

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**Factors affecting purchase decisions of  
online shopping for clothing**

**By**

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# Declaration

## Declaration

I Pearl Ntombizethu Phumzile Sithole..... declare that:

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## **Abstract**

Online shopping is becoming a popular activity, with consumers seeing the benefits, such as lower prices, and convenience. As much as online shopping is growing, it stands to be tested whether online shopping for clothing is also growing in the world of South African consumers. This study aimed to establish factors affecting consumer purchase decisions for online clothing. Furthermore, this study intended to contribute to Ideals Clothing, in helping them determine whether it would be of value to introduce online shopping. Ideals' core target market is an African female consumer. The research analysed the factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards online shopping for clothing within South Africa, giving Ideals insight into the attitude of its potential customers for online shopping. A sample of 191 respondents from Durban and Pietermaritzburg Truevine Community Church members was used to obtain data. Because the respondents were geographically scattered, an electronic questionnaire was used for collecting data. The questionnaire was emailed to 340 respondents via a link to QuestionPro, which is a tool used to collect and analyse data. The sample was made up of 60% females and 40% males, with 95% of the respondents being Africans. The majority of the respondents (82%) did not buy clothing online; the main reasons for which included the fact that they can't try on garments when buying online. The respondents who bought clothing online enjoyed the benefits that come with shopping online, such as the lower prices and the convenience offered by online shopping. It is recommended that online stores offer cheaper prices than traditional stores, and that they also ensure prompt and free delivery of the clothes purchased. It is also recommended that online stores offer a wide selection of clothes from which to choose, ensuring that the online sites are simple to navigate.

## Table of Contents

Description	Page
Title Page .....	i
Declaration .....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Figures .....	vii
List of Tables .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>Overview of the Study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Motivation of the Study.....	1
1.3 Focus of the Study .....	2
1.4 Problem Statement .....	2
1.5 Research Sub-Questions .....	3
1.6 Objectives .....	3
1.7 Limitations of the Study .....	3
1.8 Outline of the Study.....	4
1.9 Summary.....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>Consumer Online Shopping Patterns.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	6
2.2 Online Shopping.....	6
2.3 Comparison of Traditional Shopping with Online Shopping .....	7
2.4 Shopping Experience .....	8
2.5 Motivation for Shopping Online .....	9
2.6 Benefits of Online Shopping .....	11
2.6.1 Ability to Compare Prices .....	11
2.6.2 Time Saving .....	12
2.6.3 Accessibility .....	12
2.6.4 Product Choices.....	13
2.7 Limitations to Online Shopping.....	14
2.7.1 Lack of Visual Effects .....	14
2.7.2 Lack of Security and Privacy .....	15
2.7.3 Expertise on the Internet .....	15

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.8 Prior Online Shopping Experience.....	16
2.9 Website Attributes .....	17
2.10 Risk.....	18
2.11 Clothing Connection.....	20
2.12 Summary.....	22
 <b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	23
3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study .....	23
3.3 Participants and Location of the Study .....	24
3.4 Type of the Study .....	24
3.5 Approach.....	24
3.6 Sampling .....	25
3.7 Data Collection.....	26
3.7.1 Instrument.....	26
3.7.2 Construction of the Instrument .....	27
3.7.3 Pretesting and Validity.....	28
3.7.3.1 Pretesting.....	28
3.7.3.2 Validity .....	28
3.7.4 Distribution and Administration of the Instrument .....	30
3.8 Data Analysis .....	31
3.9 Summary.....	31
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>Presentation and Interpretation of Results .....</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	32
4.2 Description of the Sample .....	32
4.3 Objective One: To Determine Whether Consumers Buy Clothing Online.....	34
4.3.1 Illustration of Online Shoppers .....	34
4.4 Objective Two: To determine how often consumers buy clothing online. ....	35
4.4.1 Frequency of Buying Clothing Online .....	35
4.4.2 Time Period of Buying Clothing Online.....	36
4.4.3 Online Shopping Stores from which People Buy Clothing .....	37
4.5 Objective Three: To Determine What Motivates Consumers to Buy Clothing Online .....	38

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.5.1 Factors Driving Online Shopping for Clothing .....	38
4.6 Objective Four: To Determine What Discourages People from Buying Clothing Online .....	39
4.6.1 Limitations of Online Shopping for Clothing .....	40
4.6.2 Risks Involved in Online Shopping .....	41
4.6.3 Concerns about Online Shopping Risks .....	41
4.6.4 Likelihood of Buying Clothing Online .....	42
4.7 Objective Five: To Establish What Would Entice Consumers to Buy Clothing Online .....	43
4.7.1 Free Delivery .....	44
4.7.2 Factors that would Encourage Online Purchasing .....	45
4.8 Objective Six: To Determine whether Consumers Would Buy Ideals' Clothing Online .....	46
4.8.1 Illustration of Shoppers from Ideals .....	46
4.8.2 Reason for not Shopping at Ideals .....	47
4.8.3 People who would Buy Ideals' Clothing Online .....	48
4.8.4 Considerations for Ideals to Encourage Online Shopping .....	48
4.9 Summary .....	50
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>Recommendations and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>51</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	51
5.2 Has the problem been solved? .....	51
5.3 Limitations of the Study .....	52
5.4 Implications of this Research .....	52
5.5 Recommendations for Ideals Clothing .....	53
5.6 Recommendations for Future Studies .....	54
5.7 Conclusion .....	55
References .....	56
Appendix 1 Questionnaire .....	61
Appendix 2 Ethical Approval .....	67

## List of Figures

<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1	Layout of the Study.....	4
2.1	The Impact of Perceived Risks on Consumer Satisfaction, Intention to Revisit, and Purchase Intent.....	19
3.1	Testing Value of Measures: Forms of Validity.....	29
4.1	Illustration of Online Shoppers.....	34
4.2	Frequency of Buying Clothing Online.....	35
4.3	Time Period of Buying Clothing Online.....	36
4.4	Online Shopping Stores from which People Buy Clothing.....	37
4.5	Reasons for Buying Clothing Online.....	38
4.6	Those who do not Shop Online Owing to Risks Involved.....	41
4.7	Fears about Online Risks.....	42
4.8	Likelihood of Buying Clothing Online within the Next 12-24 Months.....	43
4.9	Respondents' Opinions on Free Delivery.....	44
4.10	Illustration of Shoppers from Ideals.....	46
4.11	Reasons for not Shopping at Ideals Clothing.....	47
4.12	Consideration Factors of Buying Ideals' Clothing Online.....	48
4.13	Consideration Factors for Ideals to Encourage Online Shopping.....	49



## List of Tables

<b>Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
2.1	Factors Influencing both Online and Traditional Shopping.....	7
4.1	Demographic Profile of the Sample .....	33
4.2	Reasons for Not Buying Clothing Online.....	40
4.3	Factors that would Encourage Consumers to Shop Online .....	45

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Overview of the Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Internet is growing in popularity among consumers who find benefits, such as cheaper prices, free delivery, and convenience, as motivators for buying goods online (Digital Media Research, 2012). South African consumers are also showing an interest in this channel of trading, mostly for buying concert tickets, sports tickets and travel tickets. There is a need to determine whether consumers are also using this channel of trading when it comes to buying clothing. This highlights the need for establishing consumer buying patterns for online shopping. This chapter provides an overview of the study, outlining the motivation for the study, the focus of the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the objectives, and the limitations of the study.

### **1.2 Motivation of the Study**

The Internet has created more opportunities for the retail industry, giving consumers an opportunity to shop online, due to convenience offered by online shopping (Kwek, Lau and Tan, 2010). Some South African retailers, such as Truworths, Woolworths and Mr Price, are offering online shopping, because they have realised that there are opportunities existing with online shopping (Digital Media Research, 2012). Ideals Clothing (Ideals), a South African based company competing directly with the companies mentioned above, has not yet tapped into the trend of selling clothing online. This raises the question of whether Ideals is missing an opportunity of trading online. This research aims to analyse the factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards online shopping within the South African market, giving Ideals insight into the consumer patterns for buying clothing online.

The researcher has deliberately chosen online shopping for clothing, because few researchers have focused on the buying patterns of the South African consumer when purchasing clothing online.

The literature review was conducted so as to test whether there is enough literature on solutions to the problem. However, it was evident that there was a paucity of literature offering a solution to the problem; therefore it was necessary to conduct primary research in order to determine the online consumer buying patterns for clothing. This study aims to benefit Ideals Clothing, in assisting them to determine whether the business will benefit from launching online shopping.

### **1.3 Focus of the Study**

The study will focus on understanding consumer attitudes towards buying clothing online, highlighting either motivation or discouragement as factors concerning buying clothing online. The study will probe the likelihood of consumers buying Ideals' clothing online, in order to guide Ideals in deciding whether to launch an online shopping site. The sample of the study has the same consumer profile as Ideals' core target market, that is, an African consumer. The study is conducted in Pietermaritzburg and Durban; areas from where the respondents were recruited; this is in line with the location of most Ideals stores.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Ideals is competing in the same competitive environment as retail stores such as Truworths, Edgars, Jet Clothing Stores, and Woolworths. Consumers are growing more used to the Internet, and the retail stores mentioned above all offer online shopping for clothing. Since Ideals competes directly with these retailers, there's a concern that Ideals' might end up losing its customers who prefer to shop online and lose them to its competitors. This raises the question of whether Ideals is missing an opportunity of selling clothing online. This research will analyse factors influencing consumer attitudes towards online shopping, giving Ideals insight into the attitude of its potential customers towards online shopping. The aim of this study is therefore to determine the consumer buying patterns of clothing online.

## **1.5 Research Sub-Questions**

The research questions of the study are as follows:

- To what extent are consumers interested in buying clothing online?
- What motivates consumers to buy clothing online?
- What discourages consumers from buy clothing online?

## **1.6 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine whether consumers buy clothing online and how often they do;
- To determine what motivates consumers to buy clothing online; and
- To determine what discourages consumers from buying clothing online.

Furthermore, the study attempted to establish what would entice consumers to buy clothing online; and also determine whether consumers would buy Ideals' clothing online.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study had a number of limitations; these are highlighted below:

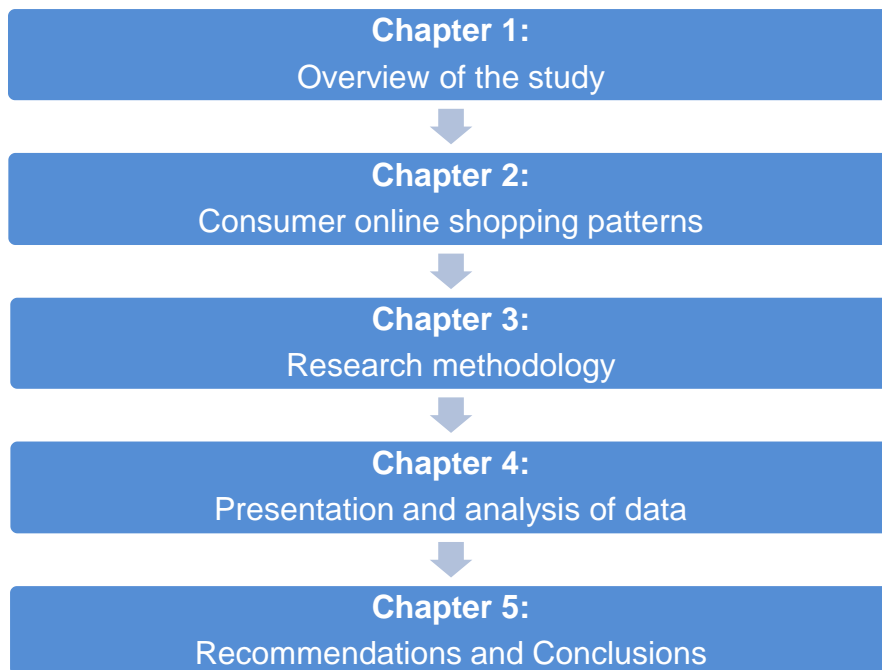
- The sample was drawn from a local church based in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, with the main members being Africans. This is not a full representation of the KwaZulu-Natal population. It would have been better to have compared the results of the African respondents with those of other races, even though Ideals' core target market is the African consumer. A more detailed study covering other areas of KwaZulu-Natal, where Ideals trade would have made the sample heterogeneous.
- Some respondents had limited access to the Internet, some respondents only having access to the Internet in the evenings when they got home from work or school. Some of the respondents forgot that they needed to

complete the questionnaire, because the email with link was sent to them during the day.

- The response was very slow. Reminders were sent three times to the respondents, reminding those who had not completed the questionnaire to do so. It took the whole month to gather all the responses from the required sample of 191. This left the researcher with limited time to analyse the research.

## 1.8 Outline of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters, as outlined by Figure 1.1.



**Figure 1.1** Layout of the Study

Chapter One gives an overview of the study on online shopping for clothing. It highlights the purpose of the study, the focus of the study, the research questions, and the objectives and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two presents the literature related to the online shopping from both local and international studies and reviews. The gaps in the literature were identified,

giving the reasons for conducting further research. Chapter Three outlines the research methods used in the empirical study. Chapter Four presents and discusses the research results. The results are presented in conjunction with the results from related literature and from other similar studies. Lastly, Chapter Five presents the recommendations emanating from the study, and outlines the limitations of the study.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter highlighted the motivation for the study in ascertaining the buying patterns of consumers when buying clothing online. This study will help Ideals Clothing determine whether to launch online shopping. The chapter outlined the research questions in line with the research objectives, with the aim of understanding consumers' attitude towards online shopping. The limitations of the study were addressed, clearly highlighting some of the challenges faced by this study, such as slow response rate, and limited Internet access. The next chapter will present the literature on online shopping by other researchers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Consumer Online Shopping Patterns

#### 2.1 Introduction

The Internet is growing in popularity. It is no longer merely a tool with which people interact with one another; it has allowed consumers to gather information about products, and therefore, to shop online. Some South African retailers are tapping into this trend of trading online, as they have realised the opportunities that exist with online shopping. This trend is even evident in the clothing retail stores within South Africa, who have capitalised on this form of selling to consumers.

This chapter will focus on literature which focuses on online shopping, highlighting the factors motivating consumers either to shop or not to shop online, contrasting traditional shopping with the online shopping experience.

#### 2.2 Online Shopping

According to Kwek *et al.* (2010), online shopping is the process of buying goods and services over the Internet. Online shopping is becoming common, because consumers are seeing the benefits and convenience of this activity. Consumer attitude plays a huge role in e-commerce adoption, which in turn affects consumers' online shopping purchasing decisions (Delafrooz, Paim, Haron, Sidin and Khatibi, 2009). According to the Internet Business Statistics (n.d.), 51% of South African people with Internet access shop online. It is therefore important for retailers who wish to offer effective online shopping, to understand consumer attitudes towards this practice.

The Online Retail in SA Study (2011) indicated that in South Africa in 2010, the total online retail expenditure on products exceeded the R2-billion mark for the first time, increasing by 30% from the previous year. This indicates a strong growth of online shopping, showing that consumers are becoming increasingly interested in buying products and services online.

### 2.3 Comparison of Traditional Shopping with Online Shopping

Online shopping has different characteristics from traditional shopping, namely, easy access, time savings, and a variety of product choice (Wang, Liu and Cheng, 2008). A certain level of Internet understanding must, therefore, be held by the consumer (Atcharyachanvanich, Sonehara and Okada, 2008).

In a traditional store a consumer is able to inspect the product and evaluate the vendor before making the purchase, however, this is not as easy online; the consumer is not able to touch the product before making a purchase (Tang and Chi, 2005).

Wang *et al.* (2008) compared the factors influencing online shopping with those of traditional shopping, as depicted in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1** Factors Influencing both Online and Traditional Shopping

Influencing Factors	Traditional Shopping	Online Shopping
Retailer	Place, traffic conditions, distribution	Website visibility
	Shops' credibility	Online shops' credibility
	Promotion	Information comparison
Service Factor	Quality of service	Payment security, privacy
	Service mode	
Environmental Factors	Shopping environment	Website interface
Purchasing motivation	Experience	Convenient time
Personal Factors	Shopping preferences, experience background	Educational level, the experience of networks

Adapted from Wang, Liu and Cheng (2008)

It is evident from Table 2.1 that online shopping relies on a website. This requires some knowledge of the website, whereas traditional shopping requires a



consumer to visit the store. According to Wang *et al.* (2008), online shopping relies on the website's providing visual effects which influence consumers to shop online, whereas in traditional shopping consumers are able to touch and try the products they are buying.

Monsuwe', Dellaert and Ruyter (2004) highlighted that online shoppers are not able to interact with the salesperson, and are not able to touch or try the product when buying online. Online shopping lacks the social value of the personal contact a consumer receives from the salesperson during traditional shopping. This could alienate consumers who find these features important. May, Wong and Scullii (2005) stated that some cultures such as the Chinese value human interaction when shopping; because online shopping lacks interaction with salespersons and other consumers, this method may not be easily endorsed by the Chinese consumer.

Hansen and Jensen (2009) found that the lack of obtaining personal advice when shopping online makes it challenging for consumers to choose clothing items; this could prevent consumers from purchasing by this method.

Consumers who have a preference for shopping at traditional stores find enjoyment of the shopping experience an important aspect of shopping; in contrast with consumers who are comfortable with shopping online (Rajamma, Paswan and Ganesh, 2007).

## **2.4 Shopping Experience**

Baty and Lee (1995, cited in Dillon and Reif 2004), defined the shopping experience as the combination of effort, compatibility of lifestyle, enjoyment and playfulness. According to Seock and Norton (2007), consumers prefer websites that are fairly easy to navigate. Dillon and Reif (2004) stated that playfulness is negatively affected by websites that are not easy to navigate, thus diminishing the shopping experience.

Siddiqui, O'Malley, McColl and Birtwistle (2003) found that consumers are seeking websites that offer sound and video features; consumers wish to have close-up zoom features and the ability to view the products in three dimensional space (3D)

within the virtual environment. This indicates that shoppers are looking for excitement when they shop online.

Hansen and Jensen (2009) found that women tend to find shopping fun, whereas men are “quick shoppers” who do not necessarily find fun in shopping. However, Hansen and Jensen (2009) further found that women find it less fun to buy clothing for their partners online than for themselves.

May So *et al.* (2005) stated that consumers who tend to dislike shopping in general and those who buy products in a rush are likely to prefer online shopping, finding the online mode more convenient than the traditional.

## **2.5 Motivation for Shopping Online**

Robbins, Judge, Odendaal and Roodt (2009) defined motivation as the practice accounting for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards achieving a certain goal. Consumers are motivated by various reasons to shop online, having different personalities and attitudes which influence perceptions and behaviour concerning shopping online (O'Brien, 2010).

Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) concurred with Seock and Norton (2007) that consumer perceptions which cause online shopping behaviour of differing kinds are categorised into two main orientations, that is, hedonic and utilitarian. According to Delafrooz *et al.* (2009), hedonic shoppers are experiential shoppers, while utilitarian shoppers are goal-oriented shoppers.

O'Brien (2010) stated that shopping research on hedonic and utilitarian motivation of consumers is very important in understanding the reasons for consumer shopping.

Bluschke (2011) and Chang, Lai and Wu (2010) referred to hedonic shopping as fun, where consumers shop for enjoyment; whereas utilitarian shoppers are goal-oriented. Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) stated that hedonic shoppers were more attracted to well-designed online shopping websites that were easy to navigate and aesthetically appealing. Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004) stated that if consumers are

initially exposed to pleasurable online shopping experiences, they are likely to shop more, as they browse more, engaging in unplanned online purchases.

By contrast, utilitarian shoppers wish to achieve their shopping goals with a minimum of effort and irritation; they are more concerned with efficiency of shopping (Bluschke, 2011). Utilitarian shoppers seek convenience, hence their preference for online shopping. This indicates that utilitarian shoppers try to minimise their shopping time as much as possible, saving time for activities other than shopping.

Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) concluded that utilitarian consumers had a greater effect on attitude for online shopping, whereas hedonic shoppers have no significant effect on such attitude.

The findings of Hansen and Jensen (2009) differ from Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004), in that hedonic shoppers perceive online shopping for clothes to be less enjoyable than traditional shopping, because online shopping does not allow them to touch and feel clothes before their purchase.

Kinley, Josiam and Lockett (2010) stated that consumers who find fun (hedonic) in shopping, purchase products more frequently, and are more impulsive than utilitarian consumers, who buy less frequently, and are likely to stop shopping once they find what they require. According to Delafrooz *et al.* (2009), hedonic shoppers could easily be influenced by online retailers to buy products, because they do not have a specific goal in mind when they are using the online shopping site.

May So *et al.* (2005) found that when an offer from the web-store is more attractive than an offer from a traditional store, the consumer's attitude towards online shopping becomes positive. This indicates that pricing of products offered by online retailers motivates consumers to shop online. According to Goldsmith, Flynn and Clark (2004), a catalogue shopper who has experience of shopping from home is more likely to shop online.

Winer and Dhar (2011) highlighted that customer service plays an important role in customer satisfaction. They defined customer service as the service which enhances the main product or service being purchased. When consumers are

satisfied with their online shopping experience they are more likely to buy again and become repeat consumers. Satisfying consumers' needs during the online shopping process helps gain their attention, thereby transforming them into repeat consumers (Omar, Bathgate and Nwankwo, 2011).

## **2.6 Benefits of Online Shopping**

Consumers buy online because they find benefits in this mode of shopping. Once an online consumer realises the benefits of buying products online, the consumer will be more likely to purchase or continue purchasing online (Atcharyachanvanich *et al.*, 2008). Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) agreed with the findings of Xu and Paulins (2005) that the benefits of online shopping include: a wide selection of products, low search costs, competitive pricing, and easy access to information. Online shopping provides functional motives such as convenience and unique product offerings (Forsythe, Liu, Shannon and Gardner, 2006). Functional benefits are benefits relating to convenience, price comparison and the means of selecting products when shopping online (Kwon and Noh, 2010).

May So *et al.* (2005) suggested that online retailers should target people who are busy, time-conscious, and who dislike shopping; these consumers would be more appreciative of the benefits of online shopping, such as convenience. In view of these studies, benefits such as the ability to compare prices, time saving, accessibility to product choices, and better prices, are discussed.

### **2.6.1 Ability to Compare Prices**

Online shopping allows consumers to compare various products and prices of different online retailers globally (Monuwe' *et al.*, (2004). Kwek *et al.* (2010) highlighted that online retailers are able to offer better prices than traditional stores, owing to lower operating costs and the global reach of the Internet. Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) found that the good price offered by online retailers influences consumers to shop online. Kwek *et al.* (2010) stated that online shopping allows consumers to search and to compare different products from

various stores globally. Winer and Dhar (2011) stated that online shopping allows consumers to compare prices quickly and easily when compared with visiting several retail stores or making phone calls to obtain prices. It allows consumers the ease of comparing prices of different stores. Some websites, such as PriceCheck Shopping, Oneshop, and Shopbot, are specifically designed with such price comparison in mind. According to Delafrooz *et al.* (2009), one of the reasons consumers shop online is the cheaper prices offered by the online retailers compared with traditional stores, which helps the consumer to save money.

### **2.6.2 Time Saving**

The time spent searching for information and then shopping online is reduced, compared with gathering the same information and shopping by traditional means (Chang, Lai and Wu, 2010). When it comes to traditional shopping, a consumer is faced with the possibility of standing in a queue in a store, be it a queue for the fitting room or a queue for the teller; this tedious activity is eliminated in online shopping (May So *et al.*, 2005). A consumer may shop online anytime and anywhere there is access to the Internet.

Because online shopping reduces customer time needed to obtain information about product prices and product offerings, it may encourage repeat buying (Monsuwe' *et al.*, 2004). This gives consumers more time to conduct other activities important to them, such as spending time with family, playing sport, or simply having more leisure time.

### **2.6.3 Accessibility**

Another key benefit of shopping online is that it is easy to access the Internet throughout the day; one is not limited to a particular geographic area. As long as the consumer has access to the Internet, online shopping is possible. There is no time constraint on using the Internet to buy products online; this has been identified as one of the most important benefits of online shopping (Kwon and Noh, 2010).

By contrast, May So *et al.* (2005) argued that traditional shopping is convenient for consumers, because most of the stores and shopping malls in places such as Hong Kong close very late at night; allowing consumers to shop long after working hours. May So *et al.* (2005) further stated that in smaller geographical areas where there is an efficient transport system, it is easy for people to visit the shops even several times in a day. In South Africa the majority of stores in major malls open at 09h00 and close at 19h00 or slightly later (Sats, 2013).

Online shopping allows consumers to buy at any time of the day; consumers having access to the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which makes it convenient for them to shop frequently (Xu and Paulins, 2005). A consumer may purchase products online in the comfort of his home; this indicates that consumers are not limited by the trading hours of the stores as in traditional shopping; they may shop whenever it suits them.

According to NationMaster.com (2013), there are 5,100,000 Internet users in South Africa. From a population of close to 50,000,000 this indicates that the majority of the South African consumers do not have access to the Internet. Digital Media Research (2012) indicated that the majority of South Africans access the internet at home.

#### **2.6.4 Product Choices**

Unlike traditional shopping, online shopping offers a wide selection of goods from which a customer may choose (Xu and Paulins, 2005). Consumers may view many different products, thus comparing prices more efficiently (Kwek *et al.*, 2010). The variety of products available on the Internet is a benefit that encourages online buying (Kwon and Noh, 2010). The perceived benefits of a variety of products offered over the Internet have an influence on consumers' online purchase intention (Kwon and Noh, 2010).

Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) stated that online retailers are able to provide a wider variety of products compared with traditional stores, because they are not limited by space, their products being displayed on the website. Consumers are able to visit a far greater number of online stores than they could visit conventional stores,

giving them a wide selection of products from which to choose. This is of great advantage to consumers, who are then able to make better-informed purchase decisions.

## **2.7 Limitations to Online Shopping**

While there are numerous benefits of online shopping, there are, however, factors negatively affecting online shopping, such as perceived risk in terms of fraud, and in terms of not being able to try on an item of clothing before the purchase is made, which discourages consumers from trusting online shopping (Wang *et al.*, 2008). Because online shopping is not as well entrenched by consumers as is traditional shopping, this provides a challenge for many consumers (Monsuwe' *et al.*, 2004).

Lack of trust affects consumers' attitudes towards shopping online. May So *et al.* (2005) found that when consumers do not realise the benefits of online shopping, they may spurn this mode of purchasing. May So *et al.* (2005) further stated that when traditional shopping is habitual to a consumer, as in the case with Hong Kong consumers, it is a challenge to change the customer's habit from traditional to online shopping. There are a number of factors posing a challenge to online shopping, which will be discussed in greater detail.

### **2.7.1 Lack of Visual Effects**

Consumers are not able to check the quality of clothes as they shop online (Monsuwe' *et al.*, 2004). Wang *et al.* (2008) stated that most consumers want personally to see, touch and try the products they are buying; however, online shopping only provides visual effects with which to enlighten the customer. This causes uncertainty about the product they wish to purchase. May So *et al.* (2005) suggested that online retailers should find ways by which to convince consumers of the product's quality and product features of the items they seek to buy over the Internet.

### **2.7.2 Lack of Security and Privacy**

Some consumers are reluctant to shop online because of perceived risks associated with this activity. According to Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004), consumers believe that purchasing online is not secure, as they cannot monitor the safety of their financial information over the Internet. Consumers are uncomfortable about releasing their personal information and their credit card details when shopping online (Kwek *et al.*, 2010). According to Jana (2012), most respondents preferred paying in cash for goods and services.

By contrast, Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004) found that a high level of privacy and security during online shopping creates consumer trust with this form of purchasing. Seock and Norton (2007) found that security and privacy are very important criteria for consumers in considering online shopping. This indicated that consumers wished to be assured of the privacy of their personal information and to be guaranteed confidentiality when submitting their personal details during online shopping.

### **2.7.3 Expertise on the Internet**

Online shopping may only be conducted over the Internet, which means that it excludes people who do not have access to the Internet and who do not know how to use this mode. Khare and Singh (2012) pointed out that online shopping is very much dependent on consumer expertise on the Internet, including the understanding of website features. Khare and Singh (2012) agreed with Wang *et al.* (2008) that in order for a consumer to shop online, he must have basic knowledge of computers and the Internet.

According to May So *et al.* (2005), as consumers become more familiar with websites, they are more inclined to consider online shopping as a means of buying products.



## 2.8 Prior Online Shopping Experience

A consumer who shops online relies to some extent on previous online shopping experiences (Jayawardhena, Wright and Dennis, 2007). Some researchers, such as Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004) and May So *et al.* (2005) found that previous online shopping experience is a determinant of online shopping; it creates the intention to shop online again. A consumer's experience with using the Internet plays an important role in the likelihood of his engaging in online shopping.

According to Kwek *et al.* (2010), consumers with previous online shopping experience are more likely to shop online than those who have no experience of shopping online. Consumers without previous online shopping experience are more risk-averse than consumers with previous online shopping experience (Jayawardhena *et al.*, 2007). Dillion and Reif (2004) found that students who had bought a product online expressed a favourable attitude toward buying textbooks online. Shoppers are more likely to continue to shop online as their computer skills improve, and as they gain more experience in buying online (Dillion and Reif, 2004)

Kwon and Noh (2010) found that the more experienced, mature consumers are purchasing over the Internet, the less risk they perceive in online shopping. According to Monsuwe' *et al.* (2004), good previous online shopping experience helps reduce the perceived risk associated with online shopping. However, a bad online shopping experience is more likely to cause consumer reluctance to shop online again (Monsuwe' *et al.*, 2004).

May So *et al.* (2005) mentioned that people who have never bought online before are more likely to reject online shopping. Furthermore, they found that unfamiliarity with online shopping can cause unnecessary anxiety about the security of the website and the conducting of online shopping, which may result in consumers rejecting this mode.

Experienced online shoppers appreciate the benefits of this form of purchasing. The more experience that mature consumers gain of online shopping, the more they appreciate the benefits associated with this activity (Kwon and Noh, 2010). May So *et al.* (2005) found that the knowledge gained when consumers shop

online helped them evaluate the attributes of online shopping, giving the consumer an opportunity to form a positive attitude towards online shopping.

Online shoppers with previous online shopping experience found this activity enjoyable and suited to their lifestyles (Dillion and Reif, 2004).

## **2.9 Website Attributes**

The dimension of the website and the user-friendliness of the website are very important to consumers when they shop online. A website's design and its attributes play a very important role. As with traditional shopping where consumers expect to receive information about the products they are buying, so too with online shopping. According to Omar *et al.* (2011), the online shopping behaviour of consumers is influenced by the way in which consumers perceive the usefulness of the online shopping website and the ease of using such websites.

Seock and Norton (2007) identified product information, navigation and customer service factors as the important factors which consumers consider when buying clothing online. Website layout design and information content play a very important role in interesting consumers in further exploring the website (May So *et al.*, 2005). Baltzan (2010) defined information as data that is converted into meaningful and useful context. Baltzan (2010) further stated that having the right information at the right time could be worth a fortune, information being necessary for decision-making.

Seock and Norton (2007) found that providing good customer service, good navigation features and good product information for online shopping influences online shoppers' perception of their favourite clothing website. Consumers are more likely to shop on clothing websites which satisfy their needs (Seock and Norton, 2007).

- Consumers rely hugely on the information that is available on the online shopping website (Kim and Lennon, 2010). Kim and Lennon (2010) further stated that consumers were far more pleased with websites providing more information than those that provided less information. Online retailers

should provide up-to-date product information for online shoppers, such as price, size, and colour, displaying quality photos; this encourages consumers to shop online (Dillon and Reif, 2004). Consumers expect online retailers to inform them of available new stock, as they wish to be kept up-to-date at all times (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2003).

- A website should allow consumers to check the status of their order; it should regularly be updated. Seocke and Norton (2007) found that consumers expect good customer services such as a return policy and order tracking when shopping online.
- Clothing websites should be easy to navigate and fun to visit; they should have uncluttered screens (Seocke and Norton, 2007), in other words a website that is consumer-friendly, making it easy for consumers to navigate. A complicated website design which is not easy to navigate could prevent mature consumers from completing their shopping transaction (Kwok and Noh, 2010). The online retailers that target mature consumers should recognise and consider the difficulties that these consumers could face when shopping online (Kwok and Noh, 2010). Hansen and Jensen (2009) found that men are not as frustrated as women by difficulties that they experience with the website design and layout when buying products online.

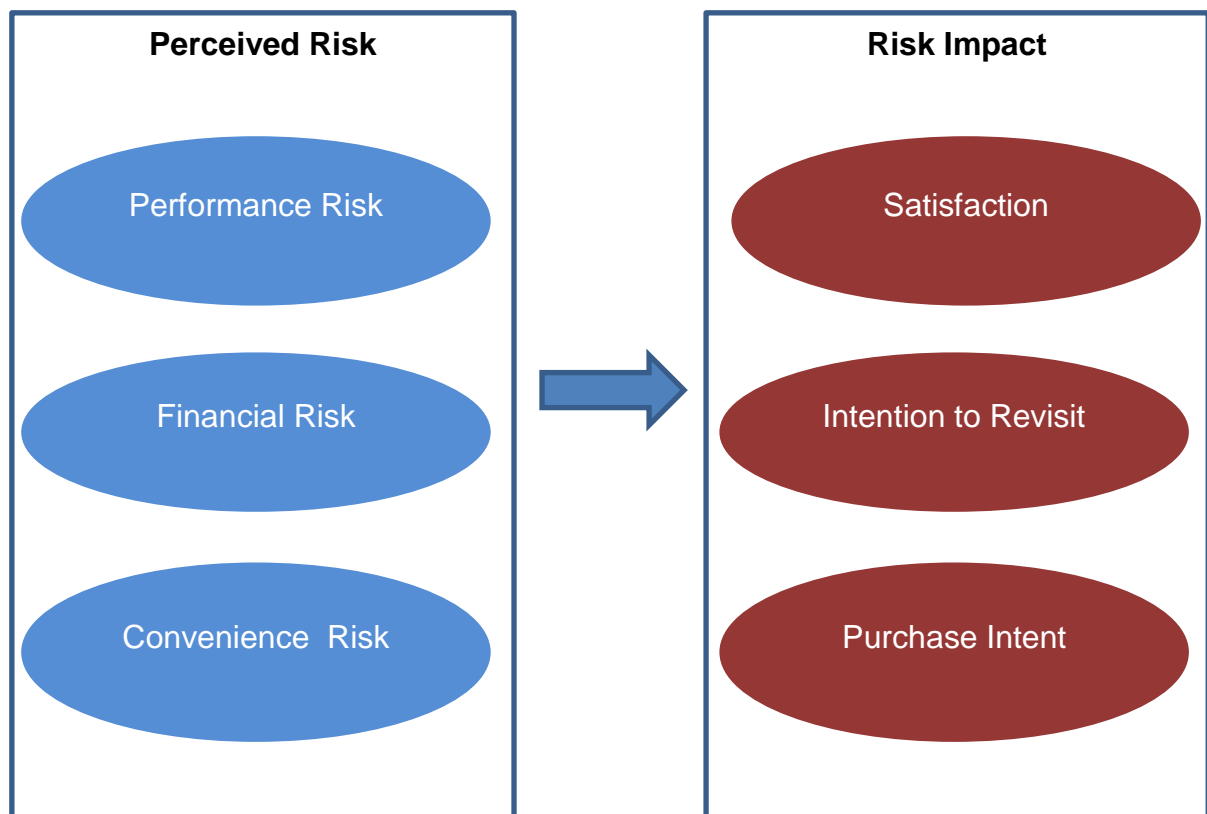
These website dimensions should be considered by online retailers when designing online shopping websites, in order to encourage consumer shopping. Online retailers should consider all these three website design dimensions in order to satisfy both customers and potential customers.

## **2.10 Risk**

Zhang and Liu (2011) stated that risk refers to some adverse consequences of decision-making, which always occurs when future development is unknown. Kwek *et al.* (2010) mentioned that online shopping is reasonably new to most consumers and it is perceived to be riskier than traditional shopping.

Wang *et al.* (2008) highlighted that the medium of payment and credit means of online shopping is perceived to be unsafe, posing a risk of fraud. According to MasterCard Worldwide Survey (2012), 38% of respondents perceived online shopping as unsafe shopping medium. Consumers considered the security factor of online shopping to be a possible drawback to online shopping (Shergill and Chen, 2005).

There are various types of risk that consumers associate with online shopping. Jarvenpaa and Todd (1997, cited in Dillon and Reif, 2004) identified four such risk dimensions: economic, privacy, personal, and performance. Kwon and Noh (2010) highlighted various other types of risk: product performance risk, financial risk, and convenience risk, as depicted by Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1** The Impact of Perceived Risks on Consumer Satisfaction, Intention to Revisit, and Purchase Intent

Adapted from: Kim and Lennon. 2010.

According to Kim and Lennon (2010), consumers' intention to revisit the online shopping website was greatly influenced by perceived performance risk and convenience risk; consumer satisfaction was also influenced by performance risk and convenience risk. Kim and Lennon (2010) further stated that consumers' intention to shop online was influenced by financial risk and performance risk. This suggests that online retailers should reduce perceived risk in order to encourage consumers to revisit the website and to experience satisfaction online.

Consumers are concerned with the potential loss of money owing to security issues of online transactions; they are also concerned with the functionality and quality of the product bought online (Kwon and Noh, 2010). Consumers are concerned that the product bought online might not meet their quality expectations.

Consumers could face convenience risk when shopping online, owing to the delays or difficulties with website navigating, order processing, or waiting for delivery of the product purchased (Kwon and Noh, 2010). Jayawardhena *et al.* (2007) stated that consumers were less likely to shop online for products with high perceived product performance risk than for those products with low product performance risk. May So *et al.* (2005) found that products with standardised attributes such as price and quality were perceived to be less risky; consumers preferred to buy such products.

Khare and Singh (2012) found that consumers perceived online shopping as being unsafe because sometimes products bought by this means were not delivered on the agreed date; sometimes products were damaged on delivery. This highlights that some consumers do not trust online shopping because of the perceived risks associated with this activity.

## **2.11 Clothing Connection**

Clothing is meaningful to a consumer, being a visible display of oneself; it is of great hedonic value (Goldsmith *et al.*, 2012). The self-expressive nature of clothing gives a consumer identity. Because clothes give personal meaning, the consumer

is more likely to take great care in selecting this type of product (Kinley *et al.*, 2010).

Michaelidou and Dibb (2008) found that involvement of consumers tends to vary from a means of self-expression to improving self-image through the choice of their clothes. Kinley *et al.* (2010) stated that clothes are self-expressive: they allow consumers to create their own identity.

Involvement plays a very important role when customers purchase clothing. This is because of the value that society places on apparel (Michaelidou and Dibb, 2008). Consumers do not buy clothes haphazardly; they become fully absorbed in the transaction.

Consumers normally have favourite stores where they choose to buy their clothes. In these stores consumers may touch and feel the clothes they are viewing. Zhang and Liu (2011) highlighted that since online shopping is virtual, consumers cannot touch and feel the products, which makes it more difficult for a consumer to determine whether the product is suitable for him/her.

Zhang and Liu (2011) further stated that highly involved consumers shop more often and spend more money on clothing than do less involved shoppers. Kinley *et al.* (2010) stated that the more involved the consumer is with shopping, the more likely the consumer will shop for longer periods. Kinley *et al.* (2010) found that the highly involved shopper tends to shop in stores and on Internet shopping sites.

Consumers are likely to search for their favourite clothing store on the Internet. Their attitude towards their favourite Internet clothing store positively influences their willingness to buy clothing from that outlet (Seock and Norton 2007).

Michaelidou and Dibb (2008) found that highly involved consumers more often seek the opinion of their female friends and female colleagues when they shop than do less involved shoppers. On the other hand, less involved shoppers did not ask the opinions of other people; rather, they observed what other people wore and took inspiration from them (Michaelidou and Dibb, 2008).

Goldsmith *et al.* (2004) found that fashion innovation is not well-related to online shopping; rather, fashion involvement was far more related to online shopping because involved consumers tend to find excitement in purchasing clothing.

According to Kinley *et al.* (2010), the higher the level of consumer involvement, the more likely the consumer is to search for more information and to assess other possible alternatives. Kinley *et al.* (2010) found that highly involved consumers were more likely to be impulsive when they buy clothes; they were more curious, excited and satisfied.

## **2.12 Summary**

Consumers who find convenience, prices and product choices important to them are inclined to buy more online, and are also inclined to buy more frequently. Therefore, online retailers must ensure that the online shopping experience is convenient, exciting and easy for consumers to manoeuvre. Prices must be competitive, in order to attract consumers to shop online.

Not much research has been conducted in South Africa to assist the understanding of factors affecting consumer online purchase decisions for clothing. A gap exists in the literature specifically for the South African middle-income consumer. There is, therefore, a need for establishing the factors affecting consumers' decisions to buy clothing online.

The next chapter will focus on the objectives of the study, recruitment of respondents, data-collection strategies, including research design and methods, and finally, the analysis of the data.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The Internet is growing in popularity. It is therefore important for businesses to understand whether their target consumers are tapping into this new means of doing business, such as buying clothes online.

This chapter outlines the research methods used for this study, highlighting the appropriateness of the research methods chosen. It covers the objectives of the study, participants of the study, research instrument, data-collection method, and the techniques used when analysing the data.

The objectives of the study are clearly defined, as they are important in developing the research instrument that will achieve the research objectives. The appropriate research instrument was selected based on what the study aims to achieve.

#### **3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to determine consumer buying patterns of clothing online. Furthermore, this study intends to contribute to Ideals Clothing Retailer, in helping them determine whether it would be of value to introduce online shopping.

The objectives of this study are:

- To determine whether consumers buy clothing online;
- To determine how often consumers buy clothing online;
- To determine what motivates consumers to buy clothing online;
- To determine what discourages consumers from buying clothing online;
- To establish what would entice consumers to buy clothing online; and
- To determine whether consumers would buy Ideals' clothing online.



### **3.3 Participants and Location of the Study**

Ideals' core target market is an African middle-income consumer. The questionnaire was sent to Truevine Community Church (TCC) members of Durban and Pietermaritzburg branches. TCC has members from different income groups, however, the majority of their members are people with the same consumer profile as customers of Ideals Clothing. This makes them Ideal's target market, therefore they are relevant to this study.

### **3.4 Type of the Study**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), a study may be either descriptive, exploratory, hypothetical, or case study analysis, in nature. Exploratory study is conducted when there is not much information available related to the problem at hand, whereas descriptive study is conducted when there is a need to understand the characteristics of variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Hypothesis testing is undertaken when there is a need to establish cause-effect relationships between variables. According to Render, Stair and Hanna (2012), case studies are mainly qualitative studies, where matters related to similar situations are analysed.

A description study allows the researcher to ascertain the characteristics of the relevant variables and to be able to describe them. It provides data in frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Therefore, a descriptive study is suitable for this research, as it will be able to provide a profile of different factors, such as demographic profile of online shoppers. It will give a better understanding of the variables of interests related to the consumer buying patterns of clothing online.

### **3.5 Approach**

According to Render *et al.* (2012), qualitative and quantitative techniques are the two types of common data-collection techniques. Qualitative research tends to use words and images for analysis, and it is mainly used for small-scale research, whereas quantitative research tends to use numbers for analysis, and it is highly suitable for large-scale research (Denscombe, 2010). Qualitative data is obtained

through interviews, written documents, observation, and questionnaires with open-ended questions (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

The quantitative method relies on random sampling, and structured data-collection instruments, producing results easy to summarise, compare, and generalise (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). It provides research data more speedily than does qualitative research, therefore quantitative research is more appropriate for this study.

### **3.6 Sampling**

Truevine Community Church members were used as respondents of the study, however, only church members with email addresses were targeted as respondents, because the questionnaire was going to be emailed via a link to the online survey. Three hundred and forty church members were sent an email with a link to the online survey. One hundred and ninety one responses were sufficient for this population (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

Primary data, which is the data collected first-hand from the respondents, may be collected by using administered questionnaires, or by means of interviews, focus groups and observations. A primary data-collection method using self-administered questionnaires was used to collect data. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) cited that questionnaires allow a researcher to measure variables of interest.

The respondents are geographically scattered around KZN. Kumar (2005) states that a questionnaire is suitable for administering to geographically scattered respondents. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), the questionnaire allows a researcher to obtain data more efficiently, allowing a researcher to collect data from many respondents in a short period of time and in a cost-effective way. These participants were mainly church members of Truevine Community Church. The researcher is a member of Truevine Community Church, therefore it was convenient to collect data.

There are two types of sampling design that could be used, namely, probability sampling, and non-probability sampling (Denscombe, 2010). Probability sampling

involves random sampling, where every individual has a chance of being selected, whereas non-probability sampling does not give all individuals an equal chance of being selected (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). Since the sample was chosen conveniently based on the fact that the researcher is also a member of Truevine Community Church, non-probability sampling, using convenience sampling, was appropriate for this study. Convenience sampling was selected because the members of the population are conveniently available. Only church members with email addresses were chosen as respondents, the questionnaire being emailed to the respondents. It was important for respondents to have access to the Internet, because the questionnaire was sent via a link to QuestionPro; and also, because online shopping requires one to have access to the Internet.

Based on the population size of 340, a sample size of 191 is appropriate (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). A confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 4.7 is appropriate for this sample (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

### **3.7 Data Collection**

Denscombe (2010) named various types of data-collection methods which could be used to obtain information, such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documents. It is important for the researcher to choose the right method of collecting data, so that the data is useful in helping to achieve research objectives.

#### **3.7.1 Instrument**

A questionnaire is a set of prepared questions with alternative answers from which the respondents can choose. It is suitable for collecting data when the researcher knows how to measure the variables of interest (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). A self-administered questionnaire was emailed to all the respondents via a link to QuestionPro.

### **3.7.2 Construction of the Instrument**

The questionnaire had background information introducing the researcher, and highlighting the purpose of the research (Appendix 1). It was also highlighted that participation was voluntary; respondents were assured of confidentiality.

The questions were constructed in such a way that the feedback received from the respondents would help achieve the research objectives.

- The first few questions addressed the demographic profile of respondents, such as age, gender, race and income. These demographic profile questions are common in research, as they are normally asked in many different questionnaires, and are often phrased in a similar way. QuestionPro provides a helpful survey template.
- Question five asked whether or not consumers shopped online, in order to establish whether the respondents already buy clothing online.
- Further questions helped to determine the motivation and discouragement factors of buying clothing online. Some of the phrases in the questions, such as questions 14 and 19, were based on the findings from the literature of Delafrooz et al. (2009).
- The last few questions were intended to determine whether consumers buy clothes from Ideals Clothing, and whether they would buy from Ideals Clothing were Ideals to introduce online shopping. These questions would be of value to Ideals Clothing, as they would then know whether consumers were prepared to buy Ideals clothing online.

The questionnaire had to be simple enough for respondents to complete without any assistance, it being a self-administered questionnaire. All questions were asked in English; they were short, and simple to understand. The questions varied from multiple-choice questions of both single and multiple responses to Likert-type questions.

### **3.7.3 Pretesting and Validity**

#### **3.7.3.1 Pretesting**

It is very important to pretest the instrument in order to ensure that there are no errors with the measurements, and that the questions are understood by the respondents (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009).

It was important to pretest the questionnaire, ensuring that it functioned well in terms of phrasing the questions, ease of use, and correct logic of the questions. This was vital because the questionnaire was self-administered; therefore there was no interviewer who could assist the respondents when they had problems with the questionnaire.

The pilot questionnaire was created on QuestionPro. It was sent to nineteen third year MBA students who were also writing their dissertations at the time. The questionnaire was sent via a link to QuestionPro, because it was going to be used on the live study.

The pilot test was necessary to ensure that:

- The questions were phrased properly and were easy to understand;
- The questions were neither leading nor biased;
- Logic of questions was correct; and
- The questionnaire was easy to complete.

Once the pilot questionnaire was completed by eight respondents, data were tested. Some respondents pointed out that it was not necessary to ask respondents who said no to question 18 (If Ideals introduced online shopping, would you purchase from them through a website?) to respond to question 19 (what should Ideals do to encourage online shopping?).

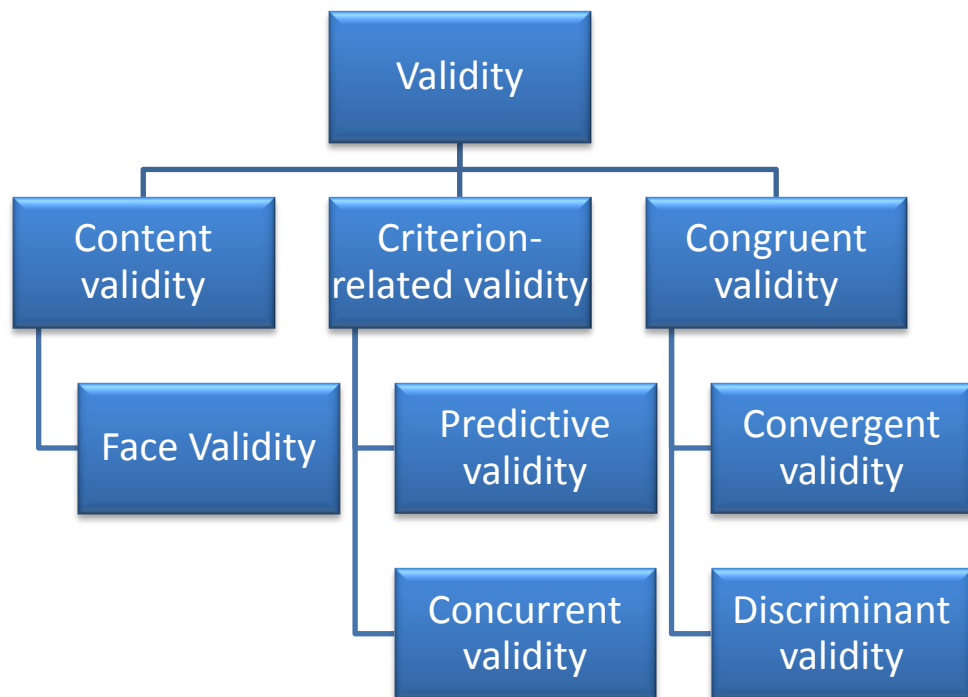
#### **3.7.3.2 Validity**

Validity is a process which shows how well an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Denscombe, 2010). The data has to be checked to assess

whether it has been entered correctly, and that the data were suited to the research question investigation.

Validity may be either internal or external. Internal validity focuses on the measuring instrument itself, whereas external validity looks at whether the research findings could be generalised to the target population. It is important that the researcher focus on both the internal and external validity.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), the internal validity tests may be grouped into content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity, as outlined in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1** Testing Value of Measures: Forms of Validity

Adapted from: Sekaran and Bougie. (2009).

Content validity shows how well the dimensions of the elements have been outlined. This could be accomplished through face validity, which shows that items which are intended to measure a concept, do in fact measure that concept (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). The feedback received from the pilot test was

positive; with the respondents confirming that the questions were relevant, and that the alternative answers were aligned with the questions.

Questions were well articulated and were not ambiguous. The results of this survey were compared with other, similar, existing survey results, as a means of validation. Special focus was placed on designing the research instrument, ensuring that it aimed to achieve the research objectives.

#### **3.7.4 Distribution and Administration of the Instrument**

A self-administered questionnaire was emailed to 340 church members of Truevine Community Church who have email addresses. The researcher was given access to the list of email addresses as the ethical clearance to conduct a research was granted to the researcher. The questionnaire was sent via a link to QuestionPro, which is an online survey tool. According to Question Pro Survey Software (2013), QuestionPro is an online survey software used by a researcher in order to create survey questions, in order to distribute the survey online via email or website, and to analyse results. Online surveys allow researchers to reach many respondents, it being convenient to email the questionnaire to the respondents. It was also convenient for the respondents to conduct the online survey, as they could complete it at any time convenient to them, such as in the comfort of their home, at work, en route; as long as they had access to the Internet.

The questionnaire comprised nineteen questions. It took respondents about ten minutes to complete the questionnaire online. Completed questionnaires were automatically stored on QuestionPro after the respondents had completed them. QuestionPro provided an up-to-date report on the number of respondents who had completed the survey. The response rate was quite slow, however the researcher sent the reminders to the respondents three times, reminding them to complete the survey. This was monitored until the required number of respondents was achieved. The survey was then closed and data was ready for analysing.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The data were analysed by using SPSS, which is a data-analysis tool on QuestionPro. Some data such as demographic profile were presented using frequency tables, showing the percentage breakdown of respondents by age, gender, race, and income. Graphs and tables including cross-tabulation were used to present data, which made it easier to analyse the data. Some of the graphs were populated by QuestionPro. A full analysis of the interpretation of each graph and table was presented.

### **3.9 Summary**

The research methods suitable for this study have been presented, outlining the research instrument appropriate to achieving the research objectives. The questionnaire was constructed online, making it convenient for the researcher to collect data, and for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it was easy to complete, and the questions were easily understood by the respondents. A pretest was conducted on eight third year MBA students, in order to ensure that there were no errors on the questionnaire, especially seeing that the questionnaire was self-administered.

The next chapter will present data in a meaningful form, and will be illustrated by means of tables and graphs.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Presentation and Interpretation of Results**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Data was captured using an online questionnaire hosted by QuestionPro. Most of the frequency statistics have been generated directly from Question Pro.

The findings of the research are presented and discussed, in line with the research objectives of this study. The research results are presented in different formats; from narrative discussions to tables and graphs, with a brief discussion of what each table and graph represents. The results are then analysed so as to give a better understanding of the meaning of the data presented.

The research results are discussed, together with other research findings from other relevant studies, in order to make correlations and links with existing literature.

#### **4.2 Description of the Sample**

The questionnaire was emailed to 340 respondents, who were members of the Truevine Community Church in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The questionnaire was viewed by 335 respondents; 191 respondents completed the survey. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) states that a sample size of 191 is recommended for a population of 340, therefore this sample size of 191 is an acceptable representation of the population of the study.

The demographic profile of the respondents is represented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1** Demographic Profile of the Sample

Characteristic	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	
20-29	32%
30-39	51%
40-49	15%
50-59	1%
60>	1%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	40%
Female	60%
<b>Race</b>	
African	95%
Coloured	2%
Indian	3%
<b>Income</b>	
<R5,000	3%
R5,001-R10,000	15%
R10,001-R15,000	17%
R15,001-R20,000	21%
R20,001-R25,000	11%
R25,001-R35,000	15%
>R35,000	18%

Table 4.1 above illustrates the demographic profile of the respondents, with the majority being African females aged between 20 and 39 years old. This is representative of the Truevine Community Church members, being more females than males. The majority of the respondents were middle-income consumers, based on the fact that 38% of the respondents earned between R10,001 and R20,000 per month. The respondents were mainly Africans, which is a true reflection of the Truevine Community Church population. This is in line with the core target market of Ideals Clothing; their core target market is an African female consumer.

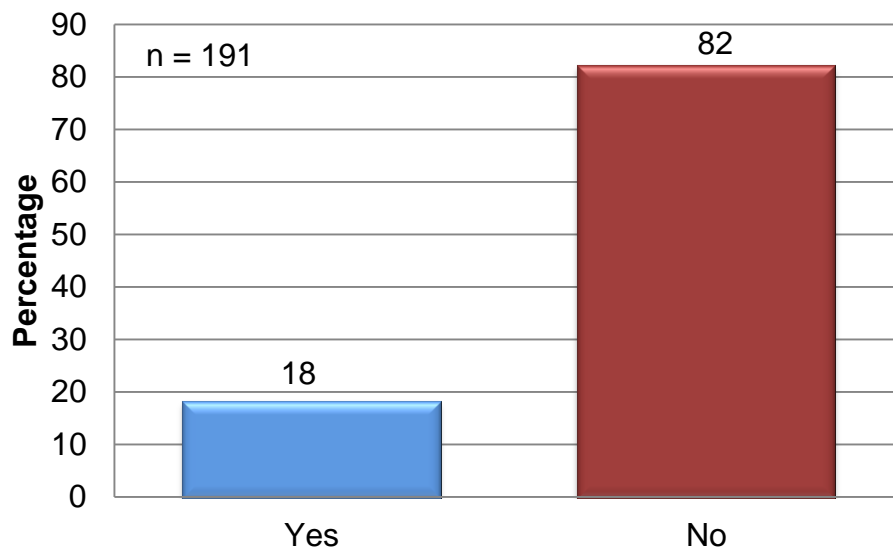
### 4.3 Objective One: To Determine Whether Consumers Buy Clothing Online.

This study is about online shopping for clothing. It is important to be sure whether consumers will buy clothing online.

#### 4.3.1 Illustration of Online Shoppers

It is important to determine whether the respondents buy clothes online, because online purchases of clothing is at the heart of this study.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the number of respondents who either buy or do not buy clothing online.



**Figure 4.1** Who buys clothing online?

Based on the research results, only 18% of the respondents bought clothing online. The low results of people who shop online indicate that most people have not really adopted the trend of buying clothing online. Some countries have adopted this means of buying clothing at a faster rate. According to Digital Media Research (2012), in New Zealand, the most frequently purchased products online are clothing, footwear and accessories (65%), electronics (62%) and books and magazines (52%). In South Africa, 44% online purchasers buy tickets for concerts and sports, 43% buy travel tickets and 11% buy clothing and accessories (Digital

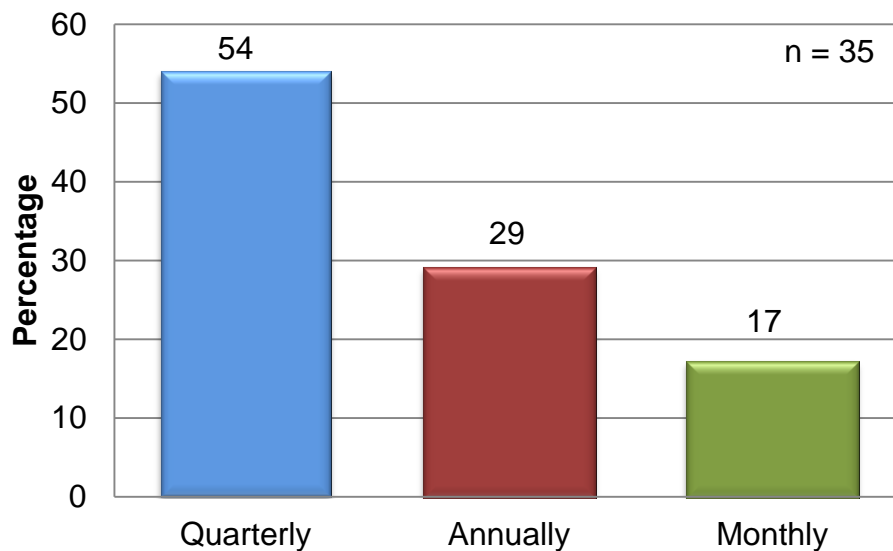
Media Research, 2012). It is evident that the result of this study (18%) is consistent with the South African purchasing pattern (11%) of buying clothing online.

#### 4.4 Objective Two: To determine how often consumers buy clothing online.

Since online shopping has been available for many years, one must understand when consumers started buying clothing online. It is important to know how regularly consumers buy clothing online. It is also essential to know from which online retailers consumers are buying clothing; whether it is from the local chain stores, or from the international online shopping sites.

##### 4.4.1 Frequency of Buying Clothing Online

Consumers may be buying clothing online sporadically, therefore there is a need to determine how often consumers do buy clothing online.



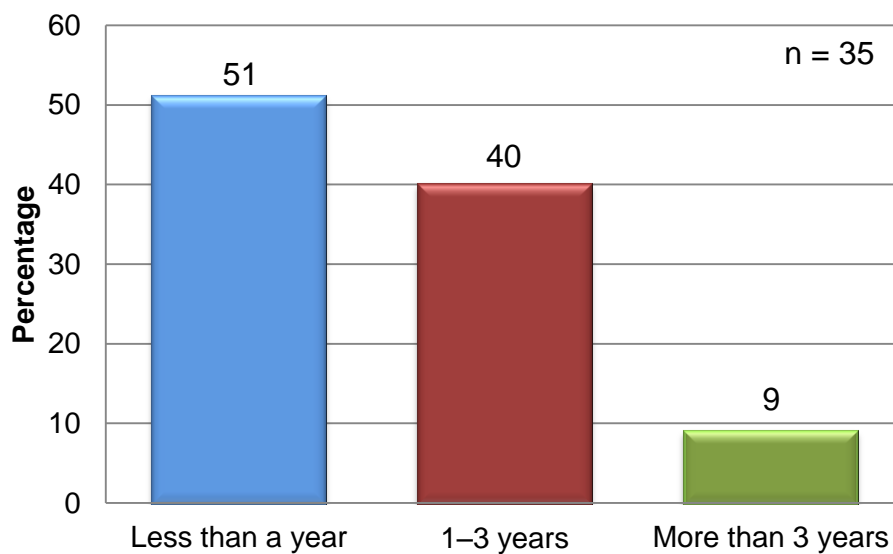
**Figure 4.2** Frequency of Buying Clothing Online

Of all the respondents who buy clothing online, 54% buy clothing online only once a quarter. Only 17% of the respondents buy clothing online on a monthly basis. The rest of the respondents, who account for 29%, only buy clothing online once a year.

This shows that consumers do not buy clothing online on a regular basis. Shergill and Chen (2005) described frequent online shoppers as those online consumers who had bought goods and services online at least five to ten times in the previous year.

#### 4.4.2 Time Period of Buying Clothing Online

The Internet has created opportunities for people to buy clothes online. It is essential to determine when consumers started buying clothing online.



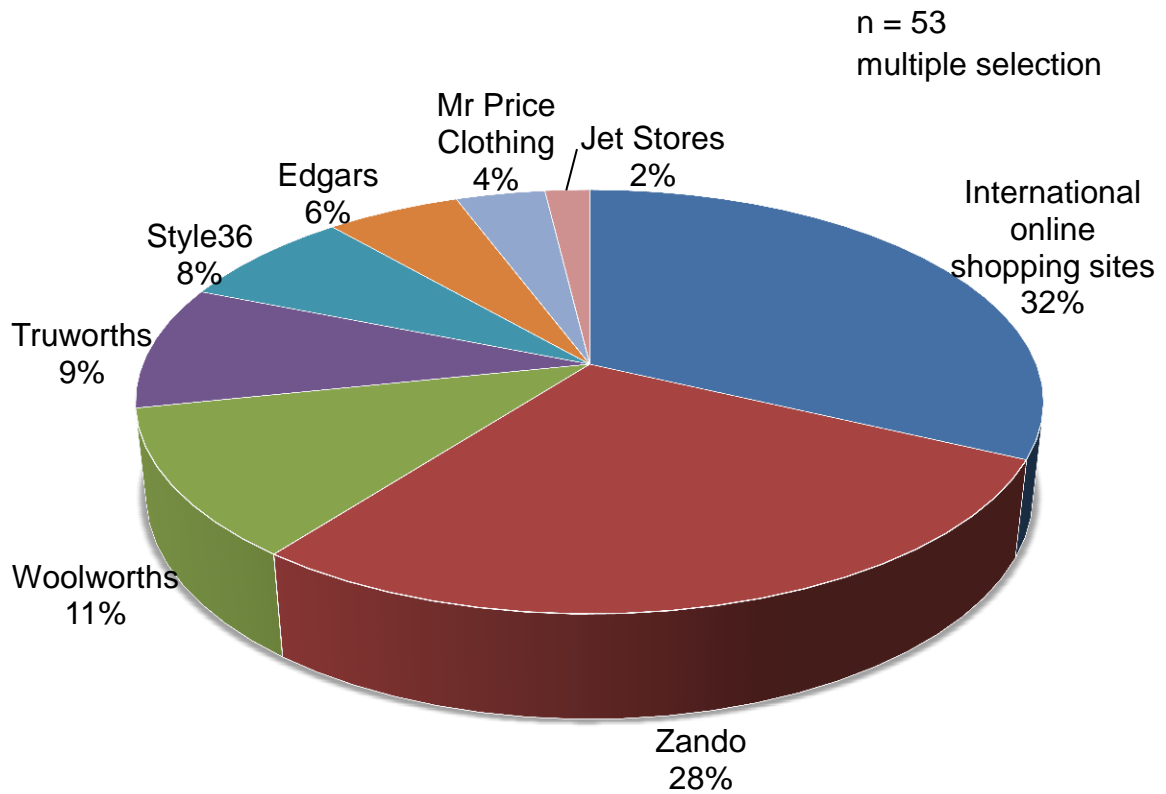
**Figure 4.3** How Long Have People Been Buying Clothing Online?

Only 9% of the respondents who buy clothing online have been buying clothing online for more than 3 years and 40% of the respondents have been buying clothing online for between a year and 3 years. The majority of respondents who buy clothing online, 51%, have been buying clothing online only for the last year.

As much as online stores for clothing have been available for more than a decade, the majority of respondents have only recently started buying clothing online. This shows that consumers are becoming interested in online shopping for clothing, however, only at a very slow rate.

#### 4.4.3 Online Shopping Stores from which People Buy Clothing

Online shopping has become popular; many different stores have introduced this facility. It is of interest to know from which online stores consumers buy their clothing.



**Figure 4.4** Online Stores from which People Buy Clothing

As highlighted by Figure 4.4, most respondents buy clothing online mainly from international shopping sites (32%). The graph shows that very few people are buying from the local chain-store online shopping sites, such as Jet Stores (2%), Mr Price Clothing (4%), Edgars (6%) and Truworthis (9%).

Even in other countries, consumers tend to prefer to buy clothing online from overseas online sites, rather than local online sites. According to Digital Media Research (2012), 58% of New Zealand online shoppers, and 75% of Australian online shoppers, buy from overseas sites; this is mainly contributed to lower prices offered by overseas sites.

As indicated by the graph above, Zando is the second-biggest online shopping site preferred by the respondents (28%). This is in line with the research results presented by Jana (2012), showing that Zando is the second-most preferred site on which South African consumers buy goods.

#### 4.5 Objective Three: To Determine What Motivates Consumers to Buy Clothing Online

Some people prefer to buy clothing online; it is important to understand the benefits people find in purchasing clothing online.

##### 4.5.1 Factors Driving Online Shopping for Clothing

Consumers would not buy clothing online if they did not find any value in this, therefore it is critical to determine the key factors encouraging people to buy clothing online.

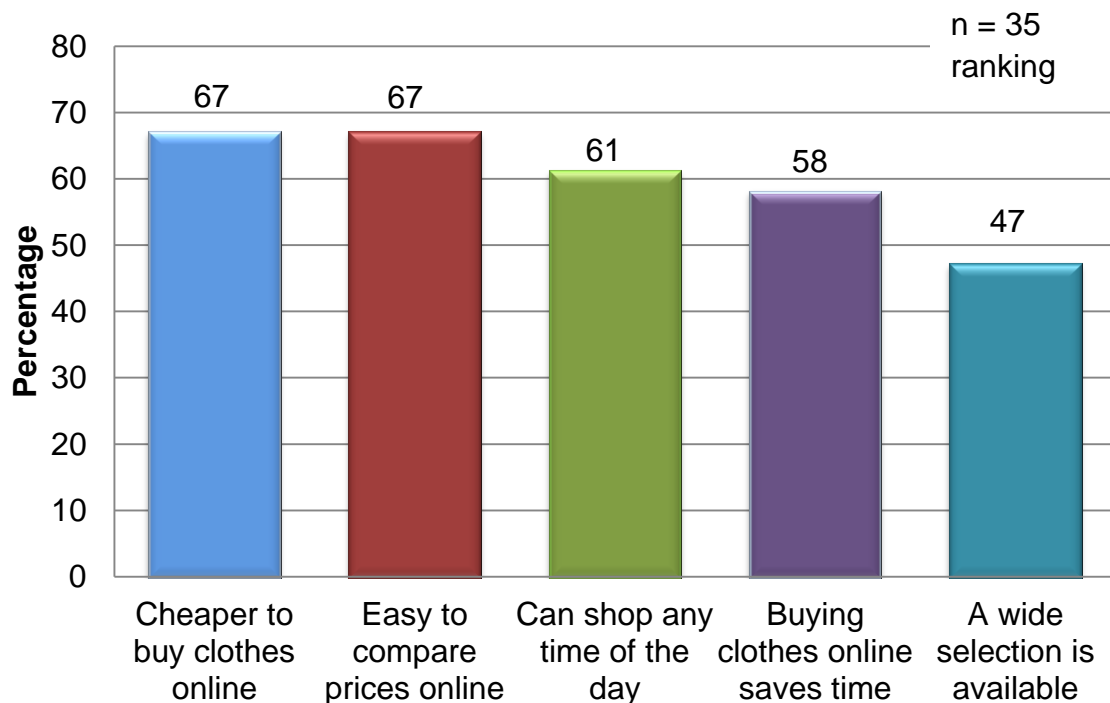


Figure 4.5 Reasons for Buying Clothing Online

Most respondents find it cheaper to buy clothing online; also finding it easier to compare prices online, as highlighted by Figure 4.5. These are the top 2 reasons which encourage the respondents to buy clothing online; they are both equally ranked at 67%. The next reason motivating the respondents to buy clothing online is that they can shop any time of the day online (61%). The fourth benefit is saving time when buying clothing online (58%). The benefit of online shopping offering a wide selection of clothing items, is the least important reason why the respondents buy clothing online.

The top two reasons for buying clothing online are about price, which indicates that consumers really want cheaper prices when they buy clothing online. Consumers buy online because the prices are cheaper than they are at the traditional store (Kwek *et al.* 2010). According to Winer and Dhar (2010), online shopping allows consumers to compare prices with ease, as opposed to visiting traditional stores. Online shopping shows a significant growth in South Africa, with consumers having to consider price, convenience, and security issues when shopping online (MasterCard Worldwide Survey, 2012).

According to Digital Media Research (2012), the lower price offered by online stores is the main reason for consumers shopping online, followed by the convenience of online shopping. Consumers like the convenience of online shopping, as they can shop any time of the day. This is supported by 61% of the respondents enjoying this benefit.

As much as some consumers are encouraged by online shopping, some consumers are discouraged from shopping online for clothing. The next section will focus on the factors that discourage people from buying clothing online.

#### **4.6 Objective Four: To Determine What Discourages People from Buying Clothing Online.**

Some people do not shop online. It is important to determine what hinders people from buying clothing online. This objective aims to understand the main reasons why some people do not buy clothing online.



#### 4.6.1 Limitations of Online Shopping for Clothing

Some consumers choose not to buy clothing online. These reasons are depicted in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2** Reasons for Not Buying Clothing Online

Reasons for not buying clothes online	Percentage
Want to touch, feel, and try the clothes before purchase	33%
Can't see how the clothes will look on me.	26%
Want to take home clothes at the time of purchase	17%
See no need to buy clothes online	11%
Don't know how to shop online	6%
Do not have a credit card	5%
No access to the Internet	2%
n = 321 owing to multiple selection of relevant responses	

As depicted in Table 4.2, the majority of the respondents who did not buy clothing online (33%) did not do so because online shopping did not allow consumers to touch, feel and try the clothes before purchase. The second-biggest reason for not buying clothing online is that consumers could not see how the clothes would look on them before they bought them (26%). Some respondents (17%) preferred to take home clothes at the time of purchase; 11% of the respondents just did not see the benefit of buying clothing online.

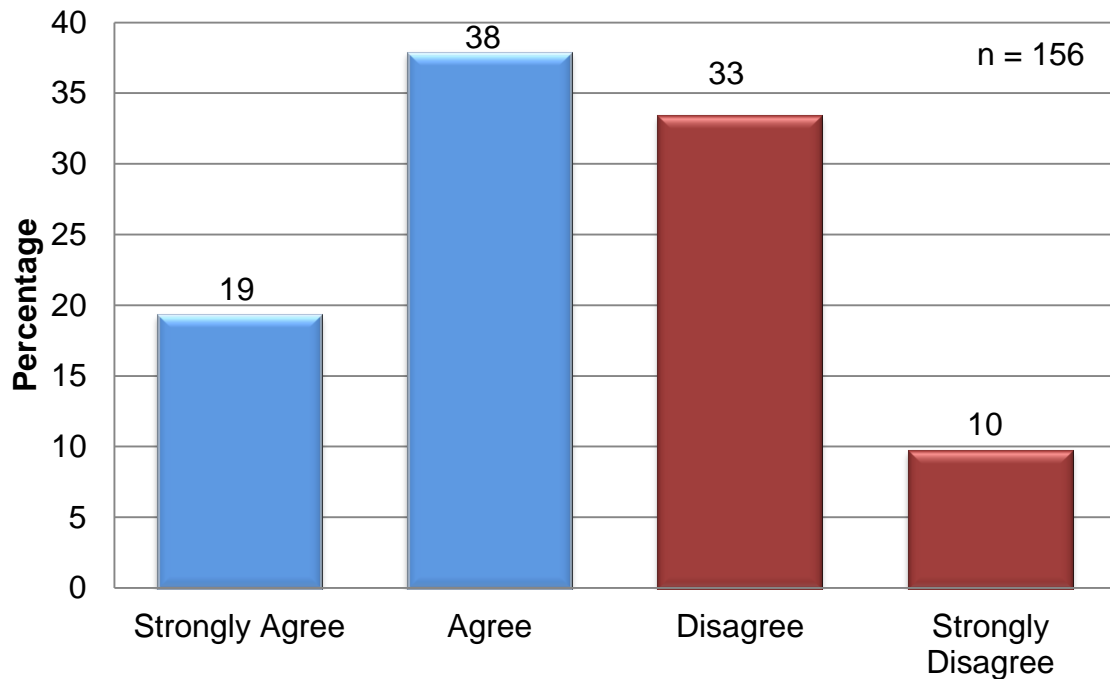
The results clearly indicate that the main barrier to online shopping for clothing is that consumers are not able to touch, feel, and try the clothes at the time of purchase. Consumers want to see exactly what they are buying; they want to feel the clothing items. Wang *et al.* (2008) stated that most consumers want to see, touch and try the products which they are buying.

It is also clear that people wanted to obtain their clothes at the time of purchase. They did not like the idea of buying clothes; then waiting until they were delivered. They wanted instant satisfaction.

Some consumers do not see the need for buying clothing online, highlighting that they did not see much benefit in buying clothing online. This indicates that some consumers are still happy with buying clothing through traditional shopping.

#### 4.6.2 Risks Involved in Online Shopping

Some consumers may be seriously reluctant to shop online owing to the risks involved with online shopping, therefore it is crucial to understand whether this concern is valid (Figure 4.6).

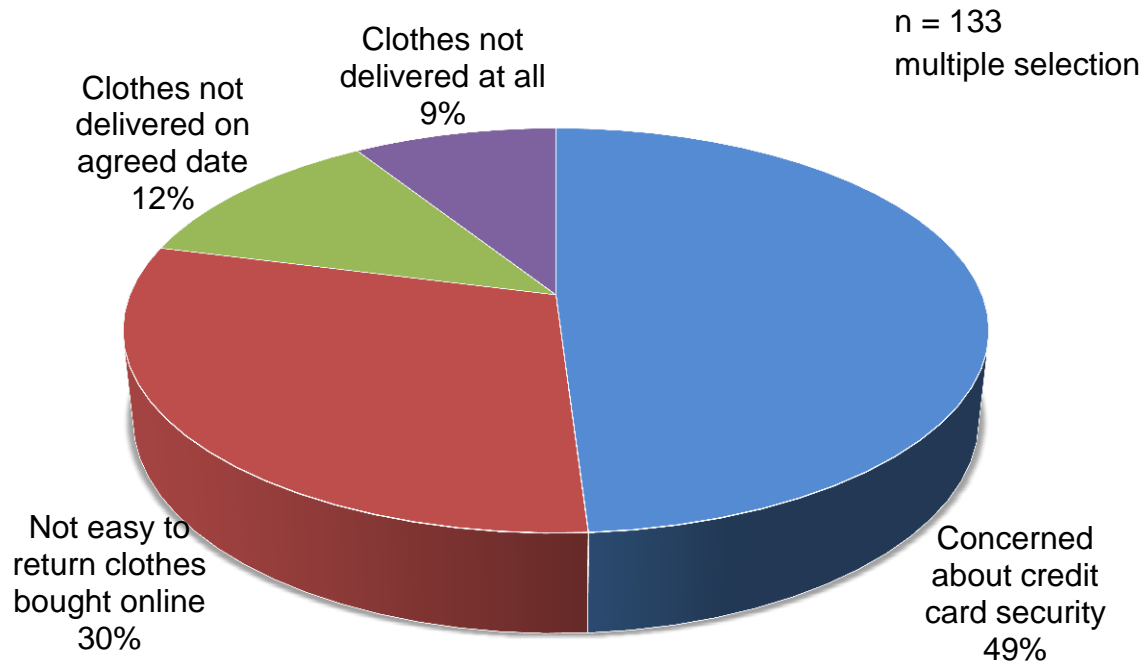


**Figure 4.6** Those who do not Shop Online Owing to Risks Involved

The research results reveal that 57% of the respondents who did not buy clothing online agreed with the statement that they did not shop online owing to the risks associated with online shopping. Only 43% of the respondents disagreed with the issue of the risks associated with online shopping. Kwek *et al.* (2010) mentioned that online shopping is fairly new to most consumers; it is perceived to be riskier than traditional shopping.

#### 4.6.3 Concerns about Online Shopping Risks

Most consumers are concerned about the risks associated with online shopping, however, it is necessary to determine which actual risks consumers are most concerned about when it comes to online shopping for clothing.



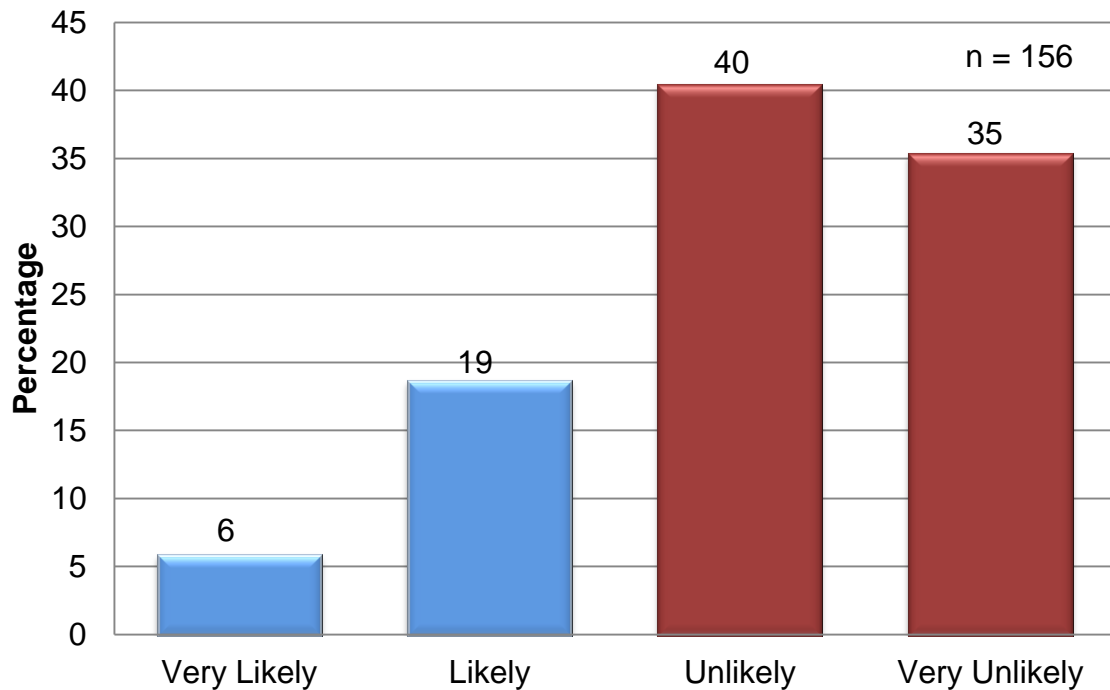
**Figure 4.7** Fears about Online Risks

Figure 4.7 illustrates that the majority of respondents who did not shop online found credit card security to be the major concern (49%), following by the point that it is not easy to return the clothes bought online (30%). These are the two main risks that the respondents are most concerned about.

Consumers are concerned about the potential loss of money owing to security issues of online transactions (Kwon and Noh, 2010). This indicates that the credit card security is causing consumers to be reluctant to shop online. Jana (2012) stated that the majority of South African consumers (53%) prefer paying by cash during purchase; only 21% prefer paying by credit card.

#### 4.6.4 Likelihood of Buying Clothing Online

In order to understand whether consumers would buy clothing online, one must determine whether consumers would consider buying clothing online within the next 12-24 months.



**Figure 4.8** Likelihood of Buying Clothing Online within the Next 12-24 Months

Only 25% of the respondents were likely to use online shopping to buy clothes within the next 12-24 months, leaving the majority of respondents (75%) not likely to buy clothing online within the next 12-24 months. This indicates that most consumers are not really considering using online shopping to buy clothing in the near future.

Digital Media Research (2012) found that 37% of the respondents indicated that they were likely to spend more on online shopping in the following year. However, these results are based on online shopping for general merchandise and not particularly for clothing.

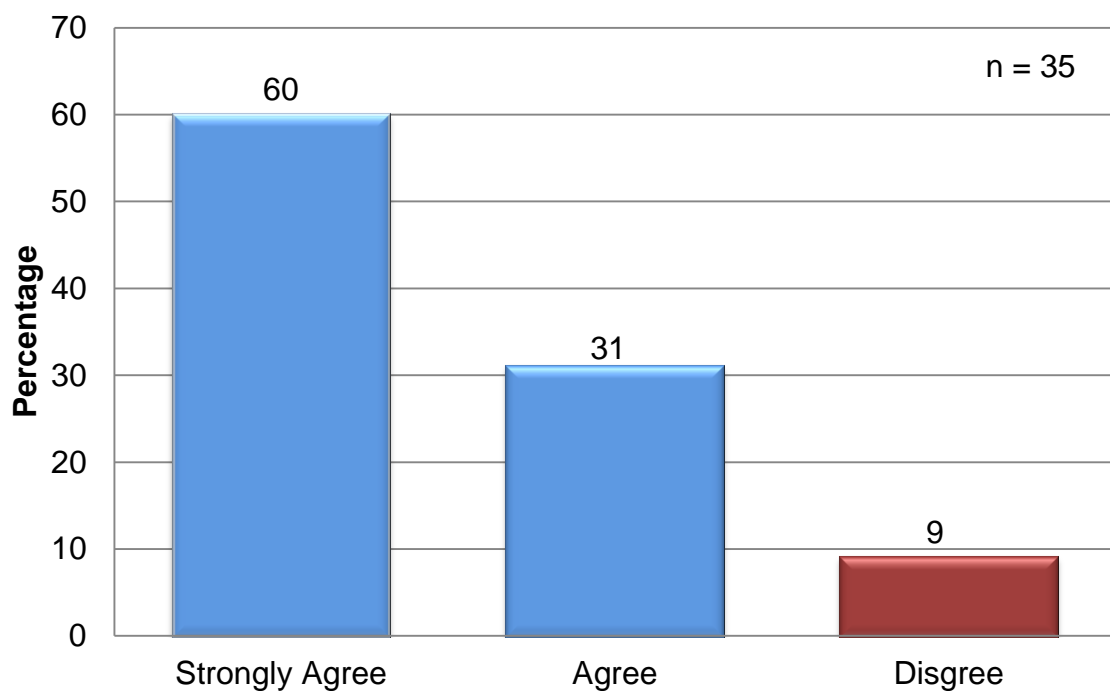
#### **4.7 Objective Five: To Establish What Would Entice Consumers to Buy Clothing Online.**

The main purpose of this objective is to determine what would entice consumers to buy clothing online; looking at factors such as cheaper prices, delivery efficiency,

earning reward points, payment options, 3D look, and shopping online through a mobile phone.

#### 4.7.1 Free Delivery

Some consumers might be concerned about the delivery costs of goods bought online, therefore there is a need to establish whether offering a free delivery service will encourage consumers to buy clothing online.



**Figure 4.9** Respondents' Opinions on Free Delivery

As outlined in Figure 4.9 the majority of the respondents (91%) agreed that free delivery encouraged them to buy clothing online; only 9% disagreed. This indicates that the charge that is paid for delivery discourages consumers from buying clothing online. According to Wang *et al.* (2008), 41% of consumers choose not to buy online because they are concerned about additional shipping costs when buying items online. Consumers expect free delivery from their online retail provider of choice (MasterCard Worldwide Survey, 2012). Consumers would be

encouraged to shop online if the delivery of products purchased was free of charge.

#### 4.7.2 Factors that would Encourage Online Purchasing

Some consumers do not buy clothing online. It is crucial to determine the factors that would encourage consumers to buy clothing online.

**Table 4.3** Factors that would Encourage Consumers to Shop Online

What would interest consumers in buying clothing online	Percentage
Cheaper price than at the store	24%
Free delivery of clothes purchased online	17%
Quick delivery of clothes once purchased online	16%
3D look of me wearing the clothes	15%
Able to earn rewards points	12%
Able to shop using my mobile phone	9%
Payment option through my existing credit account	7%
n = 377 owing to multiple selection of relevant responses	

As outlined in Table 4.3, the majority of respondents (24%) would be interested in buying clothing online if the prices were cheaper than the prices at the store. Free delivery of clothes was also a very important factor in encouraging consumers to buy clothing online. Free delivery and quick delivery accounts for 33% combined. Issues such as payment through credit account, shopping online using a mobile phone, and earning reward points, were much less important than cheaper prices and free delivery in encouraging consumers to buy clothing online.

In order to interest consumers in buying clothing, the prices should be cheaper than in the store. Delafrooz *et al.* (2009) found that the good price offered by online retailers influences consumers to shop online, as these are cheaper than the prices in the store.

It is also important for the respondents to view what the clothes would look like on them before they buy them, therefore a 3D look of them wearing the clothes would encourage them to buy clothing online. Siddiqui *et al.* (2003) found that consumers

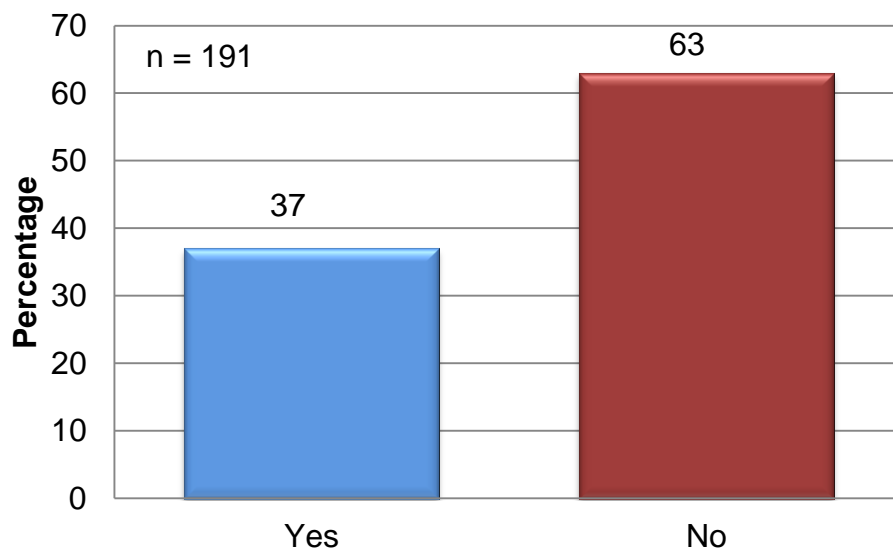
are seeking websites which offer video features that have the ability to view the products in three-dimensional space (3D) within the virtual environment.

#### **4.8 Objective Six: To Determine whether Consumers Would Buy Ideals' Clothing Online.**

The key objective of this study is to determine whether consumers would buy Ideals' clothing online should Ideals introduce online shopping. This will help determine whether Ideals should invest in online shopping, and launch an online shopping site. It is important first to understand whether the respondents shop at Ideals. It is also crucial to establish the reasons for not shopping at Ideals from those consumers who do not shop from Ideals, determining the factors that could encourage them to buy Ideals' clothing online.

##### **4.8.1 Illustration of Shoppers from Ideals**

As highlighted previously, it is important first to determine whether the respondents shop at Ideals store, in order to understand whether Ideals' stores form part of their shopping stores of choice for clothing.

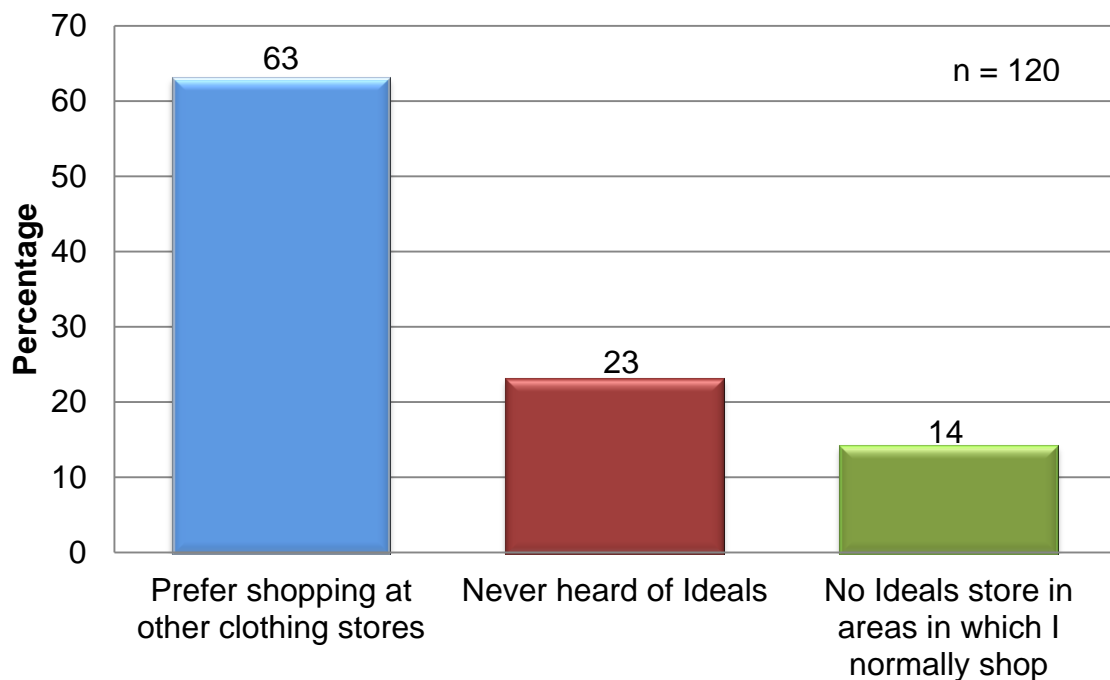


**Figure 4.10** Outline of People who Shop at Ideals

As depicted by Figure 4.10, of all the respondents, only 37% of respondents shop at Ideals, leaving 63% of the respondents not shopping at Ideals Clothing. This indicates that the majority of the respondents do not shop at Ideals Clothing.

#### 4.8.2 Reason for not Shopping at Ideals

There are people who do not shop at Ideals. It is essential to understand the barriers inhibiting them from shopping at Ideals Clothing Stores.



**Figure 4.11** Reasons for not Shopping at Ideals Clothing

As illustrated by Figure 4.11, 63% of the respondents did not shop at Ideals clothing stores, because they preferred to shop at clothing stores other than Ideals. Twenty three percent (23%) of the respondents had never heard of Ideals. The rest of the respondents stated that they did not shop at Ideals because there is no Ideals store in the areas in which they normally shop.

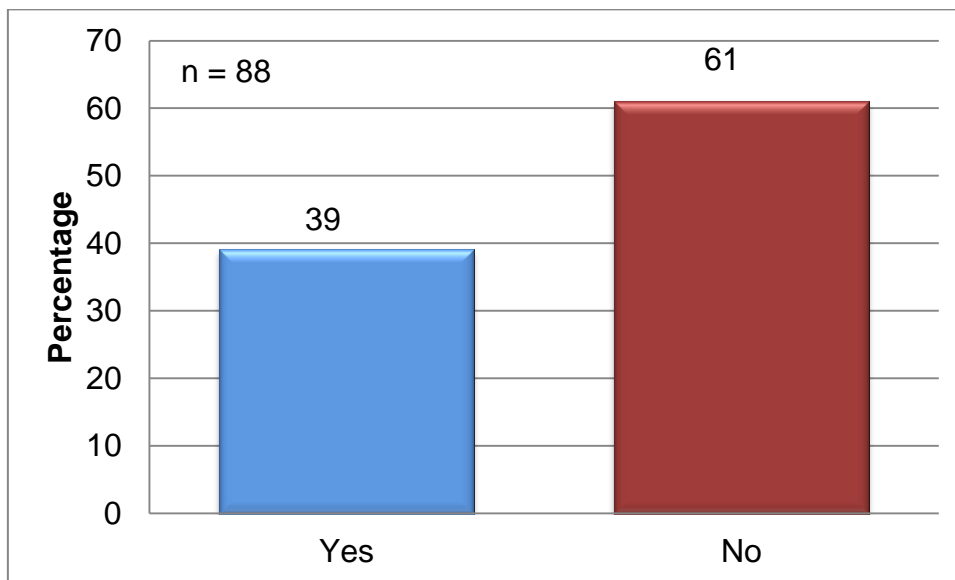
There are respondents who have never heard of Ideals, which indicates that Ideals is not well known. It also shows that Ideals is not situated in areas where some of



the respondents shop. This is supported by the fact that Ideals Clothing stores are not at all the shopping malls.

#### 4.8.3 People who would Buy Ideals' Clothing Online

The main competitors of Ideals Clothing, such as Jet Clothing, Woolworths, Truworths and Edgars offer online shopping. It is important to determine whether people would buy Ideals' clothing online.

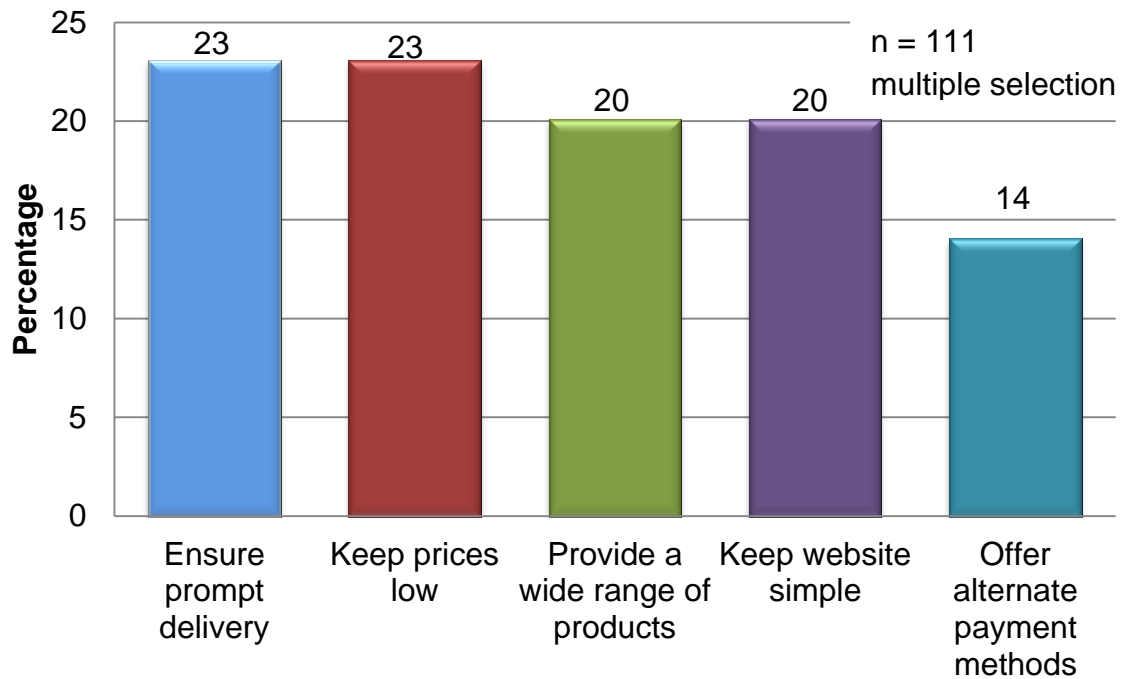


**Figure 4.12** Illustration of people who would buy Ideals' Clothing Online

As outlined by Figure 4.12, only 39% of the respondents confirmed that they would buy clothing online if Ideals had to offer online shopping. The respondents included people who were not customers of Ideals Clothing. This indicates that the consumers are not yet interested in buying Ideals' clothing online.

#### 4.8.4 Considerations for Ideals to Encourage Online Shopping

Some consumers might consider buying Ideals' clothing online if Ideals had to offer online shopping. It must be determined what Ideals should do to encourage such consumers to buy Ideals clothing online, should they introduce online shopping.



**Figure 4.13** Consideration Factors for Ideals to Encourage Online Shopping

As depicted in Figure 4.13, prompt delivery (23%) and keeping prices low (23%) were the two main factors that would encourage the respondents to buy Ideals' clothing online. Providing a wide range of products (20%) and keeping the website simple (20%) were the next two factors that would encourage the respondents to buy Ideals' clothing online. Offering alternative payment methods is the least important factor (14%) encouraging the respondents to buy Ideal's clothing online.

This indicates that consumers would be encouraged to buy Ideals clothing online if Ideals would ensure efficient delivery of clothes after purchase, and offer cheaper prices when they buy online. MasterCard Worldwide Survey (2012) stated that when consumers chose online retailers, their decision is based on cheaper prices (91%), payment convenience (90%) and secure payment (90%).

The wide variety of products available on the Internet is a benefit which encourages online buying (Kwon and Noh, 2010). Consumers would be encouraged by a wide selection of clothing from the Ideals online store. According

to Seocke and Norton (2007), clothing websites should be easy for consumers to navigate, and they should be fun to visit.

#### **4.9 Summary**

The research results were presented and analysed in this chapter, in line with the research objectives of the study. The research findings were discussed, together with the relevant previous research related to this study. The research results highlighted that the majority of consumers were not buying clothing online as they were not able to feel and try the clothes when buying online, furthermore, they were concerned about credit-card security when purchasing online.

On the contrary, some consumers were encouraged to buy clothing online, owing to cheaper prices offered by online retailers, and the convenience of shopping online. The research revealed that the majority of consumers were not yet ready to buy Ideals clothing online.

The research results will help to draw up recommendations for the study; these recommendations will be discussed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Recommendations and Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides recommendations in line with the discussions from the previous chapters. It aims to provide recommendations to Ideals Clothing based on the research objectives; it also highlights the challenges that were encountered when conducting the research. The findings of this research play a large role in assisting Ideals to decide whether launching an online shopping site will be of value to the organisation.

### 5.2 Has the problem been solved?

In order to address the research problem, a number of relevant research objectives were identified. Therefore, in order to determine whether the research problem of understanding factors influencing consumer attitudes towards online shopping, has been solved; it is crucial to assess whether the research findings are in line with the research objectives.

The research results have clearly indicated that the majority of consumers did not buy clothing online. The consumers who bought clothing online were mainly middle-income female consumers; and the majority of these consumers bought clothing online only once a quarter.

Cheaper prices, convenience of comparing prices, and the ability to purchase any time of the day, were the main factors encouraging consumers to buy clothing online. Lower prices, free delivery, and quick delivery, would encourage consumers to shop online.

Consumers want to feel and try the clothes they are buying, and to see how they will look in them. Online shopping does not allow consumers to touch or try the clothes they are buying, which discourages consumers from buying clothing

online. The majority of consumers indicated that they would not buy Ideals' clothing online were Ideals to introduce online shopping.

The results presented indicate that the research results addressed all the research objectives; therefore the research problem has been solved.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Four limitations of this study were highlighted earlier:

- The sample of this study was drawn from a church based in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, with the main members being Africans. This is not a full representation of the KwaZulu-Natal population. This study did not take into account other races, which would have allowed the researcher to compare the results to that of other races. A study including other areas of KwaZulu-Natal, where Ideals trade would have made the sample heterogeneous.
- It was noted that some respondents had limited access to the Internet, as some respondents only had access to the Internet in the evenings when they got home from work or school. This resulted in some of the respondents forgetting that they needed to complete the questionnaire, as the email with link was sent to them during the day.
- It took the whole month to gather all the responses from the required sample of 191 since the response was very slow. Reminders were sent three times to the respondents, reminding those who had not completed the questionnaire to do so.

### **5.4 Implications of this Research**

This study has managed to gain better insight into the driving factors and the limitations of online shopping for clothing. The research results highlighted that some consumers were encouraged to buy clothing online, owing to cheaper prices offered by online retailers, and the convenience of shopping online. On the contrary, the research revealed that the majority of consumers were not buying clothing online as they were not able to feel and try the clothes when buying

online, furthermore, they were concerned about credit-card security when purchasing online.

Even though most consumers do not buy clothing online, online shoppers have found benefits in buying clothing online, such as cheaper prices and convenience. The South African clothing retailers can gain by this study, as it will give them insight into the buying patterns of consumers who buy clothing online. The results also outlined the factors that discourage consumers from buy clothing online. Retailers should take these factors into account, in order to encourage consumers to shop online.

The research revealed that the majority of consumers were not yet ready to buy Ideals clothing online. This study would be of benefit to Ideals Clothing, because they are considering launching an online shopping site. It gives them insight into what encourages consumers to buy clothing online. It also gives them a better understanding of why some consumers do not buy clothing online; and what could they do to encourage such consumers.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Ideals Clothing**

Based on the research findings, the following are recommended for Ideals Clothing:

- The sample was drawn from a local church based in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, with the main members being black Africans. This is not a full representation of the KwaZulu-Natal population. A more detailed study covering other areas of KwaZulu-Natal where Ideals trade, and including other races, would make the sample heterogeneous;
- The research results indicated that the majority of consumers would not buy Ideals' clothing online if Ideals were to launch an online shopping site. Ideals should not launch online shopping at the moment, until they find more consumers who would use their online shopping site;
- Most consumers did not know Ideals Clothing; most of these consumers were within the core target market of Ideals. This shows that there is a

need for Ideals to embark on an impactful brand-awareness campaign of their stores;

- Based on the research findings, the location of Ideals stores is not really convenient for the majority of consumers. They do not seem to be easily accessible, not being in the main areas where the core target market normally shops. They need to position their stores where they will be more accessible to the majority of consumers; and
- If Ideals were to introduce online shopping, they would have to offer lower prices than in-store prices, ensure prompt delivery, provide a wide variety of clothing items, and keep the online shopping site simple.

## **5.6 Recommendations for Future Studies**

There were limitations that were encountered when conducting this study. These are outlined as follows:

- The study did not include an educational level as part of the demographic profile of the respondents. This limited the researcher from determining whether there is a correlation between the level of education and online shopping. Further research should take the level of education into account;
- The research results showed that the respondents mostly buy clothing online from the international online shopping sites. The questionnaire did not ask the respondents for the reasons for their choice. Further studies should determine such reasons and establish the deciding factors the consumers consider when choosing the online site from which to buy clothing; and
- The sample was not representative of the KwaZulu-Natal population. Ideals Clothing is actually using this research as a feasibility study. A much larger sample would be required in order to obtain data for making strategic decisions.
- The sample did not focus on Ideals' existing in-store customers. Further studies should focus on existing customers in order to establish whether the current customers would support online shopping from Ideals.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The research indicated that most consumers do not buy clothing online; those who buy clothing online, do so only once a quarter. Consumers enjoy the benefits that come with online shopping for clothing, such as cheaper prices, convenience, and a wide selection of clothing items offered online. Consumers are discouraged by the fact that they cannot touch and try clothes when buying online, which causes them not to buy online.

Ideals Clothing, the main retailer to benefit by this research, is not well known to the consumers. Were Ideals to launch online shopping, the majority of consumers would not buy Ideals' clothing online. Online shopping is popular in South Africa, however, buying clothing online is still a niche market.



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# APPENDIX 1

## QUESTIONNAIRE



### UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

Dear Respondent,

#### **MBA Research Project**

**Researcher:** Miss P.N.P. Sithole (031 460 0289)

**Supervisor:** Prof A.M. Singh (031 260 7061)

**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba (031 260 3587)

I, Pearl Ntombizethu Phumzile Sithole, am an MBA student at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Factors affecting purchase decisions of online shopping for clothing in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The aim of this study is to determine what motivates consumers to buy clothing online, and what discourages consumers to buy clothing online.

Through your participation I hope to understand the factors affecting online clothing purchases. The results are intended to contribute to South African retailers such as Ideals, in realising the opportunities that might exist with online shopping for clothing.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey/focus group. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or

about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The survey should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigator's  
signature\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

1. Gender

Male		Female	
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2. Age

Below 20		20- 29		30- 39		40- 49		50- 59		60 and above	
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3. Race

African		Coloured		Indian		White	
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4. Income per month

- a. Below R5,000
- b. R5,001-R10,000
- c. R10,001-R15,000
- d. R15,001-R20,000
- e. R20,001-R25,000
- f. R25,001-R35,000
- g. Above R35,000

5. Do you buy clothes online?

Yes  If answered yes, please skip to question 11

No  If answered no, please continue with the survey

6. If you answered no to question 5, what are your reasons for not buying clothes online?  
(select all that apply)

I do not have access to the Internet	
I do not know how to shop online	
I want to touch, feel and try the clothes I buy	
I want to have my clothes at the same time that I buy them	
I do not see the need to buy clothes online	
I do not have a credit card to buy online	
I can't see how the clothes will look on me.	



7. I do not shop online owing to the risks involved.

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

8. I am concerned about the following online risks:  
(select all that apply)

I am concerned about my credit card security when I buy online	
It is not easy to return clothes bought online	
Clothes bought online are not delivered on agreed date	
Clothes are sometimes not delivered at all	

9. I would be interested in buying clothes online if this provided the following:  
(select all that apply)

Cheaper price than at the store	
Payment option through my existing credit account	
Quick delivery of clothes once purchased online	
Free delivery of clothes purchased online	
Able to shop using my mobile phone	
Able to earn rewards points	
A 3D look of me wearing the clothes	

10. What is the likelihood of your buying clothes online in the next 12-24 months?

Very unlikely		Unlikely		Likely		Very likely	
---------------	--	----------	--	--------	--	-------------	--

11. If you answered yes to question 5, how often do you buy clothes online?

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	
Quarterly	
Annually	

12. How long have you been buying clothing online?

Less than a year	
1 – 3 years	
More than 3 years	

13. Which website do you normally use to buy clothing online?  
(select all that apply)

Mr Price Clothing	
Woolworths	
Truworths	
Miladys	
Jet Stores	
Zando	
Deligo	
Style36	
Indiemode	
International online shopping sites	

14. Rank the reasons why you choose to buy clothing online?  
(1 being the most important and 5 the least important)

Reasons for buying clothing online	Ranking of importance
Buying clothes online saves time	
It is cheaper to buy clothes online	
Online shopping offers a wide selection of clothes to choose from	
It is easy to compare prices online	
I can shop any time of the day	

15. Free delivery would encourage me to buy more clothing online.

Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
-------------------	--	----------	--	-------	--	----------------	--

16. Do you shop at Ideals clothing stores?

Yes	
-----	--

If answered yes, please skip to question 18

No	
----	--

If answered no, please continue with the survey

17. If you answered no to question 16, what is your reason for not shopping at Ideals?

I prefer shopping at other clothing stores	
There's no Ideals store in areas I normally do my shopping	
Ideals do not offer online shopping	

18. If Ideals introduced online shopping, would you purchase from them through a website?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

19. If you answered yes to question 18, what should Ideals do to encourage online shopping?

Keep prices low	
Ensure prompt delivery	
Provide a wide range of products	
Keep their website simple	
Offer alternate payment methods	

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey.

## APPENDIX 2

### ETHICAL APPROVAL



26 April 2013

Miss PNP Sithole 211535372  
Graduate School of Business and Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear Miss Sithole

Protocol reference number: HSS/0240/013M  
Project title: Factors affecting purchase decisions of online shopping for clothing

#### EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Anesh Maniraj Singh  
cc Academic Leader: Dr E Munapo  
cc School Admin.: Ms Wendy Clarke

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee  
Professor S Collings (Chair)  
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