Journal of Business and Behavioral Sciences
Vol. 23, No. 3; Fall 2011

STORE ATTRIBUTES PREFERENCE IN SELECTING A STORE: A STUDY OF LARGE SCALE RETAIL STORES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Neha Purushottam
Graduate School of Business Leadership
University of South Africa

ABSTRACT: Segmentation always been considered an important marketing strategy in the marketing literature. Review of literature has indicated that appropriate segmentation ensures efficient utilization of resources and contributes to the overall value offering. Various recent studies highlighted the importance of segmentation strategies in the current economic context. The review has also revealed that demographics and store attribute preferences play important role in segmenting the retail market. The review of previous research studies also indicated that knowing customers preferences towards store attributes helps marketer in shaping their marketing mix strategies. In this context, this paper presents findings of a research conducted during the year 2010 in South Africa. Customer demographics and their store attribute preferences in selecting a store were examined in this study. The data collection instrument used in this study was based on a scale developed by Swinyard and Rinne (1995). It is important to indicate that this study was limited to the large scale stores in formal retail sector. Moreover, the scope of this study is limited to urban areas as the collected data had customers responses only from five major cities of four provinces. After cleaning and transforming data, only 418 customers responses were found usable for the data analysis. Five factors based on key dimensions of store attribute preferences were identified through an exploratory factor analysis. Based on these identified factors and customer demographics, cluster analysis was conducted and five segments of customers were described and discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Similar to some developing countries, South African retail sector witnesses presence of formal (also reffered as modern or organized) and informal (also referred as traditional or unorganized) retail sector (von Blottnitz, 2007; Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003). Besides this clear divide, South African retail scored 24th place in GRDI Index and was considered attractive for international retailers (ATKearney, 2010). Attractiveness of South African retail market mainly to its growing population and "*positive long term economic outlook*" (p11, ATKearney, 2010). In 2010, the announcement of Wal-Mart to enter in South Africa (Moorad, 2010) has contributed to the growing anxiety among retailers who want to protect their customer base (The Economist, 2011). Review of related literature indicated that with growing competition, importance of understanding consumers and segmentation strategies goes up (Colla, 2004;

Watkin, 1986). Understanding the way consumer shop and factors affecting shoppers' behaviour help marketers to design more effective and efficient strategies (Dibb, Stern and Wensley, 2002). In order to sever various customers group better, organizations exercise segmentation (Wilson-Jeanselme and Reynolds, 2006). Market segmentation provides opportunity to marketers for efficient use of their resources by concentrating their efforts to the most beneficial customers (Tynan and Drayton, 1987). Discussing the importance of segmentation strategy, Piercy (2009, p292) indicated that it is "*a powerful strategic tool for focusing on customer needs and building competitive advantage from that focus*". Literature reviewed signifies importance of exploration of customers and their preferences in order to plan and implement better segmentation strategies. It also shows that in South Africa, there is dearth of research in the field of consumer decision making in selecting a retail store (Jacobs, Van der Merwe, Lombard and Kruger, 2010). The review also indicates that a few studies were conducted on the store attribute preferences in the South African context and most of them were focused only on the food retail sector.

In the light of this context, this research has attempted to examine South African shoppers to understand what store attributes are important to them while selecting a store to shop. It also intended to identify segments on the basis of their store attribute decision making criteria. The first section of this paper reviews the related literature in the area of segmentation especially with reference to the role of store attributes in the selection of a store. The next section discusses research methodology, scope and limitations of the study. The following section examines research results, explores and discusses emerging segments. The last three sections cover managerial implications followed by limitations of the research and the summarization under conclusions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Segmentation has always been considered as one of the key areas of marketing (Quinn and Dibb, 2010). Segmentation ensures effective cost management (Shim and Mahoney,1991) by bringing focus in marketing efforts and by effective and efficient utilization of resources (Tynan and Drayton, 1987). Rapid technological progression, increasing complexity of market (Firat and Shultz, 1997), intense competition and "*cost pressures*" (p 246, Zolfagharian and Cortes, 2010) add to difficulties of marketers in understanding changing nature of customer preferences. This scenario has forced marketers to remain in constant touch with their segments and contributed to the integration of segmentation and customer relationship management (Bailey, Baines, Wilson, and Clark, 2009). Recent financial crisis has contributed to the growing importance for the optimum use of resources and once again brought focus to the segmentation research (Quinn and Dibb, 2010).

While categorising research in this area, Foedermayr and Diamantopoulos (2008) indicated six stages of segmentation as (a) defining market, (b) segmentation variables and decisions related to choice of segmentation base, (c) the choice of segmentation method (d) creation of segments (e) evaluation of final selection (f)

implementation. They also highlighted that the most popular research area was segmentation variables and selecting of segmentation base. Geographic, demographics, psychographics and behavioural variables were identified four main segmentation variables categories (Kottler and Armstrong, 2011). With time, in the area of segmentation research "*market driven approaches*" took preference over "*a priori*" or "*management driven*" approaches as they helped in developing more useful and relevant segmentations (p 125, Swinyard and Rinne, 1995). Market oriented organization focus more on "*customers, competitors and changing market conditions*" while designing their strategies (p159, Best, 2009). Best (2009) also stressed on the use of benefit based segmentation as it was identified more market oriented. Research on benefit based segmentation covers product and store attributes (Swinyard and Rinne, 1995). With the growing importance of retailing, shoppers' activities (Ruiz, Chebat, Jean-Charles, and Hansen, 2004) and preferences towards stores (Wilson-Jeanselme and Reynolds, 2006) were also identified useful in segmenting the market. Over a period of time, the research involving store environment, store image and store attributes gained importance in the field of retailing (Hu and Jasper, 2010). Factors affecting consumer behaviour can be classified into two main classes (external and internal) and store related or retail environment related variables were considered part of external influencer (Babin and Harris, 2011). This classification also contributed to the development of "*attitude based choice*" and "*attribute based choice*" strategies (p103, Kardes, Cline and Cronley, 2011).
An understanding why shoppers' prefer or patronize some stores not others, with the knowledge of customers demographic and lifestyle helps retailers to design better segmentation and positioning strategies (Pessemier, 1980; Erdem, Ben Oumlil, and Tuncalp, 1999). Store attributes were identified significant in shaping customers preferences for the retail store (Hansen and Deutscher, 1977/78; Ann Paulins and Geistfeld, 2003), in determining patronage behaviour (Shim and Kotsiopulos, 1992a) and in selecting the type of format (Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Store attributes also influence store image (Manolis, Keep, Joyce, and Lambert, 1994) and store patronage behaviour (Shim and Kotsiopulos, 1992). Store attributes help retailers differentiate and segment customers on basis of them (Davis, 1992). Store attributes and demographics of shoppers often were examined together (Hong and Koh, 2002) as they affect store selection among or shoppers decision to shop at a retail store (Dalwadi, Rathod and Patel, 2010). Context or a country's socio-cultural and economic environments affect the store attribute preferences among customers (Jin and Kin, 2003; White and Absher, 2005). The south African context is not well explored in the area of customer segmentation (Jacobs, Van der Merwe, Lombard and Kruger, 2010). The review indicates a need to conduct research to understand the South African customers and their retail store choices.

METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study was to examine the demographics and store attribute preferences in order to (a) identify main factors shaping store attribute preferences, and to (b) identify customer groups based on these preferences and demographics. For the purposes of this study, the survey instrument (22 item scale) developed by Swinyard and Rinne (1995) and was exercise in the US consumers context. Later, this instrument was also used by White and Absher (2005) in a different context of Central and Eastern European countries which indicated utility of the instrument in different context especially in the context of developing countries. This instrument is based on quantification of importance of various store attributes in the decision of selecting a store. The respondents were requested to rank their responses on a five point Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all important' (1) to 'Extremely Important' (5). Considering the resource constraints, the data collection for this research was collected through survey method by MBL1 students (most of them are working and experienced executives from middle management level) where each student surveyed two respondents. The similar approach was employed by White and Absher (2005) when they used university students for data collection to cover wider geography. However, this approach has posed certain limitations on the research like (a) the sampling became convenience sampling (b) the geographic coverage of the research became urban and has covered only five cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Nelspruit and Rustenburg) from four provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and North-West) of South Africa (SA has nine provinces). Nevertheless, remaining limited to urban area has rather contributed to having a more representative sample as large scale retail is mainly present in urban areas (von Blottnitz, 2007, BMI, 2011). The returned questionnaires were 1007 but after data cleaning which consist of deleting cases with (a) any missing value, (b) multiple entries for single responses, (c) where there was indication of more than one favourite retailer and (d) retailers with very small presentation in collected data, only 418 customers responses were found usable for the data analysis. For data analysis, exploratory factor analysis was used followed by cluster analysis. The exploratory factor analysis is conducted with two main objectives (a) To understand whether variables of store attributes preferences can be grouped into some factors and (b) to reduce variables to a smaller number of factors. The sample size for this study was 418 and number of variables considered for factor analysis were 22. These numbers has provided a good ratio to conduct a factor analysis which is approximately 19 observations per variable which was identified a good ratio (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics: The analysis of descriptive statistics highlighted that approximately 74% respondents were from Gauteng, 12 % from KZN, 10% from Mpumalanga and 4% from North West Province. It emerged that the customers in these cities gave higher importance to neat and clean environment and lesser to everyday low prices while selecting a store *(Refer table 1)*.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Neat and clean environment	4.54	.765
High quality merchandise	4.39	.848
Has what I want	4.33	.823
Convenient location	4.31	.861
Well marked prices	4.14	.943
Aesthetically pleasing store	4.06	.905
Excellent return policy	4.05	1.093
Easy to find merchandise	4.04	.902
Advertised items are in stock	4.04	1.084
Friendly staff	4.01	1.071
Available and helpful staff	3.97	1.100
Large merchandise selection	3.92	1.032
Fast checkout even when busy	3.85	1.117
High quality clothing	3.78	1.325
Advertisement offer good saving	3.74	1.034
Availability of clothing style I like	3.60	1.316
Merchandise breadth in all department	3.57	1.044
Sales are real bargain	3.52	1.153
Has latest style clothing	3.52	1.331
Find what I want on sale	3.44	1.135
Has frequent advertising	3.38	1.211
Everyday low prices	3.28	1.182

Most respondents (around 98%) were between age 20-60 which is considered major contributor of economically viable population in South Africa (BMI, 2011). In terms of gender representation there were 71% females and 29% males. About 40% of respondents were graduate, 27% with diplomas, 21% metric, 11% post graduate and only 0.5 % had doctorate. A good percentage of the respondents (52%) were married, 41% were single and 8% were either divorced, separated or widowed. It was interesting to observe that 63% of respondents were living in their own houses and remaining 37% were living in rented houses. Most respondents (94%) had household sizes between 1-5 members per household. Approximately, 38% respondents most frequently visit 'Woolworths', 28% visit 'Pick n Pay', 23% 'Edgars' and 11% visit 'Mr Price'. Most shoppers (68%) visit these retailers less than 1-5 times a month, 20% visit 6-10 times a month while

6% visit 10-15 times and almost the same percentage of shoppers visit their favourite retailer more than 15 time a month. It emerged that the customers in these cities gave higher importance to neat and clean environment and lesser to everyday low prices while selecting a store *(Refer table 1)*.

Store attribute preference criteria: An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify factor in store attribute preferences. Factorability of the correlation matrix was assessed (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010) as a step ahead of conducting factor analysis. Anti-image correlation matrix, Bartlett test of sphericity and measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) were used to measure inter-correlation. The Bartlett's test of sphericity (Sig. <0.05) also indicated that sufficient correlation existed and conducting factor analysis was meaningful (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010). Moreover, in anti-image correlation matrix when MSA was examined for each variable it was observed that it was higher than 0.50 and lowest MSA value is 0.76. The Bartlett test of sphericity was 0.861 *(Refer table 2)* which was higher than 0.50 which favoured conduction of factor analysis. All variables indicated communalities higher than 0.45 but two variables were deleted to eliminate cross-loading. As a result factor analysis was conducted on retained 20 variables.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.861
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3589.244
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

Applying 'Kaiser Criterion' i.e. latent root criterion, factors with eigenvalue greater than 1 were extracted and five factors were considered significant *(Refer table 3)*.

Table 3: Factors based on Store Attribute Preferences				
Store attribute preferences and Factors	Loading	Eigenvalues	Percentage variance	Cronbach's alpha
Store Environment and Services		6.397	31.985	0.836
Friendly staff	.789			
Available and helpful staff	.769			
Aesthetically pleasing store	.709			
Neat and clean environment	.695			
High quality merchandise	.617			
Fast checkout even when busy	.573			
Has what I want	.506			
Style and Quality Apparels		2.216	11.082	0.888
Availability of clothing style I like	.901			
High quality clothing	.878			
Has latest style clothing	.873			
Price and Sale Management		1.848	9.238	0.702
Everyday low prices	.808			
Sales are real bargain	.632			
Find what I want on sale	.568			
Well marked prices	.527			
Advertising Management		1.098	5.491	0.707
Advertisement offer good saving	.748			
Has frequent advertising	.733			
Advertised items are in stock	.575			
Merchandise Management		1.048	5.240	0.712
Large merchandise selection	.790			
Merchandise breadth in all departments	.697			
Easy to find merchandise	.546			

These five factors represented 63.036 percent of the variance of 20 variables *(Refer table 3)*. The selection of factors was based on varimax rotation which was supported by scree test criterion as well. Moreover, prior research using the same scale by Swinyard and Rinne (1995) and by White and Absher (2005) identified presence of seven to five factors respectively which supported the number of identified factors. The reliability of factors identified by factor analysis was further determined through the 'summated scale' and 'Cronbach's alpha'.

From the factor analysis it emerged that 'Store environment and Services' contributed to the highest degree of variance. Hence, it was labelled as the first factor which comprised of items related to store environment and customer services. This finding was similar to the observations by White and Absher (2005) which also identified customer service items and some store environment items contributing to one factor. It was interesting to observe that the high quality of merchandise was found associated to this factor. This difference may be due to the fact that original scale was used for discounters. The second factor was termed as 'Style and quality apparels' and this factor displayed the same items as they were in the previous two research studies based on the same scale. Factor third was comprised of same items as identified in the earlier two research studies like low prices, sales which are real bargain. However, it also included variables like convenience related to sales and prices hence was named as 'Price and sales management'. The fourth factor was tagged as 'Advertising Management' as it covered items related to advertising and its management in store. While the fifth factor was termed as 'Merchandise management as it consisted of items related to breadth and depth of merchandise in stores and the way they were managed in stores.

Segmentation: For this purpose a cluster analysis based on 5 factors of store attribute preferences was conducted and five clusters were identified. No cluster was less than 10 percent of observations. F statistics and one way ANOVA indicated statistically significant difference between these clusters on each of the five clustering variables *(Refer table 4).*

Table 4: Cluster profiles based on store attribute preferences (Final cluster centres) and ANOVA

	Clusters					F Values	Sig.
	1	2	3	4	5		
Store Environment and Services	3.78	3.14	4.31	4.32	4.54	77.265	.000
Style and quality of Apparels	3.63	2.46	4.26	1.46	4.44	312.847	.000
Price and Sale Management	3.44	2.49	3.04	3.80	4.16	85.199	.000
Advertising Management	3.78	2.33	2.92	3.74	4.40	160.531	.000
Merchandise management	3.39	2.58	3.92	3.98	4.37	101.472	.000

Based on the cluster analysis and by analyzing demographic variables for each cluster following profiles were identified:

Cluster 1 (Sensory driven shoppers): This was the second largest segment (22 percent) with around 70 percent females and 30 percent males. This group had equal presentation (49 percent) of married and single people but had the highest percentage of single population among all groups. Moreover, it had smallest presentation (2.1 percent) of divorced or separated people. In this cluster, presentation of people who own houses (54 percent) was slightly higher than the people who live in rented houses (46 percent). The customers from this group, 21 percent customers were most frequent in visiting 'Pick n Pay', 31 percent were visiting 'Edgars', 29 percent were frequently visiting 'Woolworths' and 19 percent were visiting 'Mr Price' often. This group highly prefer to shop in stores providing good ambience, customer services, style and quality of clothing. They also equally prefer to be informed through advertisement and would like to see availability of advertised items in the stores. While selecting a store, variety and assortment of merchandise, price and sales are also important but these attributes are in their second priority. Only 47 percent customers from this group consider convenient location highly important in selecting a store. Almost equal percentage of customers from this group consider excellent return policy either extremely (36 percent) or highly (34 percent) important in selecting a store.

Cluster 2 (Not interested shoppers): This was the smallest group (10 percent) and the only group which was dominated by male population (54 percent). There were highest percentage of married people (71 percent) in this group. Most of the population (73 percent) in this group owns houses. Out of this group, 32 percent were most frequent in going to 'Pick n Pay', 22 percent to 'Edgars', 34 percent to 'Woolworths' and 12 percent were most frequent in going to 'Mr Price'. This group of customers give less importance to style and quality of clothing; advertising; prices and sales. They consider store environment; customer services and variety and assortment of merchandise moderately important. This group gave all dimensions the lowest ranking among all groups but the ranking given by this group to style and quality of clothing was the second lowest among all groups. Equal percentage (32 percent) of customers from this group consider convenient location either extremely or highly important in selecting a store. It was interesting to observe that excellent return policy was also not at all important or was slightly important for them.

Cluster 3 (Quality and style driven shoppers): This was the third largest group (17 percent) with 73 percent females and 27 percent males. This group had the most highly educated members. More than 76 percent of its members own their houses which was the highest percentage across all groups. This group had highest percentage of divorced or separated members among all groups. It was interesting to observe that 70 percent members of this group were most frequent in visiting 'Woolworths'. This group considers quality and style of apparels and variety and assortment of merchandise besides store environment and services as highly important. Around 48 percent of the member of this group think that convenient location an extremely important attribute. While 47 percent give extreme importance to excellent return policy. Other factors like price, sales and advertisements were moderately important for this group. Hence the group was named quality and style driven.

Cluster 4 (Value seeking shoppers): This group was a second smallest segment (13 percent) which had second most highly educated group. It comprised of 61 percent of female and 39 percent of male population. 57 percent of its members own their houses while 43 percent live in rented houses. Majority (88 percent) of the group members, most frequently shopped at 'Pick n Pay'. For these shoppers store environment, services, prices, bargains, advertisement, variety and assortment were highly important. However they gave least importance to style and quality of clothing. It is important to mention here that it seems that this group of shoppers most frequently visit the store as most of their need get fulfil there but prefer to purchase their cloths from some other retailer where they likes style and cloth (may be a specialty retailer). Around 52 percent of the member of this group were of opinion that convenient location is extremely important but only 41 percent gave extreme importance to excellent return policy.

Cluster 5 (Difficult to please shoppers): This was the largest (37 percent) and consisted of highest percentage (80 percent) of female shoppers among all segments. This group had least percentage of highly educated members. This segment comprised of 51 percent married, 39 percent single and 10 percent divorced or separated population but 63 percent of its members owned houses. These shoppers wanted all and their importance rating to all aspects of store attributes was the highest among all groups. Around 92 percent members of this segment think that convenient location is extremely important. While 91 percent gave high or extreme importance to excellent return policy. Since this was the most demanding segment this group of shoppers were named 'difficult to please' shoppers.

In summary, the results show five segments of shoppers in the large scale retail sector in urban South Africa. On the basis of preferences for store attribute and demography, these shoppers segments were named as 'Sensory driven', 'Not interested', 'Quality and style driven', 'Value seeking' and 'Difficult to please'.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined retail shoppers in South Africa on the basis of their demographics and store attribute preferences. As an outcome of this research, five factors shaping store attribute preferences were identified. These factors in order of preference were 'Store environment and Services', 'Style and quality of Apparels', Price and Sale Management, 'Advertising Management' and 'Merchandise management'. The same number of factors were identified by White and Absher (2005), however, the number was less than the seven factors discovered in the study by Swinyard and Rinne (1995). This study clearly indicates that the South African shoppers give top priority to the store environment, services, quality and availability of merchandise in selecting stores. The preference rankings are different than the study conducted by Swinyard and Rinne (1995). However, it corresponds with the findings of White and Absher (2005) and Jin and Kin (2003), both studies were conducted in developing country context and in post nineties environment. Moreover, it also relates with the findings of Jacobs et al (2010), a study which was conducted in the food retail sector in South Africa. These discussions indicate towards a probability that the country context and the time period may have some influence on the ranking of factors of store attribute preferences.

Another objective of this study was to identify shopper segments based on their stores attribute preferences and demographics. As a result of this study, five distinct segments of shoppers emerged which were 'Sensory driven', 'Not interested', 'Quality and style driven', 'Value seeking' and 'Difficult to please'. It is interesting to observe that 'Difficult to please' shoppers group emerged as the largest segment similar to the study done by Swinyard and Rinne (1995). Identification of 'Value seeking' group find support from an earlier study conducted in South Africa by McClatchey, Cattell and Michell (2006) which highlighted that customers are seeking better values and as a result are shifting to online retail. Interestingly, this study also shows that shoppers of 'Quality and style driven' segment most frequently shop at 'Woolworths' while shoppers of 'Value seeking' segment most frequently shop at 'Pick n Pay' which indicate presence of differentiation already exercised by retailers and their respective positioning around different element of retail mix. Thus this study helps to understand the store attribute preferences and their role in segmenting shoppers for large scale retail stores in the South African context.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research has both theoretical and practical implications. One of the contribution of this study can be identification of major factors of store attribute preferences among South African shoppers. The finding that 'Store environment and services' are in the top priority of shoppers while selecting a store indicates that this store attribute may be a basic satisfier and points towards a possibility that unavailability of this store attribute may result into dissatisfied customers. It also suggests that retailers should ensure presence of this store attribute in their stores. White and Absher (2005) also indicated that 'Store environment and services' are the basic differentiator between organized and unorganized retailers and therefore should not be ignored. The knowledge of store attribute preferences may help retailers to relook at their offerings and if require, to redesign their retail mix to provide greater value to the customers (Johnson and Raveendran, 2009).

Another contribution of this study can be classification of different customer groups as per their store attribute preferences and demographics which retailers may decide to utilize to promote patronage behaviour. It was interesting to observe that customers from 'value seeking' group frequently purchased at 'Pick n Pay' while 'quality and style driven' had clear preference for 'Woolworths'. Previous research studies highlighted presence of a positive relationship between store attribute preferences and patronage behaviours (Shim and Kotsiopulos, 1992a). Therefore, this information may be useful for retailers to promote patronage behaviour among their respective segments. Moreover, this finding also suggests possible positioning of these retailers in the market. Understanding of segments based on shoppers' preferences may help retailers to utilize this knowledge to improve or adjust their positioning. The findings that the 'Not interested' shopper segment was dominated by male shoppers which gave considerable weightage to convenient location and to quality and style of clothing may be helpful for retailers interested in attracting this segment. Moreover, this study indicate a possibility that the shoppers from 'Value seeking' group are purchasing apparels from other retailers than the one which they visit most frequently. This indicate an opportunity for this retailer to try and satisfy needs of these shoppers by providing what they are looking outside. For example, results of Jin and Kin (2003) study indicated that after understanding similar trends, discount retailers in Korea included fashion apparels in their store portfolio. Convenient location has also emerged as an important attribute in almost all segments, which may be due to lack of strong public transport (BMI, 2011) and suggests an opportunity to gain competitive advantage in South African retail market. This research also indicates that pricing is not the only attribute South African shoppers are looking for and there are ample opportunities for retailers to differentiate through different aspects of retail mix and to engage shoppers for the long term. In the light of growing internationalization it becomes imperative for retailers to understand customers in different countries (White and Absher, 2005). Overall, this research contributes in the advancement of building of contextual knowledge on segmentation in the retail sector of South Africa.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research had many limitations like the data collected presented views of shoppers from five cities of four provinces only. Future research covering more number of cities and covering all provinces can provide better understanding and rich picture of the customers in South Africa. Moreover these cities and provinces were not presented proportionately. Therefore, future researchers may attempt to cover them proportionately to conduct a comparative study between different cities and/or between different provinces. Such studies may add to the body of knowledge about variables affecting store attribute preferences in different parts of South Africa. Another limitation of this study was possibility of generalization of results which is limited due to convenience sampling. This limitation may be address by the use of probability sampling in future studies. Including lifestyle variables and shopper's orientation in the future studies may help in developing comprehensive customers profiles. This study was also limited to the urban area and therefore provides a partial view of the customer population. Future studies may focus on developing profiles of non-urban customers as it will give retailers an idea how to adapt their offerings to attract non-urban customers as well. It would be interesting conduct similar study in the other parts of Africa specially in the Sub-Saharan Africa where south African retailers are present, to see if there are any differences in the shoppers' preferences.

REFERENCES

Ann Paulins, V. and Geistfeld, Loren V.(2003). The effect of consumer perceptions of store attributes on apparel store preference. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 7(4), 371-386.

ATKearney (2010). Expanding opportunities for global retailers: A.T. Kearney's 2010 Global Retail Development Index. Retrieved May 24th, 2011 from http://www.atkearney.com/ images/global/pdf/2010_Global_Retail_Development_Index.pdf.

Best, Roger. J. (2009). Market-based management: strategies for growing customer value and profitability (5th ed). NJ: Pearson Education.

Babin, Barry J. and Harris, Eric C. (2011). CB. (3rd ed.). OH: South –Western, Cengage Learning.

BMI (2011). South Africa Retail Report q2 2011, Business Monitor international, UK.

Bailey, Christine, Baines, Paul R., Wilson, Hugh and Clark, Moira (2009). Segmentation and customer insight in contemporary services marketing practice: why grouping customers is no longer enough. Journal of Marketing Management, 25(3/4), 227-252.

Bawa, K. Landwehr, J.T. and Krishna, A. (1989). Consumer response to retailers' marketing environments: an analysis of coffee purchase data. Journal of Retailing, 56(4), 471-495.

Blottnitz, M. (2007). Review of the South African wholesale and retail sector and its Small Enterprises in 2007. Research paper for Small Enterprise Development Agency. University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Carpenter, Jason M., and Moore, Marguerite (2006). Consumer demographics, store attributes, and retail format choice in the US grocery market. International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, 34(6), 434-452.

Colla, E. (2004). The Outlook for European Grocery Retailing: Competition and Format Development. International Review of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research, 14(1), 47-69.

Dalwadi, Riteshkumar; Rathod, Harishchandra Singh and Patel, Atul. (2010). Key Retail Store Attributes Determining Consumers' Perceptions: An

Empirical Study of Consumers of Retail Stores Located in Ahmedabad (Gujarat). SIES Journal of Management. 7(1), 20-34.

Davies, Gary (1992). Positioning, image and marketing of multiple retailers. International Review of Retail, Distribution & Consumer Research, 2(1), 13-34.

Dibb, Sally and Simkin, Lyndon (2010). Judging the quality of customer segments: segmentation effectiveness. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 18 (2), 113-131.

Dibb, Sally and Simkin, Lyndon (2009). Editorial: Bridging the segmentation theory/practice divide. Journal of Marketing Management, 25(3/4), 219-225.

Dibb, S., Stern, P. and Wensley, R. (2002). Marketing knowledge and the value of segmentation, Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 20(2), 113-119.

Erdem, O. Ben Oumlil, A. and Tuncalp, S. (1999). Consumer values and the importance of store attributes. International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management. 27(4), 137-145.

Firat, A.F. and Shultz, C.J. (1997). From segmentation to fragmentation: markets and marketing strategy in postmodern era. European Journal of Marketing, 31(3/4), 183-207.

Foedermayr, Eva K. and Diamantopoulos, Adamantios (2008). Market Segmentation in Practice: Review of Empirical Studies, Methodological Assessment, and Agenda for Future Research. Journal of Strategic Marketing, 16(3), 223-265.

Ghosh, Piyali; Tripathi, Vibhuti and Kumar, Anil (2010). Customer expectations of store attributes: A study of organized retail outlets in India. Journal of Retail & Leisure Property. 9(1), 75-87.

Hansen, Robert A. and Deutscher, Terry (1977/78). "An Empirical Investigation of Attribute Importance in Retail Store Selection." *Journal of Retailing*, Volume 53, Issue 4, 59-74.

Hair, Joseph F.; Black, William C.; Babin, Barry J. and Anderson, Rolph E. (2010). Multivariate Data Analysis (7th ed.). NJ: Pearson Education.

Hong, Heesook and Koh, Aeran (2002). Benefit Segmentation of the Korean Female Apparel Market: Importance of Store Attributes. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 20(4), *205-214.*

Hu. Haiyan and Jasper, Cynthia R. (2010). A Revisit of the Theoretical Model of Store Image and Its Application to Chinese Consumers. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 22(2), 81-93.

Jacobs, Sunelle; Van der Merwe, Daleen; Lombard, Ene; Kruger, Nadia (2010). Exploring consumers' preferences with regards to department and specialist food stores. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 34(2), 169-178.

Jin, Byoungho and Kim, Jai-Ok. (2003). A typology of Korean discount shoppers: Shopping motives, store attributes, and outcomes. International Journal of Service Industry Management. 14(3/4), 396-420.

Janssens, Wim; Wijnen, Katrien; De Pelsemacker, Patrick and Van Kenhove, Patrick (2008). Marketing Research with SPSS. England: Pearson Education.

Johnson, Johney and Raveendran, P.T., (2009). Retail Patronage Behaviour and Shopper Segmentation: A Study among Shoppers of Organised Retailers. The XIMB Journal of Management, 6(2), 121-142.

Kardes, F.R., Cline, T.W. and Cronley, M. L (2011). Consumer Behaviour: Science and Practice (International ed.). China: South –Western, Cengage Learning.

Kottler, P. and Armstrong , G. (2011). Marketing: An Introduction (10th ed.), NJ: Pearson Education.

Malhotra, N.K (2010). Marketing research: An applied orientation (6th ed.). NJ: Pearson Education.

Manolis, Chris, Keep, William W., Joyce, Mary L. and Lambert, David R. (1994). Testing the Underlying Structure of a Store Image Scale. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 54(3), 628-645.

McClatchey, Juliette, Cattell, Keith and Michell, Kathy (2006). The impact of online retail grocery shopping on retail space: A Cape Town study. Facilities. 25(3/4), 115-126.

Moorad, Z. (30, November, 2010), Wal-Mart's R16.5 billion bid for SA's Massmart official. Retrieved April 26th, 2011 from Bizcommunity. http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/162/54859.html.

Pessemier, Edgar A.(1980). Store Image and Positioning. Journal of Retailing, 56(1), 94-107.

Piercy, Nigel F. (2009). Market-Led Strategic Change (4th ed.), USA:Butterworth-Heinemann.

Quinn, Lee and Dibb, Sally (2010). Evaluating market-segmentation research priorities: Targeting re-emancipation. Journal of Marketing Management, 26(13), 1239-1255.

Rinne, Heikki and Swinyard, William R. (1995). Segmenting the discount store market: the domination of the 'difficult discounter core. The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, 5(2), 123-145.

Ruiz, Jean-Paul, Chebat, Jean-Charles, and Hansen, Pierre (2004). Another trip to the mall: a segmentation study of customers based on their activities. Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services, 11(6), 333-350.

Shim, Soyeon and Kotsiopulos, Antigone (1992a). Patronage Behavior of Apparel Shopping: Part I. Shopping Orientations, Store Attributes, Information Sources, and Personal Characteristics. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 10(2), 48-57.

Shim, Soyeon and Kotsiopulos, Antigone (1992b). Patronage Behavior of Apparel Shopping: Part II. Testing a Patronage Model of Consumer Behavior. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 10(2), 58-64.

Shim Soyeon and Mahoney, Marianne Y. (1991). Electronic Shoppers and Nonshoppers among Videotex Users. Journal of Direct Marketing, 5(3), 29-38.

The Economist (Feb 7th, 2011), Walmart in South Africa: The beast in the bush. Retrieved 13th May, 2011 from http://www.economist.com/node/18185732.

Tynan, A. Caroline and Drayton, Jennifer. (1987). Market Segmentation. Journal of Marketing Management, 2(3), 301-335.

Watkin, D. G. (1986). Toward a competitive advantage: A focus strategy for small retailers. Journal of Small Business Management, 24(1), 9-15.

Weatherspoon, D.D and Reardon, T. (2003). The Rise of Supermarkets in Africa: Implications for Agrifood Systems and the Rural Poor. Development Policy Review, 21(3), 1-17.

Wilson-Jeanselme, Muriel and Reynolds, Jonathan (2006). The advantages of preference-based segmentation: An investigation of online grocery retailing. Journal of Targeting, Measurement and Analysis for Marketing. 14(4), 297-309.

White Darin W. and Absher, Keith (2007). Positioning of retail stores in Central and Eastern European accession states: Standardization versus adaptation. European Journal of Marketing, 41(3/4), 292-306.

Zolfagharian, Mohammad A. and Cortes, Angelica (2010). Linking Market Orientation to Strategy Through Segmentation Complexity. Journal of Business & Economics Research, 8(9), 79-91.