

**THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN VARIABLES ON CONSUMERS' SHOPPING
EXPERIENCE IN FMCG RETAIL STORES IN EKURHULENI**

by

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THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN VARIABLES ON CONSUMERS' SHOPPING EXPERIENCE IN FMCG RETAIL STORES IN EKURHULENI.

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

01 March 2019

DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father, Babusiye Malope. Things would have been different if you were still around. To my mother who raised us as a single parent: I'm grateful for all that you have done for us.

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ABSTRACT

In today's constantly changing, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) retail market environment, it is imperative that retailers should focus on creating a pleasant shopping experience to differentiate their stores in order to achieve a competitive advantage. One of the strategies to achieve competitive advantage can be human variables. This study focused on the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, this study expands the existing knowledge of human variables in the FMCG retail environment. Human variables in the context of this study comprise other customers and sales associates. Each of these human variables is made up of sub-variables. The sub-variables of other customers include crowding and social relations. On the other hand, the sub-variables of sales associates are sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates.

This empirical study was conducted with 400 FMCG retail stores consumers of the ages between 18 and 60 who reside in Ekurhuleni. The study followed a descriptive research design and quantitative approach in order to address the research objectives. A convenience sampling method and a mall-intercept survey by means of self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in which the Likert scale statements in question 2 - 6 (see Appendix B) measuring different sub-variables of other customers and sales associates were subjected to a Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin rotation. The results of the final EFA involved 13 Likert scale items. The test were conducted to validate the measures of human variables. The Principal Axis Factoring revealed five factors. These factors were social relations, behavioural attributes, crowding, physical attributes and sales associates' availability. Therefore, reliability tests were conducted on the final items measuring the human variables.

The results of this research study indicate that social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. However, the consumers felt neutral with regard to crowding. The test results of a chi-square for equal proportion revealed that all the five hypotheses (H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅) were supported as the proportions of consumers with regard to the influence of these sub-variables on their shopping experience were statistically different. Furthermore, ANOVA and F-test results for testing whether there were differences between demographics indicated that H_{1a}, H_{2b} and H_{5c} were supported because there were statistically significant differences between genders with regard to the influence of crowding, between age groups regarding social relations, as well as between racial groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience.

Key terms:

Crowding; demographic variables; fast moving consumer goods (FMCG); human variables; other customers; retailing; sales associates' attributes; shopping experience; social relations; store atmospherics

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The increasing levels of competition in retailing necessitates that retail managers should consider ways of satisfying customers as a strategic objective (Skandrani, Mouelhi & Malek, 2011:51). Consequently, for strategic objective to be achieved, there must be strategic thinking involved in the process. Strategic thinking in the context of the retail sphere includes considering the physical environment of retailing. Kim and Kim (2012:818) note that the effect of the physical environment, which facilitates the interaction of human variables in retail stores is critical for retailers in the sense that retail environmental cues (for example, colour, music, layout, visual merchandising and social elements), have a direct bearing on consumers' shopping experiences and their purchases in stores. Therefore, it is important to use retail environmental cues effectively to differentiate a store from those of competitors and to achieve competitive advantage. These retail environmental cues are also called atmospherics. Kotler (1973:50) first used the term "atmospherics" to refer to the conscious designing of space to create certain effects on a buyer and the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects on a buyer to enhance his/her purchase probability. Berman and Evans (2013:491) further describe atmospherics as the store's physical characteristics that project an image and draw customers.

Turley and Milliman (2000:194) divided atmospherics into five categories: external variables; general interior variables; layout and design variables; point-of-purchase and decoration variables; and human variables. External variables include the storefront, entrances, display windows, architecture, the surrounding area, and parking. The interior category comprises variables such as flooring, lighting, scent, sounds, temperature, cleanliness, wall textures, and colour use. In turn, the layout and design category includes fixtures, allocation of floor space, product groupings, traffic flow, department locations, and allocation within departments. Furthermore, the category of point-of-purchase and decoration involves product displays, point-of-purchase displays, posters, signs, cards,

teletext messages, and wall decorations. The last atmospheric category pertains to human variables that include crowding or density, privacy, customer characteristics, employee characteristics and employee uniforms. In addition, human variables are further sub-classified into two areas, namely, other customers and retail employees also referred to as sales associates (Olahut, EL-Murad & Plaias, 2012:332). Kim and Kim (2012) conceptualised human-related environmental stimuli based on Turley and Milliman's (2000) framework. In addition, Kim and Kim (2012) classified the effects of human-related environmental stimuli into two large categories, namely other customers and sales associates. Kim and Kim (2012) define other customers to be made up of number of other customers (crowding) and social relations; and sales associates to be made up of number or availability of sales associates, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates.

Kim and Kim (2012) note that most of the research concerning the effects of other customers has been conducted to investigate the number of other customers and social relations. Furthermore, the influence of sales associates in retail environment has been examined by distinguishing between the effects of number of sales associates, their physical attributes and their behavioural attributes as perceived in the retail stores. For the purpose of this study the atmospheric variables that are investigated are human variables. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the human variables are categorised following Kim and Kim's (2012) classification. In their review, Kim and Kim (2012) assert that the influence of these human factors in retail environments has been examined focusing on three categories of dependant variables including cognitional, emotional and behavioural responses. However, for the purpose of this study it is with reference to the influence of human variables which are other customers and sales associates as well as demographic variables, namely age, gender and race. The reason for investigating human variables is that little attention was given to the human aspect of atmospherics in South Africa, particularly in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) retailing, as compared to the other atmospheric variables. Furthermore, as the FMCG retail store environment is self-service in nature, human variables can be used effectively to enhance a pleasant shopping experience, which would attract more customers.

Human variables refer to the occupants of the space of sale (customers and sales associates) who can affect the perception and behaviour of consumers (Hamrouni & Touzi, 2011:309). This study investigated other customers and sales associates to determine their influence on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Other customers can be defined as customers who are in the same retail store simultaneously with, and who are unacquainted with a focal customer (Brocato, Voorhees & Baker, 2012:385). In turn, sales associates can be defined as retail sales assistants with the emphasis on the importance of the professional nature of the sales function (Levy & Weitz, 2012:611). Human variables can add towards creating a pleasant shopping experience in stores, in this instance, in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Retailers need to do more than presenting appealing merchandise to provide rewarding shopping experience – they can achieve this by creating a pleasant store atmosphere (Levy & Weitz, 2012: 489). Many retailers view a store's environment as increasingly important to satisfy their customers by providing a positive total shopping experience (Olahut *et al.*, 2012:317). This study expands on the existing review study of Kim and Kim (2012) by empirically testing these constructs in a South African context.

This chapter provides background of the study. After the background discussion, the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives and significance of the study are provided, followed by definitions of key terms. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the research methodology used to achieve the objectives of this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the 21st century, bricks and mortar retailers have to adapt to the constantly changing needs of customers. Bricks and mortar retailers refer to retailers who operate in a physical building (Lusch, Dunne & Carver, 2011:6). Retailing can be described as the set of business activities that add value to the products and services sold to consumers for their personal or family use (Levy & Weitz, 2012:6). Stats SA (2018a:13) describes a retailer as an enterprise that derives more than 50% of its turnover from sales of goods to the general public for household use. Retail trade includes reselling new and used goods and

products to the general public to be used for household purposes (Stats SA, 2018a:13). Some of these goods fall in the category of FMCG.

This study focuses on FMCG in the bricks and mortar retailing industry. FMCG refer to products such as soft drinks, toiletries and grocery items that are sold quickly and at relatively low cost (Nayyab, Javed, Ibraheem & Safdar, 2011:804; Tiwari, 2012:168). FMCG are products that are generally replaced or fully used up over a short period of days, week and month or within a year (Tiwari, 2012:168). Furthermore, FMCG products are frequently purchased (Mann & Kaur, 2013:6; Tiwari, 2012:168). According to Nayyab *et al.* (2011:804), the FMCG retail market is divided into four major consumer categories, namely, food, toiletries, household, and health categories. The largest portion of consumers' monthly budget is spent on these products. The returns in this sector are large because these products represent the basic necessities of life (Nayyab *et al.*, 2011: 804). Since the study was conducted in the South African context, it is therefore necessary to consider an overview of the South African retail industry. The overview is briefly explained below.

1.2.1 The South African retail industry

The latest statistics indicate that the retail industry is one of the largest contributors to the South African economy's total income, and recorded a growth of 3.1% in the first quarter of 2018 (Stats SA, 2018a:2). According to Stats SA (2018a:2), FMCG have a significant impact on the retail industry and contributes towards its growth. Therefore, it is important that the FMCG retail industry should continue to devise creative and innovative ways to develop store-related aspects. There are various types of FMCG retailers. These usually include supermarket and hypermarket stores. A supermarket is a self-service retail food store offering groceries, meat, produce and non-food items such as toiletries, health, beauty aids and general merchandise (Levy & Weitz, 2012:35). Supermarket retailers in South Africa include stores such as Shoprite and Spar. Hypermarkets, in turn, refer to retail stores that are larger than a supermarket and that sell groceries, clothing, appliances and other categories (Levy & Weitz, 2012:38), for example Pick 'n Pay Hypermarket and Checkers Hyper. Since the focus of this study was on human variables,

an overview on the importance of human variables in FMCG retail stores is given in the next section.

1.2.2 The importance of human variables in FMCG retail stores

Brocato *et al.* (2012:384) posit that a retail store's atmosphere involves human variables that have a social influence. Therefore, retailers can use human variables effectively to create a pleasant shopping experience. Due to the competitive nature of the FMCG retail market, it is essential for retailers to understand the importance of human variables from consumers' perspective in order to gain and retain a competitive advantage. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Understanding consumer buying behaviour is important for FMCG retailers when studying the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience. A detailed discussion of human variables is provided in Chapter 2.

Consumer buying behaviour refers to activities undertaken by people in the process of obtaining, using and disposing of products and services for personal use (Blythe, 2013:5). In addition, Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014:2) concur that consumer behaviour is a combination of activities and influences that occur before, during and after the purchase itself. Retailers that understand consumer behaviour succeed in the constantly changing market environment. In addition, retail marketers that study the behaviour of consumers know why consumers make decisions that they do and have a better understanding of their target market. According to Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014:263) and Schiffman, Kanuk and Wisenblit (2010:418), consumers are continuously making decisions on what products and services to consume. Therefore, human variables create shopping experiences that are likely to influence consumers' decision-making. Consumer buying behaviour is discussed in section 2.4 in Chapter 2 of the study.

When analysing the influence of human variables in FMCG retail environment, it is therefore important for retailers to understand relevant demographic variables since these

have an effect on the behaviour of consumers also, in this instance, in the FMCG retail stores.

Demographics refer to population characteristics such as gender, age, race, education, and income (Kotler & Keller, 2016:96). According to Levy and Weitz (2012:99), demographic variables are the most effective means of defining retail market segments because consumers can be easily identified and the size of demographic groups can be determined. In this study, it is posited that human variables can contribute towards creating a pleasant shopping atmosphere that is likely to impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Therefore, human variables create shopping experiences that are likely to influence consumers' decision-making. Demographics are discussed in section 2.5 in Chapter 2.

Consumers' shopping experience is defined as a multidimensional construct focusing on customers' cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial, and social responses to a retail store's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016:3). Bagdare and Jain (2013:790) described consumer shopping experience as an integrated series of events leading to pleasurable, involving, relaxing, rewarding and delightful retail consumer experience in shopper's life. Consumers' shopping experience is discussed in section 2.6 in Chapter 2.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study sets out to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The highly competitive nature of the retail market requires that retailers should differentiate themselves by creating a pleasant store environment that will enhance consumers' shopping experience to be successful. Existing research concerning retail atmospherics tend to focus on ambient and design factors such as music (Bailey & Areni, 2006; Cadwell & Hibbert, 2002; Dube & Morin, 2001; Morin, Dube & Chebat, 2007), scent (Bone & Ellen 1999; Chebat & Mihon, 2003), and layout (Newman & Foxall, 2003). However, research on human variables has

received scant attention. Some scholars explored the dimension of other customers and as the importance of managing other customers (Grove & Fisk, 1997; Martin & Pranter, 1989; Miao & Mattila, 2013), customer to customer interactions (Borges, Chebat & Babin, 2010; Dorsey, Ashley & Oliver, 2016; Moore, Moore & Capella, 2005; Zourrig & Chebat, 2009) and impact of other customers' similarity (Brack & Benkenstein, 2012; Kwon, Ha & Im, 2015). Several studies have been conducted on the effect of sales associates on consumers in the retail environment (Abbes & Goudey, 2015; Azimia, Hussain & Ali, 2013; Darian, Tucci & Wiman, 2001; Hawes, Rao & Baker 1993; Jones, Moore, Stanaland & Wyatt, 1998; Kim, Ju & Johnson, 2009; Swan, Bowers & Richardson, 1999; Yurchisin & Damhorst, 2009). Some studies focused on investigating employee-to-customer interactions (Beatty, Mayer & Lee, 1996; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Kim & Kim, 2014; Koistinen & Jarvinen, 2016).

Most of these studies explored the retail industry in general, as well as apparel retail and online retail, but none focused on investigating the influence of the selected human variables (other customers and sales associates) on consumers' shopping experience. Furthermore, studies on all the main human variables, namely, other customers and sales associates are only covered in reviews, and have been conducted in the retail industry in general (Kim & Kim, 2012). Therefore, this study addressed the gap in the existing literature that was identified by investigating the influence of the two selected human variables (other customers and sales associates) on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in a South African context.

The research problem of this study is therefore to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail store environment. This study expands on a review study by Kim and Kim (2012) by empirically testing the human

variables. In order to do so, the human variables were empirically tested in a South African context.

The study will provide Ekurhuleni FMCG retailers with a better understanding of the influence that human variables have on consumers' shopping experience. Furthermore, the study can benefit FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni as it will provide insight into the value of human variables in creating a pleasant shopping experience. The rationale for focusing on human variables is because the nature of FMCG retail store environment is self-service. Therefore, human variables can differentiate the store from competitors by creating a pleasant shopping experience.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the problem statement, a number of specific objectives were formulated:

1.5.1 Primary objective

To determine the influence of human variables, namely, other customers and sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

- To determine the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- To determine the influence of demographic variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Specific hypotheses related to the above-mentioned research objectives were tested in the study. These hypotheses were introduced in Chapter 3 and the results are reported in Chapter 5.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The contributions of this study to the FMCG retailing sphere are both theoretical and practical in nature. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the body of knowledge and literature of FMCG retail environment by investigating human variables. Although available research has highlighted how effective atmospherics are in retail environment, empirical work is mostly limited to the physical store domain, leaving the human aspects of retail environments relatively less explored. This study sheds light on these aspects by investigating the influence that sales associates and other customers have on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail environment.

From a practical perspective, this study aimed to provide insight and guidelines for FMCG retailers to create a pleasant atmosphere in their stores that influence consumers' shopping experience. Most importantly, the guidelines from the findings of the study could help FMCG retailers to utilise sales associates effectively to create a pleasant shopping experience. Furthermore, the findings of this study aim to highlight the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail store environment by supporting the claim that management decisions regarding retail atmospherics cannot be completed without considering human variables (Kwon, Ha & Im, 2015:5).

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Appearance is defined as an aspect of culture that involves the human body as well as the coverings and embellishments placed upon it (Hillestad, 1980:117; Kim, Won Ju & Johnson, 2009:407).

Atmospherics refer to the design of an environment through visual communication, lighting, colours, music and scent to stimulate consumers' perceptual and emotional responses and, ultimately, to affect their purchasing behaviour (Levy & Weitz, 2012:592).

Bricks and Mortar refer to retailers who operate in a physical building (Lusch *et al.*, 2011:6).

Consumer behaviour refers to the activities undertaken by people in the process of obtaining, using and disposing of goods and services for personal use (Blythe, 2013:5).

Consumer shopping experience is the total summary of a consumer interaction with a retail company beginning before a consumer walks into the store and ending long after he or she leaves (Choi, Yang, Yang & Cheung, 2015:10).

Crowding refers to the number of persons in a given space (Noone & Mattila, 2009:31).

Fast-moving consumer goods refer to products that are sold quickly and at relatively low cost, such as soft drinks, toiletries and grocery items (Nayyab *et al.*, 2011:804; Tiwari, 2012:168).

Human variables refer to the occupants of the space of sale (customers and employees) that can affect the perceptions and behaviours of individuals (Hamrouni & Touzi, 2011:309).

Hypermarket refers to a retail store that is larger than a supermarket and which sells groceries, clothing, appliances, and other product categories (Levy & Weitz, 2012:38).

Other customers are defined as customers who are in the same facility simultaneously and who are unacquainted with a focal customer (Brocato *et al.*, 2012:385).

Retailing can be defined as the set of business activities that add value to products and services sold to consumers for their personal or family use (Levy & Weitz, 2012:6).

Sales associates refer to retail sales assistants with emphasis on the importance and professional nature of the sales function (Levy & Weitz, 2012:611).

Social factor refers to as the number, type and behaviour of customers and employees (Lam, 2001:190).

Supermarket is a large self-service retail food store offering groceries, meat, produce, and non-food items such as toiletries, health and beauty aids as well as general merchandise (Levy & Weitz, 2012:35).

The research methodology used in this study is discussed in the next section.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides a description of the research methodology used in this study and a discussion of the research design. The objectives of the study inform the research design and the methodology that was selected. The sampling methods used in this study are discussed below, followed by an overview of the questionnaire design and data collection procedures. The issues of research ethics and the data analysis methods were also explained. The section concludes with an indication of the delimitations of the study.

A more detailed discussion of the research methodology for the study is presented in Chapter 4.

1.8.1 Research design

For the purpose of this study, a descriptive research design was followed. Descriptive studies usually make use of large sample sizes and use survey and questionnaire techniques to gather the data required (Solomon, Marshall & Stuart, 2006:113). A cross-sectional descriptive research approach was used by employing sample surveys that are representative of the target population. A cross-sectional design refers to the collection

of information from any given sample of population elements only once (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2012:91). Therefore, it was appropriate for this study since the aim was to determine consumers' shopping experience as influenced by human variables at a particular point in time. These consumers purchase products sold at FMCG retail stores. A quantitative approach was therefore deemed appropriate. Quantitative research is described as research that makes use of structured, closed-ended questions and predesigned response options in questionnaires that are usually distributed to a considerable number of respondents (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2009:154). This study was quantitative in nature because it yielded data that was analysed statistically. In addition, the questions in the questionnaire are closed-ended. Primary data was collected to address the objectives of this study. This type of data refers to data collected for the purpose of a particular study (Churchill & Brown, 2007:146).

The data collection method used in this study was a survey. According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:327), the survey method entails the use of a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of a target population. Participants may be asked a variety of questions regarding their behaviours, intentions, attitudes awareness, motivations, demographics, and lifestyle characteristics (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:327). Surveys can be designed to capture diverse types of information on many diverse topics and subjects (Aaker, Kumar, Day & Leon, 2013:181). Therefore, the survey method was deemed appropriate for this study since it set out to determine the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail environment. The survey instrument used to collect data for this study was a self-administered questionnaire. This type of questionnaire is a survey instrument in which selected respondents take the responsibility of reading and completing the questionnaires on their own (Zikmund & Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013:217). Questionnaires were handed to respondents during the mall-intercept phase of the study for completion.

1.8.2 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of obtaining information from a subset of a larger group (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:380).

The sampling methods that were used in this study are discussed in the next sections.

1.8.2.1 Target population

The target population for this study were consumers who purchase products and services at the FMCG retail stores. These were consumers from two shopping malls in Ekurhuleni, namely, the East Rand Mall in Boksburg and the Festival Mall in Kempton Park. The East Rand Mall was selected because it was rated among the top 10 malls in the Gauteng Province, and it was also voted as the most popular shopping mall in the Ekurhuleni Region (Trip Advisor, South Africa, 2016-2017). In turn, the Festival Mall was selected because it is one of two shopping malls in Ekurhuleni Region with all the major FMCG retail stores under one roof, namely Pick n' Pay, Checkers Hyper, Game store (food department) and a Woolworths food market. In addition, the Festival Mall is situated in the proximity of the busiest airport in Africa, namely, OR Tambo International Airport. Furthermore, both shopping malls were selected based on being cooperative since they granted the researcher the necessary permission to conduct the survey. Two other shopping malls, namely Lakeside and Carnival Malls, were also selected but refused to grant permission.

1.8.2.2 Sampling method

A non-probability sampling method was used in this study. Non-probability refers to instances when the chances of selecting members from the population in the sample are unknown (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005:344). According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:501), non-probability sampling relies on the personal judgement of the researcher rather than on chance to select sample elements. Consequently, non-probability samples may yield good estimates of the population's characteristics. However, they do not allow

for a completely objective evaluation of the precision of the results (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:501). Probability sampling refers to a technique used to draw sample in which individuals have a known chance of being selected for sample (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:344). The reason for selecting a non-probability sampling method over a probability method in this study is that the researcher selected respondents based on accessibility. In addition, respondents were conveniently intercepted at the malls and asked to participate in the study.

The non-probability sampling method that was used to select the sample for this study was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling refers to selecting a sample based on being easily accessible (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:396; Tustin *et al.*, 2005:346). Malhotra *et al.* (2012:502) note that convenience sampling is the least expensive and least time-consuming of all sampling techniques. The rationale for selecting convenience sampling is that the sampling units were accessible, easy to measure and it was assumed that they would be cooperative. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, convenience sampling was deemed appropriate and convenient. The main disadvantage of convenience sampling is that the sample may not be representative. However, the main aim of the study was not to be entirely representative, but rather to suggest that the findings could inform other research studies and to provide the FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni with knowledge regarding the influence that human variables have on consumers' shopping experience (Detailed limitations of the study are discussed in Chapter 6).

1.8.2.3 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of individual elements included in the sample of the study (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:97). According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:499), a sample size is influenced by the average size of the samples in studies similar to the present study. The sample size for this study included 400 respondents. This number was based on the sample size of similar studies guided by Bartlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001). Furthermore, other similar studies that used the mall-intercept approach included El-Adly and Eid (2015:857) who used 368 sample. Millan and Howard (2007:477) also used a 355

acceptable sample. Michon, Yu, Smith and Chebat (2007:492) used a 312 sample, which was also considered acceptable. Therefore, these studies used a similar sample size as the sample in this study.

1.9 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire. Hair, Bush and Ortinau, (2006:392) propound that a Likert scale asks respondents to specify the degree to which they agree or disagree with several psychological or behavioural conviction statements about a given entity. The items for all constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale (5= *strongly agree*, 4 = *agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 2 = *disagree* and 1 = *strongly disagree*). A self-administered questionnaire was designed for the target sample. Because this study adapted the work done by Kim and Kim (2012) by empirically testing the selected constructs, all questions asked in the questionnaire were developed by the researcher to satisfy the research objectives of the study. A detailed description of the questionnaire designed is covered in Chapter 4; a copy of the questionnaire is attached to this dissertation (see Appendix B).

The final questionnaire was divided into seven sections and was structured as follows:

- First section – qualifying question
- Second section – measured crowding
- Third section – measured social relations.
- Fourth section – measured the sales associates' availability.
- Fifth section – measured the physical attributes of sales associates.
- Sixth section – measured the behavioural attributes of sales associates.
- Seventh section – determined relevant demographic information of respondents.

The sub-variables that were measured included crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes

of sales associates. Each sub-variable was measured through a specific set of scale items.

1.10 PRE-TEST THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A pre-test refers to a trial run of a questionnaire (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:263; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:360). According to Aaker *et al.* (2013:263), the main purpose of pre-testing is to ensure that the questionnaire meets the researcher's expectations in terms of the information obtained. The questionnaire for this study was pre-tested among 40 consumers at Lambton Shopping Mall. Data was pre-tested to ensure that the questions were clear and could be answered easily. Furthermore, pre-testing was done to minimise errors that could occur and to indicate necessary corrections to questions that might be difficult for respondents to answer, as well as respondents' general reactions to the interview.

1.11 DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected at the two shopping malls in Ekurhuleni, namely, the Festival Mall in Kempton Park and East Rand Mall in Boksburg. Respondents were intercepted at the exit of the shopping malls. A mall-intercept involves recruiting shoppers in a shopping mall, qualifying them and conducting the interview at the researcher's interviewing facilities in the shopping mall (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:159; Tustin *et al.*, 2005:152). Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to consumers who were at the malls for shopping at the various FMCG retail stores. Customers were asked to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Data for this study were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The software used to analyse data was SPSS version 24. Data are illustrated in tables and mean scores. Prior to analysis, the research instrument was tested for reliability and validity to ensure that the selected research method produces suitable data to address the research problem and objectives. Reliability refers to the extent to which a scale produces

consistent results (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:249). The Cronbach's alpha, which is also known as coefficient alpha, was used in this study to assess internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's alpha involves computing mean reliability coefficient estimates for all possible ways of splitting sets of items in half (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:288).

McDaniel and Gates (2013:289) define validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilised in the study using principal axis factoring. Furthermore, the rotation method considered was Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. A chi-square for equal proportion was utilised to test the hypotheses that determined the statistically differences in consumers' proportions regarding the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience. On the other hand, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and F-test were used to test the hypotheses that determined if there were statistically significant differences between gender, age and race (A detailed discussion of data analysis is provided in Chapter 4).

1.13 RESEARCH ETHICS

The researcher had to adhere to ethical principles when collecting data from respondents such as respecting their rights and informing them (Clow & James, 2014:49). Ethics can be defined as the moral principles or values generally governing the conduct of an individual or group (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:36). Ethical clearance was requested from the research ethics committee of the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa, and it was obtained before data were collected (see appendix E). Respondents were asked to sign a consent form before data collection could proceed (see appendix A).

1.14 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results obtained in this study were limited to the targeted Ekurhuleni Region of the Gauteng Province. Therefore, the study cannot be generalised to the entire South African

population. The unit of analysis for the study consisted of consumers who were between the ages of 18 and 60 only. As convenience sampling was used in this study, the main aim was not to be representative, but to make findings available for academic purposes and to provide knowledge to the management of selected FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The chapter outline of the study is presented in the next section.

1.15 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This section outlines the six chapters of the study.

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter introduced the study and provided the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, significance of the study and definitions of key terms. The chapter concluded with a brief description of the research methodology used.

Chapter 2: Human variables

The chapter provides a detailed discussion of the constructs other customers and sales associates. The discussion on other customers focuses on sub-variables, crowding and social relations. Then the sub-variables that make up sales associates, namely sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes of sales associates were discussed. Discussion on consumer buying behaviour was provided followed by discussions on demographics and consumer shopping experience to conclude the chapter.

Chapter 3: Conceptual framework and hypotheses testing

This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual framework and research hypotheses that were tested in the study. The chapter provides discussion on the human variables

that are investigated and tested in this study. The chapter also presents the formulated hypotheses and provide a motivation for these. Furthermore, the chapter presents hypotheses relating to the sub-variables of other customers and sales associates as well as the demographics concerned for the study.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology that was followed. The research design is discussed, then the sampling approach is explained, together with designing the questionnaire and pre-testing. Data collection and data analysis are also explained. The researcher concludes the chapter with an explanation of the ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Research findings

The chapter contains detailed discussion on the empirical findings of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter provides an overview of the findings. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings are made. These are followed by discussions on the contribution of the study and its limitations. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

1.16 SUMMARY

The present chapter provided an overview of the study and what it aimed to achieve. It states the background, the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, followed by the research design. Data analysis is briefly explained, followed by delimitations of the study and a chapter outline.

CHAPTER 2

HUMAN VARIABLES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background to the notion of human variables, by commencing with defining human variables, followed by a discussion on the influence of other customers, which includes crowding and social relations. Then the influence of sales associates, including sales associates' availability, sales associates' physical attributes and sales associates' behavioural attributes are also discussed. Consumer buying behaviour and demographics were briefly discussed. Consumer shopping experience and how human variables influence it were also discussed to conclude the chapter.

Human variables that include other customers and sales associates can make an impact in retail settings (Kim & Kim, 2012:819). Human variables are also referred to as social dimensions or social factors (Baker, Grewal & Parasuraman, 1994:332; Olahut *et al.*, 2012:321). Turley and Milliman (2000:194) developed a framework and coined human variables as one of the five categories of store atmospheric variables. In order to understand human variables as an atmospheric element, various frameworks that recognise its importance as critical factor affecting retail environments are illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 illustrates the classification of atmospheric variables in a retail store environment by various authors.

Kotler (1973-1974) introduced four dimensions of store atmospherics, namely visual, aural, tactile, and olfactory dimensions. This typology excludes crowding and employee dimensions. Baker (1986) presented a framework that was classified into three dimensions, namely, ambient, design and social. However, this framework does not include exterior design. The third framework indicated in Table 2.1 was developed by Bitner (1992) which was regarded as the most complete framework as it included ambient

conditions, spatial layout and functionality, signs, symbols, and artefacts. Berman and Evans (1995) identified four key variables pertaining to store atmospherics, but excluded human variables – on which this study focused. D’strous (2000) introduced a framework that was inspired by Baker’s (1986) typology. As indicated in Table 2.1, the last framework was developed by Turley and Milliman (2000) which has built on Berman and Evans’s (1995) typology by including human variables. According to Oluhut *et al.* (2012:320) and Skandani *et al.* (2011:53), this is the most complete framework.

Table 2.1: Classification of store atmospheric variables/dimensions

Authors	Year	Atmospheric variables	Specifications
Kotler	(1973-1974)	Four dimensions: visual, aural, tactile, olfactory.	This typology does not include human dimensions.
Baker	(1986)	Three dimensions: ambient, design, and social.	This typology takes into account the social dimension (human variables), but excludes the interior and exterior design of the retail store.
Bitner	(1992)	Three dimensions: ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols and artefacts.	The framework is comprehensive. Nevertheless, research on the employee side is scarce.
Berman and Evans	(1995)	Four dimensions: external variables, internal variables, landscaping and interior design, and layout.	This framework does not include the human component, and ambient factor variables are considered among the internal variables of the store.
D’Astous	(2000)	Three dimensions: irritant ambient factors, irritant design factors, and irritant social factors.	This framework is inspired by Baker’s (1996) typology.
Turley and Milliman	(2000)	Five dimensions: general exterior, general interior, layout and design, point-of-purchase and decoration, and human variables	This framework is built on Berman and Evans’ (1995) typology and it is regarded as the most complete one.

Source: Oluhut *et al.* (2012:320) and Skandani *et al.* (2011:53)

Therefore, this study expands on Kim and Kim's (2012) framework, which expanded on Turley and Milliman's (2000) framework as it is the most complete classification of atmospheric variables, and it includes a human component. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, human variables were adapted as categorised by Kim and Kim (2012).

As this study focuses on human variables, it is important to begin by defining the concept.

2.2 HUMAN VARIABLES DEFINED

Human variables can be defined as the occupants of the space of sale who can affect the perceptions and behaviours of individuals (Baker *et al.*, 1994:331; Hamroun & Touzi, 2011:309; Osman, Ong, Othman & Khong, 2014:180). The occupants of the space of sale include the retail store customers and employees. Yoon, Seo and Yoon (2004:394) highlight the importance of human variables in a retail store environment because interaction encountered between employees (sales associates) and customers can influence both. In addition, from retail store sales associates' perspective, it can influence their work efforts and emotional states; especially if they perceive friendliness, respect, courtesy, and clear attentive communication from customers. This could stimulate efforts and increase job satisfaction. Furthermore, from customers' perspectives, interaction encounter could play a positive role in creating a pleasant shopping environment when they perceive sales associates as knowledgeable, friendly and professional in appearance (Yoon *et al.*, 2004:394).

2.3 HUMAN VARIABLES DISCUSSED

Human variables can be explained by means of the model of human environmental stimuli as depicted in Figure 2.1 that serves as the basis of the discussion for this chapter. The figure presents the conceptual framework of human-related environmental stimuli and responses conceptualised by Kim and Kim (2012:820). However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is on the first box in Figure 2.1: Human-related environmental stimuli. Therefore, responses in the second box are excluded from the present study because the focus of the study was to empirically test human variables in a South African context as

opposed to the review by Kim and Kim (2012) on which this study expands. The reason for excluding responses in Figure 2.1 is that they were used by Kim and Kim (2012) to classify the findings of various previous studies that were reviewed as they did not conduct empirical research for their study.

The human-related environmental stimuli model classifies human variables into two large categories as indicated in the first box of Figure 2.1 below. Each category includes the following sub-variables:

Category 1: Other customers' sub-variables are:

- Crowding (number of other customers).
- Social relations.

Category 2: Sales associates' sub-variables comprise:

- Sales associates' availability.
- Physical attributes of sales associates.
- Behavioural attributes of sales associates.

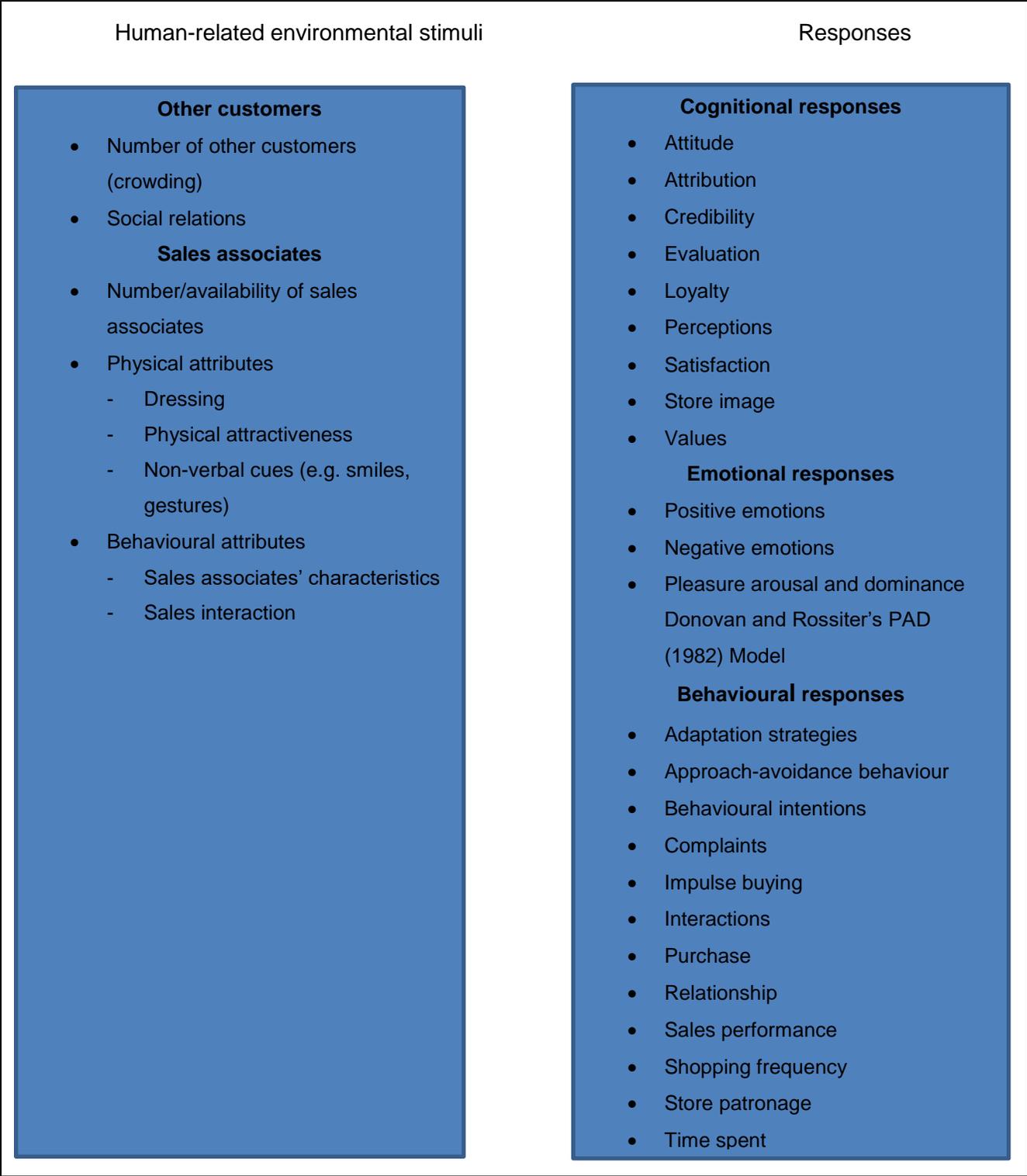


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of human environmental stimuli and responses

Source: Kim and Kim (2012:820)

2.3.1 The effects of other customers

Other customers can be defined as customers who are in the same service facility simultaneously with, and who are unacquainted with a focal customer (Brocato *et al.*, 2012:385). According to Van Rompay, Krooshoop, Verhoeven, and Pruyn (2012:1126), being with other customers may not be a pleasurable experience. However, sometimes the presence of others may be stimulating and appreciated. Therefore, such opposing effects indicate that there is a need for both social contact and solitude to shape consumers' shopping experiences (Van Rompay *et al.*, 2012:1126). **Other customers** in retailing include crowding and social relations among customers, which are discussed in the next section.

2.3.1.1 Crowding

Harrell, Hutt and Anderson (1980) introduced retail crowding as a concept to explain the number of other customers in retail marketing context. The number of other customers has an effect on how individual consumers feel in a retail store. Therefore, studies of other customers' attributes in retail stores have centred on the number of other customers in a retail context (Kim & Kim, 2012:821). Mehta (2013:642) points out that crowding as an important element of human variables is also called perceived crowding or perceived retail crowding. Crowding is defined as the evaluation or judgment of perceived density against certain standards, norms and desired levels of interaction and information (Rapoport, 1976:136).

Pons, Murali and Giroux (2014:55) define density as the perception and estimate of the number of people present in a given area, the space available and its organisation. Therefore, density plays an essential role in the evaluation of crowding and is a necessary antecedent for the experience of crowding (Pons *et al.*, 2014:55). Furthermore, crowding can be defined either from a physical perspective (number of persons in a given space) or from a psychological perspective (perceived crowding) (Noone & Mattila, 2009:31). Perceived crowding appears to be a multidimensional construct comprising human crowding perceptions and spatial crowding perceptions. Human crowding perceptions

refer to the number of individuals and the extent of social interactions. On the contrary, spatial crowding perceptions refer to crowding perceptions based on the amount of merchandise and fixtures with their configuration within the store (Eroglu, Machleit & Barr, 2005:1147; Machleit, Eroglu & Mantel, 2000:30). Therefore, perceived crowding as part of the overall environment of the store is an important determinant of customer satisfaction (Eroglu *et al.*, 2005:1147).

Eroglu and Machleit (1990:217) found that in high retail density conditions, task-oriented customers experienced more retail crowding than non-task-oriented customers. Perceived risks and time pressure associated with purchases have been shown to intensify shopper perceived retail crowding in the environment only under conditions of high retail density. Furthermore, in high levels of retail density, time pressure was found to negatively affect satisfaction in the shopping environment (Eroglu & Machleit, 1990:218). However, Machleit *et al.* (2000:40) suggest that the effect of retail crowding on shopping satisfaction is indirect. A crowded store may or may not result in decreased satisfaction, depending on a number of different individual and situational factors (Machleit *et al.*, 2000:40).

Noone and Mattila (2009:31) examined the moderating effect of consumption goals in the perceived crowding-satisfaction relationship. They found that regardless of service level and customer tolerance of crowding, significantly lower satisfaction ratings associated with crowded service environment were found when the primary consumption goal for the service experience is utilitarian rather than hedonic in nature (Noone & Mattila, 2009:36). Hedonic consumption refers to purchases or consumption for pleasure-related products while utilitarian consumption refers to purchasing products for specific task (Poncin & Ben-Mimoun, 2014:3). Task-oriented shoppers are utilitarian and non-task-oriented shoppers are associated with hedonic behaviour. Pons *et al.* (2014:54) examined how individuals react in crowded utilitarian settings and investigated the specific role of scarcity in the density-dissatisfaction relationship. The results suggest that the scarcity of the situation can reduce the extent to which consumers perceive negative experiences in a dense retail situation (Pons *et al.*, 2014:57).

According to Van Rompay, *et al.* (2012:1130), shoppers with a strong sense of affiliation need to value the presence of others in terms of opportunities for gauging of management behaviours. In contrast, shoppers with low affiliation needs perceive the presence of others as a burden or constraint. In a crowded store, potential buyers may even deviate from their planned shopping experience, such as spending less money than planned or even leaving the store without making a purchase (Yildirim & Baskaya, 2007:3411). Therefore, retailers should put more emphasis on managing crowding in order to create a pleasant store atmosphere. It is important to note that crowding in the FMCG retail store means good business for retailers, but the crowd of customers should be properly managed to enhance consumers' shopping experience.

Figure 2.2 below illustrates example of a less crowded FMCG retail store in South Africa.



Figure 2.2: An example of a less crowded FMCG retail store

Source: Pick n Pay South Africa

Overcrowding examples in the FMCG retail stores in South Africa are illustrated in Figure 2.3 and 2.4 to support the above discussion.



Figure 2.3: Example of an overcrowded FMCG store

Source: Pick n Pay South Africa



Figure 2.4: Example of an overcrowded FMCG retail store

Source: Picture provided by Checkers Holdings

Social relations among customers are discussed in the next section.

2.3.1.2 Social relations

The notion of other customers in retail stores also focuses on social relations among customers. Hu and Jasper (2006:25) regard retail stores as a place of socialising. As a result, they examined the effect of social cues on consumers' perceptions of store image. They found that consumers had favourable attitudes towards merchandise and service quality, and were pleased with the stores that have more social cues. Consumers further indicated that they were more likely to purchase in a store that had more in-store displays of graphics with social meaning (Hu & Jasper, 2006:44).

Latane's (1981) social impact theory is considered the most effective theory to measure other customers' social influence. Argo, Dahl and Manchanda (2005:207) used the social impact theory of Latane (1981) to analyse the influence of the social presence of other customers in a retail context. The social impact theory posits that as the size of social presence increases, it has an escalating impact on people's emotions and behaviours. An increase in audience size results in participants experiencing more negative emotions (Argo *et al.*, 2005:208). In the same vein, Kwon, *et al.* (2015:2) concur by using the social impact theory, as proposed by Latane (1981) suggesting that as number of others increases, people feel less comfortable and experience more tension and nervousness. Similarly, Soderlund (2011:178) also affirms that other customers who are strangers and who are present within the same retail environment as the individual customer have an impact on the individual customer's overall evaluation of the retailer.

According to Brocato *et al.* (2012:384), perceptions of customers who are often strangers have the potential to enhance or detract from an individual customer's evaluation of the retail store and shopping experience. Furthermore, customers impact one another through interpersonal encounters directly during shopping and can indirectly have an impact by being part of the environment (Bracato *et al.*, 2012:384).

- **The effect of similarity in customers' social relations**

Social relations can further be analysed by considering how perceived similarity impacts on a customer who tends to share the same environment with customers similar to him/her and who influence his or her evaluation of the shopping experience. Kwon, *et al.* (2015:2) define perceived similarity to other customers as the degree to which other customers are perceived as resembling an individual customer. Furthermore, Brack and Benkenstein (2012:502) describe similarity as the extent to which an individual consumer feels that he/she is similar to other customers in the retail store. According to Byrne's (1971), similarity-attraction paradigm, consumers are attracted to others who have similar traits as themselves. In addition, an individual consumer's judgement of similarity may include different dimensions such as appearance, race and age (Brack & Benkenstein, 2012:502; Kwon *et al.*, 2015:2). Therefore, it is important for retailers to understand that similarity plays a major role in creating a pleasant store atmosphere. It is also important to look at the effects of sales associates and how they contribute to the creation of a pleasant atmosphere in the store.

The second category of human variables that involves sales associates is discussed below.

2.3.2 The effects of sales associates

The retail sales associate often serves as a critical nexus between retailers and their consumers because sales associates can provide information and services to assist consumers during the purchasing process (Osman, *et al.*, 2014:182). The effects of sales associates' sub-variables, namely, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates are discussed in the next sections.

2.3.2.1 Sales associates' availability

Kim and Kim (2012:824) emphasise sales associates' impact on consumers' responses towards the FMCG retail stores. Consumers are likely to respond positively towards FMCG retail stores that have sales associates that are always available to assist them. The main purpose of sales associate availability in a physical retail store is to assist consumers whenever the need arises. Assistance that consumers might need include help such as when they are confused by various product offerings or shopping for unfamiliar or complex products, or when they cannot find a particular product (Komiak, Wang & Benbasa, 2005:50). Furthermore, the key role played by the number of sales associates in determining quality of service as well as influencing store image is pointed out (Kim & Kim, 2012:824). According to Kang (2012:9359), a salesperson who is flexible, autonomous and creative is more desirable as he/she is the most important business asset to enable a retailer to achieve a better competitive advantage. In addition, sales associates' performance relates strongly to the company's performance and sales (Kang, 2012:9359).

Baker, Grewal and Levy (1992:45) assert that the number, appearance and behaviour of retail store sales associates may help shape customers' perceptions of service levels in a store. Furthermore, a larger number of sales associates increase the arousal levels in the store. However, too many sales associates and their constant badgering "Can I help you" can irritate other customers. Nonetheless, an arousing store environment will attract customers to remain longer in the store. According to Zourrig and Chebat (2009:154), when customers perceive more sales associates visible in the retail store, their waiting expectations in the queue are more positive. Baker *et al.* (2002:127) suggest that the number of sales associates on the floor influence customers' time or effort cost perceptions. Furthermore, Shao, Baker and Wagner (2004:1166) highlight that sales associates' availability in the retail store positively affect consumers' shopping experience.

It is clear that retailers should focus on hiring a sufficient number of sales associates and equip them with the necessary customer interaction skills in order to be successful. In

addition, FMCG retailers should ensure that sales associates are always available to assist customers.

2.3.2.2 Physical attributes of sales associates

Kim and Kim (2012:824) regard sales associates' physical attributes as the most important element of retailers' brand strategy to communicate their brand image. Brand image refers to the consumers' perceptions about the brand as reflected by the brand associations held in the consumer's memory (Keller, 2013:72). Sales associates' appearance is a powerful design component that helps to create an impression. In addition, attractive people are considered more sociable and more accomplished at tasks (Nelson & Bowen, 2000:87). The sub-variables of physical attributes include dress, physical attractiveness and non-verbal cues.

2.3.2.2.1 Dress

Dress can be defined as the total arrangement of material dimensions such as garments, jewellery and accessories to the body and detectable modifications of the body (Kang, Sklar & Johnson, 2011:412; Shao *et al.*, 2004:1165). Dress in the retail context is one of the tangibles associated with a company's service that directly influence customers' expectations (Shao *et al.*, 2004:1165). Sales associates wearing appropriate dress influence consumers' purchase intentions, particularly in a situation where consumers are not highly involved in a purchase situation (Kim, Ju & Johnson, 2009:409). In addition, consumers' age moderates the influence of sales associates' clothing type on their attitudes towards sales associates; for example, sales associates' informal clothing may appeal to young consumers, while formal clothing influences senior consumers (Kim *et al.*, 2009:409). Yurchisin and Damhost (2009:458) point out that sales associates' appearance reflects the retail store's identity. Sales associates who share common traits with the retail store for which they work can express both their own traits and their stores' image through their dress. Furthermore, sales associates' appearance may be one of the behaviours indicative of employee-organisation identification (Yurchisin & Damhost,

2009:259). Therefore, the clothing worn by sales associates forms part of the performance of an organisation (Pettinger, 2004:180).

According to Olahut *et al.* (2012:333), professionally appearing sales associates are important to perceptions of service; for example, the effects of sales personnel who are wearing aprons can lead customers to have certain perceptions of high level of service quality in a retail setting. Therefore, retailers should understand that the physical appearance of sales associates has an impact on consumers' perceptions of their shopping experience.

2.3.2.2.2 Physical attractiveness

According to Soderlund and Julander (2009:217), the physical attractiveness of sales associates has a significant impact on the customers' evaluation of sales associates such as liking, trust and perceived expertise. In addition, physical attractiveness of sales associates produces more highly valued outcomes such as customer satisfaction and can encourage store management in terms of rewarding a sales associate (Soderlund & Julander, 2009:222). Physically attractive sales associates have a positive impact on customers' purchase intentions (DeShield, Kara & Kaynak, 1996:92). Furthermore, Nickson, Warhurst and Dutton (2005:196) emphasise the importance of sales associates' ability to look good physically. Most importantly, this indicates how important physical attractiveness could be to persuade consumers to spend more and make unplanned purchases in FMCG retail stores.

2.3.2.2.3 Non-verbal cues

According to Kim and Kim (2012: 824), non-verbal communications of sales associates displayed through facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, and body movements have been found to be important aspects of physical attributes. Non-verbal communication is the most important means of interaction between sales associates and customers (Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva & Brand, 2013:301).

Limbu, Jayachandran, Babin and Peterson (2016:657) introduced a non-verbal immediacy model that entails a set of behaviours that enhance closeness and non-verbal interaction with another and reduce psychological distance between individuals. The non-verbal communication cues that increase immediacy include eye contact, gestures, relaxed body, position, vocal expressiveness, movement, and proximity. Furthermore, non-verbal communication has been found to exert a significant effect on a customers' evaluation of a service encounter (Limbu *et al.*, 2016:657). According to Drollinger and Comer (2013:51), sales associates who display active listening behaviours with empathy are able to pick up non-verbal emotional messages such as excitement, urgency, anxiety, and anger from the customer and respond in a verbal and nonverbal manner that expresses understanding rather than imitation. Empathic understanding provides the sales associates with insightful information regarding the nature of the interaction and also helps to guide them to be more self-aware of their own non-verbal actions and words (Drollinger & Comer, 2013:51).

2.3.2.3 Behavioural attributes of sales associates

Consumers of goods and products deem determining sales associates' behavioural attributes most important. Retailers need to understand the nature of the attributes that their sales associates provide as part of the retail store's total attribute bundle (Hawes, Rao & Baker, 1993:62). In addition, sales associate need to have a sound understanding of customer's view of his/her role as a facilitator in the purchasing process (Hawes *et al.*, 1993:62). The effect of sales associates' behavioural attributes is divided into two sub-variables, namely characteristics and sales interaction, as indicated in Figure 2.1.

2.3.2.3.1 Sales associates' characteristics

Sales associates' characteristics are also termed attributes that play a major role in the retailer's business success (Hawes *et al.*, 1993:63). The most frequently noticed sales associates' characteristics include sales associates' respect for customers; their knowledge of products and services; their responsiveness (which is the willingness and readiness to provide prompt service); their friendliness to customers; and their availability

(Darrian *et al.*, 2001:208; Sum & Hui, 2009:100). It was further indicated that sales associates are important because they have selling roles, representing the company as a contact point, interact with customers and influence their final purchasing decisions (Kang, 2012:9360). In addition, Kang (2012:9360) points out the critical role played by a sales associate who is customer-oriented. Sales associates' customer orientation refers to the extent to which the sales associate knows and responds to customers' needs or wants (Kang, 2012:9360). In addition, Broxendorf, Muhlmeier, Tomczak, and Eisend (2010:1149) highlight the importance of sales associates' competence characteristics in terms of task competence and interaction competence. Task competence refers to the knowledge, the ability and the concern to fulfil the task based on the expertise regarding the customers' needs while interaction competence relates to satisfying the customers (Broxendorf *et al.*, 2010:1149).

According to Orth, *et al.* (2013:301), sales associates' characteristics are regarded as the drivers of successful retail communication. The outcomes of sales associates' characteristics include trust, satisfaction, loyalty, and a positive shopping experience (Orth *et al.*, 2013:301). Trust as part of the results of sales associates' characteristics is regarded as the most important aspect that strengthens the relationship between a sales associate and a customer. According to Swan, Bowers and Richardson (1999:94), customers' trust in sales associates has two components, namely, affect and cognition. Affect refers to feeling secure or insecure about relying on a sales associate, while cognition is the belief that the sales associate has both the necessary competence and motivation to be relied upon (Swan *et al.*, 1999:94). Therefore, FMCG retailers should understand that sales associates' characteristics are valuable in persuading consumers to make purchases in the store. It can thus be said that the same can be true for sales associates' selling interactions.

2.3.2.3.2 Sales interaction

Sales associates epitomise, represent and define the brand to the customer by transforming and implementing a company's brand strategy (Broxendorf, *et al.*, 2010:1148). This is what sales associate do when they interact with customers during the

sales process. The customer's interaction with the sales associate impacts his/her perception of the sales associate and the brand (Broxendorf *et al.*, 2010:1148). During a sales encounter, the interaction between sales associates and the customer therefore has an impact on the customer's perception of the sales associate and the perception of the brand (Brexendorf *et al.*, 2010:1148). In addition, customers frequently experience emotions when they are involved in interactions with a retail sales associate (Menon & Dube, 2000:285).

According to Abed and Haghghi (2009:268), sales associates should establish and maintain long-term relationships with customers through their behaviour. Therefore, enhancing the sales associate's skills in terms of selling strategies would lead to a better ability to understand the situation of the customer, which could lead to improved interaction with customers and hone their ability to build and maintain relationships with customers (Abed & Haghghi, 2009:268). The customer service provided by sales associates is a critical element in attracting and retaining customers (Sum & Hui, 2009:99). Therefore, it is important to understand that sales associates are likely to have an effect on how the customer feels about the retail store through their interactions (Osman *et al.*, 2014:182).

As this study sought to determine the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience, it is important to provide a brief discussion of consumer buying behaviour.

2.4 CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Consumers exchange their money for goods and services on a daily basis for own use and for their families. Individual consumers choose products that will satisfy their needs, and make buying decisions that will affect their lives for years to come (Blythe, 2013:4). Furthermore, Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015:30) stated that consumer behaviour explains how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources such as money, time and efforts on products that the marketers offers for sale. Moreover, the study of consumer behaviour describes what products and brands consumers buy, why they buy

them, when they buy them, where they buy them, how often they buy them, how often they use them, how often they evaluate them after the purchase, and whether or not they buy them repeatedly (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015:30).

Consumer behaviour is defined as the totality of consumers' decisions with respect to the acquisitions, consumptions and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people, and ideas by decision-making units (Hoyer, MacLinnis & Pieters, 2013:3; Ling, Alessandro & Winzar 2015:6). Similarly, Parumasur and Roberts-Lombard (2014:2) describe consumer behaviour as a combination of activities and influences that occurs before, during and after the purchase itself. FMCG retailers should understand consumer behaviour in relation to using and disposing of products as well as how consumers buy those products.

According to Hoyer *et al.* (2013:4), consumer behaviour involves more than just buying. It includes the following activities that consumers perform:

- **Acquiring** represents acquisition behaviour, the behaviour that consumers displays on acquiring products and services.
- **Using** involves how consumers use the products they acquired. When it comes to usage, marketers are interested in knowing when consumers are likely to use the product and how they react after using it, such as spreading positive or negative word of mouth.
- **Disposing** involves how consumers get rid of the product that they have purchased.

It is therefore important for FMCG retailers to understand these activities. The above activities are influenced by individual and group factors that affect consumers' decisions to purchase products and services. Individual factors include motivation, perception, learning ability, attitudes, personality, and life-styles. Individual factors refer to factors inherent in human behaviour that will influence an individual's behaviour as a consumer (Cant, 2010b:104). Group factors are the concepts and ideas that influence consumers

when interacting with others (Cant, 2010b:62). Group factors include culture, family, reference groups, social class and opinion leaders.

Consumers follow various stages in the consumer decision-making process when they discover that they have a need that must be satisfied. These stages are very important for FMCG retailers to understand because they will enable them to understand how consumers gather information that leads them to purchasing decision-making.

Human variables and demographics determine consumers' buying behaviour towards the FMCG retail stores, also in the case of the selected malls in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, it is important to understand consumers' demographics as discussed below.

2.5 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographics can be defined as the study of human population based on age, race, gender, economic status, education, income, and employment (Kotler & Keller, 2016:96; Levy & Weitz, 2012:597; Wiid, 2014:23). Cant (2013b:37) describes demographics as an objective characteristics of an individual's age, race, gender, income, and education. According to Wiid (2014:23), demographic variables can provide insight into various groups of consumers and their behaviour. Furthermore, they can enable the FMCG retailers to characterise consumers correctly and create demographic profiles for different market segments (Wiid, 2014:23). Demographic variables are therefore important in terms of how consumers behave towards FMCG retail stores. Demographic shifts such as changing trends regarding the population size and composition are at the root of many changes in the society (Louw & Venter, 2010:181). Therefore, changes in any or more of these demographic variables over time could have a significant impact on the FMCG retail industry in Ekurhuleni (Louw & Venter, 2010:182).

Demographic variables in the FMCG retail environment may also have a positive impact on the buyer-seller relationship (Kwak & Sojka, 2011:118). In addition, Mittal, Cambra-Fierror, Pres, and Grott (2017:222) highlight the importance of consumers' demographic characteristics in retailing because different profiles may lead to different behaviours.

Interestingly, customers and sales associates' similarity in terms of age, height, race, and gender increase the probability of sales (Kim & Kim, 2012:825). Therefore, it is important for FMCG retailers to understand demographic variables since they play a crucial role in determining consumers' reaction towards human variables in the store.

The demographic variables that this study focuses on include gender, age and race. For the purpose of the study, these demographic variables were tested with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience.

2.6 CONSUMER SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

In today's constantly changing market, retailers acknowledge consumers' shopping experience as an important component in sustaining a competitive advantage (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016:8). In the context of this study, it is important to understand the significant role that pleasant shopping experience play in attracting consumers to the FMCG stores and encourage repeat purchases.

2.6.1 Consumer shopping experience defined

Consumers' shopping experience is defined as the total summary of a consumer's interaction with a retail company beginning before the consumer walks into the store and ending long after he/she leaves it (Choi, Yang, Yang & Cheung, 2015:10). Lang and Hooker (2013:640) consider shopping experience as the intersection between retail setting and consumer behaviour, as shopping within a well-designed retail environment is an important part of acquisition. Moreover, Bagdare and Jain (2013:790) describe consumer shopping experience as an integrated series of events leading to pleasurable, involving, relaxing, rewarding, and delightful retail consumer experience in a shopper's life. Furthermore, retail consumer shopping experience involves dimensions such as joy, mood, leisure, and distinctive (Bagdare & Jain, 2013:792).

- **Joy** of shopping involves the fun and pleasure derived from entertaining shopping experiences (Bagdare & Jain, 2013:792). A joyful shopping experience consists of engaging, involving and entertaining based on active or passive participation of the customer in the entire shopping experience. FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni should create a joyful shopping experience to encourage repeat purchases.
- **Mood** refers to a mild, transient generalised affective state that creates the shopping experience (Bagdare & Jain, 2013:793; Osman *et al.*, 2014:182). According to Osman *et al.* (2014:182), a store atmosphere affects shoppers' mood and influence purchasing behaviour. The store environment can create a positive or negative mood. Positive mood can be generated by pleasant environment and influence approach behaviour, while a negative mood is generated by unpleasant store environment and can create avoidance response (Osman *et al.*, 2014:183). FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni should consider creating a pleasant environment to enhance shopping experience and differentiate the store from competitors.
- **Leisure** refers to the free choice of activity associated shopping (Backstrom, 2011:200). A leisure activity turns a shopping result into pleasure, enjoyment, perceived freedom, and customer delight (Bagdare & Jain, 2013:793). Therefore, it is important for FMCG retailers to use leisure activity to persuade consumers to spend more time in their stores in order to make more purchases.
- **Distinctive** awareness involves creating a store environment that gives a unique experience (Bagdare & Jain, 2013:793). The FMCG retail store that creates unique and pleasurable events develops a distinctive image for identification and recognition.

2.6.2 Consumers' evaluation of shopping experience

FMCG retailers should understand that any experience that consumers have with the store will be critical in their evaluation of shopping outcomes, such as being pleasurable or not. According to Millan and Howard (2007:475), any kind of shopping should be pleasurable as certain groups of shoppers are more interested in pleasure outcomes of

shopping than others. Therefore, stores that produce emotions that are more pleasurable may relate to different purchasing behaviours. Juwaheer, Punderuthis and Ramdin (2013:179) highlight the strategic importance of shopping experience to increase customer patronage in retail stores. Srivastava and Kaul (2014:1029) emphasise the role that shopping experience play as consumers are not only visiting the FMCG retail stores only for purchase, but also for enjoyment and entertainment purposes. In addition, consumers evaluate the retail stores in terms of how much pleasure or fun they have received (Srivastava & Kaul, 2014:1029). Consumer shopping experience in the retail environment is widely recognised as the internal and subjective response that consumers have to any interaction with the retail store (Pine & Gilmore, 1998:99). Moreover, consumers have experiences anytime they touch any part of the product, service or brand (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2016:8). Furthermore, EL-Adly and Eid (2015:849) state that social interaction value also enhances consumers shopping experience. Social interaction value refers to the benefit consumers enjoy in positive shopping experience through interacting with other customers and sales associates in the FMCG retail store (EL-Adly & Eid 2015:849).

2.7 THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN VARIABLES ON CONSUMERS' SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

The literature highlighted that the FMCG consumers' needs in the 21st century are more than just the products and services. Therefore, pleasant consumers' shopping experience is the most powerful component to position the retail store. In this case, human variables can be one of the effective tools to create consumers' shopping experience. FMCG retailers can use human variables to influence the behaviour of consumers towards their stores. This could be done by managing crowding effectively, and equip their sales associates with necessary knowledge of creating a pleasant shopping atmosphere that will enhance consumers' shopping experience. As mentioned earlier, some consumers are positively influenced by the presence of other customers while some tend to be negatively influenced as they feel frustrated in a crowded retail store (Van Rompay *et al.*, 2012:1126).

Furthermore, sales associates could play a crucial role in providing an interpersonal retail experience as they influence consumers' emotions in the FMCG retail store (Osman *et al.*, 2014:182). The literature review emphasised that other customers and sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in the retail stores. Kim and Kim (2012:836) indicate that human variables in the retail store influence consumers' perceptions towards the stores and their own behaviour. According to Srivastava and Kaul (2014:1030), the social environment of the store as well as the interactions between the sales associates and the customers affects consumers' shopping experience at a retail store. In addition, interactions among customers can also have an influence on consumer shopping experience (Srivastava & Kaul 2014:1030).

2.8 SUMMARY

The literature indicate that crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates influences consumers. The influence of human variables in creating a pleasant store atmosphere was also highlighted. The aim of this chapter was to provide background on pertinent human variables and to define these human variables. The influence that other customers have, which is made up of sub-variables, namely crowding and social relations, was also discussed. The influence of sales associates on consumers was therefore perused, after the sub-variables of sales associates (which include sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes) were discussed. The influence of human variables with regard to demographics was then discussed. Consumer shopping experience was defined and consumers' evaluation of shopping experience was discussed as well as the influence that human variables have on consumers' shopping experience to conclude the chapter.

The hypotheses and conceptual framework of this study are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an overview of the conceptual framework of the study is provided, followed by a description of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates. The chapter also provides a motivation for the hypotheses tested in the study.

3.2 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TESTED IN THE STUDY

This study determines the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. As mentioned in Chapter 1 and 2, the two main types of human variables on which the study focused are other customers and sales associates. These human variables comprise sub-variables. The sub-variables for other customers include crowding and social relations, while sales associates' sub-variables include sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates (Kim & Kim, 2012:820).

Human variables can be defined as the occupants of the space of sale who may affect the perceptions and behaviours of individuals (Baker *et al.*, 1994:331; Hamroun & Touzi, 2011:309; Osman, *et al.*, 2014:180). For this study, the occupants of space of sale pertain to other customers and sales associates. Other customers with regard to crowding and social relations were determined by testing various hypotheses discussed later in this chapter. On the other hand, the hypotheses that determine the influence of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience were tested with regard to sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates. Furthermore, the hypotheses were also tested on demographic variables, namely gender, age and race to determine if there are significant differences with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability,

physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience.

Sales associates can facilitate how consumers feel with regard to crowding and social relations. Sales associates can have an effect on how consumers feel when shopping in the FMCG retail stores as they are likely to impact on customers' moods (Osman *et al.*, 2014:182). In addition, sales associates play a critical role in FMCG retailing as their assistance to consumers can positively impact on consumers' experience about the store (Kim & Kim, 2012:819).

3.2.1 An overview of the conceptual framework tested in this study

The conceptual framework tested in this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1. The framework is based on five sub-variables of other customers and sales associates. The sub-variables of other customers as depicted in the framework are crowding and social relations. Conversely, the human variables' sales associates in the framework are made up of sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates. The objectives of this study were to determine consumers' shopping experience in light of these five sub-variables and demographic variables in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. These five sub-variables and demographic variables of consumers that participated in the study, namely, gender, age and race are illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

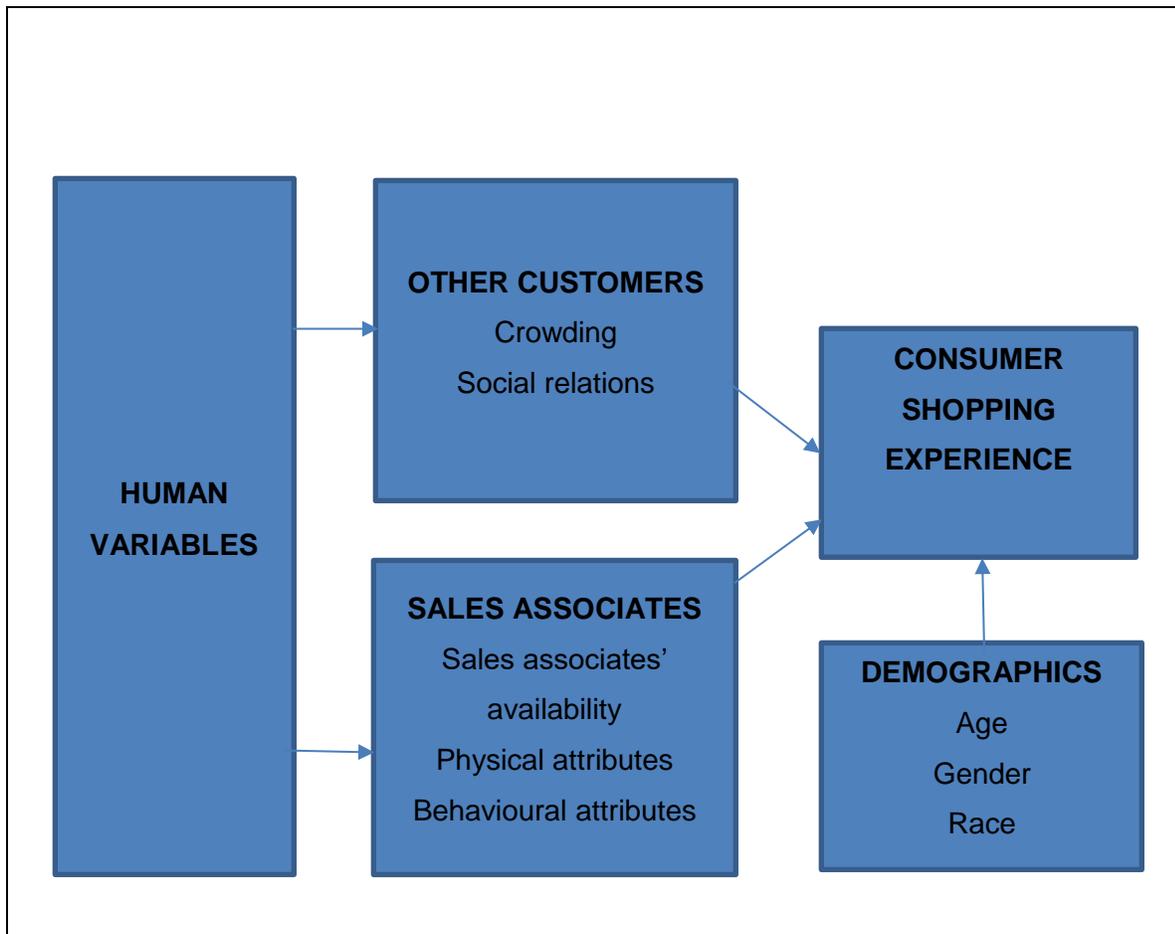


Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework tested in this study

Since the framework has been outlined, the next section aims to discuss the sub-variables of other customers and sales associates as measured in the study. It is important to take note of the fact that the relationships indicated in Figure 3.1 were correlational relationships in a cross-sectional, non-experimental study, but not causal relationships. Furthermore, the sub-human variables and demographics are independent variables while shopping experience is a dependant variable. The sub-variables included in the conceptual framework were identified from Kim and Kim's (2012) human – related environmental stimuli conceptual framework.

3.2.2 Measuring the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience

A five point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used to measure the influence of other customers and sales associates' attributes. The two sub-variables of other customers, namely crowding and social relations were measured with four statements/items each (see questionnaire: appendix B). Conversely, sales associates' attributes were measured with three sub-variables, namely availability (3 statements), physical attributes (3 statements) and behavioural attributes (4 statements), (see the questionnaire in Appendix B). It is important to indicate that there are some statements that were eliminated owing to low loading (see Table 5.6 in Chapter 5).

The hypotheses of this study are linked to the secondary objectives to test if the proportions of consumers are statistically different regarding the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. On the other hand, the hypotheses were also formulated to test if there are statistically significant differences between demographics, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience (see the formulated hypotheses in section 3.2.3).

The human variables (the sub-variables of other customers and sales associates' attributes) are discussed in the next section.

3.2.3 The five sub-variables of other customers and sales associates

The focus of this study was on the sub-variables of other customers and sales associates as the human variables that form the basis of the hypotheses that were tested in this study.

These sub-variables of other customers and sales associates are tested on crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes, and behavioural attributes of sales associates, as well as across gender, age and race. These are discussed in the next sections. Nevertheless, hypotheses pertaining to qualification and income were not tested as these proved to be the most sensitive demographic variables. The researcher identified this sensitivity during the collection of data when respondents seemed to be uncomfortable about revealing their highest qualifications and monthly income. The challenges of high illiteracy level and lack of decent jobs in South Africa could be the reason for respondents' sensitivity regarding qualification and income. Since human variables were classified into two categories (other customers and sales associates), the development of hypotheses firstly focused on other customers' sub-variables and lastly, on sales associates' sub-variables. In addition, each sub-variable has four hypotheses, in which one hypothesis was formulated in determining if the proportions of consumers regarding its influence on their shopping experience are statistically different, and the other three for determining if there are statistically significant differences between demographics (gender, age and race).

The hypotheses for other customers' sub-variables are discussed in the next section.

3.2.3.1 Crowding

Crowding refers to the number of persons in a given space (Noone & Mattila, 2009:31; Eroglu & Machleit, 1990). In addition, crowding can positively or negatively impact on consumers' experience as it may influence them to decide whether they remain or leave the FMCG retail store (Hwang, Yoon & Bendle, 2012:225). Interestingly, a crowded store may create an image of excitement or a feeling of restricted movement, or both (Hwang *et al.*, 2012:225). According to Mehta (2013:646), the assistance provided by sales associates can reduce the negative effects of crowding. Pons *et al.* (2014:58) investigated the role of scarcity and customers' affective reactions in crowded retail situations and found that a crowded condition hinders relaxed and peaceful shopping experience. According to Machleit *et al.* (2000:29), the level of in-store crowding perceived by shoppers can affect their patronage decisions as well as satisfaction with the overall

shopping activity. Eroglu *et al.* (2005:1151) investigated perceived retail crowding and shopping satisfaction. The results indicated that perceived retail crowding negatively affects shopping values.

Kim and Runyan (2011) conducted a study on the effects of mall kiosks on perceived retail crowding. The findings revealed that consumers perceive the environment with kiosk as crowded, and this perception of overcrowding negatively affects their approach behaviour, leading to lower intentions to patronise (Kim & Runyan, 2011:138). In their study, Pan and Siemens (2011:108) found that individual customers prefer a medium level of crowding than a store with low or high crowding. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was developed:

- H₁: Crowding influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Mehta (2013:648) highlights the important role that demographic variables can play in crowding research. Studies conducted by Raju (1980); Zuckerman, Eysenck and Eysenck (1978) showed that gender, age, level of education, and employment status in a crowded retail environment are correlated with individuals' optimal stimulation levels. Optimum stimulation levels refer to one's desired level of environmental stimulation and predisposition to act in the presence of environment (Wang, Chang & Wysong, 2012:7). Yilidirim and Akalin-Baskaya (2007) conducted a study to investigate perceived crowding in a restaurant with different seating densities. The findings indicated that male customers had more positive perception of densities than female customers. In addition, female customers seemed to be more critical than male customers about atmospheric attributes. Moreover, the difference between male and female consumers was found to be statistically significant (Yildirim & Akalin-Baskaya, 2007:3415). In addition, Baker and Wakefield (2012) conducted a study on how shopping orientation influenced perceived crowding, excitement and stress in a mall. The findings revealed significant differences between male and female consumers as well as different age groups.

Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses were formulated regarding gender, age and race on the influence of crowding:

- H_{1a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{1b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{1c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

3.2.3.2 Social relations

Interaction with other customers during shopping can influence a consumer's shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores (Kim & Kim, 2012:823). Tombs and McColl-Kennedy (2010:121) argue that even when customers do not interact with each other, the mere presence of others elicits them to monitor the social behaviour of others. In addition, the presence of others increases arousal levels within the individual consumer, which in turn, enhances the expression of dominant behaviour (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2010:121). Brack and Benkenstein (2011:501) conducted a study on the effects of similarity regarding the customer-to-customer relationship in a service context. Their findings showed that similarity has a positive effect in relation to attitudes towards the service. Soderlund (2011:174) investigated how customers who are strangers to an individual consumer affect his/her overall evaluation of the store. The results indicated that interacting with other customers in a retail store and purchasing activities impact on an individual's attitude towards a retailer and the overall evaluation.

Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H₂: Social relations influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Soderlund (2011:178) further found that there was a significant difference between genders, as female consumers had a more positive attitude towards the store than male consumers. Jubas (2011) conducted a study on shopping for identity taking gender, race and class of critical consumers into consideration. The findings showed that participants' perceptions of race and gender differed significantly.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H_{2a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{2b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{2c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The hypotheses based on sales associates' sub-variables are discussed and formulated in the next section. These hypotheses are also based on three demographic variables, namely, gender, age and race.

3.2.3.3 Sales associates' availability

Sales associates are considered the most important variable that influences how customers respond to a retail store (Kim & Kim, 2012:824). According to Darian *et al.* (2001:211), customers prefer to shop in a retail store where sales associates are readily available and tend to avoid retail stores where sales associates are hard to find. Baker, Parasuraman and Grewal (1994:332) found that sales associates who greet customers when they enter the retail store create a pleasant shopping experience. Furthermore, the

presence of a sufficient number of sales associates suggest that customers will be satisfied with the retail store as they would spend less time searching for merchandise as opposed to when there are few sales associates on the floor because these customers may become annoyed and frustrated (Baker, Grewal, Parasuraman & Voss, 2002:127). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H₃: Sales associates' availability influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

A study by Lieven (2016) that explored customers' choice of salespersons during the initial sales encounter found that there was a significant difference between male and female respondents' preferences in terms of sales associates and the service provided. In addition, men and women do not react in a significantly different manner towards the influence of multi-store environment cues (Baker *et al.*, 2002:134). However, the present study sets out to establish whether male and female consumers in the FMCG retail stores differ significantly or not.

Retailing studies on advertising and communication suggest that there are significant differences among consumers in terms of both age and race. A study by Sharma (2015) on communication across age groups found that age groups differed significantly regarding attitudes towards advertisements. In turn, Gao, Xu and Kim (2013) investigated the effect of racial cues on readers' responses to advertisements. They found that consumers of different race groups reacted differently toward brands advertisements. Furthermore, consumers tended to react negatively towards brands that used models of the opposite racial groups, and positively towards brands that used models of racial groups similar to them.

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the above discussion:

- H_{3a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- H_{3b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{3c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

3.2.3.4 Physical attributes of sales associates

Sales associates' appearance and behaviour are perceived to correlate with the quality of products and service offered in a retail store (Haj-Salem, Chebat, Michon & Oliveira, 2016:1222). Tsai and Huang (2004:1006) found that sales associates who display positive behaviour such as greeting, smiling and establishing eye contact increase customers' willingness to return and recommend the store to others. Soderlund and Julander (2009:216) investigated the effects of attractiveness of service workers on customers' satisfaction, and found that high levels of physical attractiveness produced high levels of satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H₄: Physical attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Osman, *et al.* (2014:182) assert that sales associates' physical attributes include dress, physical attractiveness, demographics, and non-verbal cues. In turn, Richard, Stuart, McKay, and Sackett (2017), investigated the impact of store-unit–community racial diversity congruence on store-unit sales performance. The results indicated that racial diversity congruence resulted in significantly higher store-unit sales performance than racial diversity incongruence. Shao, *et al.* (2004) investigated the effects of appropriateness of the clothing of service contact personnel on customers' expectations of services quality and purchase intention. Their findings revealed that male and female customers were significantly different in their cognitive responses to the dress of service contact personnel (Shao *et al.*, 2004:1173).

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H_{4a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{4b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{4c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

3.2.3.5 Behavioural attributes of sales associates

The influence of sales associates' behavioural attributes can be divided into two categories, namely, characteristics and interaction (Kim & Kim, 2012:826). Customers' satisfaction with their shopping experience is also influenced by the quality of interaction with sales associates since highly empathetic sales associates evoke more attention from customers because empathy stimulates interaction (Srivastava & Kaul, 2014:1030). Darian *et al.* (2001:210) investigated how sales associates' behavioural attributes influence customers' retail patronage intentions. The results indicated that sales associates' respect for customers, knowledge and responsiveness are the most important attributes that influence customers to patronise a retailer. Menon and Dube (2000:285) conducted a study to investigate salespersons' responses to customers' emotions with a view to ensure greater satisfaction. The findings showed that salespersons' positive responses led to greater customer satisfaction. Therefore, this hypothesis was formulated:

- H₅: Behavioural attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Prendergast, Li and Li (2014), investigated consumers' perception, gender and credibility. The results showed that there were significant differences between male and female consumers regarding sales associate's credibility in terms of trustworthiness and attractiveness. However, with regard to perceived expertise, there was no significant difference between genders (Prendergast *et al.*, 2014:204). In addition, Jones *et al.* (1998) conducted a study on sales person' race and gender, and found that race and gender showed significant differences on the impact of buyer seller's credibility and trustworthiness.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H_{5a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{5b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{5c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The results for testing these hypotheses are presented in Chapter 5.

3.3 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the hypotheses formulated for the present study. These hypotheses are based on five sub-variables, namely crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, as well as their physical attributes and behavioural attributes. Each sub-variable was considered in light of three demographic variables, namely gender, age and race. This chapter also provided the theoretical background of each sub-variable to support the formulation of the hypotheses. It was indicated that all secondary

objectives were used to measure the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. In addition, the hypotheses are linked to the objectives of the study.

The research design and methodology used for this study are discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology used for the present study. The research process and the steps that were followed in this study are also discussed, together with an explanation of the research design, the sample, sampling techniques, and data collection methods. The analysis of the data is presented and finally ethical issues are discussed.

4.2 THE MARKETING RESEARCH PROCESS

Marketing research can be defined as the systematic gathering and analysis of marketing-related data to provide information that can be used by FMCG retailers in decision-making processes (Clow & James, 2014:3; McDaniel & Gates 2013:4). Marketing research involves following a systematic sequence of steps that can produce viable and valid data (Clow & James, 2014:3).

The research process entails a systematic, planned approach to ensure that all aspects of the study are properly addressed (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:42). The research design and implementation thereof must correlate with the research purpose and objectives to ensure that the results are useful. For the purposes of this study, the steps in the research process are depicted in Figure 4.1 below. These form the basis of discussions for the present chapter.

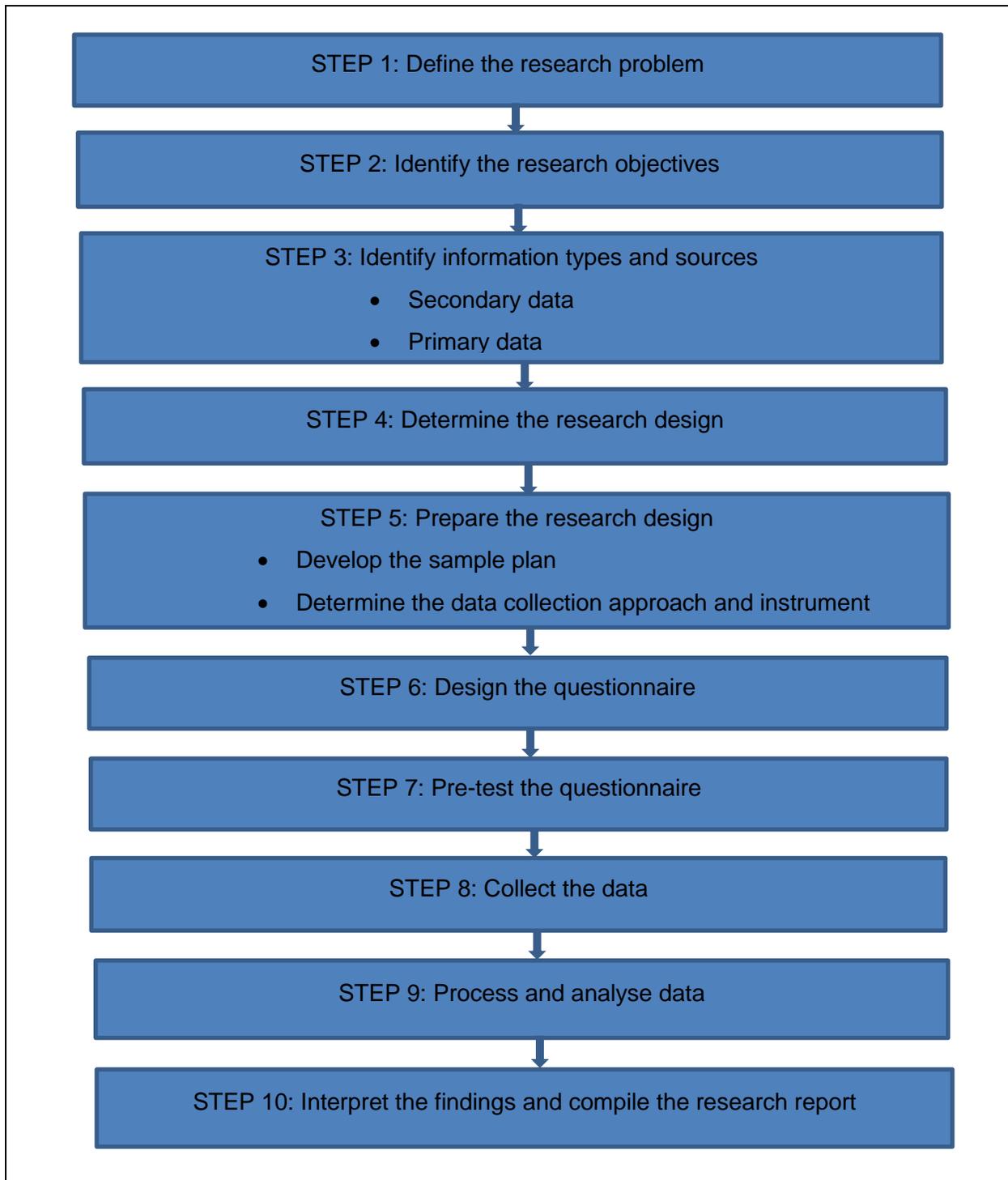


Figure 4.1: The marketing research process

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:43); McDaniel and Gates (2013:67) and Tustin *et al.* (2005:76)

These steps are discussed in the next sections.

4.2.1 Step 1: Define the research problem

The first step in the marketing research process defines the research problem as set out in Chapter 1 of the study. A marketing research problem is a statement that specifies the type of information needed to solve the problem, and how that information can be obtained efficiently and effectively (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2012:297; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:66).

This study investigate the influence of human variables, namely other customers and sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The self-service nature of the FMCG retail store environment requires retailers to create a pleasant shopping experience to attract customers and differentiate their stores from competitors.

In Chapter 2, the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retailing was highlighted since these variables, from customers' perspective, could create a pleasant atmosphere. This is especially true if customers perceive sales associates as knowledgeable, friendly and appear professional (Yoon *et al.*, 2004:394). In addition, Van Rompay *et al.* (2012:1130) indicated that consumer's interactions with other shoppers in the retail store can also lead to satisfaction of social needs. Existing research on human variables tends to focus on the retail industry in general, or on apparel and online retail stores specifically. However, there is no research on FMCG retail stores in particular (Beatty, Mayer & Lee, 1996; Gremler & Gwinner, 2000; Kim & Kim, 2014; Koistinen & Jarvinen, 2016). Aspects of the key human variables were only covered on reviews, but have not been empirically tested in the retail industry (Kim & Kim, 2012). Therefore, this study addresses the gap in the existing literature that was identified by investigating the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in a South African context.

Therefore, the research problem of this study was to investigate the influence of human variables (other customers and sales associates) on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. Human variables are valuable in retail environment and particularly to FMCG retailers as they can be used to create a pleasant store atmosphere that will enhance consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores.

Formulating the research objectives is the next step in the marketing research process as indicated in Figure 4.1. These are discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Step 2: Identify the research objectives

The research objectives were formulated based on the research problem. Marketing research objectives refer to goal statements that indicate the information needed to solve the marketing research problem (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:48; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:64). Well-formulated objectives serve as a road map when pursuing the research project (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:66). The primary and secondary objectives formulated for the purpose of this study are indicated in Chapter 1, and reiterated below.

The following primary research objective was formulated from the literature review:

To determine the influence of human variables, namely other customers and sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The secondary research objectives developed from the primary objective are as follows:

- To determine the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- To determine the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- To determine the influence of demographic variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

As indicated in Figure 4.1 the third step in the research process is the identification of information types and sources, which is explained in the next section.

4.2.3 Step 3: Identify information types and sources

It is important for the researcher to determine whether to use primary or secondary information to achieve the research objectives of the study.

4.2.3.1 Secondary data

Secondary data refers to existing data collected for purposes other than the problem at hand (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:84; Bradley, 2013:63; Clow & James, 2014:63). There are two sources of secondary data, namely, internal and external sources (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:90). Internal sources include information available within the organisation such as sales records, annual reports and customer profiles (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:87; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:90). External sources refer to information that originated outside the company, including government publications, periodical and journals, academic sources, professional bodies, and trade press (Bradley, 2013:89). According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:90), secondary data can be a cost-effective and efficient means of obtaining information for marketing research. Researchers usually start their investigation by examining the readily available secondary data to see whether they can solve the problem before collecting primary data (Kotler & Keller, 2016:126).

Table 4.1 below illustrates the advantages and disadvantages that the researcher should consider when using secondary data.

Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of secondary data

Advantages	Disadvantages
May help in classifying or redefining the problem	Collected for some other purpose
May provide solution to the problem	No control over data collection
May provide alternative primary data methods	May not be very accurate
Secondary data can alert researchers of potential problems and difficulties	May be outdated
May provide necessary background information and build credibility for research report	May not meet data requirements
It may provide the sample frame	May not be reported in the required form

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:87); McDaniel and Gates (2013:90)

For the purpose of this study, there was no internal secondary data that was used. However, external secondary data was used. The external secondary data used include academic articles, academic textbooks and internet sources. The latter external secondary data was utilised to formulate the literature review and to develop appropriate constructs for this study (see Chapter 2).

Secondary data could not solve the problem of this study. Therefore, primary data had to be collected as discussed in the next section.

4.2.3.2 Primary data

Primary data refers to data that is collected to solve the problem under investigation (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:90; Bradley, 2013:112). Primary data uses survey, observation and experimental methods (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:90), which are discussed in the next step. According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:114), the researcher should collect primary data after analysing secondary data and concluding that it is not sufficient to solve the problem at hand. Primary data was collected for the present study.

The research design selected for the study is discussed in the next section.

4.2.4 Step 4: Determine the research design

A research design is the plan that is followed to address the research objectives (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:66). Aaker *et al.* (2013:63) define a research design as the detailed blueprint used to guide the study towards its objectives. The research design represents the master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the required information (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:82). There are three main types of research designs, namely exploratory, descriptive and causal research, as depicted in Figure 4.2 below.

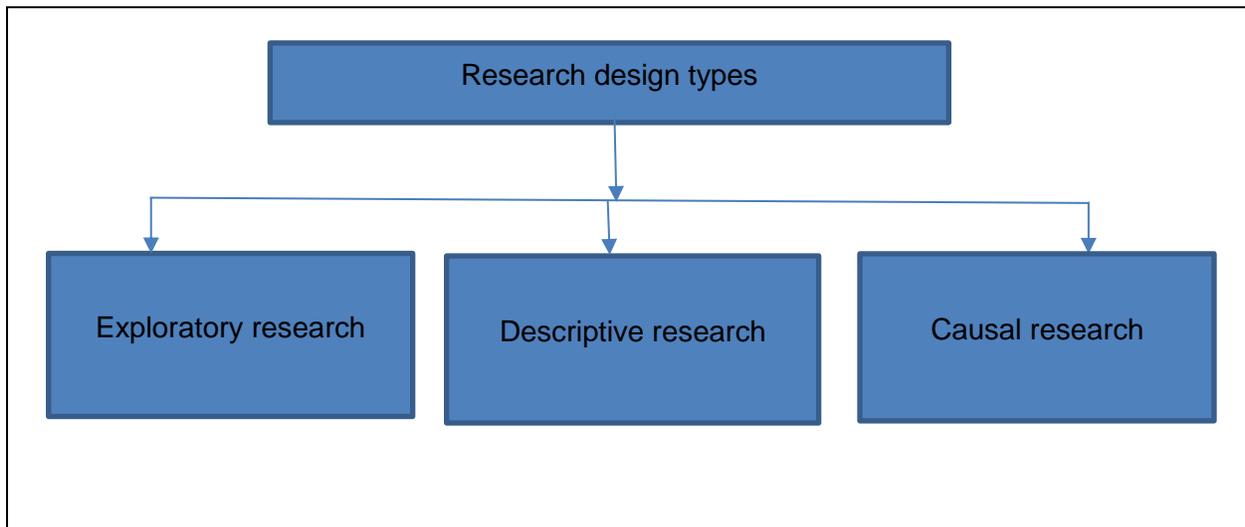


Figure 4.2: Types of research design

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:64); Clow and James (2014:27); Tustin *et al.* (2005:83)

According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:66), there is no single best research design. Instead, different designs offer an array of choices, each with advantages and disadvantages. The choice of a research approach depends on the nature of the research to be conducted (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:65).

4.2.4.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is used when seeking insight into the general nature of a problem (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:65). According to Clow and James (2014:27), exploratory research involves a preliminary examination of the problem or situation to identify parameters to be studied further and in some cases, even to define the problem itself. Exploratory research is suitable when the researcher is not clear about problems that might be experienced during the investigation (Clow & James, 2014:27; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:129). Furthermore, exploratory research allows the researcher to establish priorities among research questions and to learn about problems that are practical in nature when conducting the study (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:85).

4.2.4.2 Causal research

Causal research is used to determine whether one variable causes another (Clow & James, 2014:29). McDaniel and Gates (2013:67) described causal research as the research design that determines whether the value of one variable causes the value of other variables. In other words, it determines whether an independent variable has an effect on a dependent variable. The goal of causal research is to control and eliminate all possible causes of an effect, except the one being studied (Clow & James, 2014:29).

4.2.4.3 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is conducted to answer the who, what, when, where, and how questions (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:66; Tustin *et al.*, 2005:86). Researchers who use descriptive research usually have a clear understanding of the problem at hand (Clow & James, 2014:28). The purpose of descriptive research is to provide an accurate snapshot of the market environment (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:66). Furthermore, descriptive research provides the researcher with an elucidation of the phenomenon associated with the subject population (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:134).

For the purpose of this study, a descriptive research design was used because the study investigates a current phenomenon, namely the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The findings of this study can provide FMCG retailers with information on how human variables influence consumers' shopping experience. According to Clow and James (2014:163), descriptive research can be divided into cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Cross-sectional studies are conducted at a single point in time and therefore provide snapshot of the subject or topic being studied at that time. Longitudinal research refers to studies that ask the same questions at multiple points in time (Clow & James, 2014:163; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:196).

Cross-sectional descriptive research was used with sample surveys that are representative of the target population. The study determined the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores at a particular point in time. Each respondent completed the questionnaire only once.

There are also two data collection research approaches, namely, qualitative and quantitative research. These are explained in the next section.

4.2.4.4 Qualitative and quantitative research

The researcher should decide whether to use a qualitative or quantitative approach.

- **Qualitative research** is a research approach that involves unstructured data collection methods that provide results that are subjectively interpreted (Clow & James, 2014:41). The findings of qualitative research are not subject to quantification (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:117). According to Bradley (2013:236), qualitative research uses techniques that attempts to glean opinions and attitudes. It is used for exploratory research.
- **Quantitative research** can be described as a research approach that involves a structured data collection method that provides results that can be converted into numbers and analysed by means of statistical procedures (Bradley, 2013:268;

Clow & James, 2014:41; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:17). Quantitative research is used for descriptive and causal research (Clow & James, 2014:43).

A comparison between qualitative and quantitative approaches is depicted in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Comparison between qualitative and quantitative research

RESEARCH ASPECT	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
Type of research	Exploratory	Descriptive or causal
Sample size	Small	Large
Type of questions	Unstructured	Structured
Type of analysis	Subjective, interpretive	Objective, statistical
Generalisability	Limited	High
Cost (typically)	Lower	More expensive
Time frame	Shorter	Longer
Hardware	Sound recorders, projection devices, video recorder, pictures, discussion guides	Questionnaires, computers, printouts, mobile devices
Research training	Psychology, sociology, consumer behaviour, marketing, marketing research	Statistical, decision models, decision support systems, computer programming and marketing research.

Source: Clow and James (2014:42); McDaniel and Gates (2013:117)

This study followed a quantitative approach. The rationale for selecting this research approach is that the study used a self-administered questionnaire with structured questions to obtain information from consumers by means of mall-intercept. In addition, the study aimed to describe the characteristics of the population in terms of human variables and how they influence consumers' shopping experience. Lastly, it was selected because responses in the questionnaire were assigned numbers for the purposes of statistical analysis.

The next step in the research process is to prepare the research design for collecting the primary data for this study.

4.2.5 Step 5: Prepare the research design

This is the fifth step as indicated in Figure 4.1 of the marketing research process.

The sample plan is the first phase of preparing research design and is discussed in the next section.

4.2.5.1 Design the sample plan

Sampling refers to the process of obtaining information from the population sample (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:80). A sample is described as a subset of all members of the population (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:380; Tustin *et al.*, 2005:337). The sample for this study was drawn from FMCG consumers between the ages of 18 and 60 who reside in Ekurhuleni. According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:81), the basic issue in developing a sample plan is to specify the characteristics of the individuals from whom information is needed in order to address the research objectives. The process of developing a sample plan involves various steps as shown in Figure 4.3.

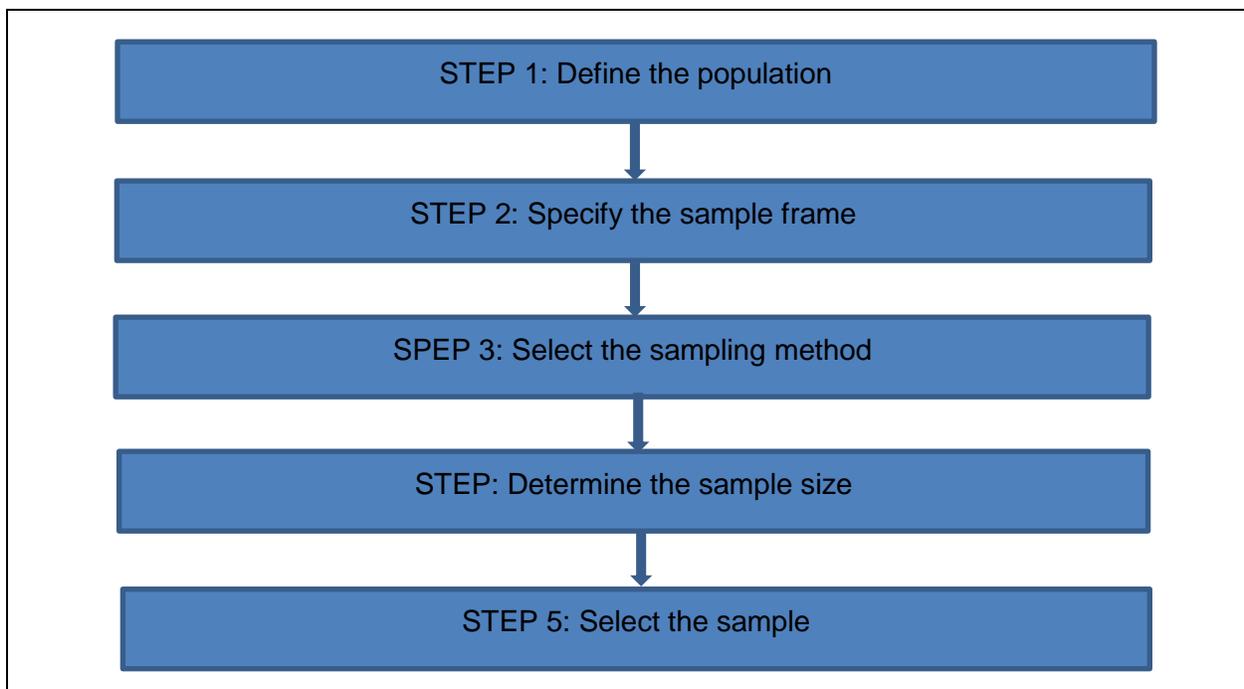


Figure 4.3: Steps in developing the sampling plan

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:304); Cant (2013b:79) and Malhotra *et al.* (2012:496).

Step 1: Define the target population

Defining the target population is the first step in the sampling process. According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:380), the target population is the entire group of people about whom data will be obtained. The target population for this study were consumers who shop at the FMCG retail stores in shopping malls, which can be defined as the population of the study. For the sake of practicality and cost, the focus of this study was delineated to the population of Ekurhuleni as it is considered to be one of the largest regions in Gauteng Province with a population of over 3.1 million (Stats SA, 2016). Respondents were asked a qualifying question to ensure that they reside in Ekurhuleni metropolitan area.

Therefore, the units of analysis for this study were individual consumers of FMCG retailers in selected shopping malls (East Rand mall and Festival mall) in Ekurhuleni.

Step 2: Identify the sampling frame

A sampling frame can be defined as a list of population elements from which units to be sampled can be selected (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:347; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:384). This study used a mall-intercept sampling method (see step 3) as a formal documented plan was not available. Nevertheless, the sample frame for this study can be said to comprise consumers of FMCG retail stores who reside in Ekurhuleni, who were readily available, and who agreed to participate in the study.

The next step is to determine the sampling method as discussed in the next section.

Step 3: Determine the sampling method

Determining the sampling method is the third step in the sampling plan design. The researcher had to determine whether to use probability or non-probability sampling in order to achieve the objectives of this study. There are various types of probability and non-probability sampling methods as shown in Figure 4.4 below.

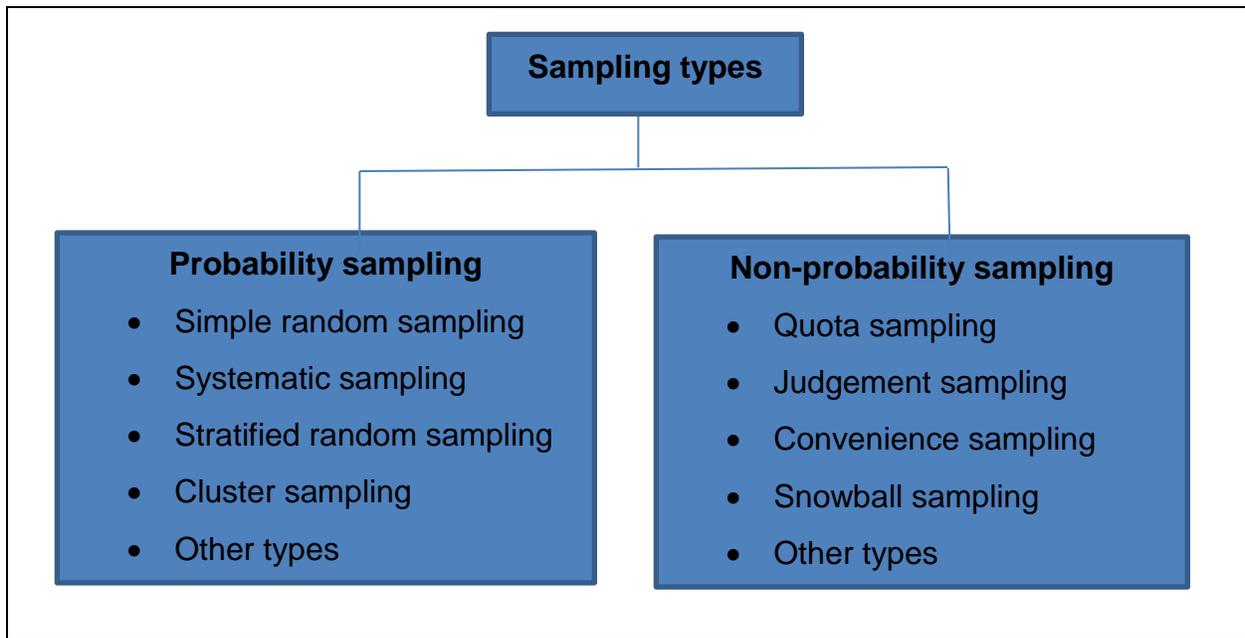


Figure 4.4: Types of probability and non-probability sampling

Source: Bradley (2013:162); Cant (2013b:80)

Probability sampling refers to instances in which all members of the population have a known probability of being selected in the sample (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:309; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:389). The advantage of probability sampling is that it allows the researcher to obtain representative samples of a larger population (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:309). Probability sampling also has disadvantages such as high cost to reach the target population. It is also more time-consuming than non-probability sampling (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:350).

There are various types of probability sampling that a researcher can use (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:310-314; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:508-512; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:389-394) as depicted in Figure 4.4.

- **Simple random sampling** refers to random selection of population members in which every member of the population has a known and equal probability of being selected in the sample.

- **Systematic sampling** involves selecting a sample by systematically spreading the sample through a list of population members.
- **Stratified sampling** entails dividing the population into sub-sets termed strata, for example, male and female, and then selecting random samples from each of the subsets independently of each other.
- **Cluster sampling** refers to dividing the population into sub-sets termed clusters and then randomly selecting a sample of clusters.

Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that relies on the personal judgement of the researcher rather than on chance to select the sample elements (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:501). Non-probability sampling can yield good estimates of the population characteristics, but does not allow for the objective evaluation of the sample results (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:501). Types of non-probability sampling methods (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:315-317; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:502-506; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:396-397) as illustrated in Figure 4.4 above are also explained below.

- **Convenience sampling** refers to selecting respondents based on ease of access.
- **Judgement sampling** is a method in which respondents are selected based on the researcher's judgement about their representativeness of the population being studied.
- **Quota sampling** refers to selecting respondents on quotas based on classification factors selected by the researcher for population sub-groups.
- **Snowball sampling** is a method where additional respondents are selected based on referrals from initial respondents.

For the purpose of this study, **non-probability sampling and convenience sampling (mall-intercept)** were used. The rationale for selecting convenience sampling was that the target population comprised consumers of the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni and were intercepted at the selected shopping malls. Therefore, any individual consumer who had made purchases from the FMCG retail stores and any readily available individual that

was cooperative could be selected for the sample. In addition, the research objectives of the study could be best achieved with convenience sampling as data were collected by means of mall-intercepting.

The advantages and disadvantages of convenience sampling are listed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Advantages and disadvantages of convenience sampling

Advantages	Disadvantages
Convenience sampling is least expensive.	Sample selection might be biased.
It is least time-consuming.	A sample might not be representative.
Sampling units are accessible, easy to measure and cooperative.	Results cannot be generalised.

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:316); Malhotra *et al.* (2012:503) and McDaniel and Gates (2013:396).

Step 4: Determine the sample size

Sample size refers to the number of individuals or elements to be included in the study (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:499; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:386). According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:499), the sample size is influenced by the average size of samples in studies similar to the current study. The sample size for this study comprised 400 respondents based on the similar study by E-Adly and Eid (2015:857) with 368 sample. Furthermore, the sample size of other similar studies that used the mall-intercept approach included Millan and Howard (2007:477), who used a sample of 355 sample and Michon, Yu, Smith, and Chebat (2007:492), who used a sample of 312. Bartlet, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001), further suggested that a sufficient sample size can be determined at a confidence level of 95%.

Once the sample size has been determined, the final step in the sample design was to select the sample as discussed in the next section.

Step 5: Select the sample

The researcher intercepted consumers at FMCG retail stores at the selected malls and asked them to participate in the study. The researcher provided a brief description of the study to every consumer who agreed to participate.

4.2.5.2 Determine the data collection approach

After determining the research design, the researcher needs to select a means of gathering data. There are three basic methods of gathering data, namely surveys observation and experimental research.

- **Observational research** refers to the systematic process of recording the behaviours or results of behaviour of people, objects and occurrences of events (Clow & James, 2014:128).
- **Experimental research** involves measuring causality. Here the researcher changes one or more independent variable(s) and observes the effect of the changes on a dependant variable (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:69).
- **Survey research** refers to a method that captures a wide variety of information on many diverse topics and subjects (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:181). A survey involves collecting information from individuals and organisations by means of structured questionnaires or interviews (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011:212). Survey research is often used for descriptive purposes and is suitable to describe a phenomenon, behaviour and situations (Clow & James, 2014:163). This type of research relies on a questionnaire to collect data from respondents (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:336).

Survey research was selected as an appropriate data collection method for the purpose of this study in order to achieve the objectives. Aaker *et al.*, (2013:181) and Leedy and Ormrod (2013:189) indicate several advantages of using survey method to collect data.

Advantages of survey research

- A survey can collect a great deal of data about an individual respondent at one time.
- A survey method is versatile; it can be used in virtually any setting with any group, and is adaptable to research objectives that necessitate either a descriptive or causal design.
- A survey is simple in design.

There are various survey methods that can be used to collect data, namely personal interviews, telephone interviews and self-administered surveys, as indicated in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Types of survey methods

Survey method type	Characteristics
Personal interview	This type of survey is conducted face-to-face by a trained interviewer and can be administered at any venue.
Telephone interview	This involves the collection of information telephonically by an interviewer.
Self-administered survey	This type involves asking respondents to complete a questionnaire in their own time. Self-administered questionnaires may be mailed or delivered either personally or online to respondents or by means of mall-intercept

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:196) and Cant (2013b:76)

4.2.5.3 Determine the data collection instrument

Since the data collection approach used in the present study was a survey, a self-administered questionnaire was deemed appropriate to collect data. A self-administered questionnaire refers to a method that allows respondents to read and complete a questionnaire themselves (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:184; Cant, 2013b:78). For the purpose of this study, a self-administered questionnaire was selected owing to its advantages. In addition, it was selected because respondents were intercepted at the malls.

Table 4.5 below illustrates the advantages and disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires.

Table 4.5: Advantages and disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires

Advantages	Disadvantages
It is fairly low in cost.	The questionnaire length is limited and instructions are necessary.
Extended geographic coverage is possible without increasing costs.	This method has a low response rate.
There is sufficient time for respondents to think about their answers.	The respondent needs to be in an environment that has few distractions.
Incentives may be used.	Respondents who represent extremes can skew the data.
It is fairly easy to reach inaccessible respondents.	The mailing list used must be accurate, if used.
Respondents perceive this method to be anonymous.	
Visual illustrations may be used.	
It allows for rapid data collection.	

Source: Aaker *et al.* (2013:204) and Cant (2013b:78)

4.2.5.4 Determine the data collection method

In this study, mall-intercept was used to collect data. Shopping mall-intercept surveys entail conducting interviews by intercepting shoppers and interviewing them face-to-face (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:197; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:159). According to McDaniel and Gates (2013:159), the main advantage of using the mall-intercept method is that it is not very expensive because respondents are already in the mall. Therefore, interviewers spend more time interviewing and less time looking for shoppers to interview. However, mall-intercept is also associated with some disadvantages such as some customers may refuse mall interviews, and shoppers who are not representative of the general population also visit the mall for shopping (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:197; McDaniel & Gates.2013:159). The disadvantages were addressed by approaching FMCG consumers residing in Ekurhuleni, who are readily available and willing to participate in the study. The researcher collected

data for this study for three days in each of the two shopping malls. In addition, the researcher did not use fieldworkers as he collected data himself.

The next step of the marketing research process is to design the research instrument/questionnaire, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

4.2.6 Step 6: Design the questionnaire

A questionnaire refers to a set of questions designed to generate the data necessary to address the objectives of the study (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:336). Malhotra *et al.* (2012:452) define a questionnaire as a structured technique for data collection consisting of a series of questions, written or verbal, that participants answer. A good questionnaire should achieve the following objectives (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:452):

- It must translate the information needed into a set of specific questions that participants can answer.
- It must uplift, motivate and encourage the participant to become involved, to cooperate and to complete the task.
- It should minimise response errors.

The questions in questionnaires can be divided into three categories, namely structured (close-ended), unstructured (open ended) and semi-structured questions as discussed below:

- **Structured questions** are closed-ended questions that allow the researcher to specify the set of response alternatives and response format. The types of structured questions include multiple choice, dichotomous and scaled questions (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:252; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:465).
- **Unstructured questions** are open-ended questions that allow respondents to respond in their own words (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:463).

- **Semi-structured questions** involve a mixture of close-ended and open-ended questions. The introductory question may be structured (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:393).

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire contained structured questions. These questions included dichotomous, multiple choice and scaled questions.

- **Dichotomous questions** have only two response alternatives that a respondent chooses from, such as “yes or no” (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:466; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:350). An example of dichotomous question from the questionnaire of this study:

Do you reside in Ekurhuleni?

Yes	1
No	2

- **Multiple choice questions** refer to questions where the researcher provides a choice of answers and respondents are asked to select one option that correctly expresses his/her opinion (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:351).

An example of multiple-choice question from the questionnaire of the study is:

Please indicate your age group.

17 - 23	1
24 - 35	2
36 - 45	3
46 - 60	4

- **Scaled questions** involve creating continuum on which objects are located according to the measured characteristics they possess (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:224).

For the purpose of this study, a Likert scale was used. A Likert scale uses rating scales that require the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series of statements about the stimulus objects

(Aaker *et al.*, 2013:233; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:424). An example of a Likert scale in the questionnaire of the study is:

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni:

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.1	I enjoy shopping in the crowded FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5

There are four types of measuring scales:

- **A nominal scale** uses numbers to identify objects with strict one-to-one correspondence between the numbers and objects (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:412). An example of nominal scale from the questionnaire is:

Please indicate your gender.

Male	1
Female	2

- **An ordinal scale** is a ranking scale that arranges items in order with regard to some common variables (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:255; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:414). This study did not use ordinal scale.
- **An interval scale**, in which the numbers used to rank the objects also represent equal increments of the attribute being measured (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:226). No interval scale used for this study.
- **Ratio scale** possesses all the properties of the nominal, ordinal and interval scales and has an absolute zero point (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:415). This study did not use ratio scales.

The structure of the questionnaire used for this study is shown in the next section.

Table 4.6: Structure of the questionnaire for this study

Section A comprised question 1
<i>Qualifying question</i>
Question 1 focused on establishing whether a respondent resided in Ekurhuleni or not
Section B comprised questions 2-6
<i>Other customers questions</i>
Question 2 addressed crowding
Question 3 focuses on social relations among customers
<i>Sales associates questions</i>
Question 4 enquired about the availability of sales associates
Question 5 focused on the physical attributes of sales associates
Question 6 addressed behavioural attributes of sales associates
Section C comprised questions 7-11
<i>Demographic questions</i>
Question 7 addressed respondents' gender
Question 8 required respondents to indicate their age groups
Question 9 asked about respondents' race
Question 10 enquired about the highest qualification of respondents
Question 11 addressed respondents' monthly gross income

The measures used in this study are depicted in Table 4.6 below. It is important to highlight that the questions in the questionnaire were developed based on the literature review. Since Kim and Kim (2012) developed a conceptual framework and not empirical testing of the constructs. As it was indicated in Chapter 2, this study expands on Kim and Kim's (2012) study that was a review not empirical. Therefore, the researcher developed the questionnaire for this study (see the attached questionnaire in Appendix B).

Table 4.7: Measures used in the study

Research objectives	Question number and variables in the questionnaire
To determine the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 2, 4 statements: 2.1 – 2.4
To determine the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 3, 4 statements: 3.1 – 3.4
To determine the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 4, 3 statements: 4.1 – 4.3
To determine the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 5, 3 statements: 5.1 – 5.3
To determine the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 6, 4 statements: 6.1 - 6.4
To determine the influence of demographic variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	Question 7, 8 and 9, 3 statements: 7-9

Once the questionnaire has been designed, the next step of the marketing research process as depicted in Figure 4.1 is to pre-test the questionnaire as discussed in the next section.

4.2.7 Step 7: Pre-test the questionnaire

Pre-testing the questionnaire should be conducted before data could be collected for the main study. A pre-test refers to a trial run of the questionnaire (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:360). According to Aaker *et al.* (2013:263), the purpose of pre-testing is to ensure that the questionnaire meets a researcher's expectations in terms of information that needs to be obtained. Furthermore, pre-testing is done to assess the questions and to minimise errors before the actual data collection (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:324). Pre-testing should be conducted in the same mode as the final interview (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:360). For example, this study was done by means of a mall-intercept, and therefore, the pre-test had to follow the same procedure.

The questionnaire used in this study was pre-tested among 40 customers of Lambton Shopping Mall in Ekurhuleni because the management of the mall granted permission to the researcher to conduct the procedure. The reason for pre-testing the questionnaire at a shopping mall (Lambton) other than the ones at which the actual data was collected, was owing to the fact that the East Rand mall and Festival Mall did not allow the researcher to conduct pre-testing, but granted him permission to collect the actual data for the study. Furthermore, there were no changes made in the questionnaire after pre-testing as the researcher did not see any problem that was experienced by respondents.

4.2.8 Step 8: Collect the data

This is the step where the actual data was collected by means of the research instrument (the questionnaire). The researcher conducted the survey at the East Rand Mall in Boksburg and the Festival Mall in Kempton Park. The management of both shopping malls granted permission to conduct the research. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed to respondents by means of mall-intercept survey. Accordingly, consumers who agreed to participate in the study were required to sign the consent form before completing the questionnaires. The completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. The researcher collected data.

The next step after collecting data as indicated in Figure 4.1 is data analysis.

4.2.9 Step 9: Process and analyse data

The collected data was analysed by means of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involves summarising the characteristics of large set of data (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:456). The software used to analyse data is SPSS version 24. Data are illustrated in tables. The statistical techniques used in the case of descriptive statistics help to summarise, classify and describe the set of data characteristics including standard deviation and measures of central tendency (which are the arithmetic mean median and mode) (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:458).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:282), descriptive statistics involve discussing how to determine three things that the researcher might want to know about a data set: point of central tendency, amount of variability, and the extent to which two or more variables are associated with one another. Conversely, inferential statistics allows the researcher to draw inferences about large populations from relatively small samples (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:294). Inferential statistics also allow one to reach conclusions that beyond the data set or sample from which the data is compiled (Duignan, 2014:14).

The reliability and validity of the research instrument were tested with Cronbach's alpha and exploratory factor analysis to ensure that the measurement was reliable and valid (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:196).

4.2.9.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which the research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Wiid & Digines, 2015:242). Factor analysis is a technique of statistically identifying a reduced number of factors from a larger number of measured variables (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:595). Exploratory factor analysis is a data reduction method that can be used to identify constructs or hidden underlying dimensions that may or may not be apparent from direct analysis (Cleff, 2014:183). Accordingly, exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the study. Furthermore, an exploratory factor analysis determined whether the individual questions loaded or contributed to the constructs as intended in the questionnaire. The extraction method used in this study is the Principal axis factoring. The rotation method that was used is Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Exploratory factor analysis that focused on principal axis factoring was conducted to group the items under the five factors.

Kaiser Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett Sphericity were used to determine measure of the appropriateness when conducting the exploratory factor analysis. KMO can be described as the ratio of the sum squared correlation plus sum of the squared partial correlations (Cleff, 2014:185). The KMO value varies between 0 and 1 with 0.5, indicating that it was acceptable and viable to conduct an exploratory

factor analysis. Bartlett's test for Sphericity was conducted to determine correlations between variables (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:242).

4.2.9.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if measurements are repeated (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:433; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:286). Cronbach's alpha, which is also known as coefficient alpha, was used in this study to assess internal consistency and reliability. Cronbach's alpha involves computing mean reliability coefficient estimates for all possible ways of splitting a set of items in half (McDaniel & Gates, 2013:288). Malhotra *et al.* (2012:434) describe Cronbach's alpha as a measure of central consistency reliability that is the average of all possible split-half coefficients resulting from different splittings of the scale items. It can vary between 0 (no consistency among items) to 1 (complete consistency). Furthermore, a Cronbach's alpha above 0.8 indicates good reliability, while a score between 0.6 and 0.8 is acceptable. However, a Cronbach's alpha below 0.6 means that reliability is unacceptable (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:434). This study set out to determine whether the scale could measure the same underlying constructs consistently.

Descriptive statistics for the total composite scores and individual questions in the questionnaire

A five-point Likert scale ranging from **strongly disagree – 1** to **strongly agree – 5** was used to measure the constructs investigated in this study. The means and standard deviations for the human variables were presented for the composite scores. The results of individual questions in the questionnaire are also reported in Chapter 5, section 5.4.

4.2.9.3 Hypotheses test for the study

A chi-square for equal proportions was used to test the hypotheses. This determine if the proportions of consumers are statistically different with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales

associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. A chi-square is a measure of the extent to which some observed data depart from expectation (Bruce & Bruce, 2017:112). Furthermore, other hypotheses were also formulated to determine if there were statistically significant differences between demographic variables, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes on consumers' shopping experience. The statistical differences were tested with the F-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The F-test is a technique used to determine if the difference between the mean scores is statistically significant or not (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:644; Wiid & Diggines, 2015:284). ANOVA is a statistical method used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between means of independent groups (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:682). One-way ANOVA was also used. One-way ANOVA is a statistical test to determine if more than two means are equal (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:282).

The hypotheses test results are reported in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.5 and 5.6).

4.2.10 Step 10: Interpret the findings and compile the report

The final step in the marketing research process is to interpret the findings/results and to compile the report (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:493). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013:310), a research report is a clear document that presents what the researcher has done to resolve the research problem in a precise manner. The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refers to moral principles or values that generally govern the conduct of individuals or groups (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:19; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:36). In addition, Aaker *et al.* (2013:19) note that researchers have responsibilities to their profession, clients and respondents. Therefore, they must adhere to high ethical standards to ensure that neither the function nor the information not brought into disrepute (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:19).

Furthermore, the researcher ensure that the respondents in the study have the right to choose to participate or not, and should respect their right to safety, to be informed, and their right to privacy (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:20; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:43). For this study the researcher adhered to all these ethical principles.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa (see appendix E). This was to ensure that the study is conducted ethically and the rights of respondents were upheld. East Rand Shopping Mall and Festival Shopping Mall granted permission to collect data. In addition, Lambton shopping mall granted permission to pre-test the questionnaire. Consent forms were attached to the questionnaires in order to gain permission from the respondents. These forms also indicated the purpose of the study and explained that respondents' confidentiality would be respected.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a brief explanation of the importance of marketing research in the organisations. The marketing research process was discussed followed by a detailed discussion of each step. The research design used for the present study was also addressed. The sample plan and research instrument designed for data collection were described together with ethical considerations.

The next chapter presents the findings and interpretations gleaned from the data.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The empirical findings of the study are presented in this chapter together with interpretations to demonstrate how the objectives of the study were achieved. The chapter provides an overview of the research findings by presenting descriptive statistical analysis to profile respondents, after which discussions on inferential statistics and factor analysis follow. The chapter also presents the results of the hypotheses tested in this study. Integration of the research objectives, hypotheses and discussion of the results were provided to conclude the chapter.

5.2 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are presented and interpreted in the next sections.

5.2.1 Sample distribution

The number of respondents who participated in this study per shopping mall are illustrated in Table 5.1 below. There were 200 respondents who participated at East Rand Mall (Boksburg) and 200 respondents were from Festival Mall (Kempton Park). These shopping malls fall under the Ekurhuleni region. The total number of respondents for both shopping malls was 400.

Table 5.1: Total number of respondents per shopping mall

Shopping malls	Number of respondents	Percentage
East Rand shopping mall	200	50%
Festival shopping mall	200	50%
Total	400	100%

5.2.2 The qualifying question

The research instrument included a qualifying question that screened respondents to determine whether they qualified to participate in the sample, namely “Do you reside in Ekurhuleni?” Respondents who answered “Yes” were asked to proceed with the questionnaire, while those who answered “No” were asked not to proceed. For this study, the researcher was asking every respondent before he/she can start completing the questionnaire if they reside in Ekurhuleni or not in order to ensure that all respondents who participated in the study were eligible. Table 5.1 shows that all 400 respondents who completed the questionnaires answered “Yes” to indicate that they resided in Ekurhuleni. The following section provides the demographic data used to profile respondents.

5.2.3 Demographic profile of the respondents

In this study, the demographic attributes of respondents were based on age, gender, race, income level, and qualification level. Demographics refer to a population’s characteristics such as gender, age, race, education and income (Levy & Weitz, 2012:597). The demographic attributes of respondents were used to profile the respondents who participated in this study. These enabled the researcher to understand the type of consumers who were most likely to be influenced by human variables.

Table 5.2: A demographic profile of respondents

Demographic profile of respondents (n=400)

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gender		
Male	224	56.%
Female	176	44.%
Age		
18-23	122	30%
24-35	135	34%
36-45	78	20%
46-60	65	16%
Race		
African	228	57%
White	102	25%
Coloured	43	11%
Indian	27	7%
Qualification		
Did not complete Grade 12	27	7%
Completed Grade 12	116	29%
Diploma	103	26%
Undergraduate degree	100	25%
Postgraduate degree	54	13%
Income		
Below R5 000	59	15%
R5 000-R10 000	129	32%
R11 000-R20 000	100	25%
R21 000-R30 000	32	8%
Above R31 000	80	20%

Table 5.2 indicates that 56% (n=224) of respondents who participated in this study were male while 44% (n=176) were female. A significant number of respondents who participated in the study were between the ages of 24 and 35 (n=135, 34%). Then, 30% (n=122) of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 23 respectively while 20% (n=78) were between the ages of 36 and 45. The lowest number of respondents was in the age group of 46 to 60. Furthermore, the table indicates that the majority of respondents (57%; n=228) are Africans and the least represented racial group were Indian with 7% (n=27). White respondents were the second highest represented racial group in the sample with 25% (n=102), followed by 11% (n=43) coloured respondents.

Table 5.2 also shows that 29% (n=116) of respondents had a grade 12 certificate. Most respondents had diploma as their highest qualification. About 25% (n=100) held an undergraduate degree, and only 13% (n=54) had a postgraduate degree. It was also revealed that 32% (n=129) of respondents earned between R5 000 and R10 000 a month while 25% (n=100) were in the income bracket of R11 000 – R20 000. Furthermore, 20% (n=80) earned more than R31 000. A small number of respondents 8% (n=32) indicated an income of R21 000 to R30 000 per month and 15% (n=59) were earning below R5 000 a month.

5.3 THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument used a five-point Likert scale, which comprised strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to obtain valid constructs from responses. In addition, exploratory factor analysis was used to ensure that the measurement was valid (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:196).

Responses on question 2 to 6 of the Likert scale questions were used to measure crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates.

5.3.1 Validity

As discussed in Chapter 4, **validity** refers to the degree to which the research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:242; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:289). Factor analysis is a technique of statistically identifying a reduced number of factors from a larger number of measured variables (Clow & James, 2014:311; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013:595).

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to responses of 18-item questionnaire. The extraction method used was principal axis factoring, and this followed by Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation rotation. The first five factor solution was the most interpretable.

Therefore, only five factors were retained for rotation. Questionnaire items and corresponding factor loadings are presented in Table 5.6. In interpreting the rotated factor pattern, an item was said to load on a given factor if the item was 0.40 or greater for that factor and less than 0.40 for the other factor. Using these criteria, three items were found to load on the first factor, which was subsequently labelled, four items loaded on the second factor, two items loaded on the third factor labelled, there were two items loaded on the fourth factor labelled, and also two items loaded on the fifth factor labelled. There was question 5.3 that was retained in the second factor as it loaded higher than on the fourth factor. A total of 13 items were retained from the questionnaire (see Table 5.6).

Kaiser Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Sphericity were used to determine the measure of appropriateness determined by exploratory factor analysis. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was conducted to determine correlations between variables. The results of these tests are depicted in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy.		.649
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	Approx. chi-square	1811.664
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

Table 5.3 above indicates that the value for KMO for this study was 0.649 above the minimum threshold. Furthermore, Bartlett's test indicated significance (1811.664, df=153, Sig. =.000). These findings indicated that the use of factor analysis was appropriate.

5.3.1.1 Communalities

Communalities in this study were inspected to determine whether individual statements or items could be grouped with the retained factors. Communality refers to common variance as opposed to unique variance, that is, variance that is unique to an item. Communalities, in turn, indicate the extent to which an individual item associates with the other items (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:242).

Any item that has low communality of 0.2 or lower can be removed. Table 5.4 indicates that **15 items scored above 0.2 for communality**, which means that they associated well with one another. However, **items 2.3, 2.4 and 4.3 have low communalities below 0.2**, and were removed.

Table 5.4: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Q2.1	.478	.703
Q2.2	.443	.617
Q2.3	.192	.246
Q2.4	.086	.077
Q3.1	.213	.281
Q3.2	.507	.661
Q3.3	.542	.739
Q3.4	.349	.396
Q4.1	.542	.794
Q4.2	.538	.638
Q4.3	.115	.112
Q5.1	.286	.326
Q5.2	.343	.753
Q5.3	.306	.412
Q6.1	.342	.391
Q6.2	.440	.796
Q6.3	.451	.558
Q6.4	.271	.452

5.3.1.2 Factor structure for further rotation

Wiid and Diggins (2015:243) suggest the following criteria to determine the number of factors (variables):

- The cumulative percentage of variance explained by factors must be greater than 60%.

- The eigenvalues should be greater than 1.0.
- Significant decline in scree plot.

The eigenvalues are illustrated in Table 5.5. According to Wiid and Diggines (2015:243), if the eigenvalue for a factor is 1 or higher, that factor can be considered as meaningful in the exploratory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted using SPSS version 24. The 18 statements from question 2-6 in a Likert scale of the questionnaire were extracted with principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation. The eigenvalues as depicted in Table 5.5 shows seven factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, although the scree plot indicated a possible 5 to 6 factors. Considering the factor loadings, the seventh factor did not have any item loading meaningful to it, while the sixth factor only had two items for which one was cross-loading. Therefore, the five factor solution was tried.

The eigenvalue for the first factor is 3.093, for the second 2.507; 1.674 for the third, for the fourth factor 1.507, and 1.324 for the fifth factor. The percentages of variance are factor 1 at 17.2%, factor 2 at 13.9%, factor 3 at 9.3%, factor 4 at 8.4% and factor 5 at 7.4%. A cumulative percentage of variance of 67.8% for seven factors was determined since five factors scored below the recommended 60% (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:243).

Table 5.5: Factor extraction using Principal axis factoring

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	3.093	17.183	17.183	3.093	17.183	17.183
2	2.507	13.927	13.927	2.507	13.927	13.927
3	1.674	9.299	40.409	1.674	9.299	40.409
4	1.507	8.374	48.783	1.507	8.374	48.783
5	1.324	7.354	56.137	1.324	7.354	56.137
6	1.067	5.928	62.065	1.067	5.928	62.065
7	1.038	5.769	67.834	1.038	5.769	67.834
8	0.895	4.972	72.806			
9	0.835	4.639	77.445			
10	0.678	3.766	81.211			
11	0.664	3.686	84.897			
12	0.563	3.126	88.024			
13	0.531	2.950	90.974			
14	0.423	2.350	93.323			
15	0.340	1.889	95.213			
16	0.315	1.753	96.965			
17	0.284	1.576	98.541			
18	0.263	1.459	100.000			

Extraction method: principal axis factoring

The scree plot depicted in Figure 5.1 supports the interpretation of the extracted factors.

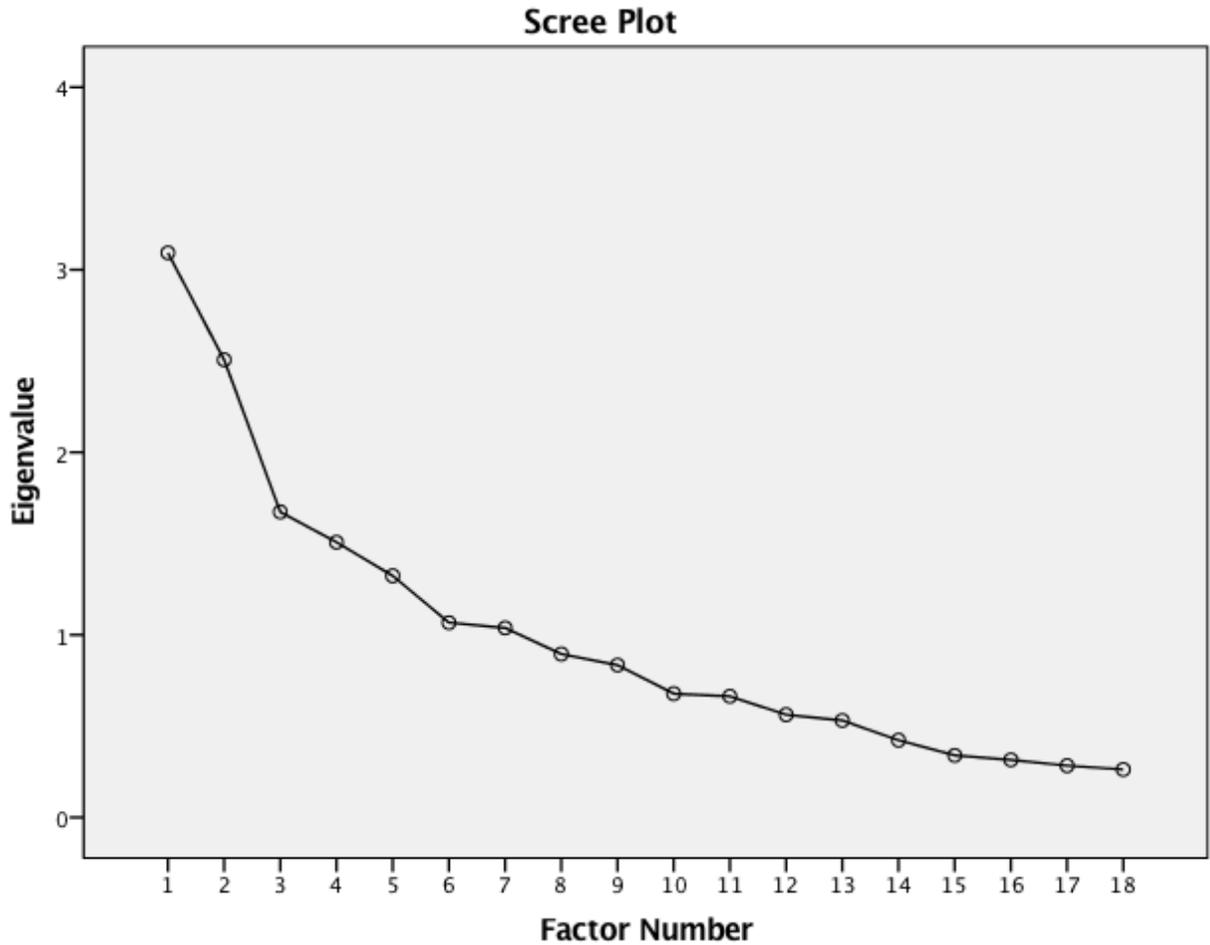


Figure 5.1: Scree plot for factor retention

A scree plot indicates the eigenvalues plotted against the number of factors in the order that they can be extracted, and is used to identify the factors that are appropriate (Cleff, 2014:187). The scree plot in Figure 5.1 indicates that the slope of the line declines after the fifth factor. This implies that five is the appropriate number of factors to be considered. Therefore, factors 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were retained.

Table 5.6: Pattern matrix

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q3.3	.849				
Q3.2	.762				
Q3.4	.529				
Q3.1					
Q6.3		.781			
Q6.2		.644			
Q6.4		.485			
Q5.3		.456			
Q6.1					
Q2.3					
Q2.4					
Q2.1			-.838		
Q2.2			.766		
Q5.2				.853	
Q5.1				.573	
Q4.1					.889
Q4.2					.820
Q4.3					

Note: extraction method: principal axis factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

5.3.1.3 Item loading per factor

Table 5.6 above indicates the loading of items per factor. The loading of an item indicates the extent to which an individual item loads onto the factor. According to Wiid and Diggines (2015:243), a loading of 0.40 on an item is considered meaningful. Factor loadings below 0.40 are not indicated in Table 5.6 in order to simplify the interpretation. The individual statements are allocated to each of the factors according to their individual factor loadings based on the constructs or variables in the questionnaire.

Factor 1 was named social relations.

This factor consists of the following: Q3.2, Q3.3, and Q3.4. Question 3.1 was eliminated because of its loading, which was below 0.4. The loading for statement 3.3 was 0.849. This means that it loaded higher than the other three statements in factor 1.

Factor 2 was named behavioural attributes.

The second factor includes these statements: Q6.2, Q6.3 and Q6.4. However, statement Q6.1 had a low loading of lower than 0.4, which meant that it was eliminated. The low loading could be attributed to the use of the word 'knowledge'.

Factor 3 was named crowding

In the case of factor 3, statements Q2.3 and Q2.4 loaded lower than 0.40. These two statements were not considered for further analysis. Therefore, factor 3 comprised Q2.1 and Q2.2.

Factor 4 was named physical attributes

Q5.3's statement loaded in factor 2. This could be attributed to the use of the word 'professionally', which is associated with behavioural attributes. Therefore, this statement was retained in factor 2. The fourth factor statements are Q5.1 and Q5.2.

Factor 5 was named sales associates' availability

In this factor, statement Q4.3 had a weak loading and was not considered for further analysis. The removal of Q4.3 left factor 5 with Q4.1 and Q4.2.

The reliability test results are discussed in the next section.

5.3.2 Reliability

Reliability as discussed in Chapter 4 refers to the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if measurements are repeated (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:433; McDaniel & Gates, 2013:286). The Cronbach's alpha, also known as coefficient alpha, was used in this study to assess internal consistency reliability.

Table 5.7 below indicates the interpretation of the overall Cronbach's alpha value for reliability.

Table 5.7: Interpretation of Cronbach's alpha

Range	Strength
Above 0.8	Good reliability
Between 0.6 and 0.8	Acceptable reliability
Below 0.6	Unacceptable reliability

Source: Malhotra *et al.* (2012:434) and Wiid and Diggins (2015:249)

The reliability results for crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes, and behavioural attributes of sales associates are illustrated in Table 5.8. From Table 5.8, it emerged that crowding had two items that were retained with 0.780 indicative of an acceptable Cronbach's alpha. Social relations' Cronbach's Alpha was 0.697, which is acceptable with three items, sales associates' availability had a good reliability of 0.828 with two items, while the Cronbach's alpha of the physical attributes of sales associates was 0.651, which is acceptable for the two items. The last factor was the behavioural attributes of sales associates with four items and an acceptable Cronbach's alpha of 0.666. These Cronbach's alpha results indicate that the scale is reliable.

Table 5.8: Overall coefficient for the human variables scale

Variables	Items	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability
Crowding	Q2.1, Q2.2,	0.780	Acceptable
Social relations	Q3.2, Q3.3, Q3.4	0.697	Acceptable
Sales associates' availability	Q4.1, Q4.2,	0.828	Good
Physical attributes of sales associates	Q5.1, Q5.2	0.651	Acceptable
Behavioural attributes of sales associates	Q6.2, Q6.3, Q6.4, Q5.3	0.666	Acceptable

The individual Cronbach alpha values next to the items (or questions) indicate the change in the overall Cronbach's alpha value. This implies that the corresponding item should be

removed from the construct. The corrected item-total correlation indicates the correlation of the specific item (or question) with the total correlation of all the questions. The higher this correlation, the better this item or question form part of the construct. If the individual Cronbach alpha is higher (usually at least 2-4%) than the overall Cronbach alpha (entire set) and the corrected item-total correlation is low or negative (below 0.1) then this individual item could be removed.

The coefficient sub-scales for each sub-variable are discussed below.

The internal consistency reliability sub-scale for social relations was indicated in Table 5.9. Statements Q3.2, Q3.3 and Q3.4 loaded strongly on factor 1. However, statement Q3.1 had a low loading that qualified it for removal. This statement was not removed to improve reliability. The reliability for these retained statements produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.697. Therefore, statement Q3.2, Q3.3 and Q3.4 were used to measure the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.9: Internal consistency reliability for social relations sub-scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's alpha if Item Deleted
Q3_3	12.00	3.683	.653	.512
Q3_2	11.87	3.950	.632	.535
Q3_4	11.88	4.621	.417	.671
Q3_1	11.74	5.166	.259	.759

Table 6.10 indicates internal consistency reliability sub-scale for behavioural attributes. In addition, the table indicates that statement Q5.3 loaded strongly together with Q6.2, Q6.3, and Q6.4 on factor 2. It means that Q5.3 was retained in factor 2 instead of factor 4. The Cronbach's alpha for the statements that loaded strongly on factor 2 is 0.666. Statement Q6.1 was removed owing to its lower loading when the final exploratory factor analysis was conducted.

Table 5.10: Internal consistency reliability for behavioural attributes sub-scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's alpha if Item Deleted
Q6_3	16.72	4.804	.549	.567
Q6_2	16.74	4.853	.562	.566
Q5_3	17.03	4.438	.412	.622
Q6_4	16.92	4.961	.334	.654
Q6_1	17.18	4.810	.323	.664

The internal consistency reliability for crowding sub-scale was shown in Table 5.11. These statements Q2.1 and Q2.2 from the questionnaire loaded strongly together on factor 3. The pseudo Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for crowding as a proper Cronbach's alpha could not be calculated. The analysis of reliability for these two items produced 0.780 Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, these two statements were used to measure the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

It is important to indicate that pseudo Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as a proper Cronbach's alpha could not be calculated for crowding, physical attributes of sales associates and sales associates' availability (see Table 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13 below).

Table 5.11: Internal consistency reliability for crowding sub-scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Q2_2	2.8250	1.914	.641
Q2_1	3.1275	2.237	.641

Table 5.12 indicates the internal consistency reliability for the physical attributes of sales associates. Statements Q5.1 and Q5.2 loaded on factor 4 and both reflect physical attributes. For physical attributes, pseudo-Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also calculated as a proper Cronbach's alpha could not be calculated. The reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.651. Therefore, these two statements were used to

measure the influence of physical attributes on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail environment (see question 5 in the questionnaire in Appendix B).

Table 5.12: Internal consistency reliability for physical attributes sub-scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Q5_1	3.80	.658	.491
Q5_2	3.62	.967	.491

The internal consistency reliability for sales associates' availability was indicated in Table 5.13. Statement Q4.1 and Q4.2 from the questionnaire loaded higher on factor 5. Pseudo-Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated and produced 0.828 Cronbach's alpha, which is good. These two statements (Q4.1 and Q4.2) were used to measure the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.13: Internal consistency reliability for sales associates' availability sub-scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
Q4_1	3.55	.790	.708
Q4_2	3.60	.888	.708

Once the validity and reliability of the research instrument have been determined, composite scores were developed for the underlying human variables (other customers' sub-variables and sales associates' sub-variables) that were identified in the exploratory factor analysis.

5.4 COMPOSITE SCORES

The mean scores and standard deviation of the human variables that were used in the study are presented in Table 5.14. The sample mean score refers to the average number obtained by dividing the sum of the responses to a question by the total number of

respondents to the question (Aaker *et al.*, 2013:352). To determine the composite score for each factor, the mean of each respondent's answer was calculated across the items associated with that specific factor. Then the mean of these mean scores across all respondents was calculated. For example, the mean of the three items (Q2, Q3 and Q4) for social relations was calculated from the mean scores of each respondent. The composite score for the social relations construct was calculated by adding the mean of the three items and dividing it by the number of items.

Table 5.14: Descriptive statistics for composite scores of the five sub-variables of other customers and sales associates

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Social relations	400	3.92	0.76
Behavioural attributes	400	4.30	0.55
Crowding	400	3.02	1.30
Physical attributes	400	3.71	0.78
Sales associates' availability	400	3.57	0.85

The results in Table 5.14 indicate the highest total mean score for behavioural attributes (M=4.30, SD=0.55), which shows that large number of respondents agreed with the statements presented. Furthermore, the total score for social relations (M=3.92, SD=0.76), physical attributes (M=3.71, SD=0.78) and sales associates' availability (M=3.57, SD=0.85) indicate that these have an influence on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni since they agreed with the statements in the questionnaire. On the other hand, crowding's total mean score (M=3.02, SD=1.30) shows that respondents remained neutral on the statements used in the questionnaire. This implies that consumers do not have a problem with crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The next section provides an interpretation of the results per sub-variable or factor.

5.4.1 Crowding

Respondents were asked in question 2 to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding crowding in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni: “I prefer to shop in a crowded FMCG retail stores” and “I often try to avoid shopping in the crowded FMCG retail stores”. Therefore, the researcher used opposing statements to measure crowding. The results in Table 5.15 reveal that more respondents 25.50% (n=102) agreed and 21.00% (n=84) strongly agreed that they prefer to shop in the crowded FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni, while 20.75% (n=83) were neutral. However, 17.25% (n=69) strongly disagreed. There were 22.50% (n=90) respondents who strongly disagreed that they tried to avoid shopping in crowded FMCG retail stores, with 22.25% (n=89) feeling neutral. It was also found that many respondents strongly agreed 26.50% (n=106) and agreed with the second statement. In summary, these results show that 25.5% (n=102) of the respondents prefer to shop in crowded FMCG retail stores, while 26.5% (n=106) of them avoid shopping in crowded FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. These results indicate neutrality as the statements used to measure crowding are opposite to each other.

Statements 2.3 and 2.4 were excluded for further analysis as they had low loadings (refer to Table 5.6).

Table 5.15: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with regard to the influence of crowding on your shopping experience

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q2.1	69	17.25%	62	15.50%	83	20.75%	102	25.50%	84	21.00%
Q2.2	90	22.50%	48	12.00%	89	22.25%	67	16.75%	106	26.50%

Source: Question 2

5.4.2 Social relations

There were three statements in question 3 in the questionnaire. They include 3.2 “I like to make new friends when I’m shopping, 3.3 “I often prefer to have fun with other customers shopping next to me”, and 3.4 “I like to talk to other customers who have goals that are similar to mine”. Respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement (refer to Table 5.6). Statement 3.1 was not considered for further analysis as its reliability was very low. Most respondents 41.25% (n=165) agreed and 31.00% (n=124) strongly agreed with the statement 3.2: “I like to make new friends when I’m shopping”. The results in Table 5.16 also indicate that 21.50% (n=86) remained neutral while only 5.50% (n=22) of respondents disagreed. Most respondents 38.25% (n=153) agreed and 27.75% (n=111) strongly agreed with statement 3.3: “I often prefer to have fun with other customers shopping next to me”. In addition, 24.00% of respondents felt were neutral about the statement. The same applied to statement 3.4: “I like to talk to other customers who have goals that are similar to mine”. Here, a large percentage of respondents 43.75% (n=175) agreed and 29.5% (n=118) strongly agreed with the statement while 20.0% (n=80) respondents remained neutral and 6.0% (n=24) disagreed. These results indicate that social relations have an influence on consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.16: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with regard to the influence of social relations on your shopping experience

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q3.2	3	0.75%	22	5.50%	86	21.50%	165	41.25%	124	31.00%
Q3.3	3	0.75%	37	9.25%	96	24.00%	153	38.25%	111	27.75%
Q3.4	3	0.75%	24	6.00%	80	20.00%	175	43.75%	118	29.50%

Source: Question 3

5.4.3 Sales associates' availability

Table 5.17 presents the results obtained for question 4 where respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the influence of sales associates' availability on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. The statements are as follows: Statement 4.1: "Enough sales associates are always available and willing to assist customers in the FMCG retail stores" and 4.2: "Sales associates always welcome customers when they enter the FMCG retail stores with a friendly smile". Statement 4.3 was eliminated owing to its low loading. The results in Table 5.17 show that 49.75% (n=199) of respondents agreed that they are always welcomed by sales associates who are willing to assist them when they enter the FMCG retail stores as opposed to the 27.0% (n=108) respondents who were neutral and 6.25% (n=25) who opted to disagree. More respondents 24.75% (n=171) also agreed that sales associates always welcomed them to the FMCG retail stores with a friendly smile, while 33.25% (n=133) were neutral and 10.0% (n=40) disagreed. Therefore, it is clear that most respondents enjoy shopping in FMCG retail stores because they feel that there are enough sales associates who are always available and willing to assist customers. Respondents also liked FMCG retail stores where sales associates always welcome customers with friendly smiles. Therefore, influence their shopping experience.

Table 6.17: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on your shopping experience

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q4.1	18	4.50%	25	6.25%	108	27.00%	199	49.75%	50	12.50%
Q4.2	6	1.50%	40	10.00%	133	33.25%	171	42.75%	50	12.50%

Source: Question 4

5.4.4 Physical attributes of sales associates

From the results in Table 5.18, it is evident that many respondents (38.25%) (n=153) like to shop in the FMCG retail stores that have well-dressed and presentable sales associates. However, 30.75% (n=123) respondents remained neutral and further 9.00% (n=36) decided to disagree. Furthermore, many respondents 46% (n=184) agreed and 19.25% (n=77) strongly agreed that “the neat uniforms that sales associates wear represent the FMCG retail stores’ brand very well”, while 30.75% (n=123) respondents felt neutral. However, there were only 3.25% (n=13) respondents who disagreed with the second statement. These results prove that the physical attributes of sales associates positively influence consumers’ shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.18: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with regard to the influence of physical attributes on your shopping experience

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q5.1	11	2.75%	36	9.00%	123	30.75%	153	38.25%	77	19.25%
Q5.2	3	0.75%	13	3.25%	123	30.75%	184	46.00%	77	19.25%

Source: Question 5

5.4.5 Behavioural attributes of sales associates

In question 6, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement level regarding behavioural attributes statements. Table 5.19 illustrates the results for statements 6.2 – 6.4 and 5.3 that loaded in this second factor instead of factor 4 (see Table 5.6 for loading results). As can be seen in Table 5.19, many respondents strongly agreed 48.75% (n=195) and agreed 43.75% (n=175) with statement 6.2: “I like sales associates that are friendly and patient”. Only 6.75% (n=27) respondents remained neutral. The results also indicated that most respondents 52.75% (n=211) strongly agreed and 37.75 % (n=151) agreed with statement 6.3: “I prefer to shop at the FMCG retail

stores that have sales associates who can understand customers' needs". Only 0.75% (n=3) of respondents disagreed with this statement. Statement 6.4: "Sales associates who are honest and professional can be trusted" yielded 43.25% respondents who strongly agreed and 40.00% (n=160) who agreed. Only 14.25% (n=57) respondents remained neutral, while 1.25% (n=5) disagreed and strongly disagreed 1.25% (n=5). For statement 5.3 that was retained in factor 2 (behavioural attributes), "professionally appearing sales associates create a pleasant atmosphere in the FMCG retail stores", 38.0% (n=152) of respondents agreed and strongly agreed (40.5%, n=162) while only 16.0% (n=64) respondents felt neutral and 4.0% disagreed. These results imply that behavioural attributes of sales associates are the most influential sub-variable on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.19: Indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes on your shopping experience

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q6.2	0	0.00%	3	0.75%	27	6.75%	175	43.75%	195	48.75%
Q6.3	0	0.00%	2	0.50%	36	9.00%	151	37.75%	211	52.75%
Q6.4	5	1.25%	5	1.25%	57	14.25%	160	40.00%	173	43.25%
Q5.3	6	1.50%	16	4.00%	64	16.00%	152	38.00%	162	40.50%

Source: Question 6

Once the results for crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates have been interpreted, the hypotheses and test results are presented in the next section.

5.5 HYPOTHESES TEST

Hypothesis testing is used to compare a set of observed frequencies, means or proportions with a set of theoretical frequencies means or proportions (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:608). The hypotheses to determine if the proportions of consumers in the three categories, namely disagree, neutral and agree are not statistically different with regard

to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni were tested with chi-square for equal proportion. The chi-square test is used with count data to test how well it fits some expected distribution. A chi-square is a measure of the extent to which some observed data departs from expectation (Bruce & Bruce, 2017:112). These hypotheses are H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅. The five-point Likert scale was reduced to three categories in order to simplify reporting of these hypotheses test results. The three categories are disagree, neutral and agree. This was done by combining strongly disagree with disagree and strongly agree with agree.

5.5.1 Determining the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience

Table 5.20 illustrates the distribution of scores for consumers' perceptions regarding crowding and the p-value is provided in the chi-square for equal proportion in Table 5.21 to test if the proportions of consumers who falls within the three categories, agree, neutral and disagree are statistically different regarding their perception that crowding has an influence on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. The test results in Table 5.20 indicate that 40.5% (n=162) of respondents agreed that crowding influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores, as opposed to the 32% and 27.5% of respondents who disagreed and remain neutral respectively. These results conclude that less than half of respondents perceived crowding as a factor that influences their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores.

Table 5.20: Frequency distribution scores for crowding

Crowding	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	128	32.00
Neutral	110	27.50
Agree	162	40.50

The p-value that determine whether H₁ is supported or not is depicted in Table 5.21 below.

Table 5.21: Chi-square test on crowding

Chi-Square Test for Equal Proportions	
Chi-Square	10.4600
DF	2
Pr > ChiSq	0.0054

Sample Size = 400

The chi-square produced 0.0054 p-value that is less than 0.05. This p-value indicates that the proportions of consumers who fall within the three categories are statistically different which implies that their perceptions with regard to the influence of crowding on their shopping experience are different. Therefore, this p-value supports the following hypothesis.

- H₁: Crowding influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.5.2 Determining the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience

The chi-square for equal proportion was used to test if consumers' proportions regarding the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores are statistically different. From the results in Table 5.22 below, 76% (n=303) of respondents agreed that social relations have an influence on their shopping experience. These results showed that consumers who participated in the study had statistically different perceptions.

Table 5.22: Frequency distribution scores for social relations

Social relations	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	17	4.25
Neutral	80	20.00
Agree	303	75.75

Table 5.23: Chi-square test on social relations

Chi-Square Test for Equal Proportions	
Chi-Square	338.7350
DF	2
Pr > ChiSq	<.0001

Sample Size = 400

Furthermore, the chi-square test results in Table 5.23 indicate <.0001 p-value which is less than 0.05. This p-value shows that the proportions of consumers are statistically different regarding influence that social relations have on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. These results supported the following hypothesis.

- H₂: Social relations influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.5.3 Determining the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience

The results in Table 5.24 reveal that most respondents (65.25%) were in agreement with the influence that sales associates availability have on their shopping experience as opposed to 8.5% who disagreed and 26.25% who were neutral. Based on these results, sales associates' availability influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.24: Frequency distribution scores for sales associates' availability

Availability	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	34	8.50
Neutral	105	26.25
Agree	261	65.25

The chi-square results for equal proportion are interpreted in the next section.

Table 5.25: Chi-square test on sales associates' availability

Chi-Square Test for Equal Proportions	
Chi-Square	202.2650
DF	2
Pr > ChiSq	<.0001

Sample Size = 400

It is indicated in Table 5.25 that the p-value obtained for the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores is <.0001. This p-value is less than 0.05, which indicate that there is a statistically difference in the proportions of consumers. Based on this p-value the hypothesis below was supported:

- H₃: Sales associates' availability influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.5.4 Determining the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience

As can be seen in Table 5.26 the results indicate that most respondents (68%, n=271) agreed that physical attributes of sales associates influence their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni compared to less than half of the respondents (30.25%, n=121) who disagreed.

Table 5.26: Frequency distribution scores for physical attributes

Physical attributes	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	8	2.00
Neutral	121	30.25
Agree	271	67.75

Table 5.27: Chi-square test on physical attributes

Chi-Square Test for Equal Proportions	
Chi-Square	261.0950
DF	2
Pr > ChiSq	<.0001

Sample Size = 400

It is indicated in Table 5.27 that the proportions of consumers with regard to the influence of crowding on their shopping experience are statistically different as the p-value is less than 0.05. It is therefore that this p-value (<.0001) confirm that the following hypothesis was supported.

- H₄: Physical attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.5.5 Determining the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience

The hypothesis in this section was tested to determine if the proportions of consumers within the three categories (disagree, neutral and agree) differ statistically regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates' influence on their shopping experience. The results in Table 5.28 indicate a high percentage of respondents (94.5%, n=378) who agreed that behavioural attributes of sales associates influences their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.28: Frequency distribution scores for behavioural attributes

Behavioural attributes	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	2	0.50
Neutral	20	5.00
Agree	378	94.50

Table 5.29: Chi-square on behavioural attributes

Chi-Square Test for Equal Proportions	
Chi-Square	674.6600
DF	2
Pr > ChiSq	<.0001

Sample Size = 400

The chi-square results in Table 5.29 produced <.0001 p-value, that is less than 0.05. These results indicate that the proportions of consumers who fall within the three categories are statistically different with regard to the influence that behavioural attributes of sales associates have on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. With this p-value the following hypothesis was supported.

- H₅: Behavioural attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The test for significant differences between demographics, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience are presented in the next section.

5.6 TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS

The F-test was used with ANOVA, which produced the p-value. According to Wiid and Diggins (2015:284), the p-value indicates statistical difference at 95 percent level of

confidence if the calculated p-value is smaller than 0.05. ANOVA is a technique that tests the differences in means of the interval dependant for various categories of independent variables (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:682). One-way ANOVA was used to compare the mean differences. One-way ANOVA is a statistical test used to determine if more than two means are equal (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:453). These tests determine whether there are statistically significant differences between participating consumers' demographics, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. It was therefore important to test if there were differences between genders, between age groups and between races as the literature that led to the formulation of hypotheses in Chapter 3 indicated some differences.

5.6.1 Differences between consumers' demographics with regard to crowding

The results to test the statistically significant differences between gender, age and race regarding crowding are illustrated in Tables 5.30 – 5.35.

5.6.1.1 Gender with regard to crowding in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

One-way ANOVA was used to indicate different mean levels of gender with regard to crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The results in Table 5.30 indicate that females (M=3.21) had a higher mean score than male respondents (M=2.88). This showed that consumers who participated in this study were neutral with regard to the influence of crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The reason both mean scores are neutral is because the mean score above 2.50 fell under neutral which is leaning towards 3.00 in the Likert scale that was used.

Table 5.30: One-way ANOVA on gender regarding crowding

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Male	224	2.87723	0.08653	2.7071	3.0474
Female	176	3.21023	0.09762	3.0183	3.4022

To determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the respondents' genders regarding crowding, ANOVA was used with an F-test to produce probability value (p-value). The results in Table 5.31 indicate a p-value of 0.0111, which is below 0.05. This p-value shows that there is a statistically significant difference between genders with regard to crowding's influence on consumers' shopping experience at a 95% level of confidence (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:284). Based on this p-value=0.0111* which revealed that a statistically significant difference exists, the following hypothesis was then supported:

- H_{1a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.31: ANOVA F-test on gender regarding crowding

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q7 Gender	1	10.92890	10.9289	6.5155	0.0111*
Error	398	667.59547	1.6774		
Total	399	678.52437			

*Significant difference

5.6.1.2 Age with regard to crowding in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

In order to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the age groups of respondents, one-way ANOVA and an F-test were used.

The mean scores obtained from the one-way ANOVA as illustrated in Table 5.32 indicates the responses of age groups in terms of feelings regarding crowding. The results indicate that the mean scores differ slightly in the age group 24 to 35 (M=2.96) and 36 to 45 (M=2.94) leaned towards neutral. The mean score of respondents between the ages 18 to 23 (M=3.16) was the highest, followed by ages of 46 to 60 with 3.00 mean score. These results indicate that respondents from different age groups remained fairly neutral regarding the influence of crowding in their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.32: One-way ANOVA on age regarding crowding

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
18-23	122	3.15984	0.11821	2.9274	3.3922
24-35	135	2.96296	0.11238	2.7420	3.1839
36-45	78	2.93590	0.14784	2.6452	3.2266
46-60	65	3.00000	0.16195	2.6816	3.3184

The F-test that was conducted with ANOVA produced a p-value of 0.5745 as shown in Table 5.33. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between age groups of respondents regarding the influence of crowding on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores since the p-value obtained from the F-test results was above 0.05. As there was no difference, the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{1b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.33: ANOVA F-test on age regarding crowding

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q8 Age group	3	3.39688	1.13229	0.6642	0.5745
Error	396	675.12750	1.70487		
Total	399	678.52437			

**Significant difference*

5.6.1.3 Race with regard to crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

One-way ANOVA shown in Table 5.34 and F-test in Table 5.35 were used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between respondents' race groups and crowding in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The mean scores for African (M=2.99) and white (M=2.96) respondents were almost the same. Furthermore, the mean scores for coloured (M=3.27) and Indian (M=3.15) respondents were relatively higher. The results indicate that most respondents from the

various racial groups remained neutral with regard to how crowding influence their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.34: One-way ANOVA on race regarding crowding

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
African	228	2.99342	0.08646	2.8235	3.1634
White	102	2.95588	0.12926	2.7018	3.2100
Coloured	43	3.26744	0.19908	2.8761	3.6588
Indian	27	3.14815	0.25124	2.6542	3.6421

As shown in Table 5.35, the F-test results produced a p-value ($p=0.5440$) that is larger than 0.05. This p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between respondents' racial groups regarding how they felt about the influence of crowding on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{1c} : There are differences between race groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.35: ANOVA F-test on race regarding crowding

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q9 Racial group	3	3.65095	1.21698	0.7141	0.5440
Error	396	674.87343	1.70423		
Total	399	678.52437			

**Significant difference*

It is important for the FMCG retailers to understand consumers' reactions towards crowding in order to be able to create a pleasant shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores.

5.6.2 Differences between consumers' demographics with regard to social relations

One-way ANOVA and F-test with ANOVA were also used to test whether there were differences in terms of gender, age and income. Understanding consumers' demographic differences is important to the FMCG retailers because it will create greater understanding of consumers' perceptions of a pleasant shopping experience.

5.6.2.1 Gender with regard to social relations in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

As indicated in Table 5.36, the mean scores for male (M=3.96) and female (M=3.85) respondents are similar, although the mean score for male respondents was slightly higher. These mean scores indicate that consumers agreed that social relations influence their shopping experiences in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.36: One-way ANOVA on gender regarding social relations

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Male	224	3.96280	0.05049	3.8635	4.0621
Female	176	3.85417	0.05696	3.7422	3.9662

The results of the F-test with ANOVA in Table 5.37 shows a p-value of 0.1543 that is larger than 0.05. This p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents regarding social relations. With this p-value (0.1543), the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{2a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.37: ANOVA F-test on gender regarding social relations

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Prob > F
Q7 Gender	1	1.16308	1.16308	2.0367	0.1543
Error	398	227.28026	0.57106		
Total	399	228.44333			

**Significant difference*

5.6.2.2 Age with regard to social relations in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

One-way ANOVA was used to determine if there are differences between the mean scores. It can be seen in Table 5.38 that the mean score for the age group 46 - 60 differs from those of age groups 18-23, 24-35 and 36-45. However, most respondents from all age groups agreed that social relations influence their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

An F-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference or not between the various age groups regarding social relations.

Table 5.38: One-way ANOVA on age regarding social relations

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
18 – 23	122	3.77322	0.06800	3.6395	3.9069
24 – 35	135	3.98025	0.06464	3.8532	4.1073
36 – 45	78	3.88034	0.08504	3.7131	4.0475
46 – 60	65	4.08718	0.09316	3.9040	4.2703

The F-test results in Table 5.39 indicate a p-value of 0.0312, which is below 0.05. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between respondents' age groups with regard to the influence of social relations on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni at a 95% confidence level. With this significant difference, the following hypothesis was supported:

- H_{2b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.39: ANOVA F-test on age regarding social relations

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q8 Age group	3	5.04764	1.68255	2.9825	0.0312*
Error	396	223.39570	0.56413		
Total	399	228.44333			

*Significant difference

5.6.2.3 Race with regard to social relations in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

One-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether there are differences in the mean scores of the racial groups and F-test to determine the significance of the difference.

The results in Table 5.40 indicate that the mean score for Coloured respondents (M=4.08) was higher than those for African, White and Indian respondents. Furthermore, the results show that most respondents agreed that social relations influence their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.40: One-way ANOVA on race regarding social relations

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
African	228	3.94883	0.04990	3.8507	4.0469
White	102	3.76797	0.07461	3.6213	3.9147
Coloured	43	4.07752	0.11491	3.8516	4.3034
Indian	27	3.92593	0.14501	3.6408	4.2110

It is indicated in Table 5.41 that the F-test produced a p-value of 0.0976, which is above 0.05. This p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between racial groups regarding social relations in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{2c}: There are differences between race groups with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.41: ANOVA F-test on race regarding social relations

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q9 Racial group	3	3.60481	1.20160	2.1163	0.0976
Error	396	224.83852	0.56777		
Total	399	228.44333			

**Significant difference*

The interpretation of the results for testing the significant differences between gender, age and race with regard to sales associates' availability follows in the next section.

5.6.3 Differences between consumers' demographics with regard to sales associates' availability

The researcher used one-way ANOVA and F-test to compare the mean scores ranking and to determine the significant differences between demographics (gender, age and race). The results are presented in Tables 5.42 – 5.47.

5.6.3.1 Gender with regard to sales associates' availability in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The mean scores depicted in Table 5.42 indicate that male (M=3.60) and female (M=3.53) respondents did not differ in terms of how they feel about sales associates being always available to assist customers in the FMCG retail stores. The results further show that both genders agreed that the availability of sales associates play an influential role on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The results could help FMCG retailers to understand the need to put more emphasis on the availability of sales

associates to create a pleasant atmosphere in the FMCG retail stores that will enhance consumers' shopping experience.

Table 5.42: One-way ANOVA on gender regarding sales associates' availability

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Male	224	3.60268	0.05656	3.4915	3.7139
Female	176	3.53125	0.06381	3.4058	3.6567

The ANOVA with F-test in Table 5.43 produced a p-value of 0.4027. This p-value is above 0.05, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between gender groups regarding the influence of sales associates' availability in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. However, this result did not support the following hypothesis:

- H_{3a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.43: ANOVA F-test on gender regarding sales associates' availability

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q7 Gender	1	0.50286	0.502857	0.7017	0.4027
Error	398	285.21652	0.716624		
Total	399	285.71937			

**Significant difference*

5.6.3.2 Age with regard to sales associates' availability in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

Table 5.44 and 5.45 presented the results for one-way ANOVA and the F-test that determined whether there is a statistically significant difference between age groups, as well as the mean rankings with regard to the availability of sales associates in the FMCG retail stores.

The age group of 18-23 yielded a low mean score (below 3.50), which indicates that this group were neutral as opposed to respondents from other age groups who agreed that they prefer FMCG retail stores that always have sales associates available.

Table 5.44: One-way ANOVA on age regarding sales associates' availability

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
18-23	122	3.49180	0.07659	3.3412	3.6424
24-35	135	3.58148	0.07281	3.4383	3.7246
36-45	78	3.55128	0.09579	3.3630	3.7396
46-60	65	3.72308	0.10493	3.5168	3.9294

The ANOVA F-test results with a p-value of 0.3584 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between various age groups regarding the influence of sales associates' availability on their shopping experience. This p-value is above 0.05, and the results indicate that the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{3b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.45: ANOVA F-test on age regarding sales associates' availability

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q8 Age group	3	2.31361	0.771204	1.0776	0.3584
Error	396	283.40576	0.715671		
Total	399	285.71937			

**Significant difference*

5.6.3.3 Race with regard to sales associates' availability in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The results pertaining to differences among race groups are illustrated in Tables 5.46 and 5.47. The mean scores in Table 5.46 indicate that Coloured respondents recorded the lowest mean score of 3.34, which shows neutrality. The mean scores obtained for African,

White and Indian respondents show that they agreed that the availability of sales associates in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni influences their shopping experience.

Table 5.46: One-way ANOVA on race regarding sales associates' availability

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
African	228	3.60526	0.05599	3.4952	3.7153
White	102	3.59804	0.08371	3.4335	3.7626
Coloured	43	3.33721	0.12892	3.0838	3.5907
Indian	27	3.55556	0.16270	3.2357	3.8754

The ANOVA F-test results depicted in Table 5.47 show a p-value ($p=0.2882$) that is above 0.05. This p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the different race groups. The p-value revealed that the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{3c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.47: ANOVA F-test on race regarding sales associates' availability

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q9 Racial group	3	2.69895	0.899650	1.2588	0.2882
Error	396	283.02042	0.714698		
Total	399	285.71937			

**Significant difference*

5.6.4 Differences between consumers' demographics with regard to physical attributes of sales associates

ANOVA with F-test were used to determine if statistically significant differences exists between the demographics of the respondents. The results are presented in Tables 5.48-5.53

5.6.4.1 Gender with regard to physical attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The one-way ANOVA results in Table 5.48 indicate the same mean scores for male and female respondents. These mean scores of 3.70 and 3.71 respectively indicates that respondents agreed that physical attributes of sales associates influences their shopping experience, as they highlighted that they like to shop in the FMCG retail stores that have presentable sales associates.

Table 5.48: One-way ANOVA on gender regarding physical attributes

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Male	224	3.70759	0.05192	3.6055	3.8097
Female	176	3.71307	0.05858	3.5979	3.8282

The ANOVA F-test results in Table 5.49 show a p-value of 0.9442, which indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents. This p-value is larger than 0.05. The results also indicate that the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{4a} : There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.49: ANOVA F-test on gender regarding physical attributes

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q7 Gender	1	0.00296	0.002959	0.0049	0.9442
Error	398	240.35704	0.603912		
Total	399	240.36000			

**Significant difference*

5.6.4.2 Age with regard to physical attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The results of one-way ANOVA and ANOVA with F-test that were conducted on gender are illustrated in Tables 5.50 and 5.51. The mean scores in Table 5.50 did not show much difference as they were all leaning towards the agree level, which is above 3.50. This indicates that respondents across age groups recognised the influence that sales associates' physical attributes have on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.50: One-way ANOVA on age regarding physical attributes of sales associates

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
18-23	122	3.66393	0.07032	3.5257	3.8022
24-35	135	3.76667	0.06684	3.6353	3.8981
36-45	78	3.76282	0.08794	3.5899	3.9357
46-60	65	3.61538	0.09633	3.4260	3.8048

The ANOVA F-test results depicted in Table 5.51 indicate that the p-value is 0.4810. This is larger than 0.05, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between age groups. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{4b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.51: ANOVA F-test on age regarding physical attributes of sales associates

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q8 Age group	3	1.49189	0.497298	0.8244	0.4810
Error	396	238.86811	0.603202		
Total	399	240.36000			

**Significant difference*

5.6.4.3 Race with regard to physical attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

Table 5.52 indicates that the Indian respondents recorded a mean score of 3.90, which is higher than the other race groups. However, the mean scores for African, White and Coloured respondents fell under the same level with the Indian consumers as they agreed that they like the FMCG retail stores that have presentable sales associates.

Table 5.52: One-way ANOVA on race regarding physical attributes of sales associates

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
African	228	3.68640	0.05147	3.5852	3.7876
White	102	3.72059	0.07695	3.5693	3.8719
Coloured	43	3.68605	0.11851	3.4531	3.9190
Indian	27	3.90741	0.14956	3.6134	4.2014

Table 5.53 shows the results of the ANOVA with F-test that was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the racial groups in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The results produced a p-value of 0.5704, above 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between racial groups with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience. Therefore, it is that the hypothesis below was not supported:

- H_{4c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.53: ANOVA F-test on race regarding physical attributes of sales associates

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q9 Racial group	3	1.21524	0.405079	0.6708	0.5704
Error	396	239.14476	0.603901		
Total	399	240.36000			

**Significant difference*

5.6.5 Differences between consumers' demographics with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates

To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between respondents' demographics with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates, ANOVA was used with F-test. Furthermore, one-way ANOVA was used to arrange the mean scores of respondents in ranking order.

5.6.5.1 Gender with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The one-way ANOVA results in Table 5.54 reveal that female respondents (M=4.31) had a higher mean score than males (M=4.28). Overall, the mean scores of male and female respondents indicate that they would prefer the FMCG retail stores that have sales associates who are professional, friendly and understand customers' needs. These mean scores differences can make the FMCG retailers aware of the value that sales associates' behavioural attributes might add to enhance consumers' shopping experience as they have an influence.

Table 5.54: One-way ANOVA on gender regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Male	224	4.28125	0.03666	4.2092	4.3533
Female	176	4.31250	0.04136	4.2312	4.3938

The ANOVA with F-test results that were conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between genders are shown in Table 5.55. The p-value for gender was 0.5721, which is larger than 0.05. This p-value 0.5721 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female respondents with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers shopping experience. Based on the results, the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{5a}: There are differences between gender groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.55: ANOVA F-test on gender regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q7 Gender	1	0.09625	0.096250	0.3196	0.5721
Error	398	119.84375	0.301115		
Total	399	119.94000			

**Significant difference*

5.6.5.2 Age with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The researcher also used ANOVA and F-test to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between respondents' age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. In addition, one-way ANOVA was utilised to determine the mean scores differences.

The mean scores in Table 5.56 indicate how respondents felt regarding the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. The results indicate that the mean scores of different age groups are quite similar. These mean scores show that they agreed that behavioural attributes have an influence on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.56: One-way ANOVA on age regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
18-23	122	4.30328	0.04955	4.2059	4.4007
24-35	135	4.22222	0.04711	4.1296	4.3148
36-45	78	4.37179	0.06197	4.2500	4.4936
46-60	65	4.33846	0.06789	4.2050	4.4719

The ANOVA F-test results as depicted in Table 5.57 show a p-value of 0.2269, which is larger than 0.05. This p-value indicates no statistically significant difference between the age groups of respondents. Owing to the fact that there is no statistically significant difference, the following hypothesis was not supported:

- H_{5b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.57: ANOVA F-test on age regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F-ratio	Prob > F
Q8 Age group	3	1.30618	0.435394	1.4533	0.2269
Error	396	118.63382	0.299580		
Total	399	119.94000			

**Significant difference*

5.6.5.3 Race with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The results of ANOVA with F-test and one-way ANOVA on race regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates are presented in Tables 5.58 and 5.59.

In Table 5.58, the results of the one-way ANOVA indicate that the mean score for Indian (M=4.50) respondents is higher than those of the other racial groups. It shows that Indian

respondents strongly agreed that behavioural attributes of sales associates influences their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The mean scores for African, White and Coloured respondents also indicate that they agreed with the influence that behavioural attributes have on their shopping experience.

Table 5.58: One-way ANOVA on race regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates

Level	Number	Mean	Std. error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
African	228	4.20724	0.03578	4.1369	4.2776
White	102	4.38725	0.05349	4.2821	4.4924
Coloured	43	4.41279	0.08239	4.2508	4.5748
Indian	27	4.50000	0.10397	4.2956	4.7044

The ANOVA F-test results in Table 5.59 indicate that the p-value (0.0021*) is less than 0.05. The results show that there is a statistically significant difference between race groups at a 95% level of confidence (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:284). Therefore, the following hypothesis was supported:

- H_{5c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Table 5.59: ANOVA F-test on race with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F- ratio	Prob > F
Q9 Racial group	3	4.35554	1.45185	4.9741	0.0021*
Error	396	115.58446	0.29188		
Total	399	119.94000			

*Significant difference

Knowledge of how crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes of sales associates influences consumers' shopping

experience as well as demographic differences is important to the FMCG retailers as it could help them to develop appropriate and effective marketing strategies.

Discussion of the results, integration of the research objectives and hypotheses are presented in the next section.

5.7 INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The secondary research objectives of the study are addressed below and the results are discussed with regard to each objective in relation to the hypotheses. The five-point Likert scale results for disagreement (“disagree and strongly disagree”) and agreement (“agree and strongly agree”) were combined to make the reporting of the results clear in this section (see Tables 5.15 to 5.19 in this Chapter 5). The hypotheses are linked to the objectives of the study.

5.7.1 Secondary objective 1: To determine the influence of crowding on consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

This study found that the reactions of most respondents towards crowding were neutral with a total mean score of 3.02 as depicted in Table 5.14 in this chapter. It is clear that consumers who participated in the study did not seem to be concerned about crowding. The results further indicated that crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni did not have an influence on consumers’ shopping experience. This was indicated by consumers’ responses to the two opposing statements used to measure crowding as they did not bother to comment on whether “they prefer to shop in the crowded FMCG retail stores” or “whether they tried to avoid shopping in crowded FMCG retail stores” (see Table 5.15 in this chapter).

The results of the chi-square indicated that there were statistically different proportions of respondents with regard to the influence of crowding on their shopping experience in

FMCG retail stores as shown in Table 5.21. Therefore, the findings supported the following hypothesis:

- H₁: Crowding influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The results of the ANOVA and F-test to determine if there are significant differences between demographics with regard to crowding indicated that there is a statistically significant difference that exist between genders (see Table 5.31). Therefore, it is that this hypothesis was supported:

- H_{1a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Furthermore, the results of the ANOVA, F-test revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between age groups and between races regarding the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores (see Table 5.33 and 5.35). Therefore, these findings did not support the following hypotheses:

- H_{1b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{1c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.7.2 Secondary objective 2: To determine the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni as depicted in tables 5.14 and 5.16 indicated that most respondents felt strongly about the influence of social relations on their shopping experience.

Based on the results shown in Table 5.16, 72.25% of respondents “like to make new friends when they are shopping in the FMCG retail stores”, and 66% “often prefer to have fun with other customers shopping next to them”. Most respondents (73.2%) like to talk to customers who have goals that are similar to theirs. It could therefore be concluded that consumers tend to agree that social relations influences their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. In addition, the findings of this study regarding social relations indicated that many respondents consider the interaction with other customers as an opportunity to satisfy their social needs. Therefore, it is important for the FMCG retailers to create a pleasant shopping experience that would enable social relations among customers.

The chi-square test results confirmed that the proportions of consumers were different regarding the influence that social relations have on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores (see Table 5.23). The results supported this hypothesis:

- H₂: Social relations influence consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

In determining if there were differences between demographics, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of social relations, the ANOVA F-test results further indicated that statistically significant differences exist between age groups (see Table 5.39). Therefore, the following hypothesis was supported:

- H_{2b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The ANOVA F-test results show that there were no statistically significant differences between genders and between races regarding the influence of social relations (see Table 5.37 and 5.41). Based on these results, the hypotheses below were not supported:

- H_{2a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- H_{2c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.7.3 Secondary objective 3: To determine the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

From the results in Table 5.17, it was indicated that 62.2% of respondents preferred to shop in the FMCG retail stores that have a sufficient number of sales associates who are available and willing to assist them. Most respondents (55.2%) also emphasised the influence of sales associates' availability by agreeing that they like sales associates who welcome customers when they enter the FMCG retail stores with a friendly smile. Based on these results, it could be concluded that sales associates' availability influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

As indicated in Table 5.25, the chi-square results indicated that respondents' proportions were statistically different regarding the influence that sales associates' availability has on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, the findings supported this hypothesis:

- H₃: Sales associates' availability influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

It was indicated in Table 5.43, 5.45 and 5.47 that there were no statistically significant differences between gender, age and race regarding sales associates' availability. Therefore, the following hypotheses were not supported:

- H_{3a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{3b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- H_{3c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.7.4 Secondary objective 4: To determine the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Most respondents (58%) indicated that they like to do their shopping in the FMCG retail stores that have well-dressed and presentable sales associates. Nearly two-thirds (65.2%) further indicated that they preferred to shop in the stores that have sales associates who wear neat uniforms that represent the FMCG retail store's brand very well (see Table 5.18). These findings clearly confirmed that sales associates' availability influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The results of the chi-square in Table 5.27 revealed that the proportions of consumers were statistically different regarding the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. In this case, the results supported the hypothesis below:

- H₄: Physical attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The ANOVA F-test results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between genders, age groups and races with regard to physical attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni (see Table 5.49, 5.51 and 5.53). The findings did not support the following hypotheses:

- H_{3a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

- H_{3b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{3c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.7.5 Secondary objective 5: To determine the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The results in Table 5.19 indicate that 93% of respondents like sales associates that are friendly and patient, while 91% preferred to shop at the FMCG retail stores that have got sales associates who can understand customers' needs. It was also indicated that 83% of respondents believed that the FMCG retail stores' sales associates that are honest and professional can be trusted. Furthermore, 79% agreed that professionally appearing sales associates create a pleasant atmosphere in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. These results clearly show that behavioural attributes of sales associates have a huge influence on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The chi-square results indicated that there were statistically differences in the proportions of respondents with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience as shown in Table 5.29. Therefore, the following hypothesis was supported:

- H₅: Behavioural attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Furthermore, the ANOVA, F-test results indicated that the statistically significant differences regarding behavioural attributes of sales associates only existed between racial groups (see Table 5.59). Therefore, this hypothesis was supported:

- H_{5c}: There are differences between races with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

The results also showed that there were no statistically significant differences between genders and between age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni as presented in Table 5.55 and 5.57. Therefore, the following hypotheses were not supported:

- H_{5a}: There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.
- H_{5b}: There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

5.7.6 Secondary objective 6: To determine the influence of demographic variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

The results indicated that for other customers, statistically significant difference exists with regard to crowding between genders ($p=0.0111^*$) as shown in Table 5.31. However, there were no differences between age groups and between races regarding the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience (see Table 5.33 and 5.35). Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference between age groups regarding the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni with 0.0312^* p-value as indicated in Table 5.39. The results further indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between gender and between races with regard to social relations (see Table 5.37 and 5.41).

On the other hand, for sales associates, the results in Table 5.59 indicated that statistically significant difference only exist between race groups regarding the influence of behavioural attributes on consumers' shopping experience with 0.0021* p-value. While there were no statistically significant differences between genders and between age groups with regard to behavioural attributes of sales associates (see Table 5.55 and 5.57). The results further indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the demographic variables, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience as shown in Table 5.43, 5.45 and 5.47. The results also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between gender, between age groups and between races regarding the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni (see Table 5.49, 5.51 and 5.53).

In conclusion, based on the findings presented above, the objectives of this study were achieved because they were all measured successfully. Furthermore, all the hypotheses were successfully tested to determine if the proportions of respondents/consumers were statistically different with regard to the influence of crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates, and behavioural attributes of sales associates on their shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. In addition, the statistically significant differences between demographics, namely gender, age and race with regard to the influence of these sub-variables were also determined.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings and interpretations of the results of this study. The demographic profiles of respondents were provided. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine if individual questions loaded onto, or contributed to the constructs as intended in the questionnaire. The extraction method used was principal axis factoring with the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity. These were used to test the validity of the study. To test the reliability of the Likert scales, Cronbach's alpha was used. An SPSS version 24 was used to analyse the data obtained by means of frequency counts and mean scores. The mean ranking

differences were analysed with one-way ANOVA, while ANOVA with F-tests were used to test the significant differences between demographics (gender, age and race) with regard to the influence of the sub-variables of other customers and sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. A chi-square for equal proportion was utilised to test H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅ respectively. The results indicated that the proportions of consumers were statistically different regarding the influence that crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes, and behavioural attributes of sales associates have on their shopping experience. Then, the findings supported these hypotheses.

Three hypotheses pertaining to demographic variables, namely, gender, age and race were tested for each of the five sub-variables, which are crowding, social relations, sales associates' availability, physical attributes and behavioural attributes of sales associates. The ANOVA, F-test results for **other customers** indicated that on ***crowding***, they supported H_{1a} as there was a statistically significant difference between genders. H_{1b} and H_{1c} were not supported because there were no statistically significant differences. For ***social relations***, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between age groups while there were no statistically significant differences pertaining to gender and race. Therefore, H_{2b} was supported, but H_{2a} and H_{2c} were not supported. The hypotheses test results for **sales associates** indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between races regarding ***behavioural attributes***, which supported H_{5c}. However, there were no statistically significant differences for gender and age. Therefore, H_{5a} and H_{5b} were not supported. Furthermore, the hypotheses test results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences pertaining to gender, age and race with regard to ***physical attributes of sales associates*** and ***sales associates' availability***. Based on these results, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{3c}, H_{4a}, H_{4b}, and H_{4c} were not supported with regard to both sales associates' availability and physical attributes of sales associates.

The composite scores as depicted in Table 5.14 indicated that crowding did not seem to influence consumers' shopping experience as they remain neutral with a total mean score of 3.02, while they agreed with the influence of social relations with a total mean score of

3.92. The results further indicated that consumers agreed that sales associates' availability (M=3.57), physical attributes (M=3.71) and behavioural attributes of sales associates (M=4.30) have an influence on their shopping experience.

Conclusions and recommendations are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. This chapter provides an overview of the research findings of this study. As the research results were presented in Chapter 5, then the conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations were made in this chapter. This chapter also provides the contribution of the study to the FMCG retail industry in Ekurhuleni, followed by an assessment of the limitations of the study and concluded with suggestions for future research.

6.2 THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study revealed that other customers and sales associates have an influence on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail store environment. The results emphasised this by indicating that for other customers, social relations is the only influential sub-variable, as opposed to crowding that did not seem to influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores. In case of sales associates, all the sub-variables were shown to have an influence on consumers' shopping experience as behavioural attributes is the most influential followed by physical attributes and sales associates' availability.

6.2.1 The main purpose of the study

This study sought to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores. As this study expanded on Kim and Kim's (2012) review study, the sub-variables were empirically tested in a South African context.

The study will also provide FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni with a better understanding of how human variables influence consumers' shopping experience. In addition, this study

will benefit FMCG retailers in Ekurhuleni as it will provide insight into the value that human variables could add in creating a pleasant shopping experience. The knowledge that FMCG retailers will gain from this study could help them in differentiating their stores from competitors.

6.2.2 The importance of the study

The importance of this study lies on its theoretical, practical and empirical contribution. Theoretically, the study contributes to the existing literature by examining the influence that other customers and sales associates have on consumers' shopping experience. From practical perspective, the study provides guidelines to FMCG retailers on how to use human variables in creating a pleasant shopping experience (see section 6.4 and 6.5). This study was conducted empirically by investigating the influence of other customers and sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in a South African context. A further importance of the empirical investigation of this study is that the findings might help FMCG retailers to develop effective marketing strategies as they provide consumers' perceptions on the influence of human variables as well as their demographic differences.

6.3 DISCUSSIONS

The research findings as discussed in Chapter 5 assessed the demographic profile of respondents and the respondents' perceptions on the influence of human variables (other customers and sales associates) in the FMCG retail stores. The majority of respondents who participated in this study were males (56%, n=224). The largest group of respondents were between the ages of 24 and 35 years (34%, n=135). More respondents indicated that they earned between R5 000 and R10 000 (32%, n=129) per month. The results further indicated that 25% (n=100) of respondents possessed an undergraduate degree. The findings of the study as presented in Chapter 5, Table 5.14, revealed that behavioural attributes is the most influential sub-human variable with a total mean score of 4.30. The results simply indicated that behavioural attributes of sales associates have an influence on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. The influence

of behavioural attributes of sales associates indicate that the results are consistent with findings of Darian *et al* (2001:210), who found that sales associates' respect for customers, knowledge and responsiveness are the most important attributes that influence customers to patronise a retailer. Menon and Dube (200:285) also confirmed that sales associates' positive responses to customers led to greater satisfaction.

The results further indicated that social relations is the second most influential sub-human variable on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni with a total mean score of (M=3.92). In addition, Brack and Benkenstein's (2011:501) findings showed that consumer's similarity with other customers has a positive effect in relation to attitudes towards the service in the retail store. However, Soderlund's (2011:178) study found that other customers who are strangers and present in the same retail environment with the individual customer have an impact on his/her overall evaluation of the retailer.

Physical attributes of sales associates influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores with 3.71 total mean score. These results are in line with the previous studies. Soderlund and Julander 2009:216) found that high levels of sales associates' physical attractiveness produced high levels of customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, Tsai and Huang (2004:1006) found that sales associates' positive behaviour such as greeting, smiling and establishing eye contact increase customers' willingness to return and recommend the store to others.

The results also indicated that sales associates' availability influences consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni with a total mean score of 3.57. These results are in line with the findings of Baker *et al*. (1992:458) and Sharma and Stafford (2000) as they found that sales associates' availability has an influence on consumers' evaluations of the stores and also interacts with store ambient factors.

However, most respondents felt neutral regarding the influence of crowding on their shopping experience with a total mean score of 3.02. This could mean that crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni does not bother consumers. The results pertaining to crowding are in line with Machleit *et al*. (2000:40) who find that a crowded store may

or may not result in decreased satisfaction, depending on the number of individuals and situational factors. Furthermore, these results indicate that although emotions partially mediate the crowding satisfaction relationship, the decrease in shopping satisfaction owing to crowding is mediated by expectations and tolerance of crowding (Machleit *et al.*, 2000:40). The influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in this study can also be supported by the findings of Van Rompay *et al.* (2012:1130) in that some shoppers like crowded retail stores since it affords them the opportunity to impress and to draw comparisons. However, some consumers perceive a crowded store environment as a burden or constraint (Van Rompay *et al.*, 2012:1130). In addition, Hwang's *et al.* (2012:241) findings showed that crowding induced both negative and positive emotions of consumers. Therefore, these previous studies support neutrality.

A summary of the tested hypotheses is presented in Table 6.1 in the next section.

Table 6.1: The results of the hypotheses tested in the study

Wording of alternative hypotheses	P-value	Summary of the results
Crowding		
H ₁ : Crowding influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.0054*	H ₁ , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{1a} : There are differences between gender groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.0111*	H _{1a} , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{1b} : There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.5745	H _{1b} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{1c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of crowding on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.5440	H _{1c} , alternative hypothesis not supported.

Social relations	P-value	Summary of the results
H ₂ : Social relations influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni	.0001*	H ₂ , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{2a} : There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.1543	H _{2a} , alternative hypothesis not supported
H _{2b} : There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.0312*	H _{2b} , alternative hypothesis supported.
H _{2c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of social relations on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.0976	H _{2c} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
Sales associates' availability		
H ₃ : Sales associates' availability influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	.0001*	H ₃ , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{3a} : There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.4027	H _{3a} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{3b} : There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.3584	H _{3b} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{3c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of sales associates' availability on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.2882	H _{3c} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
Physical attributes		
H ₄ : Physical attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	.0001*	H ₄ , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{4a} : There are differences between genders with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.9442	H _{4a} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{4b} : There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.4810	H _{4b} , alternative hypothesis not supported.

H _{4c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.5704	H _{4c} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
Behavioural attributes	P-value	Summary of the results
H ₅ : Behavioural attributes of sales associates influence consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	.0001*	H ₅ , alternative hypothesis supported
H _{5a} : There are differences between genders with regard to influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.5721	H _{5a} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{5b} : There are differences between age groups with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.2269	H _{5b} , alternative hypothesis not supported.
H _{5c} : There are differences between races with regard to the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.	0.0021*	H _{5c} , alternative hypothesis supported.

**Significant difference*

Table 6.1 illustrates the hypotheses and results as presented in Chapter 5. These hypotheses are linked to the objectives of the study. For **other customers**, the chi-square results indicated that H₁ and H₂ were supported as consumers' proportions were statistically different regarding the influence that crowding and social relations have on their shopping experience.

In determining the differences between demographics, H_{1a} for **crowding** was supported because there is a statistically significant difference between genders. However, there were no statistically significant differences between age groups and between races. Therefore, H_{1b} and H_{1c} were not supported. The existing difference between genders in the results of this study regarding the influence of crowding is consistent with Yildirim and Akalin-Baskaya's (2007) study. The difference between male and female consumers was found to be statistically significant because male customers had more positive perceptions of densities than female customers (Yildirim & Akalin-Baskaya, 2007:3415). Baker and Wakefield's (2012) findings revealed that there were significant differences

between male and female consumers as well as different age groups on how shopping orientations influence their perception of crowding. However, the results of this study only differ with Baker and Wakefield (2012) because of age differences.

Regarding **social relations**, H_{2b} was supported because there was a statistically significant difference between age groups, while H_{2a} and H_{2c} were not supported owing to the fact that there were no statistically significant differences between genders and between races. However, the results of this study were not expected to differ with these previous studies. Soderlund (2011:178) revealed that female participants had a more positive attitude towards the store than male participants as they interact with other customers. Furthermore, Jubas (2011) found that there were differences between consumers' race, gender and social class regarding their shopping identity.

On the other hand, the chi-square test results for **sales associates** revealed that consumers' proportions were statistically different regarding the influence of sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates. It was further indicated that H₃, H₄ and H₅ were supported as shown in Table 6.1.

The ANOVA F-test results for determining if there are differences between demographics indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between gender, age and race with regard to **sales associates' availability**. It is therefore that H_{3a}, H_{3b} and H_{3c} were not supported. This results are consistent with Osman's *et al.* (2014:190) findings, which indicated that there was no significant difference between consumers' age groups regarding the influence of sales associates on in-store behaviour. However, the results differ with the findings of the study by Lieven (2016), which explored customers' choice of salespersons during the initial sales encounter which found that there was a significant difference between male and female respondents' preferences in terms of sales associates and the service provided.

The hypotheses test results also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in gender, age and race with regard to the influence of **physical attributes** of

sales associates on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Therefore, H_{4a}, H_{4b} and H_{4c} were not supported. These results tend to differ with the expected results based on the previous studies in the literature review. Shao *et al.*'s (2004:1173) findings revealed that male and female customers were significantly different in their cognitive responses to the dress of service contact personnel.

Furthermore, the results in Table 6.1 indicated that H_{5c} was supported for ***behavioural attributes*** as there was a statistically significant difference between race groups. In addition, there were no statistically significant differences for gender and age, regarding behavioural attributes, and therefore, H_{5a} and H_{5b} were not supported. These results are partially in line with the findings of Jones *et al.* (1998), who found that race and gender showed significant differences on the impact of buyer seller's credibility and trustworthiness. However, these findings were not anticipated as Prendergast, Li and Li (2014:204) suggested. Their findings indicated that there were significant differences between male and female consumers regarding sales associates' credibility in terms of trustworthiness and attractiveness.

As the results were interpreted, it is important to highlight the contribution that the study will make in the FMCG retail industry.

6.4 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study set out to make theoretical contribution to the FMCG retail industry. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes towards the body of knowledge and literature of FMCG retail environment by investigating human variables, namely other customers and sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni. Furthermore, this study determined consumers' perceptions on the influence of other customers with regard to crowding and social relations, as well as sales associates with regard to sales associates' availability, physical attributes of sales associates and behavioural attributes of sales associates in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

6.5 PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

From a practical perspective, this study also provides significant insights and guidelines for retailers to create a pleasant shopping experience for consumers. The results of this study have practical relevance for FMCG retail management. Sales associates' positive attributes create a pleasant atmosphere in the store that enhances consumers' shopping experience. Therefore, staff training should focus on improving individual sales associates' ability to understand customers' needs, to equip them with knowledge about products sold in the FMCG retail stores, to dress in a presentable way and to be approachable.

The presence of other customers which may result in crowding in the FMCG retail stores can affect consumers' satisfaction. Therefore, management should manage crowding and social interactions among customers to enhance their overall shopping experience. Furthermore, this study contributes to the FMCG retail industry by providing recommendations on how human variables can be used to create a pleasant shopping experience.

6.6 LIMITATIONS

The results that were obtained for this study were limited to the targeted Ekurhuleni region. Therefore, the study cannot be generalised to the entire South African population. Owing to the fact that non-probability sampling and convenience sampling methods were used, the main aim was not to be representative, but to make findings available for academic purposes and to provide knowledge to the management of the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

Another limitation is that this study did not cover human variables in other sectors such as online retail market, apparel retail market, furniture, and hardware markets. In addition, this study covered human variables from customers' perspective only not retailers' perspective. There was also a limitation of the research instrument as a scale must have

at least five items measuring a construct or variable. Hence after exploratory factor analysis, some sub-variables were measured with only two items.

The recommendations based on the conclusions drawn from the findings are presented in the next section.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made based on the findings presented in Chapter 5 and the conclusions drawn above. These recommendations are as follows:

- Although respondents seemed to be neutral with regard to crowding in the FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni, retailers need to consider managing crowding as consumers in a crowded store may spend less money than they planned, or even leave the store without making purchases (Yildirim & Baskaya, 2007:3411). It is therefore recommended that FMCG retail store managers should introduce activities that can keep waiting customers busy/entertained in order to avoid dissatisfaction caused by a crowded environment. Furthermore, sales associates should be trained on how to manage crowding professionally in the FMCG retail stores.
- Respondents emphasised that they preferred to make new friends, to have fun with other customers and to talk to other customers who have goals that are similar to theirs. Therefore, it is recommended that FMCG retailers should combine human variables with other atmospheric elements to create a pleasant shopping experience that will make customers feel comfortable and spend more time shopping and interacting in the stores. A further recommendation is to broaden the store layout in order to create space for movement.
- Because the results have indicated that respondents agreed with their preference for the availability of sales associates, consumers are likely to spend their money at the FMCG retail stores that have sales associates who are always available and willing to assist. Therefore, it is highly recommended that FMCG retailers

should ensure that sales associates are always available in all departments in the store and greet customers as an indication of welcoming and appreciating them. This could create a pleasant shopping experience as consumers will not struggle when they need assistance.

- Respondents highlighted that they were able to recognise the influence of sales associates' physical attributes on their shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores. The recommendation to FMCG retailers is that they should put greater emphasis on encouraging sales associates to dress professionally and presentably, as well as ensuring that they understand that the uniform represents the retail store's brand.
- The findings indicated that sales associates' friendliness and patience play an important role in enhancing consumers' shopping experience in the FMCG retail stores. It is highly recommended that FMCG retailers should consider motivating their sales associates to be professional by being friendly and patient to customers in the stores.
- Respondents indicated that the FMCG retail stores that have sales associates who understand customers' needs are preferred by customers. A further recommendation to FMCG retailers is to ensure that their sales associates are equipped with knowledge of their target markets and products sold to be able to understand their customers' needs in order to create a pleasant shopping experience. This could be achieved by means of staff training.

6.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Owing to the fact that the results of this study cannot be generalised to the entire South African population, since non-probability sampling was used, future research should use probability sampling.
- This study focused on the FMCG retail industry only. Future research could focus on investigating these human variables on other retail sectors such as online retail, furniture retail and hardware retail.

- Since human variables were investigated from customers' perspective, future research could also conduct studies on human variables from retailers' perspective or both in one study.
- This study used quantitative research with structured questions. Future studies could use a mixed-method approach to include qualitative approach, which could include open-ended questions as well.
- This study covered human variables in detail. Therefore, future research should attempt to investigate the interaction between human variables and other atmospheric variables such as ambient and design.

6.9 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conclusions of the study drawn from the findings to address the objectives and indicate how they were achieved. Recommendations were also made, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical contribution of the study to the FMCG retail industry in Ekurhuleni. Suggestions for future research were made and limitations of the study were identified.

The findings indicated that consumers who participated in the study agreed that other customers influence their shopping experience with regard to social relations. However, they did not seem to be bothered by crowding. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant differences between genders regarding crowding and between age groups with regard to social relations. Respondents also highlighted the influence that sales associates have on their shopping experience with regard to sales associates' availability, as well as their physical attributes and behavioural attributes by agreeing with the statements used in the questionnaire. The findings of the study further established that the statistically significant differences for sales associates existed only between race groups with regard to behavioural attributes.

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APPENDIX: A

- Informed consent form -

Informed consent to participate in an academic research study

Dept. of Marketing and Retail Management

Title of the study:

The influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni

Research conducted by:

Mr H.S. Malope (40369005)

Cell: 082 837 8163

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Mr H.S. Malope, a Masters student from the Department of Marketing and Retail Management at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is **“to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni”**.

Please note the following:

- This survey is anonymous, and your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential and you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 15 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. I will provide you with the summary of our findings on request.
- If you have any question or comment regarding the study please contact the researcher, Mr H.S Malope, Cell: 082 837 8163, Email: 40369005@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on voluntary basis.

.....

Respondent's signature

.....

Date

APPENDIX: B

- Research instrument -

Respondent number:

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**THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN VARIABLES ON CONSUMERS' SHOPPING EXPERIENCE
IN FMCG RETAIL STORES IN EKURHULENI**

Dear respondent

Thank you for your time and willingness to complete the following survey. The purpose of the survey is **“to investigate the influence of human variables on consumers’ shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni”**.

This survey will take approximately 10 – 15 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all the responses will be kept **confidential**.

There are no correct or incorrect answers. There are 11 questions in this survey.

Please answer all the questions by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate block.

Q 1. Do you reside in Ekurhuleni (East Rand)?

Yes	1
No	2

If **yes**, please proceed with the questionnaire

If **no**, please do not continue

FMCG retail stores are stores that sells products such as soft drinks, toiletries and grocery items. For example supermarkets and hypermarkets.

Human variables include other customers and sales associates in the FMCG retail stores.

Q 2. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the influence of crowding on your shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1	I prefer to shop in the crowded FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	I often try to avoid shopping in the crowded FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	The FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni manage crowding very well to create a pleasant shopping experience.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	The FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni do not experience crowding, as there are usually few shoppers.	1	2	3	4	5

Q 3. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the influence of social relations on your shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
3.1	I enjoy interacting with friendly customers during my shopping at the FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	I like to make new friends when I'm shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	I often prefer to have fun with other customers shopping next to me.	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	I like to talk to other customers who have goals that are similar to mine.	1	2	3	4	5

Q 4. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the influence of sales associates' availability on your shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
4.1	Enough sales associates are always available and willing to assist customers in the FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Sales associates always welcome customers when they enter the FMCG retail stores with a friendly smile.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	It is not easier for customers to find sales associates when they need assistance in the FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5

Q 5. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the influence of physical attributes of sales associates on your shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1	I like shopping in the FMCG retail stores that have well dressed and presentable sales associates.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	The neat uniform that sales associates wear represent the FMCG retail store's brand very well.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	Professionally appearing sales associates create a pleasant atmosphere in the FMCG retail stores.	1	2	3	4	5

Q 6. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding the influence of behavioural attributes of sales associates on your shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in Ekurhuleni.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
6.1	Sales associates are knowledgeable about the products sold in the FMCG retail stores and can answer customers questions.	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	I like sales associates that are friendly and patient.	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	I prefer to shop at the FMCG retail stores that have got sales associates who can understand customers' needs.	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	Sales associates that are honest and professional can be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5

Q 7. Please indicate your gender.

Male	1
Female	2

Q 8 Please indicate your age group.

18 - 23	1
24 - 35	2
36 - 45	3
46 - 60	4

Q 9 Please indicate your racial group.

African	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
Other	5

If other, please specify

Q 10 Please indicate your highest qualification.

Did not complete Grade 12	1
Completed Grade 12	2
Diploma	3
Undergraduate degree	4
Post-graduate degree	5
Other	6

If other, please specify.....

Q 11. Please indicate your gross monthly income below

Below R 5 000	1
R 5 000 – R 10 000	2
R 11 000 – 20 000	3
R 21 000 – R30 000	4
Above R 31 000	5

Thank you for your time and participating in this survey

APPENDIX: C

- Permission letters -

06 - 04 - 2016

Dear Henry

Approval has been granted for you to proceed, provided you follow the 5 principles listed on your application letter.

Please advise the date and time that you will be executing this so that we can inform our security department.

Please also note that you will need to come and sign in at the centre management offices before you commence with your research.

Warm regards



Lee-Anne Leathley

Marketing Manager: Festival Mall, East Rand Value Mall & Sunward Centre

Mustard Seed Relationship Marketing CC

Cell: 076 134 9782

Tel: 011 394 7549

Block E, Capital Place, Neutron Avenue, Techno Park, Stellenbosch, 7600

www.mseed.co.za

Permission Granted for Research Survey

Dear Henry S Malope

I hereby give you permission to conduct a confidential survey that will be only need to be made available to East Rand Mall Centre Management. Kindly note that we are unable to assist with the research survey as a marketing team as we have very little resources.

Kind regards



22 – 04 - 2016

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR PRE-TESTING QUESTIONNAIRE AT LAMBTON SHOPPING MALL

Hi Henry

You can proceed with arrangements to do your questionnaire.

Regards



Cell: 073 488 0260

E mail: ferdivdl@telkomsa.net

Web: www.cenprop.co.za

APPENDIX: D

- Language editing certificate -

EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

20 September 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited and proofread Mr HS Malope's dissertation entitled, **"THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN VARIABLES ON CONSUMERS' SHOPPING EXPERIENCE IN FMCG RETAIL STORES IN EKURHULENI"**.

I found the work easy and enjoyable to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my particulars:



Jack Chokwe (Mr)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489

jackchokwe@gmail.com

Professional
EDITORS 
Guild

APPENDIX: E

- Ethical clearance certificate -

**MARKETING AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS
REVIEW COMMITTEE**

23 November 2016

Dear Mr HS Malope

Decision: Ethics Approval

Ref #: 2016_MRM_010

Name of applicant
(student/researcher): Mr HS
Malope

Student #: 40369005

Staff # : n/a

Name: HS Malope, 40369005@mylife.unisa.ac.za, +27828378163

Supervisor: SSLN Mosupyoe, mosupsln@unisa.ac.za, +27124294510

Co-supervisor: Dr JAR Botha, botha.jar@unisa.ac.za, +27124294610

Proposal: The influence of human variables on consumers' shopping experience in FMCG retail stores in East Rand/Ekurhuleni.

Qualification: Postgraduate degree

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the *Marketing and Retail Management* Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for *the duration of your study*.

For full approval: The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the Marketing and Retail Management Research Ethics Review Committee on 23 November 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the Marketing and Retail Management Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial



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Open Rubric

changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

- 3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Note:

The reference number 2016_MRM_010 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail/, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the Marketing and Retail Management Ethics Review Committee, RERC.

kind regards,



Signature

Prof JA Wiid
Chairperson

012)4293939



Signature

Prof MT Mogale
Executive dean



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