | -.17540 | .11857 | -.40946 | .05865 |
| Merchandise | Equal variances assumed | 2.585 | .109 | -2.659 | 208 | .008 | -.20983 | .07892 | -.36541 | -.05426 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -2.761 | 202.946 | .006 | -.20983 | .07599 | -.35967 | -.06000 |
| Promotion visibility | Equal variances assumed | .022 | .881 | -1.008 | 205 | .315 | -.10367 | .10284 | -.30643 | .09908 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.018 | 181.719 | .310 | -.10367 | .10184 | -.30462 | .09728 |
| In-store display | Equal variances assumed | 2.138 | .145 | -.852 | 205 | .395 | -.08440 | .09912 | -.27982 | .11102 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.834 | 162.889 | .406 | -.08440 | .10124 | -.28431 | .11551 |
| Store atmosphere | Equal variances assumed | .891 | .346 | -1.277 | 206 | .203 | -.19971 | .15636 | -.50798 | .10856 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.249 | 162.355 | .213 | -.19971 | .15984 | -.51534 | .11592 |

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**Table 3: ANOVA- Age**

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical facilities | Between Groups | 2.093 | 4 | .523 | 1.361 | .249 |
| | Within Groups | 83.826 | 218 | .385 | | |
| | Total | 85.919 | 222 | | | |
| Service - in-shop assistance | Between Groups | 5.960 | 4 | 1.490 | 2.558 | .040 |
| | Within Groups | 126.981 | 218 | .582 | | |
| | Total | 132.941 | 222 | | | |
| Convenience | Between Groups | 2.372 | 4 | .593 | .737 | .568 |
| | Within Groups | 172.205 | 214 | .805 | | |
| | Total | 174.577 | 218 | | | |
| Service - value add | Between Groups | 4.374 | 4 | 1.093 | 1.643 | .165 |
| | Within Groups | 141.755 | 213 | .666 | | |
| | Total | 146.128 | 217 | | | |
| Merchandise | Between Groups | 2.225 | 4 | .556 | 1.740 | .142 |
| | Within Groups | 69.368 | 217 | .320 | | |
| | Total | 71.593 | 221 | | | |
| Promotion visibility | Between Groups | .696 | 4 | .174 | .326 | .861 |
| | Within Groups | 114.292 | 214 | .534 | | |
| | Total | 114.987 | 218 | | | |
| In-store display | Between Groups | .750 | 4 | .187 | .371 | .829 |
| | Within Groups | 108.197 | 214 | .506 | | |
| | Total | 108.947 | 218 | | | |
| Store atmosphere | Between Groups | 4.352 | 4 | 1.088 | .888 | .472 |
| | Within Groups | 263.537 | 215 | 1.226 | | |
| | Total | 267.888 | 219 | | | |

## 4.4 Income and Clothing Store Attributes

The one-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether income significantly affects how important the respondents consider store attributes, as presented in Table 4 below.

The Welch ANOVA test found that income has a significant effect on the importance of *Store atmosphere* ($F(5,53.319)=4.271$, $p<.01$) when deciding on where to do clothing shopping. Post hoc results in the Multiple comparisons table below indicate the following significant difference: The R2 501 - R5 000 income group (M=3.111, n=39) consider Store atmosphere significantly less critical than the 12 501 - R20 000 income group (M=4.033, n=30).

Whilst this study has found that income influences attribute influencing store choice, other studies found that income does not have such influence (Mahlangu et al., 2019; Makhitha, 2014). The findings of Verma et al. (2015) support that store attributes influencing store choice differ across income groups**.**

## 4.5 (Makhitha, 2014)Frequency of purchase

The one-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether shopping frequency has a significant effect on how important the respondents consider store attributes. The Welch ANOVA test found that Shopping frequency has a significant effect on the importance of *Physical facilities* ($F(4,26.818)=3.416$, $p<.05$) when deciding on where to do clothing shopping. The post hoc results in the Multiple comparisons table below indicate the following significant difference: Those who shop infrequently (M=4.093, n=68) consider *Physical facilities* significantly more important than those who shop 3 to 4 times per year (M=3.7517, n=54). The results are shown in Table 5 below.

This study's findings differ from Martínez-Ruiz et al. (2017), whose study reported that store attributes differ across the frequency of users with regular users emphasising convenience and store atmosphere while occasional users are emphasising store atmosphere and value for money. The study further reiterated that store atmosphere is essential for non-users.

## 4.6 Marital status and clothing store attributes

The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether the marital status significantly affects the importance of clothing store attributes. Marital status has a significant effect on how important the respondents consider the *Physical facilities* of a clothing store ($t(217)= 2.652$, $p<.01$) and the *convenience* of a clothing store ($t(213)= 2.370$, $p<.05$). The practical significance of the differences is small to medium, as can be seen from the effect sizes in Table 5. On average, married respondents (M=4.2129, n=50) attach significantly more importance to the Physical facilities than unmarried respondents (M=3.9510, n=169). On average, married respondents (M=3.8167, n=50) attach significantly more importance to convenience than unmarried respondents (M=3.4788, n=165). The results are shown in Table 6 below:

**Table 4: ANOVA- Income**

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical facilities | Between Groups | .713 | 5 | .143 | .366 | .872 |
| | Within Groups | 83.850 | 215 | .390 | | |
| | Total | 84.563 | 220 | | | |
| Service - in-shop assistance | Between Groups | 3.287 | 5 | .657 | 1.095 | .364 |
| | Within Groups | 129.115 | 215 | .601 | | |
| | Total | 132.402 | 220 | | | |
| Convenience | Between Groups | .194 | 5 | .039 | .048 | .999 |
| | Within Groups | 171.771 | 211 | .814 | | |
| | Total | 171.965 | 216 | | | |
| Service - value add | Between Groups | 4.084 | 5 | .817 | 1.259 | .283 |
| | Within Groups | 136.225 | 210 | .649 | | |
| | Total | 140.309 | 215 | | | |
| Merchandise | Between Groups | .805 | 5 | .161 | .511 | .768 |
| | Within Groups | 67.488 | 214 | .315 | | |
| | Total | 68.293 | 219 | | | |
| Promotion visibility | Between Groups | 2.726 | 5 | .545 | 1.064 | .382 |
| | Within Groups | 108.166 | 211 | .513 | | |
| | Total | 110.892 | 216 | | | |
| In-store display | Between Groups | 1.690 | 5 | .338 | .671 | .646 |
| | Within Groups | 106.306 | 211 | .504 | | |
| | Total | 107.996 | 216 | | | |
| Store atmosphere | Between Groups | 19.220 | 5 | 3.844 | 3.291 | **.007** |
| | Within Groups | 247.594 | 212 | 1.168 | | |
| | Total | 266.814 | 217 | | | |

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**Table 5: ANOVA- Frequency of Purchase**

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical facilities | Between Groups | 6.612 | 4 | 1.653 | 4.566 | **.001** |
| | Within Groups | 77.475 | 214 | .362 | | |
| | Total | 84.088 | 218 | | | |
| Service - in-shop assistance | Between Groups | 3.682 | 4 | .920 | 1.554 | .188 |
| | Within Groups | 126.735 | 214 | .592 | | |
| | Total | 130.416 | 218 | | | |
| Convenience | Between Groups | 2.015 | 4 | .504 | .634 | .638 |
| | Within Groups | 166.733 | 210 | .794 | | |
| | Total | 168.748 | 214 | | | |
| Service - value add | Between Groups | 1.941 | 4 | .485 | .726 | .575 |
| | Within Groups | 140.368 | 210 | .668 | | |
| | Total | 142.309 | 214 | | | |
| Merchandise | Between Groups | 1.480 | 4 | .370 | 1.163 | .328 |
| | Within Groups | 67.787 | 213 | .318 | | |
| | Total | 69.267 | 217 | | | |
| Promotion visibility | Between Groups | 1.012 | 4 | .253 | .478 | .752 |
| | Within Groups | 111.691 | 211 | .529 | | |
| | Total | 112.703 | 215 | | | |
| In-store display | Between Groups | 1.091 | 4 | .273 | .551 | .698 |
| | Within Groups | 103.944 | 210 | .495 | | |
| | Total | 105.036 | 214 | | | |
| Store atmosphere | Between Groups | 1.954 | 4 | .489 | .412 | .800 |
| | Within Groups | 250.226 | 211 | 1.186 | | |
| | Total | 252.181 | 215 | | | |

**Table 6: Independent Samples Test- Marital Status**

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Physical facilities | Equal variances assumed | .001 | .980 | 2.652 | 217 | .009 | .26185 | .09875 | .06723 | .45647 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.653 | 80.282 | .010 | .26185 | .09871 | .06543 | .45827 |
| Service - in-shop assistance | Equal variances assumed | .251 | .617 | 1.726 | 217 | .086 | .21491 | .12448 | -.03043 | .46026 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.644 | 74.875 | .104 | .21491 | .13074 | -.04554 | .47537 |
| Convenience | Equal variances assumed | .001 | .975 | 2.370 | 213 | .019 | .33788 | .14254 | .05692 | .61884 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 2.372 | 81.059 | .020 | .33788 | .14244 | .05447 | .62128 |
| Service - value add | Equal variances assumed | .190 | .663 | -1.629 | 212 | .105 | -.21181 | .13005 | -.46816 | .04454 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.546 | 75.226 | .126 | -.21181 | .13702 | -.48476 | .06114 |
| Merchandise | Equal variances assumed | 2.111 | .148 | .801 | 216 | .424 | .07333 | .09157 | -.10715 | .25382 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .739 | 72.002 | .462 | .07333 | .09927 | -.12456 | .27122 |
| Promotion visibility | Equal variances assumed | .711 | .400 | .387 | 213 | .699 | .04586 | .11836 | -.18745 | .27916 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .406 | 87.373 | .686 | .04586 | .11292 | -.17858 | .27029 |
| In-store display | Equal variances assumed | .506 | .478 | .952 | 213 | .342 | .10869 | .11411 | -.11625 | .33362 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .967 | 82.922 | .336 | .10869 | .11239 | -.11485 | .33222 |
| Store atmosphere | Equal variances assumed | .105 | .746 | 1.031 | 214 | .304 | .18225 | .17674 | -.16612 | .53062 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.035 | 81.222 | .304 | .18225 | .17612 | -.16815 | .53265 |

The above-confirmed influence of marital status and frequency of purchase on the attributes in clothing stores that are regarded as necessary was also documented in previous studies (Mahlangu et al., 2019; Makhitha, 2014; Witek et al., 2021), the findings of which demonstrated a difference between the views on important store attributes between married and unmarried consumers and the frequency of purchase.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that developing market customers prioritise store products while shopping for clothing. This was followed by marketing and the services supplied by retailers' workers. The store environment, convenience, and value-added services were the least important characteristics. The respondent's gender affected the store features that influenced store choice, with service – in-store assistance and merchandise having a more significant influence than other aspects on purchasing clothing from a particular store. Females place a higher premium on service — in-store assistance – than males do and a substantially higher premium on merchandise. Consumers' ages were reported to affect the store qualities that influenced their purchase decisions, while no substantial disparities between age groups could be found.

Income had a substantial effect on the significance respondents placed on store atmosphere in their store selection, with respondents in the R2 501 - R5 000 income bracket placing it significantly lower than respondents in the 12 501 - R20 000 income bracket. Shopping frequency was found to have a substantial effect on the perceived importance of Physical facilities, with post hoc analyses indicating that individuals who shop infrequently value Physical facilities significantly more than those who shop three to four times per year. Additionally, marital status had a substantial effect on how respondents rated the physical facilities and convenience of the clothes store. Married respondents place a more significant premium on physical facilities than unmarried respondents. Additionally, married respondents placed a higher premium on convenience than unmarried respondents.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that goods are the most significant aspect of clothing stores, it is recommended that clothes stores offer high-quality, stylish, and original stuff that complements emerging market consumers' image and identities (Thompson et al., 2018). Additionally, clothing stores could improve their service by employing helpful and friendly store workers. Store sales associates should be adequately trained to attend to customers' requirements, including resolving conflicts and assisting clients whenever they require assistance. Store management should promote excellent customer service with incentives. Additionally, stores should offer credit card processing, store cards, an easy-return policy, and reimbursements when necessary. The establishment of customer care departments in stores will significantly improve the consumer experience and happiness (Cunningham et al., 2018)

Given that female developing market, buyers prioritise merchandise and store staff services over other features. Apparel retailers must address these attributes when marketing to ladies versus guys. Selema et al. (2018) discovered that ladies and younger consumers shopped more frequently. According to this study's findings, when managed correctly and with a better understanding of emerging market consumers' preferences, merchandise and services can be used to more effectively promote products, entice female emerging consumers to spend more time in stores, and visit clothing stores more frequently.

Clothing retailers should use promotions to entice emerging market shoppers into their stores. These promotions may take the form of discounts and sales. Additionally, items should be easily visible. Additionally, in-store and window displays may aid in this effort and impact shopper behaviour in apparel businesses. Visual marketing stimulates and motivates customers to spend longer time in a business, and the quality of items contributes to this experience (Khisa et al., 2020).

Selema et al. (2018) discovered that visible merchandise had a favourable effect on shopping time, supporting the proposal that retail store managers invest in this feature to keep consumers in stores longer. Given that physical facilities affect emerging consumers who visit clothes stores, retail managers should build physical facilities that are easily accessible to customers. Additionally, they should guarantee that dressing rooms and trolley check-out locations are conveniently accessible to consumers. Additionally, the illumination should be sufficient to ensure that the item is visible to shoppers.

Given that consumers' marital status substantially affected how important they rated the physical facilities and convenience of clothes stores, clothing stores should leverage these features to attract consumers. This is especially true for married developing market customers, who place a higher premium on these traits than unmarried consumers. Some married clients may have small children adds another dimension to the significance of physical facilities. Additionally, other studies discovered that retail strategies for married and unmarried consumers should be differentiated (Mathew et al., 2018).

## 7. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study's limitations include that data were obtained in a single retail centre in Venda, Limpopo. As a result, the findings reflect residents' perspectives in that area and should not be interpreted to apply to all customers in South Africa. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on emerging market customers. Additional research might be undertaken among consumers of all races in South Africa to determine whether the value placed on shop features varies by region and race. Additionally, the study used a convenience sampling technique. It would be beneficial to examine the significance of store features using probability sampling techniques to reach respondents from diverse geographic areas equitably. Finally, while the store environment was less essential, future research should look into why this feature was overlooked mainly in clothes stores. Additional research might be conducted to discover whether shop features affect consumer pleasure and loyalty. Emerging market customers are viewed as a valuable market segment with a rising standard of living. As a result, merchants must carefully assess this market group's weight on each shop attribute. A more excellent grasp of developing market customer preferences regarding clothing buying will aid businesses in more effectively marketing their items.

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