

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

TITLE PAGE

Retail design intent and effects on shopping behaviour in a
South African retail store.

by

Ayanda Buwa

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Supervisor: Monica Di Ruvo

Co-supervisor: Prof Johannes Cronjé

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16.11.2020

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ABSTRACT

Retailers are well known for designing store environments with an intent to enhance the customers' positive emotions, assuming that those emotions would contribute to the desired shopping conduct, such as a greater willingness to buy or linger in the store for longer. Store-based retailing dominates the retail environment in South Africa; on the other hand, ecommerce is slowly gaining momentum. Computers continue to be a privilege enjoyed by South African consumers in the middle to high LSM. The limited literature in this area indicated that there is a need for further investigation into retail design intent and effects on shopping behaviour in South Africa. This study focused on determining and explaining the correlation between the interior design effects in a South African Retail store environment on intended shopping behaviour. A qualitative approach was adopted using a single retail store in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a case study to determine the customer behaviour in relation to the design intent. Data gathered through Interviews and observations was analysed using the behavioural qualities model developed by Ahrentzen, (2001:2), which was adapted and used as a conceptual framework. The findings indicated that similar aspects as of five to ten years ago still create in-store experiences today. Although globally, retailing is moving towards e-commerce and customers have various ways they could do their shopping, in-store experience is still relevant in attracting customers. In this study, it is argued that the impact of retail design on physical retail store environments goes beyond creating appropriate 'atmospheres'.

Keywords: Retail Interior Design, Shopping Behaviour, Design Intent, Retail Experience, Customer Experience, Design Research.

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GLOSSARY

In this research, the following terms will be referred to:

Legibility:

Legibility is a psychological construct and defined as “the ease with which its (an environment’s) part can be recognized” (Lynch, 1960). Weisman (1981), views legibility as an important component that supports the process of way finding.

Store Image:

Store Image “Is defined as the way in which the store is defined in the shopper’s mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes”. Furthermore, “store image is complex by nature and consists of a combination of tangible or functional factors and intangible or psychological factors that a consumer perceives to be present” (Lindquist,1975: 31).

Visual Merchandising:

“Visual merchandising displays can be regarded as visual features that create attention or pleasure in a store with the aim of enhancing the shopping experience of the consumer” (Mathew, 2008).

Atmospherics

“Atmospherics is an effort in designing buying environments to produce specific emotional state and enhance the purchase probability” (Kotle, 1974).

Multisensory Design

“Design that impacts the five senses of the human body. Touch, sight, taste, hearing and smell” (Breffeilh, 2010).

Living Standard Measures (LSM)

Living Standard Measures (LSM) is a commonly used tool in retail sectors in Southern Africa. “It groups populations according to their living standards using criteria of different variables that each carry different weighting with some being positive and others negative”. It divides the population into 10 LSM groups, 10 (highest: eg. high income earner) to 1 (lowest: eg. living in rural area with a minimal income) (SAARF, 2012).

Motivational Orientation

Motivational Orientation is the shopping predisposition with which consumers engage in purchasing. These motives that influence shopping can be either pleasurable or economic in nature (Gilde, 2010:57).

Environmental Psychology

“Environmental psychology is that branch of psychology that studies the relationship between people and the socio-physical features of the built and natural environment, in order to enhance human wellbeing and to improve human– environment relations” (Yalcin, 2014).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Store-based retailing is dominant in South Africa. A strong emphasis on mall culture means that shopping is seen as a form of entertainment. This together with the high concentration of malls and shopping centres means that bricks and mortar shopping is prevalent (Goga, Paelo and Nyamwena, 2019:35). Personal computers are still a privilege that customers in the middle and upper income markets possess. Furthermore, the postal services have been the lynchpin for online growth in several countries as it provides a cheap option for postage. However, in South Africa, small businesses and consumers are hesitant to utilize the post office due to concerns over goods not arriving or arriving too late(Goga, et al., 2019:35).

The South African retail industry is of value as it contributes to the country's economic growth and well-being (Cant & Hefer, 2013:1217). According to Liaw (2007:1) the retail industry has expanded exponentially, thereby generating a highly concentrated and dynamic market. The internet has become one of the most preferred methods for purchasing items as it is convenient for customers to search for and purchase merchandise (Park, Li & Jeon, 2009:916) at their convenient time and place. Consumers now have more options of where and how to purchase products.

Due to the changed retail environment, one of the biggest challenges experienced by retail owners is how to draw consumers to their store and to retain them as consumers (Dabija et al., 2014:58). Retailers ensure that their in-store designs are effective and that in-store improvements are made on an ongoing basis to create a desirable environment where consumers would like to spend time on a shopping excursion, rather than searching and buying over the internet. This study explores the relationship between the design intent and effects in South African retail store

environments, determining the legibility of interior design and the customer shopping behaviour (intention to behave).

Retailers devote substantial resources to the design and layout of stores. It is therefore important that interior designers understand the impact of their design interventions on retail store environments, as that would have an impact on both the retailer and the consumer's response (Kaltchava & Weitz, 2006:108). Gilde (2010:37), attests to the fact that consumers want to easily locate products, find their way through a retail setting and satisfy their shopping need by having an enjoyable shopping experience.

Consumers create identity through consumption and the places where they shop. They want to approach, explore, communicate and perform or buy in these retail store spaces that portray a certain lifestyle through the retail design. Doyle and Broadbridge (1999) emphasized that the retail store and associated shopping interactions embody the customer-retailer relationship, along with the contribution of the store to the reputation of the retailer. The retail store is a label contact tool and is a retailer's image as transactions take place (Doyle & Broadbridge 1999). A number of scholars explaining the image of the physical retail store attest to the fact that, it may enhance and make enjoyable the act of buying, further providing the consumer market with greater benefits. (Davies and Ward (2002), Baker *et al* (2002:155), Kent (2003), Dunn and Lusch (2007), and Puccinelli *et al* (2009)).

The correlation between the store image and the consumer behavior has also been investigated (Babin and Attaway, (2000:93); Kim *et al.*, (2007:96); Kotler, (1974:56); Petermans, A., Van Cleempoel, K., (2010)). Such studies indicate that the understanding of a retail store is a blend of the customer's emotional and cognitive reactions, that will in part represents what the store means customer. Consumers view store environments as a complete, multisensory experience without isolating the architecture of the store to the items sold or the music or the store employees.

This research supports the need, from a holistic viewpoint, to explore store design intent.

Doyle (2004) argued that it would be of value that one adopts the integrated approach in store design, claiming that variations in culture, economy and technology may affect retail stores and how they are designed. Doyle further suggests design philosophies that affirm his belief embedded on this concept holistic thinking as an approach. The work of other researchers such as Dunn and Lusch (2007), Johnson and Lee (2008), Erdem, et al (1999) and Sullivan and Adcock (2002) shows this approach to retail design. The foundations of a successful retail design were established by these research studies based on the holistic approach. They also defined the "art and science" of retail design from a retail store development perspectives (Dunn & Lusch 2007).

Within the field of interior design, retail design is well established (Murialdo, 2008:7; Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2010). Within a building frame, innovative and technological approaches are implemented in this multifaceted field. The expertise and the unique skill set in trained retail designers help them to creatively resolve challenges when it comes to the function and quality of a retail setting (Mazarella 2010). In literature, retail designers are defined as design specialists who possess the ability to connect a physical space to business strategies and priorities (Mazarella 2010; Moore & Lochhead 1998:122). Retail designers could be of assistance to retailers in influencing retail design which benefits product differentiation and strategic leadership (Lochhead & Moore 1998:123; Mazarella, 2010). The general sense of this research focus on retail design within the South African context. South African retailers also make use of store design as an aid to differentiate themselves from a competitive market (Van der Vyver 2008, Janse van Noordwyk 2008:66). Retail design is therefore dynamic field as it requires a number of specialists leading to the effective creation and execution of a retail branding (Mazarella 2010).

1.2. Problem Statement

While the body of knowledge provides basic insights about how retail design affects the ability of retailers to gain patronage from their target market, a number of gaps remain in the retailers understanding. Previous research work has highlighted the likelihood that the shop environment can invoke shopping experience and enhance the brand experience of a customer (Borghini et al. 2009:364; Dolbec & Chebat 2013:462; Nierobisch et al. 2017:118). More extensive research is needed to investigate the built environment and examine the effects of motivational orientation on retail stores; how environmental preferences shape the design behaviour relationships.

Since store-based trade still dominates the South African retail landscape, retail design is a relevant area to enquire and explore. Retailers commit significant resources to store design, product layout, visual merchandise and in-store experience. They now recognize the importance of actively managing the customer experience. Customer experience as a multidimensional concept involves the "cognitive, physical, physiological, sensory and social reactions of the consumer to the retailer 's products during the whole buying process" (Lemon, et al. 2016:70). Within the retail industry, considerable research has been conducted in the field of marketing, that addresses the effects and the relationship between retail design, design intent and consumer behaviour, and how these aspects affects the shopping behaviour of the consumer. In the field of interior design however, limited literature on empirical studies on the subject of retail design has been published, indicating that there is a need for further investigation into retail design intent and effect on shopping behaviour in South Africa and gave rise to the research questions.

1.3. Research Questions

1.3.1. The main research question that will direct the study is:

To what extent does retail design intent and its effects correlate with consumer shopping behaviour?

1.3.2. The following three sub-questions will also be asked in order to answer the main research question:

1.3.2.1. What design effects do designers apply in creating a motivational shopping environment?

1.3.2.2. How do consumers respond to the designers' intent?

1.3.2.3. How does design legibility affect the shopping experience?

1.4. Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of this research is to explore the relationship between the design intent and effects in retail store environments.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Examine the built environment and investigate the effects of motivational orientation.
- Determine how interior design affects the consumer experience.
- Determine the legibility of interior design and the customer shopping behaviour (Intention to behave).
- Assess how legible the design factors are to the consumers.
- Investigate the design effects used by the interior designers in creating a motivational shopping environment.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it adds to academic literature within the retail design industry, with a focus on effects of design on customer behaviour. It further creates awareness and interest amongst retailers, store designers and students of design regarding the intent and effects of interior design in the retail sector. This research may provide insights for South African retailers by painting a realistic image to aid retailers in understanding the effects of design intent and plans vs. what actually happens in stores (the reality).

1.6. Delimitations of the study

In this dissertation, it is acknowledged that, in all sectors with physical retail store environments where purchases can be made, there is a possibility of design intervention. This study is limited since its main focus is on understanding and exploring the role of retail designers in the designing and execution of a South African retail store in the appliances and electronics sector. It is also important to stress that in order to consider all retailers in all markets, the results of this study cannot inherently be applicable. In addition, the researcher only interviewed interior designers that focus on retail design projects. Furthermore, the focus is on an upper LSM shopping centre, where there is likelihood of design intervention on the physical retail store. The focus will be on a physical retail store based in Sandton, Johannesburg, South Africa. The scope, to which the findings of this dissertation are relevant, would require further research for other retail sectors. Only the aspects of design intent and its effects on customer behaviour is discussed.

1.7. Outline of the dissertation

A general introduction was provided in the first chapter. It offered the reader an outline of the research subject by elaborating on the design intent, effects of retail design and the relationships between these and consumer behaviour. The second chapter contains the literature reviewed. It further elaborations on the topic of this dissertation. The third chapter outlines the nature, theory, approach and overall methods of the analysis used to address this study's research question. The results found of the thesis are presented to detail in chapter four. The Fifth and final chapter is dedicated to the discussion, analysis and conclusions drawn from the findings. Reflections on literature, aims & objectives of the study in relation to the finding together with theoretical contributions, practical implications and potential avenues for future research are put forward.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this study, an area of interest was identified and relevant keywords were searched and acquired, using online databases, books, journals articles and conference papers as a starting point for reviewing literature. Key words used included; retail store design, interior design, retail environments, consumer behaviour & environmental psychology and experiential design. Based on the results, certain themes were identified from the published literature. The journal articles found were then read and sorted into a table format for analysis and interpretation purposes. The following table provides a high level overview of the literature and the themes that emerged during the review.

Themes from the literature	Keywords and themes discussed						
	Store Environments	Legibility	Visual Merchandising	Retail store Interior design	Customer Behavior	Marketing	Experiential Retailing
<p>Theme 1: Personalisation The first theme that was identified was personalisation and co-creation opportunities that adds value and are being accentuated within the retail space. The argument was on the role technology has played in enabling customization, as consumers have taken the position of manufacturers by creating wants and desires on their own. They then become more selective which leads to them personalisation to satisfy their desires, expectation and demands. These consumers would be more outgoing, more extravagant on the other hand more cultured and more aware of who they are. Such consumers want more interactive experiences and personalization.</p> <p>(Mehrabian & Russell, 1974:79; Russell & Snodgrass, 1988:12; PricewaterhouseCoopers & TNS Retail Forward, 2007; Barkworth, 2014; Thomson, 2018).</p>	√		√	√	√	√	√

Themes from the literature	Store Environments	Legibility	Visual Merchandising	Retail store Interior design	Customer Behavior	Marketing	Experiential Retailing
<p>Theme 2: Social impact design</p> <p>The second theme that was identified, addressed effect-driven design to support a response in mitigation of social problems. The approach used by Social Impact Design (SID) as a research methodology for assessing effect-driven design methods and how it increases the significance of design methodology for design practice is put forward. Designers need to learn how things work and why. The necessary conditions for the theoretical construction of the design are proposed.</p> <p>(Baker, 1990; Friedman, 2003:509; Cash, 2014:175; Tromp & Hekkert, 2016:25)</p>	✓			✓	✓		✓
<p>Theme 3: Human centered design</p> <p>The third theme that emerge during the literature review was on the evolution of Human Centered Design. The argument was on the approaches, obstacles and opportunities for Human centered Design to be applied strategically in innovation as it has the potential to contribute to the goal of many organizations that see the need to be more human-centered.</p> <p>(Van der Bijl-Brouwer & Dorst, 2017:2; Trotter, 2019)</p>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Themes from the literature	Store Environments	Legibility	Visual Merchandising	Retail store Interior design	Customer Behavior	Marketing	Experiential Retailing
<p>Theme 4: Design factors</p> <p>The fourth theme addressed design factors that have been emphasised as an effective visual comparative tool. Beliefs about consumer patronage behaviors were apparent in retail environment design and construction. The factors of store design were divided into functional and aesthetic elements. Retailers build a store brand using these components to encourage healthy buying habits from consumers. Design considerations that enhance shopping activity were put forward in this theme.</p> <p>(Marans & Speckelmeyer, 1982:333-337; Friedman, 2003:508; Gilde, 2010:55; The Store Front, 2017)</p>	✓		✓		✓		✓
<p>Theme 5: Cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions</p> <p>The fifth theme that was identified focused on the effect of a store setting on consumer buying behavior as mediated by the emotional state of the customer. The emotional states are psychologically influenced by the store environments, stimulated by the normal multitude of in-store variables. The emotional states are mediators of purchasing habits, such as shopping satisfaction, time spent searching and enjoying the store's deals and a probability of returning to the store. The physical environment of the store can elicit cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions that influence customer approach or avoid behavior in the retail setting.</p> <p>(Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Hefer and Cant, 2013:1217; Waja, 2013:45)</p>	✓				✓		✓

Table 2. 1: High-level summary of the literature reviewed.

A thematic model was chosen for this literature review because it offered the author means to organize and explore current literature based on topics and theoretical principles that were relevant. Due to the limited literature published that focuses on the retail design more so in South Africa, most of the themes that emerged in the literature review were based on international examples. As South Africa is considered as a developing country, the author first looked at global trends to define the value and implementation globally of retail design and consumer behaviour.

2.2 Trends in the global retail industry

In terms of how services are provided to customers, the retail sector is evolving at a rapid rate. The importance of value propositions that direct the purchasing decisions of customers is continuously evolving. In order to improve revenues, retailers are advised to respond rapidly to emerging trends such as more discerning buyers, shifting preferences and other retail channel models. (PricewaterhouseCoopers & TNS Retail Forward, 2007).

Consumers have become more active and more selective with their preferred brands in purchase choices. Emerging retail trends globally have consequences which drives customer shopping behaviour (Retailing 2015: New Frontiers; PricewaterhouseCoopers & TNS Retail Forward, 2007). The then suggestions that retailers are revising their offerings of goods and services to target selected groups of consumers. Consumers are increasingly and progressively discerning as a result they desire personalisation of their preferences for the certification of their desires and aspirations (Barkworth, 2014). Personalisation and possibilities for co-creation that bring greater meaning have been reinforced. Consumers now assume the role of producers in developing their own needs and expectations (Barkworth, 2014). This ensures how shoppers would have the leverage to negotiate for retail opportunities expressly tailored to their particular needs. Consumers are much more social, which means they can share information of any sort quickly, from anywhere, anytime,

about anything. Thus the influence of word-of-mouth communication by customers via social media channels is hugely beneficial to retailers.

In order to better appreciate the reasons driving customer buying behaviour, retailers would best take into account their formative assessment of their customers shopping climate, merchandise preferences, service and brand. Retailers should be more flexible, considering various approaches, potentially striving to understand more developing markets through which they can take advantage. (PricewaterhouseCoopers & TNS Retail Forward, 2007).

For starters, much has been documented of the Millennials (Generation Y), who were born during 1986 and 2005 (Pitta, et al, 2012). More sociable, more spendthrift, but still more sophisticated, status-conscious and meticulous are words used by that define these Pitta, et al., (2012) to define these consumers. Meanwhile, Generations Y and Z, which account for nearly two-thirds of the population are reshaping South Africans values as they come of age. They are driving values of adventure, freedom, curiosity, and authenticity (Thomson, 2018) as they have more resources as emerging consumers, retailers would best take interest on them.

Barkworth, (2014) noticing that the retail industry was evolving, He noted that it differs greatly from conventional retailing strategies of the past which concentrated mainly on location. Customers this day expect more digital interactions and personalisation. Profitability can be accomplished by the development of unforgettable shopping experiences, merchandise relevance, as well as convenient, friendly retail store environments that improve competitiveness in established stores (Pricewaterhouse Coopers & TNS Retail Forward, 2007). Customers continue to engage in activities, avoiding their adult lives and commitments, enjoying pleasure and hedonism (Barkworth, 2014), questing for physical experiences which they would not experience through online shopping.

2.3 The South African retail sector

The South African retail industry experienced a crisis in 2014. Adding to the negative impact on forecasted sales in the South African retail exchange, the Bureau of Market Research (2014) notes that retailers were adversely impacted by the recession during and after the 2009 to 2013 period. The retail sector is burdened by sluggish economic performance, with fairly indebted shoppers lacking the discretionary income to spend cash for pricey commodity categories. Things did not get any better with the global pandemic “COVID-19” and the lock down period initiated by the South African government in March 2020. Even before the COVID-19 panic set in and concern was raised about the impact of a crisis on South Africa’s largest trading partner, the domestic economic outlook for 2020 was feeble (Krugel & Viljoen, 2020:11). South Africa is currently in its longest downward business cycle since records started in 1945, with rising unemployment, declining real GDP per capita, and dismal business sentiment (Krugel & Viljoen, 2020:11).

South Africans, because of poor economic growth, have struggled with a weakened currency for a number of years. This has contributed to an increase in strike action, a continuity of higher imports than exports, shortfalls on electricity, poverty, corruption, an increase in prices and a credit amnesty that pushed the Reserve Bank to lift interest rates, household disposable sales appeared to be under strain (Maswanganyi, 2014). Retail experts concluded that in shop consolidation, the market pattern of more store closing and decrease in trading space would continue within the retail industry. Since then the focus of active retailers has moved towards smaller store openings (Magwaza, IOL Company, 2015).

Recognizing the major effect of store atmosphere on customer behavior, Kaltchava and Weitz (2006:108) testify to the fact that retailers are devoting substantial resources to Store Design and merchandise presentation activities. Looking at a few South African retailers, the Retailer X Group in their 2015 annual report declared a R771 million investments on stores and store refurbishments. Truworths in 2017, reported an investment of R353 million committed to store development (Truworths, 2017). Retailers want their stores to attract customers, enable them locate the things

they need and encourage them to make regular, spontaneous and random transactions, ultimately, providing them with a pleasant shopping experience encouraging them to return (Levy & Weitz, 2009).

Although some retailers aspire to have prominent brand positioning, they could profit from concentrating on delivering a shopping experience that feeds both logical and emotional relationships. By simplifying the purchasing process for customers and offering additional advantages such as monetary savings, the logical utilitarian relationship of the in-store shopping experience could be accomplished (Kumar & Kim, 2014:686). The hedonic connection of the shopping experience could be accomplished if they provided the consumer with a pleasant and satisfying experience (Kumar & Kim, 2014:687). When clients are excited about an exceptional retail settings, stimulating shopping encounters arise. They get actively interested in the shopping experience. In order to intensify competition from other online outlets and other physical retail stores, greater shopping experiences are necessary for retailers (Garvin, 2009:17).

South African consumers like to shop in retail stores. In fact, South Africa has one of the highest rates of shopping malls per Gross Domestic Product in the world (SAPOA, 2018). South African consumers also have an expectation that "... the brand will be available to them, not as either an online or a physical store, but as a single entity, giving them the freedom to interact with the brand on their terms, whenever, and wherever it suits them" (Penstone et al., 2017). They are also looking for meaning in their own African culture. To be successful in South Africa, retailers need to embrace the complexity of this new consumer and develop advanced structures and methods to manage the changing retail landscape (Penstone et al, 2017).

2.4 Retail Store Environments

Retail designers are expected to design retail spaces in such a manner that affects and encourages favourable emotions of customers, with an intent that the space

created would lead to a desirable customer behaviour, such as more inclination to shop or linger in store for longer. Store design, and visual merchandise plays a critical role in enhancing positive customer behaviour. A good design could be efficient in synthesizing and bringing together the livelihood of various elements of the store in line with the retailer strategy (Brown, 1979).

In 1973 Kotler presented the idea of atmospherics. He described it as an effort to which a design retail environments for retailers to produce unique emotional effects that improve the likelihood of making a purchase (Kotler, 1973:56). Atmospherics specifically refers to the design of an atmosphere by using colours, lighting, sounds and furnishing, in order to enhance the customers perceptive and emotional responses and eventually influencing the customers response. Such elements are mostly assimilated within the retail design process (Bellizi & Hite 1992; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990:56-58). An example could be made of a retail stores fragrance or scent, the interior colour or lighting, background music, all targeting positive consumer behaviour. Such environmental factors have an effect on the emotional state of enjoyment, anticipation and superiority that defines the atmospheric reaction to the store environment. (Lindquist, 1974; Zimmer & Golden, 1988:256).

Baker (1986) established a typology which categorized environmental elements of the atmospheric store into; environmental factors, design factors and social factors. A variety of studies have been conducted to examine the stores non visual elements, such as; background music or sound, lighting, smell and temperature in a retail store with observational experiments. Milliman (1986:287) published a study with the management of 52 retail outlets. He found that customers made more purchases in a store with background music than in a store without, thus concluding that music may have positive correlation with customer behaviour.

Design factors have been emphasised as an effective visual comparative tool. Beliefs about consumer patronage behaviours are apparent in retail designed environments (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994). Finding a store with items displayed on the

windows or shopfront may lead to a return to the shop and therefore to a buying intention. The factors of store design could be divided into two, such as functional (Store-layout, conveniency and privacy) and aesthetics (store design, paint colours, style and finishes)(Marans & Speckelmeyer, 1982:334). With such components, retailers may build an identity that would encourage the anticipated behaviours from consumers.

Store design is also a way to view products in a shop to ease and encourage customer purchasing behaviour. Store design has thus been defined as a "silent salesman" as it has been used to catch and retain customers interest. Physical characteristics of a retail store, such as window visual merchandising, displays, store lighting and layout has been considered as inevitable deterrents that trigger consumer behaviour (Buttle, 1984:72).

2.4.1. Social Factors

Social factors include people in a store setting that involves salespeople and other customers' number, style and actions (Baker, 1986). Crowding results from the individual's physical mass as well as a psychological state of mind. Psychological crowding exists (Esser, 1972), when high density causes sensory pressure from unwanted or unknown social contacts. Esser, further examined sequential correlations between a number of variables relating to the atmospherics in retail stores. Employees in a department within a store could be an estimate for determining the quality of store service. Baker (1994) argued that the number of salespeople in a store at any time may affect the perceived merchandise and quality of service to consumers and influences the perception of customers store image. Also, the friendly and additional sales staff on the floor create a high prestige store image.

A number of researchers argue that the effects of a retail environment on consumer purchasing behaviour are influenced by the emotional state of the consumer. In this

context, Donovan and Rossiter (1982) were among the first to research mediating roles of customer emotions. They recommend that customers could experience two main emotional states, which are, enjoyment and excitement. The emotional states are psychologically influenced by the store environments, stimulated by the normal multitude of in-store variables. Those two emotional states are mediators of purchasing habits, such as shopping satisfaction, time spent searching, enjoying store's deals, speak to store employees, finding themselves spending more money than intended originally and a probability of returning to the store. Bitner, (1992:58) discussing physical store environment could stimulate emotional, cognitive and physiological reactions that affect customer approach or avoid behaviour in the retail setting.

Numerous studies (Russell & Snodgrass, 1988:12; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974:79), have reported that personality characteristics can affect a person's reaction to the physical environment. The personal reaction to the physical settings rely on situational considerations, such as the customers intentions or environmental goals (Russell & Snodgrass, 1988:12). Donovan et al., (1994) showed that, the mental state of the customer triggered in a retail environment(e.g. satisfaction and excitement). The two elements seems to be a clear explanation why shoppers invest more time in some markets and spend more money than was originally expected. The analysis also shows that the influence of emotional variables to customer behaviour is independent of quantitative variables such as human expectations of consistency and costs. Nevertheless, impulses to buy or overspend can emerge from a desire to mitigate both negative emotions and positive emotions. In other words, individuals may have multiple negative or positive motives for over-spending.

Sherman et al., (1997:374) examined the role to which consumer emotions play as mediators that affect the stores atmosphere and its effect on purchasing behaviour. Their results showed that while cognitive variables would generally account for the selection of a retail store and the majority of scheduled shopping in the store,

consumers' environment and emotional state may be key determinants of certain purchasing habits, such as buying impulses.

Aside from environmental, architecture, and social signals, crowding is another aspect that researchers believe affects customer behaviour. Crowding is seen as a result of physical, social and personal factors that make the person prone to real or potential problems arising from inadequate space (Stokols, 1972:275). When the number of people, objects, or both in a small space that is restricted, interfering with the activities and goal achievement, a person may consider the environment to be crowded. Studies have shown that the level of in-store crowding perceived by customer can influence both their choices of patronage and their satisfaction with general shopping activity. (Eroglu & Machleit, 1990:201).

Thang and Tan, (2003:1) argued that store identity together with its appearance characteristics influence the stores' preference for customers. Merchandising, in-store service, in-store operation, accessibility, reputation, marketing, services and post-transaction service provide stimuli relevant to store attributes. Consumers' preference are based on the post-visit rankings of the stores. To some degree, consumer visits to retail stores often take the form of a leisure activity whose worth is reinforced by the level of provision of service inside the shop. Therefore, if it is not liked or inconsistent with the values or principles sought by the target consumers, the essence of in-store services is likely to have a direct impact on consumer buying behaviour and will inhibit attraction.

2.5 Retail Design

Retail design encompasses a comprehension of what will work aesthetically in a retail environment, including tangible (i.e. fixed, material) as well as intangible (i.e. immaterial or atmospheric) design elements (Petermans, A., Van Cleempoel, K., 2010). Firstly, retail design requires a designer to thoroughly consider all things relevant to the physical construction of a product layout, including how the product should work both commercially and functionally.

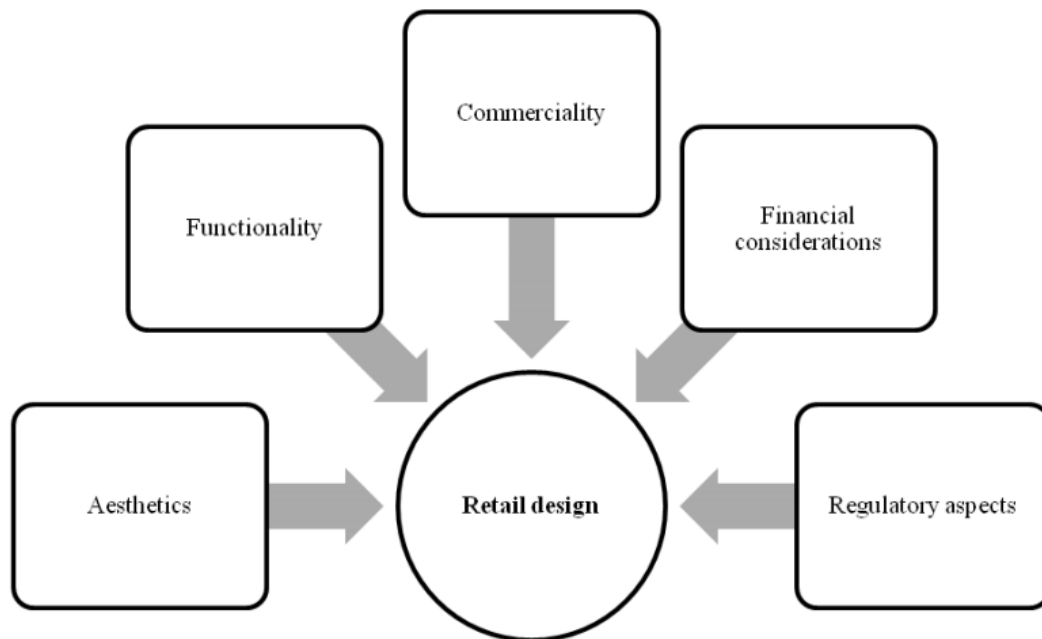


Figure 2. 1: What is retail design (Petermans, A., & Van Cleempoel, K. 2010)

The design of the retail store must be in accordance with the budget stipulated and must comply with all applicable legislation concerning the use of public space (Kindleysides, 2007). More broadly, retail design refers to the translation of the retail brand(ing) concerned, into an attractive retail store environment whereby the designer must take into account the specific social and temporal conditions (Van Tongeren, 2003).

When shoppers enter a retail store, they create an instant connection with the items available at the store, their size, the 'tone of voice' and ambience of the store, and

the appearance and personality of the retail personnel (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Combining this trend with the growing homogenisation of the retail landscape, retailers are often forced to search for differentiation strategies. After Underhill, 1999, claimed that a physical shopping setting may have as much impact on the expectations of the customer as the content of the product(s) itself, architecture has gained importance in retail management. Retailers are gradually realizing the value of being on the same page as their clients, thereby knowing not just what technically appeals to the target market but also emotionally (The Store Front, 2017). Getting to know the customers of the store, their expectations and desires, and observing their real buying habits might assist retailers and store employees to establish a better marketing plan for the retail store. This may equally help retail interior designers in designing retail stores in such a way that customers are at ease with the shopping environment they are in and are comfortable to continue shopping at the store (The Store Front, 2017).

Since the 1980s, fashion designers such as Armani, Comme des Garçons and Gucci have employed architects to differentiate their brand, buildings, megastores and epicenters to boost their reputation (Manuelli, 2006:16-33). Store design involves building an interior environment for the merchandise of goods and services and requires close deliberation of what makes the retail experience of the customer special (Mazarella 2010). The design of a retail store incorporates all parameters important to the identity of the retail brand and enables consumers to connect effectively and interpret the commitments associated with the identity of the particular retail brand (Janse van Noordwyk, 2008:51).

Because the demand for experiences has increased, for example millennials said that 52 percent of their holiday spending will go on experiential purchases compared to 39 percent of older consumers, this trend could be about to reverse (The Storefront, 2017). "As consumers choose to invest in experiences rather than products, retailers need to respond to meet the needs of their customers". "Customers don't want to just walk into your shop, buy your product and leave

because they could do this in the comfort of their own home" (The Store Front, 2017). By creating a more engaging shopping environment, retailers can bring people to their stores and make sure they leave with their items as well as their memories. Retail entertainment is expected to dominate the industry, the convergence of retail and entertainment, an attempt on the part of retailers to provide consumers with enjoyable, unique experiences that make shopping more relevant than anything it has been before (The Store Front, 2017)".

Matters relating to customer motivation, traffic flow or shop navigation and crowd control, expenditure management and management, operational performance along with competitive differentiation are concerned with the nature of the retail store environment (Doyle, 2004). Retail interior design represents the retailer's position and reputation in the market and can boost the retailer's overall performance. Baker et al. (1992) clarified how retail design transitions the store from a basic transaction interface to an entity that differentiates it from the competition with distinct and unique features. The interior designer has the potential to encourage the customer to navigate the shop and make purchases despite themselves" through purposeful preparation, using lighting and colour, the store layout (Poldma, 2009: 4664).

Moore and Lochhead (1998:122) proposed the idea that design as the development of an aesthetically attractive setting, should inform value enhancement and differentiation within a market in a retail context. Similar to marketing, the effective design of a store interior starts by identifying consumer market needs. Marketing and design are thus interdependent and design is the instrument for achieving marketing objectives.

The retail store is where the relationship between the consumer and the retail brand identity is manifested (Kindleysides, 2007:207). While the design of retail stores is recognised as an important means of market positioning, considerations of the contribution of a retail designer to the success of a retailer has largely been

neglected. Studies conducted by customer behaviourists, business specialists, retail managers and marketing experts mostly focuses on marketing. Due to the limited amount of literature on retail design, the author on this study conducted a short precedent study review to determine the value and implementation of retail design in designed retail stores.

2.5.1 Precedent Study

A precedent, in an academic setting and in practice, is a method of study from which we learn about ideas, processes and techniques that could be cited and reinterpreted in our own work (The Storefront, 2017). Carefully selected precedents can teach us how to solve specific problems; perhaps how to organize a plan, develop a detail, think about relationships between types of spaces, or develop a strategy for relating a building to its site. Through research and analysis, we discover how other designers have addressed issues of site, program, material, or spatial relationships in the particular context of their time and place.

For this research, three precedent studies have been looked at. The three precedent studies are retail stores relevant to this study that emerged during the literature review in line with store retail interior design and in-store retail experiences. They are an example of spaces designed by retailers to create experiential retailing and memorable experience for their customers. "The future is experiential retailing. However, as the demand for experience has increased, for example millennials said that 52 percent of their holiday spending will be spent on experience related purchases compared to 39 percent of older consumers, this pattern may be reversed (The Storefront, 2017)".

2.5.1.1 Precedent study one: House of Vans

The House of Vans (London has specific sessions allocated for BMX riders and skaters. Customers are actively encouraged to walk in on the day. Nothing epitomizes the Vans brand better than a place where young people can shop and socialize spontaneously (The Store Front, 2017). The House of Vans is an example of how experiential shopping can be used to build a day that customers will always remember. In figure 2.2, is a play area where customers could have an experience in the retail store as well as buy merchandise. Customers can make use of the retail designed environment to engage with purchased products and create a memorable experience. This could suggest that the customers would most likely stay longer in the retail store and that could encourage more product engagement. This is good example of experiential retailing.



Figure 2. 2: The house of Vans – Image via skate Parks (The Store Front, 2017)

2.5.1.2 Precedent study two: The Dreamery

Trotter's, (2019) explanation of the idea behind this Casper's concept store, alludes to the fact that New York is known as the city that never sleeps, which for Casper and health practitioners everywhere, is a problem. Their store experience aimed to help more people sleep better while positioning their products as the catalyst for getting better sleep. Rather than just selling their mattresses, customers can pay \$25 for 45 minutes in a private sleeping pod. Each pod uses a Casper mattress, sheets, and pillows, along with a fully-equipped bathroom to freshen up after your nap. This is another example of experiential retail.



Figure 2. 3: The Dreamery: Casper's New York Experiential store. (Trotter, 2019)

2.5.1.3 Precedent study three: Nike's SoHo Flagship Store

Nike's SoHo flagship store, has store integrated event spaces. The in-store basketball court, soccer trial space, and treadmills let customers try products out in their intended environment while having fun and socializing with people that share similar interests. Customers can also get more personalized advice based on how they move around these areas (Trotter, 2019).



Figure 2. 4: Nikes SoHo Flagship Store (Trotter, 2019)

The three precedent studies are examples of existing retail stores that have focused on experiential retailing and memorable experiences for their customers. These prove that experiential retail is not only the present but could play a bigger role in future as more online shopping takes place. All these precedent studies are not based in South Africa.

While previous studies have enhanced our understanding of the various store aspects that build in-store experiences for customers globally and internationally, research is needed on how these aspects contribute to the creation of subjective experiences in the context of South Africa. Furthermore, the knowledge of particular design effects also needs to be improved. By researching customers 'and retailers' viewpoints, we acquire insight new in these topics. The legibility of these aspects and their clarity to customers in communicating the design thinking and retail strategy was of interest to the author and is addressed in the next section.

2.6 Legibility and way finding

Lynch 1960, as cited by Gilde (2010:55) was the first to comprehensively discuss the concept of environmental legibility as a “psychological construct” and defined it as an ease with which the environment can be recognised. Way finding as defined by Downs and Stea (1977) is a process of solving one class of special problems, the movement of a person from one place to another. In retail store environments, to navigate from a certain point to the next looking for product or merchandise can be a challenging exercise. Designers introduce elements like walkways, signage, directional lighting, voids in ceilings to highlight circulation spaces as well as other design cues. Legibility and way finding are two concepts that have an impact in town planning, architecture, and more recently, retail design (Gilde, 2010:55). The more a place supports this extraction and comprehension of information, the higher is the legibility (Passini, 1984:114).

If entrances, aisles, signs and the merchandise rails in a retail store, are not clearly organized will impact customer experience and so in this piece of literature reviewed, we learn that environmental legibility is considerably dependent on the physical design and layout of the store environment and the ability of customers to understand and navigate through it is an essential component of the building cognitive map (Mark, Lilis, Narayana 1976).

In this study, the author will explore the ease to which retail designer's intent can be

understood by customers in a particular setting. Once the setting is understood, the products sold need to be appealing. For this, some retailers dedicate time in visual merchandising to entice the customer.

2.6.1 Visual Merchandising

Over the years within the retail industry a range of tested strategies have been developed. Window displays have proven to be a popular device in retail stores as they can be used to display the latest trends across stores (Morgan, 2011). Customers then make their own decisions through their own unique desires, preconceptions and experiences (Brink, Brijball & Cant, 2006). This then raises the question, if indeed a relationship exists between interior design of South African retail store environments and the intended behaviour of the customers? Investigating retail design intent and effects on shopping behaviour in a South African retail store.

Unlike manufacturing, in retail environments, the design objective is profit maximization rather than minimizing material handling costs. (Li, 2010). Store design may affect the ability of a retailer to attract patronage from their target market. Stores are under growing pressure not only to make a profit but also to get the customer back to the store and to spend again. One of the possible secret to this is to entice and maintain the consumer's attention by visual merchandising and to inspire them to return to the store (Morgan, 2016: 23-29).

Morgan (2016:23) further urges that a visual merchandiser can accomplish the retention of consumers and further acknowledges not only the visual merchandiser who can achieve the retention of a consumer; the visual merchant is assisted by the store designer by developing a board to work on. "Visual merchants, architects and interior designers have all worked hand in hand to build inspiring shopping environments" (Morgan, 2016:25).

2.7 Consumer Behaviour

The entire retail landscape offers retailers a chance to connect with their target market, establish shopping experiences while competitively positioning and building their brand personality and store image (Kumar, 2010:2; Vida, 2008:22). While attempting to generate positive feelings and increase the probability of customers making a purchase, retailers are actively striving to create favourable shop environments while projecting a good brand identity (Kumar, 2010:2). Consumers are continuously bombarded with consumer environmental metrics focused on strategic environmental cues. Throughout the buying effort, in-store stimuli could be perceived and may thus be persuasive, reflecting what the retailers intends to represent to its customers. (Kumar, 2010:3; Singh 2006). The value of the store as a trademark is valued by retailers, stressing the importance of transforming and controlling each aspect of the retail environment by differentiating it from its rivals. (Kumar, 2010:4).

In-store objects, such as Posters, TV Displays with Gestures, (multi-sensory stimuli), tend to shape the attitudes and expectations of customers regarding a shopping atmosphere or the products being marketed (Singh, 2006). In an in-store retail environment, customers use perceptual signals to create those associations regarding the retailer (Kumar, 2010:2; Singh 2006). Consumers can compare distributors to decide their retailer/retail environment preferences based on their perception of in-store stimuli as presented in the retail environments in South Africa and globally. The in-store attributes of a retail setting can also shape how the shopping experience is managed by customers (Shah & Change, 2014). The distinct retailer associations could affect the conduct of customers and their reaction (Valette-Florence, Guizani & Merunka, 2011). 2007:2007:261).

A multitude of internal factors, such as emotions and knowledge acquired from previous exposure, as well as external factors, for instance in-store stimuli (atmospheric- and merchandise cues) and reference groups (friends, family and

various media platforms), influence consumers' decision-making (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2007:261). Any customer responses, such as buying intentions, can be improved by these internal and external influences. In past studies, in-store stimuli has been considered as part of the store image, with beliefs that the buying intentions of customers will be improved by a more desirable store environment (Hassan, 2010). The positive value expectations are the product of a positive outcome behaviour, such as a desire to linger in the shopping market and the willingness to make a purchase (Singh, 2006). The level of consumption might also determine the experience's outcome (Shah & Alter, 2014).

In addition, consumer decision-making might be informed by the degree of engagement and familiarity of the consumer with the particular category of product (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanche, 2004). Complex decision-making involving high-risk purchases of costly products such as appliances and furniture can result in a robust decision-making process for customers. In other words, getting to know the product first (e.g. product details with specifications and cost), and weighing option to see if there are no other alternatives before a final decision is made about the product (Erasmus, Donoghue & Dobbelsstein, 2014; Sonnenberg, Erasmus & Donoghue, 2011).

However, purchasing decisions can result from the shopping plans of customers that were made before they reached the retail environment or from their internal retail environment assessments (Jiang & Liu, 2014). Although a customer might not have wished to make a purchase until entering the actual retail store, in-store stimuli such as visual merchandise and proper product displays principles may motivate and inspire them to make a purchase. Positive internal assessments will ultimately be equated with a positive reaction (consumer behaviour), such as the urge to make a purchase (Singh, 2006). Nice retail environments that completely involve and immerse customers could contribute to favorable shopping experiences.

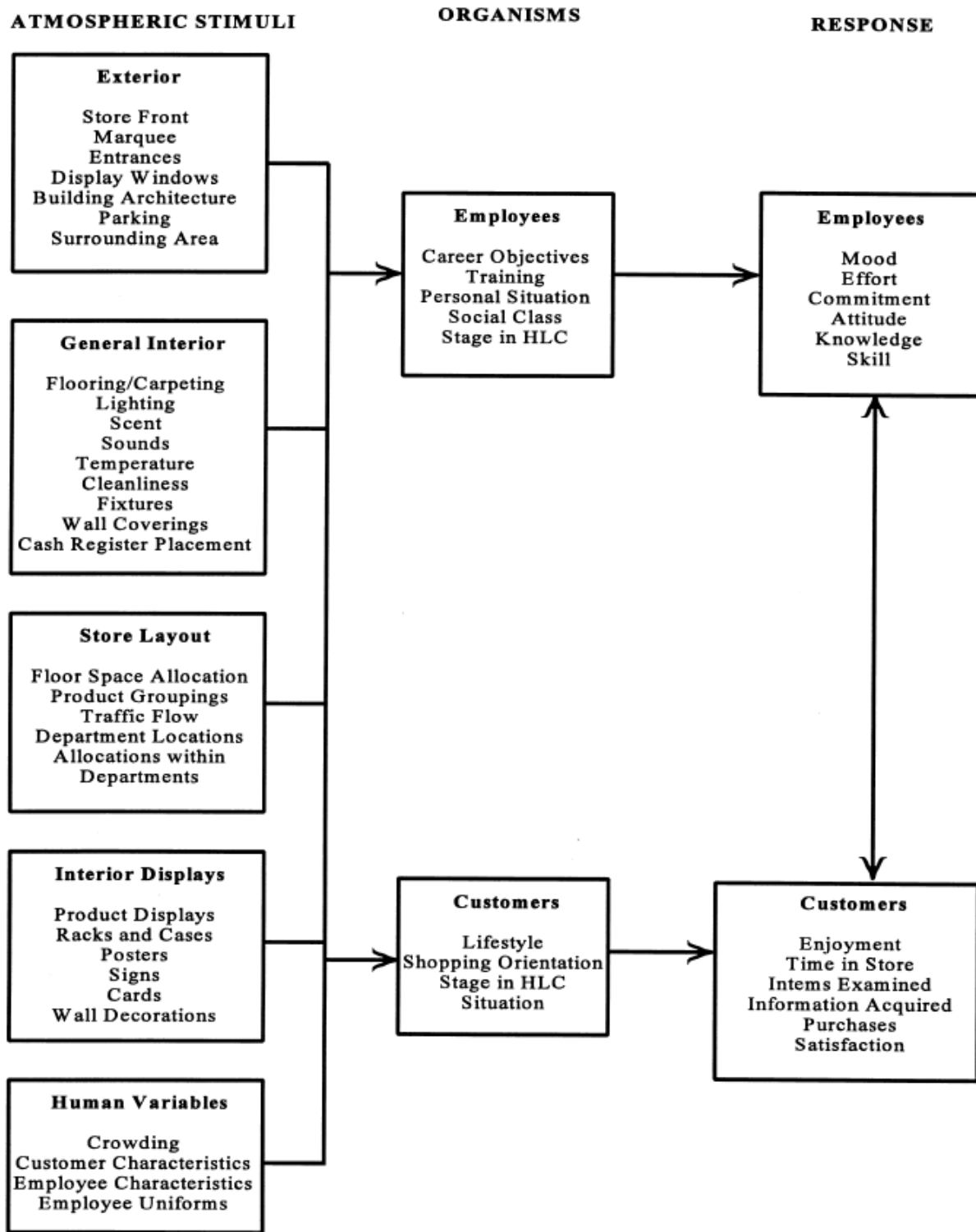


Figure 2. 5: The Influence of retail atmospherics (Milliman & Turley, 2000)

According to Milliman and Turley (2000), Atmospheric variables can be conceptualised as stimuli leading to some behavioural responses. In figure 2.5, it is showed that the basic stimuli categories relevant to a retail designed environment together with some basic conceptual effects that may lead to behavioural responses from customers. The correlation between the physical retail setting and its influence on customers is also shown.

All the attributes regulated by the retailer in retail environments may influence the patronage intentions (Garvin, 2009:33). The patronage intentions may be defined as the arbitrary possibility that a consumer will choose to purchase a product from the same retailer in the future (Chiu et al., 2014). Within a physical retail environment, patronage is the possibility of a customer who may have visited, spent time in the store and purchased its merchandise, to visit the retail store again for future purchases, further, recommending the store or experience about the retailer to friends and family (Mehta & Chugan, 2014). In the current shopping experience, it is also important for retailers to consider the effect on customer loyalty on future expectations.

The purchasing behaviour of consumers is important to retailers in that it allows them to retain their competitive advantage. Customer features, space, store identity, product range and retail strategies are some of the concepts that play a role in successful retailing (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008).

Customer behavioural perspectives go far beyond the design. It encompasses the customer's individual understanding of the retail environment to fit their situation (meaning associating with the environment). From the customer behaviour point of view, Schiffman et al., (2008), puts forward that perception is characterized as a process by which a person selects, classifies and interprets the environment in order to understand the world better. The best of situations and the products should also be fun and pleasant, which ensures that not only the criteria of engineering, production and ergonomics must be met, but also the full experience, i.e. the aesthetics of form and the quality of interaction, must be taken into account.

Retail design is influenced by societal changes; “modifications in economic strategies and policies, as well as the advancements in technology (Doyle, 2004)”. Quartier, (2011:61) focused on three advances that have driven retail architecture to become today's professional discipline. The first trend they consider is the need for distributors to distinguish themselves through the creation of distinctive retail stores (Quartier, 2011:61). Since competing retailers sell similar goods on a global basis, one way retailers can differentiate themselves is to have a specific retail atmosphere.

In this study, the author will look the behavioural aspects and consideration undertaken by the retailer and the retail designers in differentiating their store from their competitors. Further looking at how they had anticipated the customers individual understanding of the environment, by looking at the design effects intended to impact customer behaviour. To impact the customer behaviour, retail designers research and collaborate with marketing specialists to understand and anticipate behavioural responses. In the next section, the author looks at research in retail design to explain qualities of a retail store that can be manipulated and designed in such a way to influence consumer experience of the retail store.

2.8 Research in retail design

The literature of the retail industry has a long trail of studies on store appearance variables that impact the way the retailer is perceived by customers. They both urge that the image of the shop resides in concrete and intangible components and that these components can be exploited to impact the shopping perception of the customer and the brand identity (Janse van Noordwyk, 2008:51). More than fifty years ago, Martineau (1958) introduced the notion that the image projected by a retail store could affect customer perceptions and actions. He defined the picture of the store as the manner in which the business, partly by its practical quality and partly by the atmosphere of psychological features, is portrayed in the shopper's mind (Du Randt, 2015).

In this review, literature on the store image subject will be split into two different sections. The two pieces being referred to as a retail store's psychological characteristics and functional attributes, as originally described by (Du Randt, 2015). Firstly, the literature review discusses studies that concentrated on the impact on customer behaviour and experience of psychological qualities. Secondly, it is defined in the current literature how the functional attributes of a retail store can be exploited and built to affect the retail store's customer experience in such a way.

2.8.1 Psychological attributes of a retail store

Some studies have deliberated on emotional effects that physical features of a retail store have on a consumer with several researchers base their studies on the Mehrabian and Russell (1974:79) approach avoidance model. The model comprises of three core elements, namely "environmental stimuli", "emotional states and behaviour". Mehrabian and Russel (1974) suggest that the reaction of a customer to the shopping atmosphere explicitly relates to their behaviour of 'approach and avoidance'. The action of the approach expresses the eagerness of the user to remain in a particular setting where specific activities in an environment can be approached, discussed and achieved (Mehrabian & Russel 1974). The avoidance behavior is defined by the eagerness of a customer to leave the atmosphere and show their decision not to return (Mehrabian & Russel 1974). The fundamentals of the model are that, the attitudes and actions of consumers inside a retail store are the outcome of the emotional states generated by the atmosphere (Baker et al 1992; Sullivan & Adcock 2002). The approach-avoidance model (Mehrabian & Russel 1974) in retailing is confirmed by Donovan and Rossiter (1982) by analyzing the relationship between emotional states developed in retail stores and customers' testimonies about their behavioural intentions in those stores. They noticed that the time spent in the retail store was impaired by the positive emotion of satisfaction. Subsequently, it raised the eagerness of the customer to engage with the sales team

and gradually influenced their ability to make a transaction (Donovan & Rossiter 1982).

Kotler (1974) suggests three aspects in which the retail store impacts shopping behaviour. "Firstly, he notes that the environment of the store acts as a "medium that generates publicity" (Kotler 1974:54). Using practical characteristics that make the retail store stand out from the market, this is done. In other words, it is becoming an instrument of distinction. Secondly, He suggests that the retail store becomes a "message-creating medium," ultimately transmitting to targeted buyers different descriptive aspects about the personality of the retail brand. Third, the retail shop acts as a "affect-creating medium" (Kotler 1974:54) where emotional states are aroused by the retail context that contribute positively to the likelihood of a purchase. He indicates that buyers have multiple purchasing preferences and intentions that never happen before "tip the balance in favour of a transaction" driving environmental influences .

Baker et al., (1992) suggested a paradigm for environmental variables to investigate the impact of complex environmental influences on consumers' emotional states. As the "ambient, social and architecture" variables, they propose three dimensions of a retail store. They demonstrate that the atmospheric components contain conditions such as noise, music, illumination and temperature in the background (Baker et al., 1992). Usually, customers are unaware of these variables until they surpass appropriate comfort levels, such as if the retail store has too much light, the temperature is too high, or the music is loud and noisy. Social influences indicate the role of individuals in the atmosphere of a retail store (Baker et al., 1992). It is indicated in the number, form and actions of the employees of the store and other clients. The third dimension is the design influences that contain a retail store's decorative and functional components. This requires the structure, style and construction that specifically contribute to the retail store's functional qualities (Baker et al., 1992). They prove that marketers use a mixture of these three dimensions to create an environment that will stimulate the emotional nature of customers.

Baker et al., (2002) analysed the psychological characteristics of a retail store in a subsequent analysis and established the connection between a retail store, mental states and behaviour of consumers. They remember that the environment of a pleasurable retail store creates a healthy mental state in the mind of a customer and results in efficient buying behaviour (Baker et al., 2002). Janse van Noordwyk (2008:51) suggests, in particular, that a healthy emotional state in a customer contributes to positive impressions of the merchandise display, the enjoyment of buying, the time spent in the shop area and the money spent on sales. Thus, retailers can elicit a favourable emotional condition in a customer by building an evocative environment in the retail store that helps make the shopping process simple and purchase decisions uncomplicated (Baker et al 2002; Hu & Jasper 2006).

2.9 Environmental Psychology

Ahrentzen, (2001), in her study of “Socio behavioural qualities of the built environment”, examined the relations between the built environments (i.e. physical structures designed and constructed and altered by people), and aspects of social behaviour by making use of a classification model. The classification model focuses on attributes of the environment which when looked at conclusively can be referred to as “experiential qualities”. They are the social constructions of the intermingling of built forms and people; they are the product of the transaction between the setting’s physical environment, activities, and the social context (Ahrentzen, 2001).

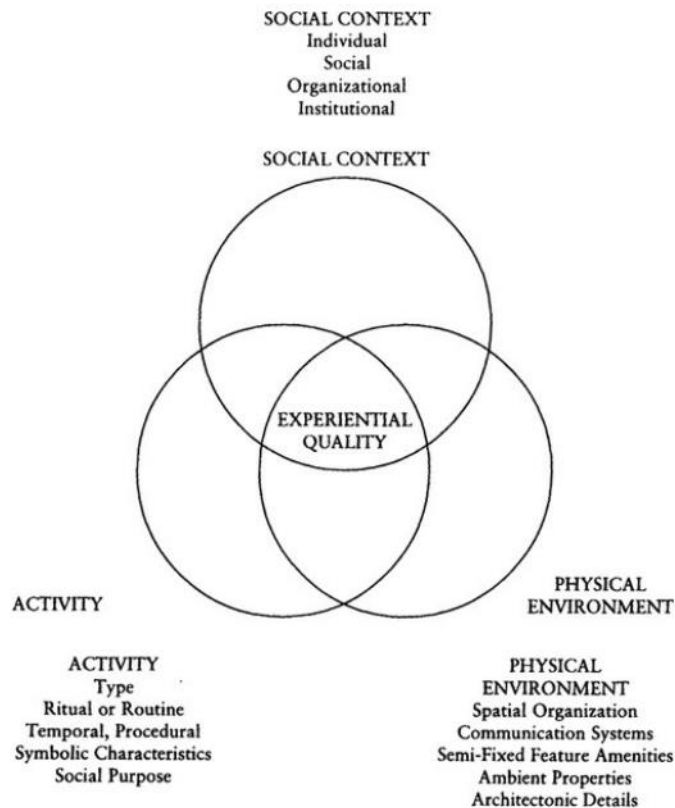


Figure 2. 6: Behavioural qualities model (Ahrentzen, 2001)

The classification model comprises of three attributes: The Physical Environment (the interior design of the stores), The Activity (the shopping experience) and the Social Context (Retail environment at the shopping Centre). The reason for adopting this classification model for the given study is because it has a thematic and systematic approach, controllable. Though suggested from an environmental psychology field, it relates human behaviour (customer) within a particular context (physical retail environment) where there is an activity (shopping). Ahrentzen, (2001), acknowledges that these experiential qualities have a particular relevance to the field of social behavioural qualities such as legibility, sensory stimulation and physical comfort. Ahrentzen on the subject of legibility, is in agreement with Lynch, (1960), adds that it is the emotional paradigm, and further describes legibility as an ease where a person is able to understand, recognise and relate to the environment they are in. This then brings one to inquire how legible the interior design affects are and how customers respond both to the environment and the designers intent in the South African context. The model focuses on attributes of the environment which when looked at conclusively can be referred to as "experiential qualities". They are the social constructions of the intermingling of built forms and people; they are the product of the transaction between the setting's physical environment, activities, and the social context.

2.10 Chapter Summary

Globally, the retail industry has advanced, creating opportunities for consumers to act as manufacturers through personalising their shopping experiences. This was accentuated by technology as it enabled customisation thus desiring more interactive experiences and personalization. South Africans, because of poor economic growth, have struggled with a weakened currency for a number of years. The lack of growth affected how South African Retailers level up to the global standards. The precedent studies reviewed, indicated a level of advancement on experiential retailing globally and how behind South African retailers are. Retail Design in South Africa is mostly seen in higher LSM store profiles. In the studied literature, it was found that a healthy emotional state in a customer contributes to positive impressions on appearance of the merchandise displayed, the enjoyment of shopping, and the time spent in the atmosphere of the store. Research is required on how these aspects contribute to the creation of subjective experiences. In addition, our understanding of specific design effects needs to be improved, both in terms of how these effects influence in-store interactions and in terms of how retailers use them and respond to them. To impact the customer behaviour, retail designers research and collaborate with marketing specialists to understand and anticipate behavioural responses. In this study, the impact of the collaboration and contribution of the different stakeholders in the design process and execution will be explored. In this study, the researcher investigates some of the atmospheric cues intended to affect the customer's emotional state of enjoyment. Further, exploring how visual merchandise, as a design comparative tool, can affect customer behaviour. While literature on physical retail store environments explains that it enhances positive feelings. Retail design plays a psychological role and has an influence on approach behaviours. It can enhance customer positive feeling and where they would find themselves staying longer in stores. In this study, the researcher investigates elements that are introduced by designers with an intent of evoking approach behaviours.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Introduction

Using Ahrentzens', (2001) and Hekkerts', (2016) as a conceptual framework, in this chapter, methodological issues relevant to this research are discussed in two parts: In part one, an explanation of the design research method used in this study is given. In part two, the research design is discussed in order to meet the aims and objectives set out in chapter one. A description of the various stages of the research are given, with an explanation of how the sample was chosen, the data collection process, the role of the researcher in qualitative research together with the data analysis method. The ethical considerations related to this research are also discussed. In conclusion, a discussion of trustworthiness and legitimacy in qualitative research pertaining to this study addressed.

Using a qualitative research method, four in-depth interviews were analysed thematically to explore the design effects introduced by the store designer and how the users of the space have responded to the design intent. Further, instore observations were conducted by the researcher to examine and understand the customer behaviour in relation to the design intent.

“A research design can be understood as a useful framework used to organize each and every aspect of the research activity; this includes the gathering of data using means most likely to satisfy the research aim (Thorpe & Jackson, Easterby-Smith, 2015)”.

3.2. Research Philosophy

The nature of this study covers all the levels on the Social Implication design method by Tromp & Hekkert, (2016). There is a social context, which is the space to which customers interact and do their shopping with an interaction with each other and store employees. The social space the customers are in leads to a behaviour resulting in an experience which may or may not be pleasant. Here in lies the exploration of the intent of the retail designer is examined to understand its effects and impact on the customers.

For this research, the author refers to design research as described by Nigel Cross (2007:1). Design studies focus on describing the why, the how and the what of design. Design studies confirms that design, as a process and as an output, has greater opportunity to add brand value. "When design principles are applied to strategy and innovation the success rate for innovation dramatically improves (Design thinking, 2018)". Technology has grown beyond item creation, leading to the impressive success rate of design-led businesses. Now companies, including designers, who want to know how to think. Companies that intuitively understand and design products and experiences that are in line with market expectations are more likely to build mind and market share and have a sustainable brand value (Design thinking, 2018).

Yelavach (2012) argues that Design Studies is interdisciplinary (moving between disciplines), multi-disciplinary (utilizing multiple disciplines in its process and methods) and transdisciplinary (combining disciplines in creating new disciplinary structures) its approaches and scopes are not constrained by any boundaries of academic disciplines. It is "promiscuous and draws on the knowledge of philosophy", sociology, anthropology, literature, cultural theory, politics and the sciences to ask questions of what is design, and how can we comprehend its acting in the world by analysing its possibilities and limits (Yelavich, 2012).

As an organized field of study, Design Studies is substantiated by its own academic and professional discourse and theoretical perspectives concerning the ways we think about design—its nature, purpose, agency, configuration, engagement, deployment, place, responsibilities, ethics, politics, problems, environment, sustainment, potentialities and alternative futures. It focuses on describing the why, the how and the what of design.

Design studies does not limit inquiry to prescriptive definitions of what design is supposed to be, but instead it aims to understand (and study) the possibilities of what design can achieve and uses varied methodologies to explore the delineations and synergies between academic inquiry, critical theory and design practice. Its scholars explore the coherent structures and intellectual parameters of how design is encountered in the world, as well as analyse which different modes of contemporary practice are rethinking design to propose and realize alternative futures

Researchers in design studies explore the coherent structures and intellectual parameters of how design is encountered in the world, as well as analyse which different modes of contemporary practice are rethinking design to propose and realize alternative futures.

Research design, conceived as "problem-solving," has brought some huge progress. However, in terms of understanding how designs come about — designs in complex situations where it is impossible to divide and conquer. Designs where aesthetics are important, and the design of any socio-technical structures (where people are part of the system), did not seem to provide a full account of what was happening. Therefore, it is not shocking that researchers turned their attention to studying the designers themselves. (McDonnell, 2015:108)

The Discoverdesign: Chicago Architecture Centre explain a well know conventional design process, by describing that the design process is an approach to break a broad project into manageable chunks. Architects, engineers, scientists and other

thinkers make use of a design process solve a range of problems. The figure 2.7 reflects the conventional design process cycle. This process cycle is generic as a design process any specific to any design field.

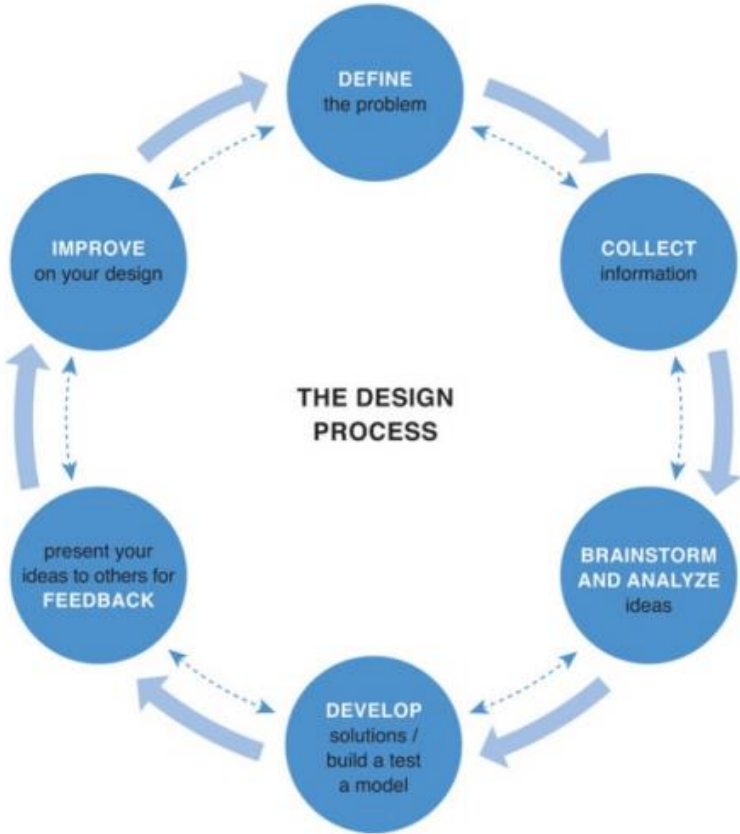


Figure 2. 7: The design Process cycle (Designdiscovery)

The Design process in figure 2.7 involves of Six steps. The steps explained below:

1. Define the problem: Until you have a clear idea of what the problem is, you are unable to find a solution.
2. Collect Information: Take photos, collect data, research and reading, sketching drawings to get you motivated.
3. Brainstorm and Analyze Ideas: Start sketching, making and studying so you can begin to understand how all the data and information you have gathered can impact your design.
4. Develop solutions: Taking advantage of early ideas and create several small-scale solutions.
5. Gather Feedback: Introduce your ideas to as many people as possible, including colleagues, teachers, experts and everyone else you trust to provide constructive comments.
6. Improve: Focus on all of the suggestions and determine whether it should be applied, or to what degree. It is often helpful to take solutions back through the Design Process to refine and clarify them.

In our advancing world, however, design is always considered not only with appropriateness and functionality but also with the creation and realization of new ideas (Royal College of Art, 1979), which treat intellect with technicalities in equal measure (Cross, 2007:41).

From Nigel Cross' (2007:1) point of view, research into the design act, i.e. its principles, processes and procedures, is what is called 'design methodology.' In this research it was essential to identify the 'ingredients' for good performance in the design. Methodological studies aim at modelling the design process and/or developing design methods. "Design methods are assumed to improve design performance. The purpose of methods is to transfer know how between people over time and space. In doing so, the methods are expected to help the designer to structure their thinking. (Daalhuizen, 2014)."

One of the main purposes of design research is to understand how designers' thinking and acting enhance the value of the design process and deliver value to design results.

Nynke Tromp and Paul Hekkert (2016:26) propose a method of Social Implication design. The "Social Implication Design method" presents the design outcome, i.e. the eventual product or service, as the designers' unique contribution to the social realm.

Tromp and Hekkert (2016) design method was applied in this study to comprehend and explore the effects designers apply in creating a motivational shopping environment. This research assumed a casual research design approach, where it focuses on cause and effects relationships.

3.3. Research Design

This research explored the built environment to examine the effects of motivational orientation, in order to determine how interior design affects the consumer experience and how legible the design factors are to the consumers. The first step in accomplishing the aims and objectives of this study involved the formulation a concise and focused research design.

The research design is a system used to coordinate all elements of the research activity; this involves the processing of data using means most likely to meet the research aims and objectives (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Likewise, the core of the study design includes making decisions about what needs to be studied and how researchers can perform their observations in ways that are better suited to addressing the research question (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). For the purpose of this research, a research design was developed as illustrated in figure 3.1.

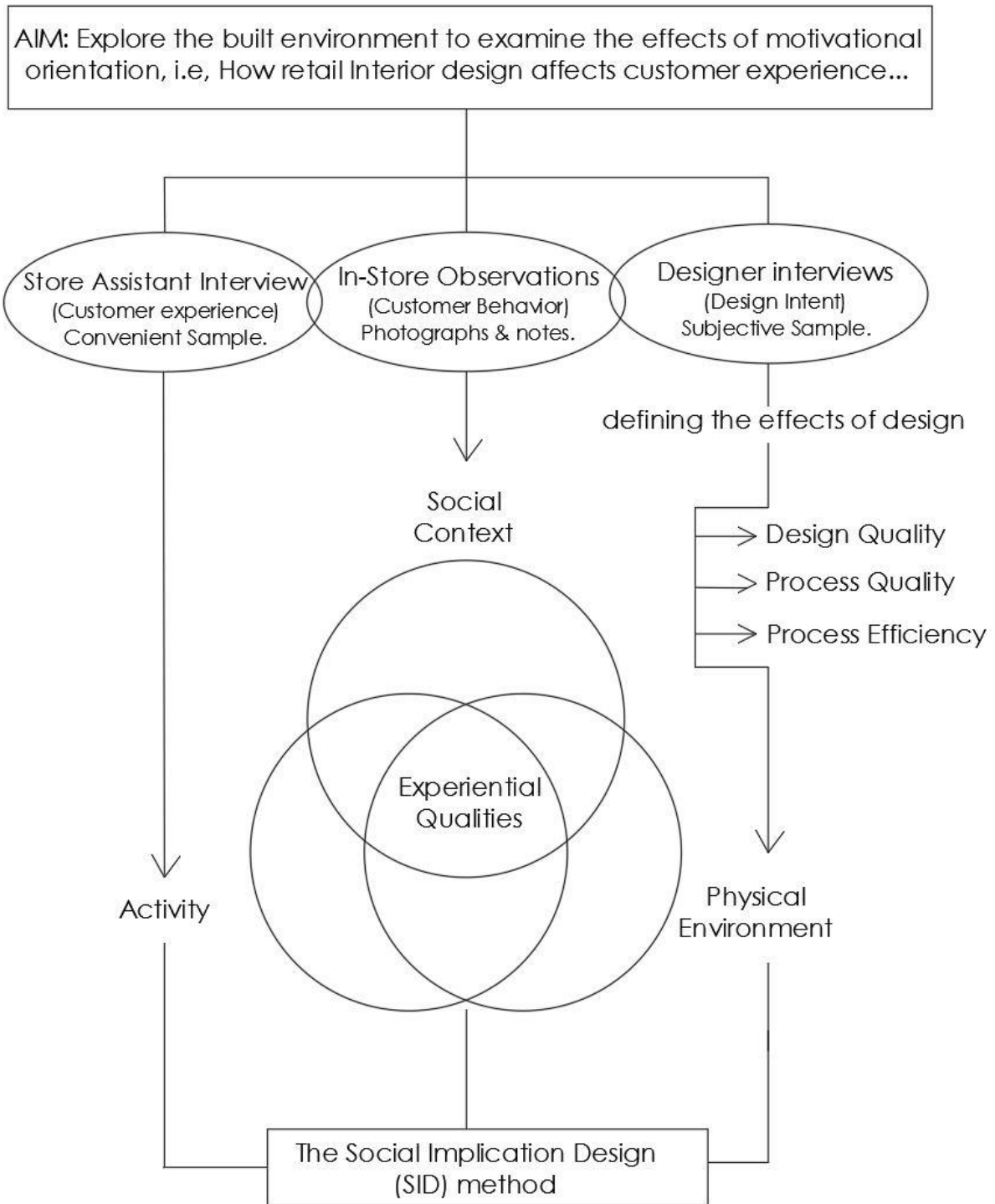


Figure 3. 1: Research design steps overview. (Buwa, 2019) Summarised from (Ahrentzen, 2001) and (Tromp & Hekkert, 2016:26- 29).

Figure 3.1 offers an overview of the research design steps. At the center of figure 3.1 are experiential qualities. These qualities are influenced by social (the act of shopping), physical environment (designed space) and the in-store activity (behavior). The Retail designer contributes to the physical context, while the store employees contribute to the in-store activity. The data collected through instore observation would then report on the social context.

In this research, the object of interest involves the relationship between the effects of the retail design in store environments and the shopping behaviour (Intention to behave). For the defined research aims, objectives and research question, the option of an exploratory design would make it possible to catch the abundance of experience in the actual retail space while ensuring that the existing research design was compatible with design studies and philosophies. In the same field of environmental psychology, Ahrentzen, (2001), in a study of "Socio behavioural qualities of the built environment", examined the relations between the built environments (i.e. physical structures designed, constructed & altered by people) and aspects of social behaviour by making use of a classification model.

3.4. Research Strategy: a qualitative case study

The interior design and retail customer behaviour construct lends itself best to a more qualitative approach (Bustamante & Rubio, 2017). As stated by Bustamante & Rubio (2017), this approach reinforces an understanding and interpretation of meaning as well as intentions underlying human interaction. The study focused on physical environmental experience and behavioural qualities which are qualities that cannot be measured in numerical form (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)". This approach is backed by Palmer (2010) who suggests that qualitative approaches are the best way to fully understand customer experience. For these reasons, a qualitative research approach was chosen as the methodology in this study.

Following the theoretical model and the research design outlined above, this research also adopts a qualitative case study. The rationale of the researcher's

choice was the identified need to collect data from a number of different sources yet of the same physical environment (retail store), referred to as Retailer X in this research. Yin (2003) reasoned that researchers should consider implementing a case study design when the research issue is articulated in terms of "how or why the actions of the respondents cannot be affected by the researchers, and the contextual circumstances are desirable and considered.

The analysis on this dissertation satisfies all three of these criteria. In comparison, a single-case analysis of Retailer X was used, considering the basic form of study that was carried out with a special emphasis on investigating the connection between the legibility of interior design and the construction of consumer behaviour.

3.5 Case study

A case study approach was chosen for the following reasons:

- A case study is a qualitative analysis approach that, using various data sources, may disclose information from the point of view of respondents (Yin 2003; Strauss & Corbin 1998).
- In a case study, the researcher not only takes into account the viewpoint of the study respondents, but also gives insights on the relationship between respondents that is important to the community (Stake 1995).
- The distinctive value of a case study technique is that it is possible to process a range of facts to present a holistic description of the phenomenon, such as interviews and findings & records.
- It develops a foundation for interpreting the complexities of a concept referred to as holism by Miles and Huberman (1994).

3.5.1 Case study design with an exploratory purpose

Yin (2003; 2009) suggests that when doing case studies, scholars have diverse priorities and warns that there are no specific distinctions between the various kinds of case analysis. While each reason for the case study is different, there are overlapping features between the three reasons described by Yin. Case studies are identified as intrinsic, instrumental or collective by Stake (1995). He explains that when the objective of using the case study is to consider more than what is evident from the perspective of the observer (Stake 1995), a case study is instrumental. When conducting a research, case studies may have single-case or multiple case implementations. A matrix indicating that single- and multiple-case studies represent unique case study design conditions (Yin 2009:46) is shown in Figure 3.2. In relation to its spatial surroundings, the matrix also displays each kind of case study design. Retail design is the focus of this research and for the case study. That there is no clear boundary between the case and the context of a study (Yin, 2009). The process and role players in the retail design cannot be considered to be separate from the situation in Retailer X Group Store Development Department and vice versa.

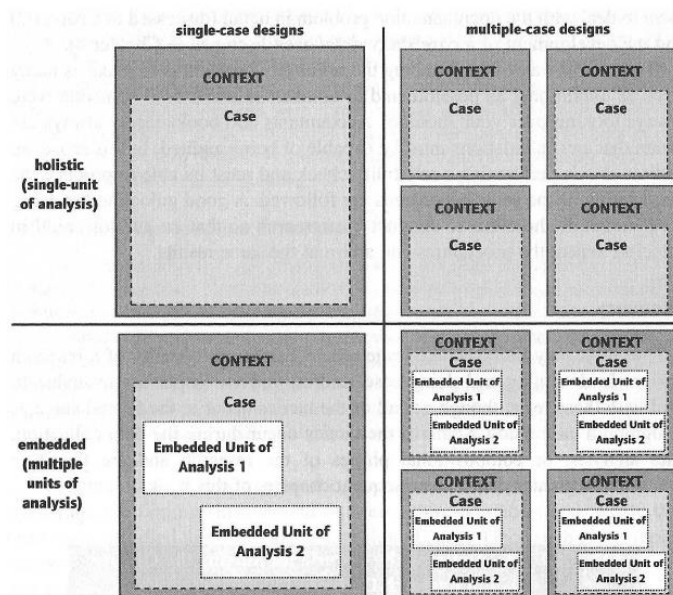


Figure 3. 2: Basic types of designs for case studies (Yin 2009:46)

Yin (2009) gives five possible reasons for the selection of a single case study in an investigation. The single case study can represent:

- A critical case in an existing theory,
- An exciting or unique case,
- Typical or representative case of ordinary circumstances,
- A revelatory case,
- A longitudinal case that studies the same case at separate moments in time.

3.5.1.1. The Case Study Context: Retailer X Group Property department

The selection of Retailer X Group Store Development Department as the case study is based on the fact that it is a retail store based in South Africa. Retailer X has a slow and steady store expansion plan, their base of retail stores and are not regularly refurbished. The chosen store based in Sandton City, Johannesburg, was built on a new concept, which would be rolled across all stores, new and existing.

The Group Store Development Department looks after the conceptual design processes, the implementation together with the construction of all their stores, however, with the new concept store, they appointed a design consultants firm. In this research the design consultants firm will be referred to as the Design team. Within Retailer X store development department, there are a number of role players that contributed to the successful design and execution of new concept stores. The focus on this study will be on the part played by Retail interior designers in designing and implementing Retailer X Concept further engaging with the employees of the store to appreciate the connection between the created space and the consumer behaviour.

As the case study for this analysis, the Group Store Development Department of Retailer X was chosen so that the role of interior designers in the design and execution of retail stores can be explored and the research can therefore be classified as instrumental. It was convenient to use their store since they recently launched a new concept late 2018, as a store of the future. Finally, Yin (2009)

distinguishes two variants, namely embedded and holistic case studies (Yin 2009), that occur in single case study designs. The case study in this research would be referred to as an embedded single case study design" (Yin 2009) as it is in an instance where a case study requires numerous units of analysis. An embedded case study design may be a helpful method for concentrating a case study investigation, according to Yin (2009), but he advises that the researcher should take caution not to let the primary phenomenon of concern become the backdrop rather than the study's goal.

3.6. Sampling method: a combination of purposeful and convenience sample

A variety of sampling types are possible when conducting research, but qualitative researchers typically concentrate on fairly small samples (Lyell, 1998). Research participants are usually chosen because they can provide detailed explanations of their experiences and are able to express their experiences, thereby providing valuable knowledge that can test and enrich the understanding of the researcher. (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Hutchinson & Wilson, 1991).

The sampling method in this study is a combination of a purposeful sample and convenience sample. In an effort to address the research questions, the researcher explicitly selected participants who could contribute to the research subject and who would be willing to share their store and customer experiences with the design intent. A good sample size for a qualitative analysis is one that addresses the research question adequately (Marshall, 1996:523)

Initially, potential participants were approached that are employed by Retailer X. This was done by deliberately selecting participants who met the study inclusion criteria (Marshall, 1996:523).

- **Retail Assistants or Employees – Convenient Sample**

All Participants worked in the store before and after the retail store design intervention. All assistants and the manager were interviewed during different shifts on different days. A convenience sampling methodology entails selecting population participants who satisfy a clear criteria, such as ease of access, availability of time, geographical proximity or desire to engage in the research (Etikan, 2016).

- **Store Design Team – Purposive sample**

Relevant contacts were obtained from Retailer X to ensure that the participants were involved during the design phase, the implementation and build of the store.

- **In-Store Observations**

An event sampling method was applied, to limit the amount of observations that were conducted by the researcher and to take a small sample of the overall behaviour. The focus was on occasional behaviours where the researcher created a list of the focal areas of the store and recorded the floor plan and mapped out how the consumer navigated the store and the extent to which they engaged with the hot spots or experiential areas. This was done by targeting the main experiential areas specified by the designer on the floor plan layout.

Throughout qualitative research it is difficult to determine the exact number of participants before the analysis is carried out. The number of participants in qualitative research is informed by the extent to which the research question has been dealt with (Marshall, 1996:522; McLeod, 2002).

When data reaches the point of saturation, i.e. when new themes cease to emerge, the researcher may conclude that there is no need for more interviews (Hutchinson

& Wilson, 1991:264; Marshall, 1996:523; Orbele, 2002). Interviews were conducted before the data reached a reasonable saturation point and the researcher felt that the research question could be answered adequately with the information gathered.

3.7 Data Collection

This research required the researcher to partake in the use of, or observe others use, a designed object or system. Design-based Ethnography has become a common tool where design is observed as a social practice. It describes a process in which a researcher will partake in traditional observant style ethnography, and observe potential user's complete activities that can inform design opportunities and solutions (Blauvelt, 2007). Other ethnographic techniques used by Design Studies scholars would fall more in line with anthropologist's usage of the method. These techniques are observant and participant ethnography. The observant style requires the scholar to observe in an unobtrusive manner. Observations are recorded and further analysed. The participant style requires the scholar to partake in the activities with their subject. This tactic enables the scholar to record what they see, but also what they themselves experience.

In the case study, Yin (2009) cites six data collection sources of documentation that include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, respondent observation and physical objects. In any case study, not everyone of them needs to be used (Yin 1994). Within this dissertation, the sources of evidence used are direct in store observations and interviews. The table below maps out the research questions and projects a parallel explanation the research aims/objectives and how the questions will be answered.

	Questions	Objectives	Tools/Methods
Main Question	To what extent does retail design intent and its effects correlate with consumer shopping behavior?	Explore the built environment to examine the effects of motivational orientation.	Literature Review Designer Interview Store Inspection
	How does design legibility of interior design affect the consumers experience?	Determine how interior design affects the consumer experience and how legible the design factors are to the consumers.	Literature Review Store Employee Interviews
Sub Questions	What design effects do designers apply in creating a motivational shopping environment?	Investigate the design effects used by the interior designers in creating a motivational shopping environment	Store Designer Interviews In-store Observations Store Inspection
	How do consumers respond to the designers' intent?	Assess how consumers respond to the designers' intentions.	Observations Store Employee Interviews

Table 1. 1: Mapping research questions with the aims and objectives

3.7.1 Observations

An inductive approach to this study began with first-hand observation in the actual retail store setting where the researcher concentrated on observing the working trends, consumer interaction with the actual space and focusing on what physically took place in the retail store. That then informed the formulation of theory towards the end of the research. In other words, no hypotheses were introduced at the beginning of the research during the inductive studies and the analysis was free to change direction for the study after the analysis cycle had begun (Neuman, 2011).

“Inductive research involves the search for a pattern from observation and the development of explanations for those patterns through series of hypotheses (Welman et al., 2005 and Mouton, 2011)”. Neuman (2003) argues that inductive research starts with comprehensive world-wide observations, progressing towards more abstract generalizations and ideas. A researcher tends to establish scientific generalizations by pursuing an inductive approach, and establishes tentative relationships as they move through study.

Experience trends and predictability were observed to arrive at conclusions and produce hypothesis afterwards. In other words, no existing hypotheses or patterns need to be checked in inductive studies during the investigation process (Welman et al., 2005; and Mouton, 2011). The research thus included personal knowledge of the physical store environment and customer service experiences at the retail store selected.

Four key performance indicators that make transparent the sales performance and customer behaviour are adopted from Günther, (2017) as means of reporting observations on this research.

3.7.1.1. Four key performance indicators

The four key indicators are as follows:

- **Traffic Flow**

Which Routes and how busy?

Which walking patterns are recognizable?

Which Conclusion can be drawn from this product placement or guidance?

- **Customer Frequency**

How many customers, How many people?

- **Hot Sports**

Where do many / Fewer customers stay

What conclusions can be drawn from this for the operative business?

- **Capture Rate**

How many passers-by entered the store?

Which displays are used in the store, how are effective are they?

In observational methods, claims have been made that participant observation enables the researcher to participate directly in the events of the setting; these claims have, of course, been balanced by warnings that the researcher can affect (contaminate) the setting or become too much of a participant, thereby losing the capacity to observe critically (Atkinson, P & Coffey, A 2001:110). On the opposite, it can be argued that observing people can be better than listening to them. Observational studies can expose hidden patterns that contribute to issues being solved. (Brian, W, 2019).

To mitigate the involvement of the researcher and the contamination of data, the research limited the observation only for mapping the consumer's interaction with the retail space or physical environment. This was done by obtaining the floor plan of Retailer X with all the fixtures indicated on the floor plan or layout. The researcher's main role was to map the navigation of the customer between the fixtures, this would also reflect mostly visited areas within the store. This was done to validate what was communicated by the designer as an intent and to corroborate what the store assistants and employees have mentioned.

3.7.2 Interviews

The data was obtained through in-depth interviews & observations. The following paragraphs outline a detailed justification for selecting the specific methods and approaches. The researcher gathered information from retail store managers, store employees and in-store observations to address the research questions.

3.7.2.1. Interviews Part one: Store Designers (Design Intent)

Potter (1996) noted that interviews are useful resources for the qualitative research data collection. A single-on-one interview approach helps the researcher to communicate with the participants and detect non-verbal signals during the interview process.

- A structured interview approach with open ended questions was used in this study to allow an interactive, in-depth discussion of the design intent. On Store employees, a more structured interview approach was useful to control the narrative and mitigate the risk of stores using the interview as a complaining session.
- Unstructured interview approach was employed to the store designers or design team, affording them the opportunity to communicate the design intent on each element or fixture designed for the store, be it finishes, lighting, layout and so forth. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that unstructured interviews allow the researcher to grasp the dynamics of the situation without needing prior categorisation.

Furthermore, in an open-ended questions approach, the reliabilities and validities are higher than is the case in closed-ended questions (Krosnick et al in Albarracín et al (eds), 2005:34). This is because in closed-ended questions there is a likelihood of the participants' responses being distorted by the limited answer choices presented to the participants by the researcher (Krosnick et al in Albarracín et al (eds),2005:34). However, in an open-ended form of interviewing, such as was the case for this

research, designers were compelled to justify the statements that they make. Asking the store designers to elaborate or clarify their responses minimized “generalizing”. This is part of the reason that the open-ended, as opposed to the closed ended approach to interviewing was selected for this research.

Constructs of unstructured interview questions for the store designers

The following structure was constructed from literature and the themes that emerged relating to this research and the Physical Environment of the store. Questions were developed within the parameters highlighted in the table below:

Construct	Dimension	Indicators	Theoretical Underpinning
<i>Physical Environment</i>	<i>Design Intent</i>	<i>Layout</i>	<i>Kumar (2010)</i>
		<i>Functionality</i>	<i>Singh (2006)</i>
		<i>Aesthetics</i>	<i>Baker (1994)</i>
		<i>Visual Appeal</i>	<i>Mathwick (2016)</i>
		<i>Efficiency</i>	
	<i>Design Efficiency</i>	<i>Security measures</i>	<i>Mathwick (2016)</i> <i>Nynke Tromp and Paul Hekkert, (2016:39-41)</i>
		<i>Operational functionality</i>	
	<i>Design Process</i>	<i>Efficiency</i>	
		<i>Prototypes</i>	
	<i>Design Quality</i>	<i>Drawings and revisions</i>	
<i>Time (Planned vs Actual)</i>			

Table 3. 1: Construct of unstructured interview questions for store designers

3.7.2.2. Interviews Part Two: Store Assistants or Employees (customer behaviour)

Throughout the case of interviews with store workers and store managers, interviews were conducted with individuals who work on the shop on a regular basis and are strategically placed to assist customers in the physical retail environment. The motivation for this was to obtain individual responses, from the store employees, that would give first-hand information on how customer's respond to the physical store environment and the design space, "...putting individual responses into a [shared] context." (Fontana & Frey in Denzin and Lincoln (eds), 2000:651). Fontana and Frey caution of the danger of conducting interview using a group approach, and argues that with this approach, the participants are likely to fall into "groupthink" (Fontana & Frey in Denzin and Lincoln (eds), 2000:652). As opposed to giving statements that reflect their genuine individual opinions, in this type of approach the participants are susceptible to expressing views that are more in tune with- if not the views of the dominant group members- than what they may believe to be the general views of the group.

Construct of structured interview questions for store employees

The previous Table:3.1 mainly highlights the questionnaire structure that addressed the questions applicable to the design intent, the design process and design principles, applied by the designer. The table: 3.2 that follows, however, structures questions specific to the users of the space created. The store employees do not have a different perspective, and only use the space that was created for them. They may understand some obvious design ques applied by the designer but some of the soft elements that are specific to design thinking and design philosophies may not be as obvious. Therefore, the user or store employees may be better equipped to explain the relationship between the design intent and what actually happens on the designed space. The following structure was constructed from literature and the themes that emerged relating to this research and the Social Context of the store. Questions were developed with within the perimeters highlighted in the table

below:

Construct	Dimension	Indicators	Theoretical Underpinning
<i>Social Context</i>	<i>Customer</i>	<i>Lighting</i>	<i>Brocato (2012)</i>
	<i>Behavior & Motivational Orientation</i>	<i>Space</i>	<i>Singh (2006)</i>
		<i>Music</i>	<i>Baker (1994)</i>
		<i>Purchase intentions</i>	<i>Mathwick (2016)</i>
		<i>Customers engagements</i>	<i>Kumar (2010:2-5)</i>

Table 3. 2: Construct of structured interview questions for store employees

3.8. Data Analysis

The data for this study was analysed in three ways for purposes of triangulation. This approach was used for assuring the validity of the study through the use of a variety of methods on same topic. However, the purpose of triangulation in this study was not necessarily to cross-validate data but rather to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon.

- First, the data was analysed thematically. The themes emerging in the preliminary review of the literature were used as a starting point. Data was analysed using the Rubin and Rubin method (1995:7), where preliminary literature analysis is reviewed in order to refocus research questions on themes emerging during interviews.
- Secondly, Ahrentzen, (2001) used a classification model, adopted in this study, to focuses on experiential qualities to establish the relationship between the built physical environments and its users. The classification model comprised of three attributes: The Physical Environment (the interior design of the stores), The Activity (the shopping experience) and the Social Context (Retail

environment at the shopping Centre). The attributes have been adopted and used as guidelines for the thematic analysis of the data collected from interviews and observations.

- Thirdly, in an assessment of the "Social Implication Design," Tromp and Hekkert (2016:26), suggest an approach that presents the process result, i.e. the actual product or service, as the specific contribution of the designers to the social realm. This method was adopted in analysing data more specifically; interviews with the store design team and store designers by analysing the design quality, design process and process efficiency.

3.9. Pilot Study

A pilot test is a mini-version of a full-scale research or sample conducted in preparation for a larger study. It is often referred to as a 'feasibility' test. This can also be a basic pre-testing of research instruments, including questionnaires or interview schedules. (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

3.9.1. Introduction

Before conducting the main research, a pilot study was employed to assess the research participant's environmental perceptions on the store environment. A sample consisted of one person from the design team, to communicate the design intent. The questions asked and answered by the store design team are included in the research as Appendix one. In addition, another person who is a store employee, was also interviewed, as a user of the space created by the designer. The author also observed for two hours the retail store environment as a pilot for instore observations. During the in store observations, the researcher made use of the floor plan and mapped out the customer's interaction with the space. The store employee interview questions are also included on this research as Appendix Two.

3.9.2. The Pilot study in this research and its value.

The pilot study was of value both for the realistic implementation of the test system and for the evaluation of the approaches used along with the Model questionnaires, interviews and in-store observations. This was done to identify possible difficulties related to the process that might have had an undesirable effect on the aims and objectives of the study. One store employee was selected to pilot the questionnaire. The following were the learnings from the pilot interview:

- Firstly, the premises had shared offices, where before the interview began, the interviewee had interaction with other employees which delayed the start of

the interview. The colleagues to the interviewee were busy with their own work streams and for the first few minutes did interrupt the interviewee. Moreover, the interviewee one's position was a store manager. Based on his position, the research could conclude from the answers given that, he was briefed by the Retailer Xs executives and was taken through the design and design intent judging by the language he used during the interview. Key adaptation from these were to find a more quiet place for the interview with less distractions, where the researcher requested the second Store employee interviewee to a quieter location not on the premises with less interruptions and distractions.

- Secondly, the choice of the second interviewee would be a more general employee who may not be exposed to managerial information and the design intent of the store. This second interviewee gave a clearer and more uninformed view and of how they perceive the store and their observations of customer interactions.

The second phase of the pilot study included the interviewing of the Store Designer. During this interview, the researcher found that most of the important questions were from the middle to the end of the interview, by this time, the interviewee seemed tired. Also the time duration for the interview was planned to be 20minutes, however, the interview took over 40minutes which was twice the planned time. The content given by the interviewee was well received and the research understood the answers that they were in fact answering the research aims. However, the interview was done with the senior interior designer who was responsible for the entire design project and there was no need of interviewing another member from the same team as the information was sufficient. A member of the operations team from the retail group head office was identified as an ideal person, who would be able to give and explain the design intent from the client's perspective who gave the store designer a brief to work from. The questions prepared for the designer

were still applicable with minor amendments to suit the second interviewee who would know also speak to the design intent.

3.10. Reflections on trustworthiness and potential weakness

In order to ensure that the research was ethically carried out, attempts were taken to ensure that moral standards and proper behaviour were enforced (Strydom 2011a:114). In fact, this was undertaken to eradicate traditional ethical pitfalls such as racism, omission, segregation and labelling. The researcher took relevant steps to ensure that the study was conducted in an acceptable manner. Included was the written consent of the faculty of Informatics and Design of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, where the ethical clearance was obtained through the Higher Degrees Committee. The research project measuring instrument, (interview questionnaire to the design team and the retailer) together the approval of all necessary procedures. The establishment of honesty was archived through recording and reporting exactly the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:103-104). The adopted Harvard referencing style was used as a prerequisite of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and assembled by means of the reference list used. The Plagiarism declaration of the Cape Peninsula University of technology is included in this dissertation.

Permission for the study to continue was sought and received from the company head office of the Retail X. The said retailer requested that they remain anonymous throughout this study hence the reference to "Retailer X". The permission was obtained prior to conducting data collection. All contributions to the study have been acknowledged.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

The research is done to give an accurate account of all the information collected and to acknowledge all sources utilised for this research. An application for ethical clearance, as required by the Faculty research and ethics committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, was submitted and approved. A declaration signed that this is the researcher's own work will accompany the dissertation.

Consent letters were received from participants and the company or organisation where the data was collected giving permission to conduct the study. However, the retail company, being referred to as Retailer X in this research, requested that it remains anonymous and should not be mentioned in this study nor should the participant's names.

To guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, the recording and questionnaires were numbered so that in the event of a breach of security or misplacement of files, the information would be encrypted for anyone to understand other than the researcher. The captured data was only viewed and examined by the researcher alone as per agreement with participants.

The following possible challenges are considered:

	Possible Challenges	Mitigation to Possible Challenges
1.	Research results may find and reflect negatively on the designer's actual intentions	The designers will remain anonymous
2.	Consumers discomfort while being observed by the researcher.	Dress code to be professional.
3	Inconsistency on information given by store employees.	Comparison of researchers notes and store assistants will be done.

Table 3. 3: Possible ethical challenges to consider.

3.11.1. Feedback

The researcher also reassured the availability of the results of the study on the CPUT website and a personal feedback to each and every participant who contributed in the research.

3.11.2. Limitations

The main limitations of this dissertation lie in the nature of qualitative research. Qualitative research is thought to provide an internal generalizability as opposed to a statistical generalizability, meaning that the data collected on the research topic is limited to a specific setting and therefore can solemnly be replicated (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Consequently, there is an increased difficulty for the author of this research to confidently claim that the information collected from the case study selected can be generalised as the norm across different retail environments, e.g., Clothing, Food, Automotive etc. The extent to which the findings of this study are relevant to other retailers or other retail sectors, will require further research to be done or the single place requires a broader range of surrounding studies to fully draw out conclusions that can be applicable across the sector. Also, information on sales performance would be confidential and difficult to obtain. In addition, the nature of non-probability sampling makes it impossible for the researcher to mention any participant of the research, be it the designers or the retail store employees, as the researcher agreed to anonymity.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the research design and methodology used to gather data. This chapter presents the findings of the research as a whole. The findings presented would detail interview answers to questions and in-store observations made by the researcher.

The overarching aim of this research is to explore the relationship between the design intent and effects in retail store environments.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Examine the built environment and investigate the effects of motivational orientation.
- Determine how interior design affects the consumer experience.
- Determine the legibility of interior design and the customer shopping behaviour (Intention to behave).
- Assess how legible the design factors are to the consumers.
- Investigate the design effects used by the interior designers in creating a motivational shopping environment.

The research focused on physical environmental experience and behavioural qualities cannot be measured in numerical form (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)". Palmer (2010) supports this approach, arguing that "qualitative approaches are the only way to truly grasp experience from the consumer's perspective." For these reasons, the qualitative research approach was chosen as the methodology for this research.

The qualitative data was derived from the interview sessions conducted with respondents together with the in-store observations done by the researcher. This data was analysed making use of content analysis which involves arranging the data in themes so that differences can be identified hence giving the results meaning (narratives).

The data in this study was collected using one of the "Retailer X" stores. The store was selected as the case study since it recently launched its new concept in the late 2018, as a store of the future. The analysis phase of this chapter will be a qualitative analysis.

This chapter is organized according to the themes that emerged in the literature review in Chapter 2. The themes are on social constructions of the intermingling of built forms and people; they are the product of the transaction between the retail setting's physical environment, activities, and the social context. The first theme presented seeks to give more understanding of the physical environment. This data was obtained through the interviews of the store designers with the aim of understanding, more specifically, the design intent. The Second theme presents the activity within the physical environment, using the data that was obtained from store employees. Thirdly, this chapter concludes by presenting the theme of the social context, with data collected from in-store observations. Each of the respondents or interviewees responses, supported by the in-store observations, were discussed with a comparison made based on the structure as outlined on figure 4.1.

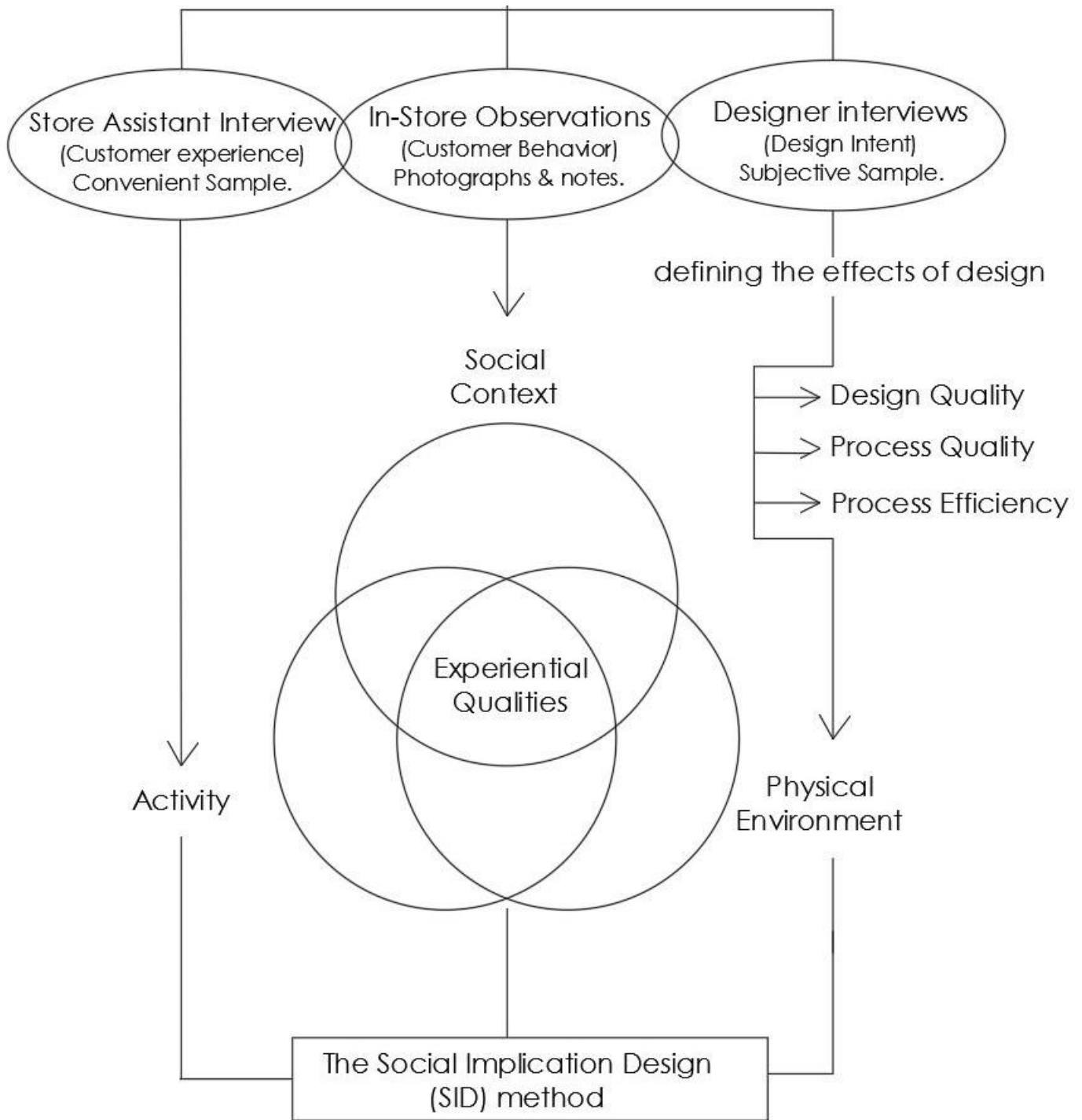


Figure 4. 1: An overview diagram of themes outlined in chapter two. (Buwa, 2019), Summarised from (Ahrentzen, 2001) and (Hekkert, 2016).

4.2. Presentation Of Findings

4.2.1. The Physical Context

4.2.1.1. Defining the Design Intent & Overall Brief.

The researcher first intended to establish the thinking of the retail designer. It is a general understanding that each designer would have their own design identity and style. When Retailer X Store designers was asked by the researcher about their design style and philosophy, they highlighted that one of their underlying philosophies is creating solutions and functional spaces relevant for today and in the future. The Store designer further explained the overall design intent. This was through engagements with the clients (the Retailer) to establish a brief and discuss the desired outcomes and the design brief.

“...one of the most important things is that it's not just designing an interior space that looks good and visually suit the brand. it's actually about designing a business solution that's going to work for the brand. It's a functional space, it's going to talk to the target market but at the same time it's a business model that the retailer will, going forward going to be able to afford to push into their stores moving forward.” [Store Designer]

“...Retailer X wanted to move it out of its current state and to evolve it to something that was more applicable to the current market, it had to be a space that spoke to the new age of shopping”. [Store Designer]

“...So I mean, some of the stuff that defined the identity is definitely the move from retailing to show rooming, no more bulk stack, its display stock, the Biggest request were to have our stores more less sterile and less clinical. We wanted the design team to come up with new trends and the new ideas, wants being done nationally, what's being done internationally.”. [Operations Director]

"...The clients brief understood that the stores needed to evolve to a space that spoke to the next generation, it had to be a space that spoke to the new age of shopping. Secondly, a lot of the goods, the way they selling is based most of it is on display, you come in, you experience it, you use it." [Store Designer]

1ST LEVEL CATEGORY BRANES
MOBILE
 2ND LEVEL CATEGORY BRANES
FITNESS
 3RD LEVEL CATEGORY BRANES
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

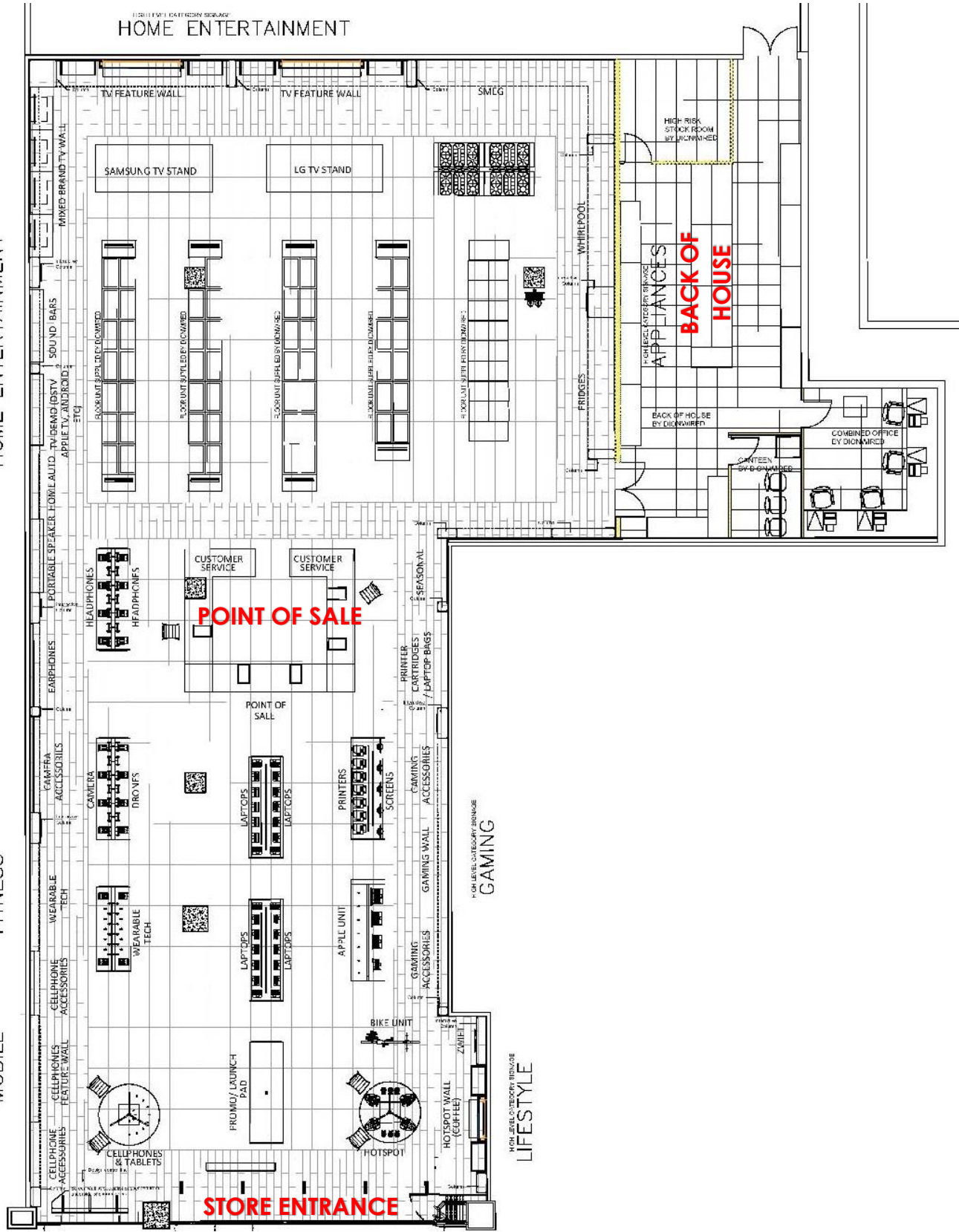


Figure 4. 2: Retailer X Floor Plan – (Obtained from the Head office)

4.2.1.2. Defining the Intended Design effects.

The first questions concerned the degree to which interior design interacts with customer behaviour, whereby the attention of the person is guided by strategically positioned stimuli by the design team to certain aspects of the store's environment. The answer to the question would also define and explain the design effects applied by the designers of Retailer X in creating a motivational shopping environment. The designers were asked by the researcher if any particular design features were introduced in this design project that they thought would enhance the customer experience?

"...So if we are going to talk about enhancing customer experience, just looking at the shopfront alone, that, visually we have tried to excite the consumers just by passing by the store, looking in the store, it's a far more inviting entrance, we have opened it up really largely and we have introduced large scale digital graphics to the front of the store; It's obviously something that has been used widely internationally at the moment and digital sales works and capture people so that's defiantly a tool that we have brought through."

[Store Designer]



Figure 4. 3: Retailer X Shopfront, Sandton City Shopping Centre

"...And if you look at the space itself, there are a lot of warm elements, there are Timbers, there are Bricks, Bricks that have been painted, we have a bit of a concrete tile. The interior is softened in comparison to where it was, so, the idea that is being sold here is lifestyle". [Store Designer]

"...There is an area which we identified as a lifestyle area, so this is not necessarily just about product. It's about the product that you can bring it into your home and it forms part of your lifestyle. I mean it's exciting to put a bicycle in the front of the store and sell the zwift idea to get people to engage. So anything that's going to engage and bring people in, that's another thing you bring to the front of the store". [Store Designer]

A common theme that surfaced during the interview with the Store Designer and the Operations Director concerning the design effects and the sensory stimuli was that Retailer X intended to leverage and capture consumers interest. In particular, the use of the wide entrance, the digital graphic at the window display in the store were means of attracting the attention of passers-by and drawing them into the store. They then see lifestyle items that may catch their attention and triggering a desire and senses to explore and experience something new.

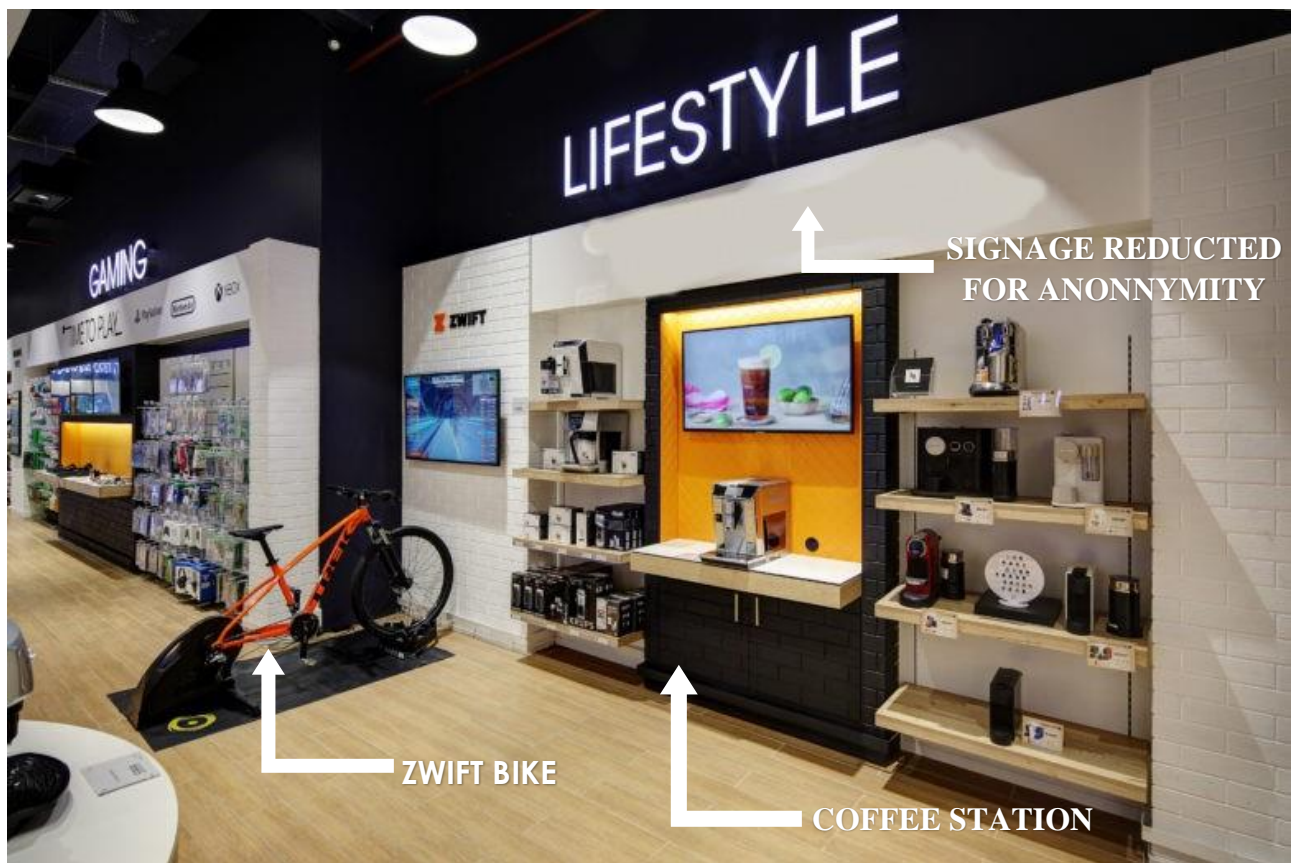


Figure 4. 4: Zwift Bike and a Coffee Zone, Retailer X, Sandton City Shopping Centre

"... in the walls built in there are orange blocks, those are hot spots. the two big TVs in the back of the wall, also sit on those orange blocks. those orange blocks were to be used for new innovative tech, the premium stuff, all the stock we wanted to highlight was gonna go in those boxes, so basically that was like a zone to attract customer, to new and innovative tech, the premium stuff". [Operations Director]

"...The other digital elements were to have online shopping capabilities in the store. So touch screen Panels, there are four of them built in the store on our various departments. You can go and browse our online selection and you can shop from there". [Store Designer]

"...Some of the highest sellers on the store were cellular, so as you enter the current store you will see that the cellular is actuary to you left". [Store Designer]

“...In December, when people walked in the store, we told them of the virtual bike and who ever set the highest power would win a prize. It's been a great engagement sport for our customers. We don't necessary want the customer to quickly pass through quickly. We want them to sit down and engage the product. That's why we have chairs, if they want to see how fast the machine s when browsing the internet, if they want to play with the cell phone, if they want listen to earphones, the stools are there for those reasons”.[Store Manager]



Figure 4. 5: Promo and General Display Areas, Retailer X, Sandton City Shopping Centre.

The effects as described by the Store Designer and the Operations Director represented the design team's intentions on how the customers would engage the products displayed and experience the space. The design intent focus was placed on the customer's willingness to engage with the hot zones created, digital elements by means of touch screen panels, product positioning, permitting the customers to

interact with top sellers and engage the merchandise as soon as they enter the store. The customer experience was enhanced through opportunities of engagement with the products. The Store Designer was further asked whether there were features or elements that took priority and shaped the store layout. What stood out was that the Retailer made use of financial information to establish the space plan and layout development. The best-selling items were placed at the front of the store, having the point of sale in the centre of the store.

"...Considering the layout and the POS (Point of sale), we wanted it to be a hub, so essentially, putting it in the centre of the floor, but essentially this is meant to feel more like a help desk, a station, a place of interaction. positioned it strategically for brands such as Vodacom, MTN to plug into that station and you could navigate right around the point of sale, what this did, it made all corners of the hub to be useful. [Store Designer]

"...Its basically a hub where all our additional services, delivery, installation repair of cellular phones we do from there So it's like a central hub that square till point in the middle of the floor, and anything that's not about purchasing stock, everything else, sits in that central hub". [Operations Director]

"...Our till points were made central now, in the centre of the store, and it's not really a till point alone anymore, it's called a services node. It's basically a hub where all our additional services, delivery, installation repair of cellular phones we do from there. RCS credits, Vodacom contracts we do from there and we ring up transactions from there. So it's like a central hub that square till point in the middle of the floor, and anything that's not about purchasing stock, everything else, sits in that central hub". [Operations Director]

Both the Store designer and the Operations Director were in agreement with the intent they had in mind for the Point of sale. This idea of having the point of sale as an information hub proved to be consistent with the notion of interaction between customer and store employees. This presented a contrast between shopping in physical retail store environment and online shopping. It presented situations where customers and store employees would interact and close off a sale.



POINT OF SALE

Figure 4. 6: Point of Sale or Service Node, Retailer X, Sandton City Shopping Centre

"...Bulkier furniture, larger items, tends to go to the back of the store. At the end of the day, it's inevitable that you will have smalls that sell and they need to be there. If you walk into the Retailer X store, you are going to want to buy a remote for a TV. It's not the most attractive product. It is sold in bulk". [Store Designer]

"...Unfortunately, anything that is sold in bulk tends not to look like a store that's displaying items, more stocking items. So if you start getting that visual impact, it actually reduces the effect that you are trying to create. So anything that create the idea of massing, we sent backwards." [Store Designer]

"...this comes back to the bulk stack issue. Not having bulk stack on our store makes it so much easier for our customers to navigate. This look and feel store has been set up with a precise idea in mind that we will not bulk stack, bulk stacking tells you that these guys are

in the business of mass sales, so yes we are in that business, we do want to increase sales at any given time, any retail company wants that, we also want our customers to have a showroom feel". [Store Manager]



Figure 4. 7: Back of Store are with Bulk Stacking, Retailer X, Sandton City Shopping Centre.

"...So if you start getting that visual impact, it actually reduces the effect that you are trying to create. So anything that create the idea of massing, we sent backwards".

"...So anything that's going to engage and bring people in, that's another thing you bring to the front of the store." [Store Designer]

The intention during the design development of the store was clear from the onset and communicated by the Store Designer, the Operations Director and the Store Employee and Manager that the intention was to have a more boutique/bespoke

feel, “a showroom effect”. It became inevitable that a portion of the store had to display other products in bulk due to the nature of the products. This form of display offered minimal engagement with products for customers.

4.2.1.3. Defining Intended design legibility and way finding.

The design team was asked of their approach and considerations on way finding and putting themselves in customers shoes in creating ease of shopping.

“...So one of the thing that we struggled with on the current stores was navigation, and inside the Retailer X store, it wasn't always clear as to where I would be able to get certain products within the store which area I would need to navigate to, to find the product I would be looking for. The fist we started with was, we wanted to create high level navigation signage, which means the minute the customer walked in, they knew exactly where to walk within the store. So that already increases the success rate of a customer walking in and feeling fulfilled in what they were there to do”. [Store designer]

*“Signage, so the store previously had very little signage in it. So we asked for a 3 tear signage, so the Top tear would be the directional signage, that's Appliances, these are TVs and that's Cameras. the second layer would be around branding, and the third layer would be the on shopping level which we would have lifestyle. we also wanted hot spots. I don't know if you saw in the stores there are those blocks of orange”.
[Operations Director]*

“...The next thing we did was to create a signage panel just below that which further navigates into certain brands within that category. What we also did was, in between the different brand signage, you see Gamin, Fitbit on top, in-between that you can see “Listen up”. That there is like a call to action. Instead of just selling customers facts, this is where you can get your Gamin, this is where you get your TomTom, its selling them an

experience. It's a call to action, come here, put on a pair of ear phone, listen to it, feel it, experience it". [Store designer]

A common theme that surfaced among the store designer and the Operations Director, communicating the design process and intent, was the issue of signage. Signage became one of the major elements considered in shaping the stores look and feel. This became a vehicle for driving customer's navigations in the store. Not only was the signage the only design effect applied for wayfinding and navigation, in developing the layout of the store, customer navigation was taken into account. Different finishes were used to demarcate customer circulation spaces and product display areas. The director referred to this directional from as a race track.

"...we've got the race track right around the store and then you've got the concrete inserts right in the middle". [Operations Director]

4.2.1.4. Defining the Design Process

The previous questions had dealt with the design effects that Retailer X designers applied in creating a motivational shopping environment. This research also included interview questions to understand the design approach and process the store design team went through in accomplishing the desired design outcome. The questions related to the design process, were to determine the design approach and process used in this case study by the store designer and to establish if the approach speaks to the conventional interior design process used by Interior designers on other design projects. In chapter two of this research on the subject of design studies, there is a section from the literature that discusses convention design processes. The following diagram reflects the conventional design process as explained in chapter two with key words that define each step.

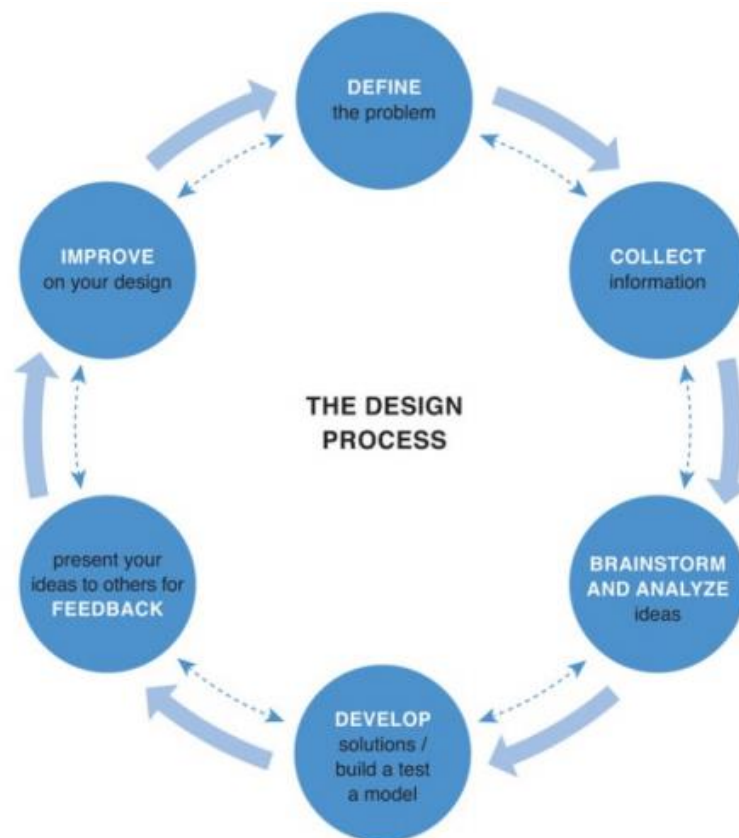


Figure 4. 8: The design Process cycle (Designdiscovery)

The findings below will be presented using the sequence of the design process steps. It was crucial for the store designer and operations director to understand this process as the store designer was responsible for the design process and the interpretation of the brief. The Operations director on the other hand was responsible for establishing the brief and acts as a client to the designer. They both formed part of the design team.

During the interview sessions with the store designer, one of the questions asked was the extent to which the clients or the retailer influence the store designers design process and outcome.

"...I think one of the important thing about this client, they were quite particular about their layout and how its suppose to work. They already had internal operations people who had the brief worked out to the tee". [Store Designer]

"...So taking that into consideration and looking at the Retailer X competitors at the moment, we had to find a way to reintroduce them into the market by portraying them differently so that they are perceived differently in relation to their competitors". [Store Designer]

"...The clients brief understood that the stores needed to evolve to a space that spoke to the next generation". [Store Designer]

During the interview session, a conclusion could be drawn that a problem was identified in the initial stages of the project. This relates to stage one of the conventional design process where a problem is defined. In this particular case study, the problem was defined by the client to the design team where they needed a fresh look in their new store that would put them in a better position than their competitors. The Store designer explained that the retailer formulated a brief for them (this could be interpreted as defining the problem, as answers to the brief would be a possible solution for the retailer). The brief was clear as to what the retailer wanted, the retail store operations director on the other hand explained that

they had an idea of what they wanted, although they did not know how it would look like in the end.

The operations director and the store designer were then asked if, during the formulation of the brief and initial phases of the project, they had considered any consumer behavioural elements for motivational orientation. This was asked to understand how they collected their information, if they conducted any precedent studies. Although both parties were involved on the brief formulation, each party had a role to play during the data collection.

"...Not Per say research. so that's why we got the external companies. they got the experience and the expertise. they would have done a lot of those studies and would have given us a lot of information. On our end however, what I do know and what we know from business intelligence internally is that we in the stores on daily basis, we know what our consumer shopping behaviour and shopping patterns are. and that's exactly why we went from retailing to show rooming". [Operations Manager]

"...There are so many stores that we visited when we were doing research for a store like this, internationally, locally, just to see how other stores who focus on technology are allowing customers walking into the store to interact with their product". [Store Designer]

Although the Store Designer was not specific about the stores visited for research purposes, the design team did collect information as per step two of the conventional design process. This information was collected in similar stores to see how they approached customer experience and engagement within the physical context. During the interview, the Store Designer came out with an interesting point of view not related to the question asked. The designer's argument was;

"...because we essentially moving to a day and age where millennials are doing the shopping, they will be to a large degree the determinations of who's doing the buying. It's

also a digital day and age, fast paces, so people are not necessarily paper based”.

[Store Designer]

The next step of the conventional design process reviewed with the design team was brainstorming and analysing. During the interview session, it was clear that the client and the store designer had sessions where they discussed the direction of the project.

“...As we took their thoughts and their thinking and their ideas as to what the brand should evolve into we transpired that into conceptual ideas, we bought them in that phase to say do you think, based on what we have gathered for you, are we heading in the right direction, do you like what you see.” [Store Designer]

“...they did a lot of work and we just scraped it summarily and we said this isn't what we wanted and they came back with new ideas. So they presented a lot of ideas before we settled on one”. [Operations Director]

“...they came to us with various different designs and options and funny enough the ones that the formally presented to us we didn't like, and then they by accident scrolled through to other concepts that they worked on... I said, hang on, what's that? They opened it and said it's something they worked on and didn't quite like it. I said but I like it, I think that one is by far the best we've seen”. [Operations Director]

When the brainstorming was done and the analysis of the design, a solution was developed by the store designer. The client or retailer was also involved. In this stage, the retailer was choosing the desired finishes and materials. This phase proved to be in line with the conventional design process of developing a solution. Evidently the overall design and fundamentals were established and all parties had reached an agreement on how the brief was translated. The store designer further explained how they developed the solution with the client.

“...They even go as far as sitting in, by the time you want to build the store, need to see what you plan on putting in that store, realistically, the materials: so they would sign off

samples they would look at tiles they would touch the materials. Essentially they were involved on every step". [Store Designer]

"...The shop fitters built the stores, they literally will build an entire line for us as you can see the wall bays, they would build this in the shop. I as the designer would go and do quality checks, there are times where the client wanted to come with me and that was ok, they would come along and see how it was going to look like, we didn't really have prototypes, they would have a look at the real thing".
[Store Designer]

One of the key learning from the interview session with the store designer was on the fifth stage of the design process where the team did not always agree when feedback was given. When the Operations Director was asked about exciting moments he had during the design project, the response was

"...Lively Debate! Very lively debate... so there was a lot of lively debate because we had Jody and the Guys coming in totally new to the Retailers kind of concept. The designers bringing their ideas on board so there was a lot of internal conflict also... so all of this lead to a very lively debate. sometimes very passionate conversation". [Operations Director]

Although not asked, the Store designers response gave an impression that the design process was smooth and dealings with Retailer X as a client. This impression was observed during the interview when the designer was responding to the question that assess the extent they had in engaging with Retailer X, giving and receiving feedback.

"...Not on this instance. It can happen and it has happened with other clients. In this instance, the client was clear about where they wanted to take the store. They didn't know how it was going to look like. But they knew the environment that they wanted to create for their target market. Because that was so clear and the communication was so clear and we understood them, it was easy to go through the motions and not reach a point where we felt that the process was misunderstood and that we had come to an

impasse thinking that there is a miscommunication because we are not delivering what they are expecting". [Store Designer]

Both responses however give evidence of the design process stage of Feedback being undertaken, this step preceded of improving Ideas. A question was asked by the researcher to the store that if designer during the design process had any elements that were in their design teams wish list that would have enhanced the customer experience.

"...I will just pick one or two things. The very first thing that we wish we hadn't gone about doing, if you look at the underneath the listen up signage, those were two graphics that aren't digital. That was a decision made on cost. But I think we could have saved money somewhere else, because its literally two screens and the store doesn't warrant the lack of impact that the graphics have along the wall". [Store Designer]

"...So I guess if I could do anything over again, I would have planned the design phase to have started earlier, giving us a little more time to do the actual project. So I think if you look at a split here, we probably spent 80% of our time in a four months' period on designing the store and getting it right and so on. And we had 20% of the time to execute, which is not great". [Operations Director]

4.2.1.5. Design Efficiency

The previous section presents the design process the store design team went through, it connects the process to the conventional design process discussed in the literature review and reports on the relationship that the researcher established between the conventional process and that which the design team for Retailer X engaged in. During the interview sessions, some questions were asked about the design process efficiency. This was simply to illustrate the process efficiency by assessing whether the designer was working efficiently, without too many detours. Process efficiency on this research was not only concerned about the design detours, but it was inclusive to the extent to which the brief was translated efficiently.

Most retailers tend to be deliberate with space allocation and profit maximization. The store designer was asked of the extent to which the stores sales forecast (finances) affected the design process and its efficiency.

"...The Layout was based on category priority, because at the end of the day we need to base our layout on sales, the client need to give us the list of the most bought items essentially and then we based our layout based on that". [Store Designer]

"...We had to consider the fact that every single item of high value, especially cellphones, and watches play stations exposes, games for Xboxes, all of those products had to be wired down on tables, and they are on an alarm system... so there is nothing else that we could not design for without taking into account that our furniture had to accommodate security solutions". [Store Designer]

"...So I think deliberately we decided to go against the grain. So normally, a Retailer X Store would have had a roller shutter in the front. Which means at night time the roller shutter comes done, we would have had security devices that were very aesthetically not pleasing. And we specifically said we don't care if it doesn't conform to the risk standard of doing things, we want the newest security devices and alarming equipment to house our stock in cause the looks and feel and the atmosphere of the store is more important than the risk aspect of it". [Operations Director]

Although the intent was clearly communicated by store designer with regards to efficiently laying out the store, taking security measures into account, having considered the functionality of the new space, there were some concerns raised by the Store employee during the interview as a user of the space created expressing a different view.

"...Ok thing is the way it's designed, it's not easy like for instance if you wanna plug in like the display unit, it's not easy to put in a plug inside to access, like to have our display units powered, it's a nightmare, like it's a nightmare. Like all the way from the TV section right up to the front, it's like from this wall going around. Like to go in there you end up hurting yourself". [Store Employee]

"...those tables, they are very nice, very nice, but I think they should have done something better about that, because to power our units it's a nightmare, it's a disaster".

[Store Employee]

"...There is not as many offices, so in the store, the store manager, the admin manager, the sales manager and the back office team all share one office. Now it might not seem like a big thing, but if you think about it, store managers have their own personal office, not from a status point of view but because there sometime private matters to be dealt with, performance appraisals, disciplinary enquiries which should be private, all of those stuff now if you do something like that in that office". [Operations Director]

The above attest to the elements the design team had to compromise on to achieve the designed aesthetics, in order to maintain the desired intent of the showroom, more space was allocated to display units and prioritising customer experience rather than to the smooth functioning of operational aspects of the store.

4.2.1.6. Design Quality

In this research the quality of Retailer X designs was evaluated through a narrative-based study with the store employees. Design Quality in this research, as defined in the literature, refers to the effectiveness of design in 'realizing intended situations;' meaning the behavioural and social consequences of its use.

"...I was working one weekend and there was a customer that walked in, mother, son and daughter, they looked around the store, on their way out. They came and were looking around, at the time, the person who was manning the station was busy with someone at the station. So the customer came in and looked at other things. On their way out, I offered them some coffee, and they said ok. I took them to the coffee station, and engaged them in the coffee, showed them how the machine works, the lady made them

each a cup of coffee. We stood there for about 10 to 15 minutes and they started talking to each other. Cause they liked what they tasted, the ease of using the machine. After they had that experience and they engaged with the rep that was there and watched how easy it was to make coffee, they asked about the features and other features they could use later on, ... So they ended up leaving and they came back two or 3 hours later and they purchased the machine". [Store Manager]

"...So obviously because we have like sugar and coffee at the front already and sometime the milk for the already is inserted inside the machine, so you say let's make coffee, you see, maybe even if you were going to suggest it but the customer suggests it first, let's have some coffee then you can show the customer how the machine works". [Store Employee]

"...Over the weekend that I have worked on the store, which is usually once a month, I get some amazingly talented people and these are customers, they want to feel they want to feel the keys. They want to feel the softness and firmness of the key in relation to grand pianos. And they play, they play some beautiful music, I mean it's some random people, walking in sitting down, and showing us their capabilities". [Store Manager]

"...Because some of them are customers that have seen the bike for like three months they always come now and then. some it's like new customers that they haven't seen it before, so they still come and ask more about that. I have also tried plenty of times and it is indeed a nice experience". [Store Employee]

This section on design quality intended to assess the effectiveness of the store design in evoking the intended customer behaviour and the social impact it would have on customers. The views expressed by the store employee and the store manager were inclined to the design intent, in that the coffee area was effective in encouraging product engagement. The placement of the piano at the entrance enticed customers to engage creating an exciting element for customers and employees. The effects of these elements, both the coffee and the music area with

the piano, not only impacted the customers engaging the products, but potential customers walking past the store, seeing other customers drinking coffee and having a conversation as well as listening to the music from the piano. In this way, narratives from the interviews were used to assess the effectiveness of the store design concepts in evoking intended behaviour and creating a motivation shopping environment.

4.2.2. The in-store activity

4.2.2.1. Consumer Behaviour

In this context, the results strongly pointed to positive relationships between customers and their respective hot zones and display areas in the store environment. The researcher observed and recorded twenty customers who entered the store. This was done through mapping the areas navigated by the customers within the store, using a blank floor plan. The customer's movements were mapped using a different colour for each customer. These observations were done mainly to verify if the customers were engaging with the intended hot zones and areas that were meant to be customer engagement areas.

The observational maps that follow indicate that customers navigated the front of the store more, engaging with the products. As such, the tracking lines are denser on the frontal part of the store. Very few customers went to the back of the store where there are larger appliances and products together with bulk stacking. This was correlated with what the store designer mentioned during the interview when asked to talk the researcher through their design process. Although the answer below wasn't answering the question asked, it did indicate the design intent to create an experiential space for customers to engage.

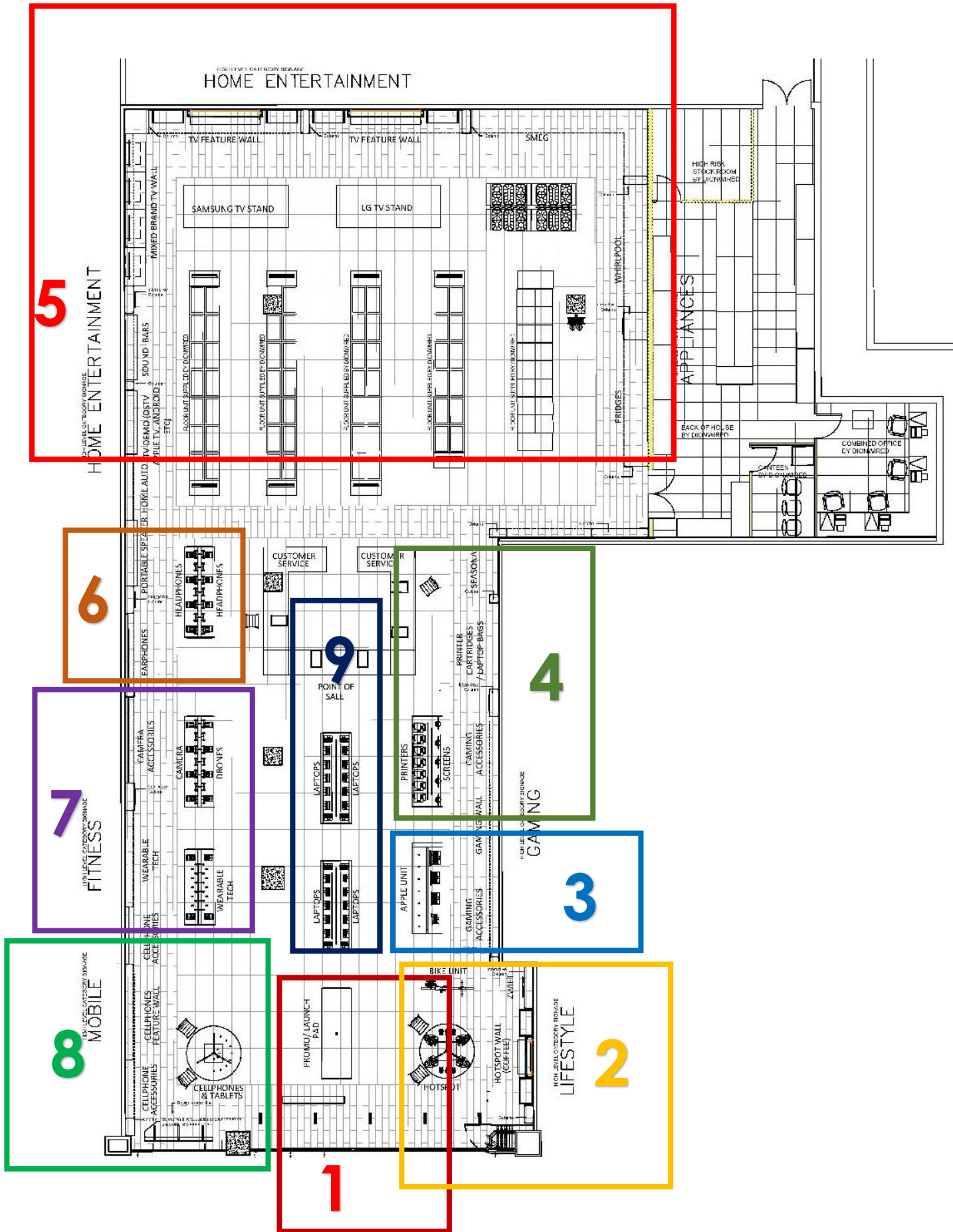
A design intervention on aesthetic of the retail store needs to be pleasant and appealing, as it is used by the retailer to reinforce its brand image. The layout of the products should be reasonable and tidy, while still maintaining a high level of cleanliness. To ensure that expectations are met and in this respect, exceeded by including sales data, investment in marketing research can well be worthwhile. Sales data could be used as a guide for layout creation and space allocation for different departments within the retail store.

Experiential atmospheres in retail environments should be a priority strategy to attract and retain customers, embedding a memorable experience that will benefit

the retailer eventually. In the past, visual merchandise was primarily used for promotional purposes; however, product engagement should be incorporated on stores not only for promotional activities, but for the engagement and retention of customers. To enhance the shopping experience of customers, retailers should improve the interior design of the store (style of decor in store; colours used in store; attractiveness of decor in store; and acceptable finishing materials used in store).

Product display, physical store, experiential elements offered by retailers coupled with interior designed spaces improving the atmospheric effects on the shopper as it can have a lasting effect and affect the patronage. Retailers could make the retail store environments more personal through incorporating social indicators that are important to the lifestyle and values of consumers. The availability of facilities that enhance the one-stop shopping experience is beneficial together with inclusion of online shopping screens or devices in the store for products that are not available at the time.

The store layout indicates the different zones within the store. The zones displayed different products. They all had a focal point. The Operations director referred to these zones as hot spots, demarcated in orange.



- Zone 1 and 2 – Promo Area and Coffee Zone
- Zone 3 and 4 - Gaming Accessories, Screens and Printers
- Zone 5 - Home entertainment and Large appliances
- Zone 6 and 7- Home entertainment and Large appliances

Customer Frequency

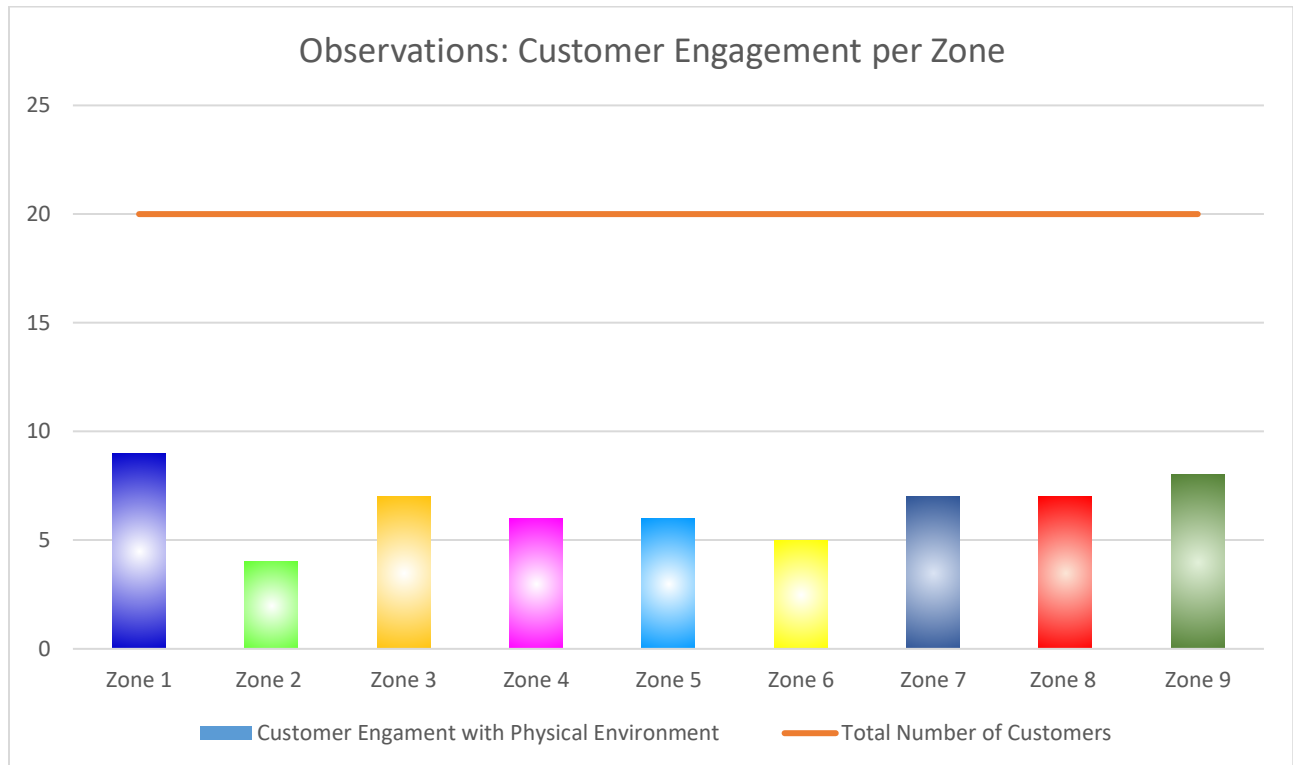


Figure 4. 9: Customer observations across all the store zones.

The above diagram reflects the number of customer engagements per zone. Although most customers lingered and engaged with more merchandised displayed close to the entrance of the store where there is a showroom effect, a fair number of customers also engaged with products on the bulk displayed items, however, the space allocated on Zone 5 for bulk display is much greater than all the other zone. The floor plan with customer mapping gives a clear indication of the customer engagement.

Traffic Flow

The store layout and pictures attached in this research indicate the race track around the store and the infills of concreted finishes as stated by the operations manager. The racetrack is finished with a timer vinyl or timber laminate. There is no particular pattern that the customers followed. The layouts with customer mapping indicate that most traffic and customer enjoyment happened in the first half of the store. It was one of the researcher's observations that customers were going around the display stands. Majority of the display stands were rectangular. The physical movement of customers was more at ease at the rounder tables as some customers would circle the display unit twice while comparing the displayed products.

"...we've got the race track right around the store and then you've got the concrete inserts right in the middle". [Operations Director

Hot Sports

"... in the walls built in there are orange blocks, those are hot spots. the two big TVs in the back of the wall, also sit on those orange blocks. Those orange blocks were to be used for new innovative tech, the premium stuff, all the stock we wanted to highlight was gonna go in those boxes, so basically that was like a zone to attract customer, to new and innovative tech, the premium stuff". [Operations Director]

The store has a minimum of 5 hot spots, Zone 1 contains two of the hot sports, each zone has a hot spot with an exception of zone 5 which houses the balance of the bulk display. During the time the researcher conducted the in-store observations, most customers engaged with Zone 1 which is demarcated as the Promotion Area. The mapping layouts provide supporting evidence. Zone 2 is an extension of the coffee zone or hot spot. Although no customers were witnessed by the researcher making use of the coffee machines and making coffee as per feedback received from the interview sessions, customers did engage with the products that were

displayed. One of the areas where customers spent most time was in zone 8. This is a cell phone section. Zone 8 had mostly young customers, high school learners who were still in uniforms who had a lot of engagement with the units. However fewer customers engaged with the back of the store in Zone 5. Only two customers during the observations made a purchase. The customers were from zone 5. One may conclude that these were planned purchases, where the customer came to the store knowing what they wanted.

Capture Rate

"...So if we are going to talk about enhancing customer experience, just looking at the shopfront alone, that, visually we have tried to excite the consumers just by passing by the store, looking in the store, it's a far more inviting entrance, we have opened it up really largely and we have introduced large scale digital graphics to the front of the store; It's obviously something that has been used widely internationally at the moment and digital sales works and capture people so that's defiantly a tool that we have brought through."

[Store Designer]

In relation to the design intent, the researcher observed customers that walked by the store and somehow glanced in and turned back to enter the store. other customers observed were already leaving the store, while outside, on their way out, looked back in at the promotion area and returned back to the store. This might be evidence in relation to the design intent of creating a wider entrance, in that the narrow entrance would have had an impact on traffic and flow of the customers. All though customers had already left the shop parameter, they could easily return as if they did not leave.

The store layout and map that follows reflects customer navigation in the store of the first ten customers. The observational maps were split for ease of legibility.

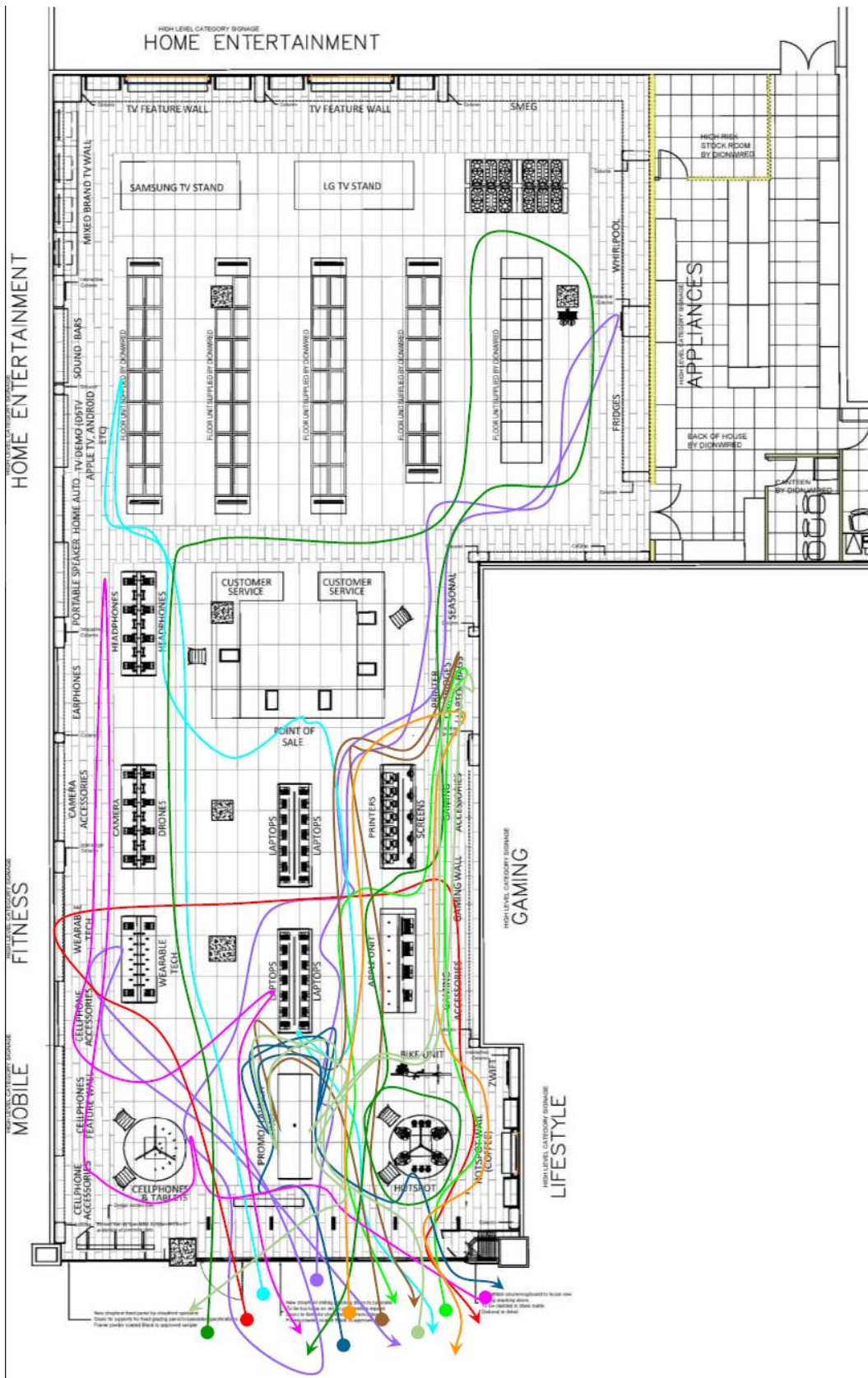


Figure 4. 10: Customer Observations Map – Customers One to Ten.

4.2.3. The Social Context

4.2.3.1. Customer Experience

During the interview with the store manager, a question was asked if the new concept environment was more encouraging for store employees and customer interactions. The response was:

"... Part of our 2020 strategy was to allow people to shop extended range in our stores, without needing a sales guy to take them to a computer and log on to computer and access the internet explorer". [Store manager]

The store employee interviewed was in agreement with the notion that there is less interaction between customers and store employees. However, he further elaborated that some customers engage the store employees not because they cannot find the item they are looking for, but would walk into the store and walk straight to the store employee to ask for assistance.

"...like people like they don't even look at those they just come to you straight maybe when you standing in the front. It's not a matter of they couldn't find they just come straight to you there". [Store Employee]

One of the design effects introduced by the designer to enhance customer experience was the integration of interactive displays in the form of touch screens. During the interview, the Store manager clearly defined the intention for the display screens.

"...Because we a smaller store, because we a show room store and because its Sandton, we cater to a different customer... purely from a space point of view we cannot accommodate that entire range... and offer them (customers) the extended range online. A lot of the time you will find the sales guys introducing the customers to them (the interactive displays). When the customers say I saw this product in your Gateway store or Woodmead store". [Store Manager]

"...So customer is not sure what the screens are for, the way I am seeing it. Then its when we going to the screen and show this is what we use the screen for, then it's when maybe then the customers would start learning and using the screen so to navigate around it and see what it actually". [Store Employee]

Both the store employee and the Store Manager were in agreement that the customers were not engaging the interactive displays as per the designer's intent, they needed some assistance from the store employees. This somehow indicated the minimal level of customer and store employee engagement. The interview sessions with the Store Employees & Store Managers further indicated that interaction taking place between some of these design effects has a bearing on how the store experience turns out.

"... The piano, the keyboards the DJ equipment, music production stuff, The Micro Phones and all of that is currently the hot spot in the store, cause, it's a lot engagement, there is a lot of attraction for customers to touch and feel. And that is currently drawing a lot of people in. the Piano with a stand at the front has a chair, it's a welcoming environment, the chair is there for you to sit on". [Store Manager]

"...On the weekend we on the electric piano we run the electronic tunes that are built in to it. So that plays through the speaker systems. I have a couple of guys in my store that are semi talented and can play the keyboard a little bit. It's a nice draw point. You get the youngsters coming in, the youngster's right now is into a music production, DJ Equipment, that's what you grow up with, it becomes your hobby and eventually becomes a career"". [Store Manager]

"...at times we do get customers who would come in and sit on the display piano, play music, at time we have customers taking photos on our cell phone display table. Some pictures get stored on the phones and we always come across nicely illuminated backgrounds". [Store Manager]

This chapter presented the results and findings of the study with regards to the relationship between the design intent and effects in retail store environments. The effects used to promote motivational orientation were explained as well as assessing how legible the design factors were to the consumers. Observing and mapping customer engagement within the store emerged as a viable support tool in achieving the aims and objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the research is summarised by reiterating the rationale of the study, the aims & objectives and the research questions. The researcher then discusses the lessons learned from this research with a substantive reflection on the findings. A comparison of the findings is made with other research conducted within the retail design field (literature reviewed and precedent studies). This is followed by a reflection on the research design, and method. The chapter is concluded by stating the contribution to the body of knowledge and recommendations are made for development work and further research.

The overarching aim of this research was to explore the relationship between the design intent and effects in retail store environments.

The objectives of the research were to:

- Determine how interior design affects the consumer experience.
- Determine the legibility of interior design and the customer shopping behaviour (Intention to behave).
- Assess how legible the design factors are to the consumers.
- Investigate the design effects used by the interior designers in creating a motivational shopping environment.

The main research question that directed this study was: To what extent does retail design intent and its effects correlate with consumer shopping behaviour? Subsequently, sub questions were formulated in support of the main research question.

5.1. Reflections on the objectives of the study & the research questions

5.1.1 Reflections on research questions

- In response to the first sub question: What design effects do designers apply in creating a motivational shopping environment?

Signage became one of the elements considered in shaping the stores look and feel. This became a vehicle for driving customer's navigations in the store. Different finishes were used to demarcate customer circulation spaces and product display areas. This directional effect was referred to as a race track. The demarcation consisted of timber and a vinyl floor finish, creating a multi-sensory experience. A Wider entrance was applied as an effect, creating a more welcoming store environment. Further the designer introduced hot zones where new products would be show cased, these zones where highlighted in bright colours to draw the customers attention. Some of the zones incorporated experiential effects, such as the virtual bike, the coffee area, Listen Up Zones (For Listening to music). Seats were introduced for customers who want to relax and experience products. The ceiling in all circulation areas was exposed and painted dark to hide the building services while the main product exhibition space received a skimmed ceiling with linier recessed focused light fixtures. The furniture and fixtures where white to provide a clinical look, easy to clean, with a minimalistic effect, where the focus in on the product and not the background.

- In response to the second sub question: How do consumers respond to the designers' intent?

Observations strongly pointed towards positive engagements between the consumers and their respective hot zones and display areas in the stores environment. However, none attempted to engage the coffee zone or the virtual bike. The observational maps indicated that customers navigated the front of the store more, engaging with the products. Very few customers went to the back of

the store where there are larger appliances and products together with bulk stacking. The customers were not engaging the interactive displays as per the designer's intent, they needed some assistance from the store employees.

The wider entrance created with an intent to be more inviting was effective as customers who walked by the store, with seemingly no intention of entering, were observed having a change of mind and entering the store as they noticed items in the promotional area. The point of sale was intended to be more than a transactional area but an information hub where the customers were to be educated about merchandise, sign contracts and inquire about products. During the observation, the inquiry activity took place on the trading floor where customers met store employees and not at the point of sale or information hub. In response to the circulation and the race track effect where floor finishes were differentiated to demarcate high traffic areas and trading areas, the customers did not follow the race track but navigated between the merchandise tables.

- In response to the third question: How does design legibility affect the shopping experience?

The customer experience was enhanced through opportunities of engagement with the products. What stood out more was that the Retailer made use of financial information to establish the space plan and layout development. The best-selling items were placed at the front of the store, given more exposure in proportion to the sales, having the point of sale, referred to as an information hub, in the centre of the store. The signage layers may have been adequate in communicating product positioning as customers were reportedly finding items easier. This was supported by the store employee attesting to customers only asking product information and not product location. On the contrary, the store size may have made it easier for customers to locate the products.

5.1.2 Reflections on objectives of the study

- In response to objective 1: Investigate the design effects used by the interior designers in creating a motivational shopping environment.

In the case of this study, Retailer X illustrated, through design effects introduced in their store, that, the design of retail environments should be directed towards creating appropriate 'atmospheres'. Enhancing the shopping experience through product engagement contributed in creating a motivational shopping environment. The customers did interact with all the intended hot zones as set out by the Designer. The layout store was separated into two sections. The first half of the store had a "boutique feel", where the consumers fully engaged with the products displayed.

The second half of the store had large appliances and a few bulk items and products. This area of the store did not have much traffic. There could be various reasons for this. After observations, the researcher concluded that one of the reasons may be that, large appliances were more expensive and therefore a customer would have to plan for the purchase. The secondary half of the store did not have specially dedicated "hot zones" to attract customers and promote engagement with the products as compared to the first section.

When comparing responses shared by the retail store designer, the Operations Director of the retail group and the Store employees, the response was uniform. All parties highlighted the importance of in-store experiences, and how these have helped customers to engage more with the space created together with the products displayed (e.g. interacting with the hot zones, store employee assistance and promotional display areas).

- In response to objective 2: Assessing how legible the design factors are to the

consumers.

The researcher noticed that there was no significant relationship between the legibility in way finding through signage and walkways to the way customers navigated through the store. This was due to the fact that customers that were observed entering the store did not follow a certain pattern in navigating the shop. The feedback from the store employee and the store manager confirmed that they have never had an experience where customers could not locate a certain product they were looking for. The manager further referred to the size of the store suggesting it was too small and this may be different in a larger store. Different conclusions may be drawn on the level of detail Retailer X devoted on signage creation and their necessity for the size of the store.

The store had two types of floor finishes. The wood laminate area, which was described by the designer a high traffic layout out in a “race track” manner and the area finished in vinyl tile flooring. Although this was aesthetically pleasing and provided a nice contrast in furnishing, customers observed did not necessarily walk on the timber areas more than the tiled area.

One of the prominent features used by the designer was the wider entrance, which allow the passing consumers to be drawn into the store when they pass by. This was enhanced by positioning a promotional table in the front in the store with newly launched merchandise. The researcher observed a positive response to this as customers who walked past the store would glance at the store and stop and detour into the store. However it is a common practise where most retailers would introduce newness at the front of the store through promotional stands. A possible disadvantage of placing this table so close to the entrance is that there is often no further need to progress deeper into the store. This was confirmed by the observations which indicated very little foot traffic to a large percentage of the rentable floor area of the store.

- In response to objective 3. Determining how interior design affects the customer experience.

The retail designers role for Retailer X was to leverage and capture consumers interest, with the hope that that would yield sales. During the interviews, Retailer X strategy was communicated with regards to yielding sales. The retailer focused on creating lifestyle interest solutions for their customers. This means there is an understanding that most of the customers entering the store may not make a purchase, however, a “lifestyle seed” would have been planted and the customer would later return and make a purchase. Out of twenty (20) customers observed, only one made a purchase. The store sold high value items, and therefore the rate to which customers make purchases was likely to be slow.

One of the elements introduced by the retailer for experiential retailing was the Zwift bike (Virtual Bike). Although the store did not sell the bike units, the unit to which the bike could be mounted was sold, there was no customers observed using the bike. During the interviews, the store manager highlighted that in December, they had a many customers engaging with the Zwift bike. Further explaining that there was a competition linked to the positive traction they saw. While this was in line with the design intent, the researcher was of the opinion that the virtual bike element introduced to enhance customer experience may have been seasonal. This was confirmed through observations as there was no customer interaction with the bike. The researcher interpreted this as one of the areas where the marketing team, visual merchandisers and other stakeholders that contribute to the creation of experiential retailing could improve by reintroducing other customer enticing elements for a new season. With all the contributions from the various stake holders, the customer experience created may not just assist in selling the products, the experience may become the product.

- In response to objective 4: Determining the legibility of interior design and the customer shopping behaviour (Intention to behave).

The designer introduced “hot zones” in the store. Some of the hot zones were colour coded with a bright orange colour. Within the colour coded zones, Retailer X had planned on having them as zones where new products would be introduced. The expectation was that the highlighted areas would attract the eye, however, there was no clear pattern observed on customers being drawn to the new products in the highlighted zone. The engagement observed was consistent with the promotional areas. The role of the designer was not only to create an aesthetically pleasing environment but functional. For the functional aspect, the designer had to take into account security measures by linking each device on display in the first part of the store to an alarm system. In the opinion of the researcher, this was executed well in this store as it offered the customer full exposure confirmed through observations. During the observations, there were instances where some of the devices would set off an alarm unprovoked. The security would then need to reset the system. Although this was an alarm system issue, it provided discomfort to some customers observed as taking a step back from the product and leaving.

Positive customer experience in the case of Retailer X was believed to encourage positive behaviour, meaning better, friendlier or more personalised service. The disadvantage sets in when all the investments produces little in the way of marked improvement. One of the elements introduced by the retailer in the store were digital screens. These touch screens were strategically located in the store where customers could view the extended range that the retailer offered and make online purchases. Although customers were observed making use of these touch screen, the store employee and manager brought forward the lack of clarity and the need for educating the customers on what the screens can do. This, in the view of the researcher suggests that, although South Africans are adapting slowly to the digital space, there is still a need to educate customers on the retailing and experiential possibilities the retailer offered.

5.2. A reflection on the method used as an influencer of the results.

The interior design and retail customer behaviour construct lends itself best to a qualitative approach (Bustamante & Rubio, 2017). Adopting this approach for this study allowed the researcher to understand and interpret the underlying intentions of human interaction. The focus was on physical environmental experience and behavioural qualities, which are qualities that could not be measured in numerical form. In order to capture the subjective perceptions through the qualitative approach, data was gathered through in-depth interviews & observations. Information was obtained from retail store designers (design team), store employees or assistants and in store observations conducted by the researcher.

A one-on-one interview method allowed interaction with the participants and an observation of non-verbal cues while being interviewed. A structured interview approach with open-ended questions used to allow for an open, in-depth discussion of the design intent. As reported in the findings in the previous chapter, an important finding was that, aspects which in previous studies have been well known and recognized as future ideas, have actually been implemented.

The designer also highlighted some futuristic thinking without realising that those ideas were also implemented on the Retailer X design project. This was realized through the open-ended questions. The findings suggested that it is more important now than before, for South African retailers to understand retail design as one of the multidimensional characteristic of the store, responsible for enhancing in-store experience. By focusing on the designer's intention to create in-store experiences, this research has shown that designers' intention often affects a variety of aspects and that handling and balancing multiple as well as different aspects is crucial to retailers. In addition, through this analysis, the researcher also advanced insights into how retailers today respond to various facets of the store design.

Interviewing the Store employee was beneficial in obtaining individual responses that could give first-hand information of customer's responses to the physical store environment and the designed space. Again, the one on one interview approach

adopted on store employees was valuable. The participants were able to share individual opinions and with limited chances of falling into “groupthink” trap. The Store Employee and the store managers’ explanations further indicated that the interactions that took place between the created design effects have a bearing on how the store experience turned out.

In addition to the interviews, first-hand observation at the physical retail store environment where conducted. The focus was on observing the functional developments, the customer engagements with the physical space and reflecting on what physically took place at the retail store captured using the mapping of customer navigations. The customer mapping presented in the previous chapter through observations reflected a positive response of customers engaged with the boutique styled space (first part of the store). This boutique styled section was more experiential for customers as they could engage with the products and the space created for them.

An interesting finding from the observations was that, though a number of customers were observed, only one out of ten made a purchase. The store manager and the store employee were aware of this fact. They highlighted that the intention was to create an experience and a lifestyle aspiration for the customer. The concept and perception in this context was in line with the precedent studies covered in this research, where the global retailers created spaces in their retail stores for customers to experience their products. Although they may not buy immediately, the aspirational lifestyle seed would have been planted therefore anticipating that the customer would return.

5.3. A substantive reflection on precedent studies and literature

South Africa’s retail sector has changed dramatically in the last decade. This has resulted in new shopping activities, and retailers having to alter in-store shopping

environments to accommodate the changes. It is hoped that this research has improved the understanding of what this implies in the South African context (from the view of retailer, the store designer as well as customers through the researcher's observations). It also became apparent through doing the research that store designers also face challenges in anticipating behavioural responses of customers.

The findings support the literature (Petermans, 2009), stating that the immersive experience where a customer can engage with the physical space and have a memorable experience remains a crucial differentiating factor between physical and online shopping experiences. This was reinforced by the argument made by Eastman & Liu, (2012) about the Millennials (Generation Y) who are the generation born between 1986 and 2005 (Eastman & Liu, 2012). "These consumers are more sociable, more spendthrift, but also more sophisticated, status conscious and meticulous" (Eastman & Liu, 2012; Jackson, Stoel & Brantley, 2011). Because they have more money to spend, technologically inclined, retailers would be very interested in them. Retailer X seems to have understood this concept and intergraded elements such as touch screens, a virtual bike, promotional areas that would attract a customer who wants more experience.

The literature suggests that, a number of retailers who have conducted research for their stores emphasize the need for new store concepts that incorporate experiential retailing, which was confirmed by the findings from this study. Further, as technologies that cater for the millennials, including in-store self-service facilities, there is still a need for Store Employees to assist customers and demonstrate the promotional display of products. The findings suggested that retailers are most likely inclined towards introducing a "new look and feel" for the store as means to which the Retailer and the Store designer could maintain competitiveness. The research approach touches on efforts made by the Store Designer not only to maintain competitiveness for the retailer but to create an in-store experiential environment competitive with the current retail trend.

When comparing the views of previous studies, similar to this research, but conducted on a global and international scale, some retailers related to customer in-store experiences in dissimilar ways. Bäckström and Johansson (2006) agreed that retailers mostly stressed the use of experiential values (e.g. advanced technology and sensory stimulation) to improve the in-store experiences of consumers.

The literature reviewed indicated that, largely the same aspects as five to ten years ago produce in-store experiences today. This, the author, found to be interesting, especially given the extensive changes that retailing has undergone over the last decade but also from a view that millennials have the buying power in this day-and-age. Although to a large degree retailing is moving towards ecommerce and customers have various way they could do their shopping, the in-store experience is still relevant in attracting customers in South Africa. There are a number of examples on literature with spaces designed by retailers to create experiential retailing and memorable experience for their customers. "One thing for sure; experiential retail is the future" (Storefront Magazine, 2017).

The three precedent studies covered provided an example of existing retail stores that have focused on experiential retailing and memorable experience for their customers. They proved that experiential retail is not only the future but also the present. Although none of these precedent studies were based in South Africa, Retailer X store design project was found to be in alignment. While previous work has strengthened our understanding of the various store aspects that generate in-store experiences for customers globally and internationally, this study might have clarified how these aspects contribute to the creation of subjective experiences in the South African context even though the research dealt with a single case study.

The interactive area in the front of the store, however, did attract customers to interact. The product engagement opportunities provided might have planted the intended lifestyle seed. However, in the example of Retailer X the fact that hardly

anyone went to the back of the store leads to the question of whether the additional space is financially viable or if it could have been put to better (more memorable) use? The researcher's observation is that there is still scope for South African retail designers to create memorable experiences in order to build brand loyalty as multichannel (online) shopping increases. This would impact the number and size of size of physical stores.

A variety of different aspects influenced the new design, ranging from physical aspects (e.g. furnishing, layout, and social aspects (e.g. actions and/or abilities of the staff) to in-store interaction (e.g. music, touching gadgets). Furthermore, a positive response was evident across all three factors that contribute to "experiential qualities", namely: social context, activity and the physical environment. Retail Interior Design played an important role in the case of Retailer X as it focused on creating a space for all those experiences to come into life. Without the store employee assisting the customers on screens, the store employees offering coffee to the customers as well as other human interaction at the store with store employees, the shopping experience would have been negatively impacted.

The findings further outlined the general outcome of the designed space by explaining intended in-store experiences created by the designer. Past researchers have focused frequently on a limited number of aspects of the store and concentrated primarily on the role of atmospheric variables, without concentrating on the interior design (e.g. Eroglu, Machleit, and Chebat 2005:201; Hynes and Manson 2016; Jain and Bagdare 2011; Madzharov, Block, and Morrin 2015).

5.4 The contribution to the body of knowledge

The findings of this study reiterated that retail design is one of the contributing factors of in-store experiences. By explaining the design intent and the customer behaviour

as a response to the designer's intention (intent to behave), the study further contribute to the advances of the hypothetical understanding that, comprehending customer' in-store experiences and retail store designers can play an integral role in creating retailing experiential spaces within the South African context.

The contribution of this study was aimed at determining and explaining the relationship between the effects of retail interior design in physical store environments and the customer response to the design intent (shopping behaviour making) explaining and exploring the relationship. Since Marketing & Visual Merchandising are progressing from "a goods to a service dominant logic", making and guiding memorable 'experiences' has become a means of communication.

Design studies, on the other hand, focus on describing the why, the how and the what of design (Yelavich, 2012). By consulting the design team to understand the design intent and how it was translated to the physical environment, it is hoped that perhaps this research promotes an ambitiously approach about design; beyond its professional enclaves, and has explored the significance and consequences of design activity on the interior retail industry with in South African context.

By replicating small portions of the studies carried out in other countries, although mostly focused on the marketing industry with limited mention or interior design analysis, this has provided further understanding of how South African retailers and store designers value the experience of customers, their alignment with global trends, and how consumers respond to design and retail environments. These findings also provide high-level insight into the current state of consumer behaviour, the perception of the online shopping experience versus the physical store environment. It is also highlighted briefly in this study how South African Consumers still value in-store experiences created by retail designers and the similarities with global trends within the retail store environment.

The findings have also produced further details of the collaboration between the retailer and the designer, how the retail brief, its operational measures, its financial contributions, could affect the design output. Further, explaining the involvement of the retail designer on the design of a retail store environment; and in turn how the customer responded to the design intent. Concerning the multidimensional character of the physical store, the findings particularly provided insights into how a number of store attributes influence the design process. This study, offers contributions that could benefit the retailers, retail store designers and design students by providing a basis for the development of a model with which one could evaluate customer experience based on how customers interact in physical retail store spaces in the South Africa.

Retail designers play a significant part in this process. Since retail in-store experiences are an important source for value creation, Retail Store Designers need to strive to create value for the customer by building individual, spontaneous relationships with Retailers as clients together with the physical space users (customers). The present parameters for creating and directing memorable experiences in the physical store environment within the South African context, proved to be in accordance with the global and international standards, while authenticity and originality on the retailer X was equally perceived. The present parameters for creating and directing memorable experiences are still legitimate and innovative ground for retail designers to take full advantage of.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendations for policy and practice

This study highlight steps and the design process undertaken by the design team, from the formulation of the brief, through engagement with the clients (Retailer X), design development to the construction of the design. The conventional design method adopted by the design team was effective and relevant for retail store design. Assessing each design stage could be adopted as means of measuring the

design success. The model used in this research with the focus on; Social context, Physical Environment & Activity, could be used by retailers and designers in evaluating customer experiences in South African retail store environments.

Retailer X manipulated the design effects of the physical store environments, with a focus on the customers by creating lifestyle solutions. The example of Retailer X has also illustrated how the interior design effects in retail environments could be further directed towards creating experiential qualities. In the South African context there is scope to introduce experiential design interventions to create memorable encounters which could positively influence purchase behaviour.

The hot zones introduced by the designer were found to be important design factors that encouraged customer engagement. The effects created in these hot zones was considerably stronger in the first section of the store (considering the layout). This emphasizes the notion that retail store environments need to have pleasant atmospheres with experiential elements that create a memorable shopping experience for customers. It seems like customers want to shop in an area where they can experience and engage with the products, even if they might not purchase them immediately, an ambition would have been planted that would later yield a sale, possibly online.

To capitalise on the shift to the stay-home economy, South African retailers would need to continue expanding their online offerings and further embrace technology to produce online customer experiences that will keep customers coming back, just as they would in a brick-and-mortar store.

5.5.2 Recommendations for further research

It is evident that Interior design within the retail industry is integrative in nature. This study focused on effects introduced by retail designers and their impact on

shopping behaviours. The store used as a case study in this research was located on a high LSM shopping centre. In South Africa, high LSM shopping centres have high probabilities of store design intervention. Unlike low LSM store, where the store would have minimal design effects. Further research could focus on Lower LSM stores.

Data was collected from the retail design team, store employees and in-store observations. On the other hand, there are other role players such as, customers, visual merchandisers, product specialists, that could provide further insight on intended shopping behaviour. Further research could investigate the potential relationship between the customer's evaluations or experiential value perceptions of selected design effects as presented in the retail environment.

Online channels are still growing in South Africa, future research could continue to examine multi-dimensional facets of in-store experience from a customer's perspective. This could be achieved by exploring how multi-channel retailing or in-store technology affects customer experience in physical stores. The integration of technological solutions was limited to viewing merchandise not on the floor and online purchases for these items instore. Further research could explore how technology could further enhance consumers' in-store experiences.

Although there has been a long standing view that ecommerce is expected to be the future of retail, spending weekends at the mall with family and friends is still one of the treasured experiences for South Africans. The research in this study has affirmed that there is still a preference for physical shopping experience - touching the products, getting advice and aspirational lifestyle imposed by the physically designed retail space. It is expected that shops and malls will still be in existence for the aforementioned reason. This study puts forward the belief that the future of retail a combination of physical store experiences and ecommerce.

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