

The Influence of Designer Paper Shopping Bags on Consumer

Interest and their Shopping Experience

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**The Influence of Designer Paper Shopping Bags on Consumer
Interest and their Shopping Experience**

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own independent work and that this dissertation, or parts thereof, has not previously been submitted by myself or anyone else to any other institution in order to obtain a degree.

Signature

Date

Good package design entails employing appropriate yet attractive graphic attributes such as colour, typography and images with which the consumer can engage. Even the name of a colour plays a considerable part in the success of a new product or brand. Consumers use graphic attributes to associate different products with different income groups, to infer the weight of products and even use it as an indicator of the perceived change in temperature resulting from the use of certain products. Consumers develop colour preferences based on associations they have formed through experience which are influenced by factors such as age, gender, culture and demographics. Colour may also affect consumers' respond to a product and may even have an effect on their emotional state. In order for consumers to involve themselves with store brands more readily, packaging has to be updated constantly to keep packaging fresh and exciting. A shopping bag, transformed with graphic attributes into a designer shopping bag, can, just as good packaging often does, contribute to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand. Consumers prefer designer paper shopping bags with attractive appearances and showed a willingness to even pay for the paper bags. This study determined if consumers will actually purchase a designer paper shopping bag as opposed to just indicate a willingness to do so. Semistructured interviews with 100 subjects provided insight into consumers' perception of the designer paper shopping bag sold at a store selling higher priced items. Designer paper shopping bags were offered to consumers for sale. Two retail stores in Bloemfontein, South Africa, participated in the study. Consumers could choose whether to buy a designer paper shopping bag or to make use of the plastic

bags provided by each of the stores. Consumers preferred to rather purchase a designer paper shopping bag sold at a well-known store, selling branded, higher priced items than purchase one from a store that sells lower priced items of which the brand names are unknown to them. Consumers are more likely to pay for a designer paper shopping bag when the amount spent by them in store is relatively high. It is recommended to introduce new packaging items via marketing strategies such as “buy one get one free” and to not test a new packaging item during a recession as consumers then tend to spend less than usual. Interviewees agree that the colour scheme of the designer paper shopping bag used in the study associate well with the clothes and accessories sold in the store. Subjects suggested a few general ideas, but agree that the illustrations used on the paper shopping bag are appropriate. The majority of the interviewees state that they can read all the typography easily and that they will feel confident when carrying the designer paper shopping bag.

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- SOLI DEO GLORIA -

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Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 functions as general introduction to the study and outlines the correlation between Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 2, titled "Attributes in packaging design", represents the first, qualitative article which outlines a literature review on good package design and identifies those variables that one should consider when deciding on colour and graphical attributes for packaging. It is written as an academic article and is to be submitted as such to an academic journal.

Chapter 3, titled "Consumers' willingness to pay for designer paper shopping bags", addresses the research question, namely if consumers will actually purchase designer paper shopping bags should these bags be offered to them for sale. A survey in the form of semistructured interviews provided insight into consumers' perception of the designer paper shopping bag that was sold in a store selling higher priced items. Separate bibliographies are provided at the end of Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. A combined bibliography is presented at the end of the dissertation.

Chapter 4 provides the conclusion drawn from Chapters 2 and 3. This chapter contains recommendations and concludes with a summary of the research as a whole.

A Reading List is given after the Bibliography. These sources are not cited in the dissertation, but may have influenced the author's thought process.

Introduction and Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

Byett et al. (1997) assert that packaging is the art, science and technology of transport and sales. A shopping bag can be likened to packaging in the sense that it ought to not only protect its contents, but, like packaging, should also serve to prepare the goods for transport. Apart from the above functions, a shopping bag furthermore has to sell what it protects. It is asserted that a shopping bag, transformed with graphic attributes to a designer bag, can, just as great packaging often does, contribute to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand. The term *designer paper shopping bag* in this study refers to a paper shopping bag consisting of design and graphic elements peculiar to a particular store.

A study conducted by Prendergast et al. (2001) revealed that paper shopping bags have more exposure and are stored for a much longer time than plastic shopping bags. Shaw (2003), after interviewing Dyess, a retail sales manager, remarked that the value of paper shopping bags lies in the option available to customers to reuse the bags and the opportunity for retailers to get their brand noticed by potential customers. Because consumers use and reuse shopping bags for a variety of purposes, they far outlive their intended purpose and are therefore suited to transform into an advertising carry-all (Bautista 1998).

Consumers' preferences are signalled by shopping bags (Edwards 2006), shopping bags reflect the taste and habits of the person carrying them (Bautista 1998) and they have the power to reassure the shopper (Edwards 2006). In a brief article titled "I love Paris in the Fall" and published in 2002 in the American edition of *Time* magazine, readers were let into the personal secrets of a certain shopper, one of which is to carry a designer shopping bag when going shopping in order to receive first-class treatment from sales assistants and to attain shopping credibility.

It is not surprising at all that retailers are aware of the strong effect that great packaging has or may have on the purchase intent of consumers. Dupuis (2007) claims that shoppers involve themselves with store brands more readily when they feel that the packaging is not only entertaining but also engaging. Consumers want to be surprised and entertained (Dupuis 2007) and the responsibility lies with the designer not only to create this entertainment value and surprise, but to influence, inform and furthermore motivate the shopper with the package design.

Packaging provides insight into trends. Most trends are not widely accepted at first, but as a trend gains prominence and subsequently popularity, it transforms to mass public consciousness and helps to sell products. Package designers use graphic attributes such as colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials as a means of expressing and marketing trends (Dupuis 2007). A shopping bag, as alluded to above, may be transformed with graphic attributes to a designer shopping bag and, just as great packaging often does, contribute to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand.

Tracy Mullin, President of the National Retail Federation (the world's largest retail trade association), remarked that shopping bags are a form of advertising that has a greater reach than television and radio and that it moreover reaches its target audience more directly and efficiently than magazines and newspapers do (Pedersen 1995). Edwards (2006) aptly refers to shopping bags as signature carry-alls while Logan (2006) deems them to be walking billboards which, according to Barbaro (2007), is paramount in identifying stores.

A market research department wished to establish how much of an impression a shopping bag makes on consumers. They subsequently interviewed 740 shoppers via telephone. Two-thirds of the interviewees revealed that they do indeed read the advertising or messages printed on shopping bags. These findings were afterwards published in the magazine *Progressive Grocer* (1996).

Monica Shaw, in an article published during 2003 in the magazine *Pulp & Paper*, commented on her attachment to brown paper shopping bags. She mentioned how versatile, durable and easily identifiable a brown paper bag is and, due to its graphics, refers to it as "An advertising machine". The store owner, the brand owner and the consumer benefit when making use of this portable art form. Bill Weiss, a shopping bag designer at Weiss & Sons in New York, commented in an interview: "You've got television, newspaper, radio and packaging ... and the fourth medium" (Radice & Comerfort 1987).

Stylish (yet practical) packaging potentially may be costly to design and manufacture. Byett et al. (1997) nonetheless suggest that packaging should be regarded as a benefit;

it should be optimized, rather than seen as a cost to be minimized. Barbaro (2007) remarked in a newspaper article that companies in the United States of America would rather opt to invest in costly redesigned bags than fail to benefit from free advertising, for that might prove to be even more costly to their companies.

1.2 Research objectives and hypothesis

Prendergast et al. (2001) provided a review on the preferences of consumers in Hong Kong regarding shopping bags. Their research indicated that consumers regarded the waterproof feature of plastic shopping bags and the convenience feature of paper shopping bags as the most important attributes. They also found that consumers regard a famous brand logo and attractive appearance more important for paper shopping bags than for plastic shopping bags. Brits (2005) subsequently conducted a similar study in South Africa to determine consumers' perception of shopping bags, their design preferences as well as their willingness to purchase designer paper shopping bags. The aforementioned study by Brits (2005) found that consumers in South Africa prefer designer paper shopping bags above plain plastic shopping bags and the consumers interviewed even indicated a willingness to pay for designer paper shopping bags. As no designer paper shopping bags were actually offered for sale to the interviewees, the aforementioned study did not test the propensity of consumers to purchase designer paper shopping bags, but set out only to determine their willingness to purchase such bags. Their indicated willingness to purchase such bags evidently necessitated further investigation.

This study, in light of the previous remarks, set out to test and determine whether consumers will actually purchase designer paper shopping bags should these bags be

offered to them for sale. As a natural consequence of this research objective, determining effective design attributes – specifically concerning colour but also other graphic attributes as applicable to good package design – form part of the research objectives.

Kim (2002), an associate professor at the Sunchon National University in Korea, conducted a study to determine whether consumers reduced their usage of paper shopping bags after they had to pay for these disposable bags. Forty per cent of the respondents indicated that they did not feel any financial burden and 45% indicated that the price of the paper bag was low in comparison to what they normally spend in a department store. The price of paper shopping bags is approximately 1% of what consumers spend in a department store. Brits' study in 2005 revealed that approximately 75% of the interviewees indicated a willingness to purchase designer paper shopping bags. The hypothesis for this study is that consumers will purchase designer paper shopping bags if the shopping bag represents a retail store selling up-market, branded items and if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high.¹

1.3 Methodology

Two retail stores in Bloemfontein, South Africa, participated in the study to determine whether consumers will actually purchase a designer paper shopping bag as opposed to just indicate a willingness to purchase such a bag. One of the stores participating in the study sells up-market branded goods, such as clothes and shoes, while the other store sells similar but less expensive goods and accessories imported from the Far

¹ The amount spent is considered to be relatively high if the value of the purchase items exceeds ZAR150.00.

East. Two branches of the up-market store, each located in a different shopping mall, received large designer paper bags, 275 x 130 x 395 mm, fitted with black rope handles. The graphics on the bag represented the up-market brand of clothes and shoes sold in both the stores. The bags were displayed and sold at the counter for ZAR10.00 (\$1.40) per bag. This up-market store also provides branded plastic bags free of charge and similar in size as the paper bag used for the purposes of this study.

The store selling lower priced items is also located in a well-known shopping centre. A smaller bag, 170 x 8 x 220 mm, also designed with peculiar graphic attributes, was thought to be ideal for this store. The large number of items that are sold in this store includes handbags, scarves and other accessories. The smaller paper bags were for sale at the counter for ZAR5.00 (\$0.70) per bag. The store in question also provides a plastic T-shopping bag (which has sections cut out on opposite sides of the bag to create handles by which it can be carried), containing no recognizable printing features or colours, free of charge to customers. Consumers had the opportunity to either buy a designer paper shopping bag or they could make use of the plastic bags provided by each of the stores. The designer paper shopping bags were available for sale at the three different stores for a period of nine months. The researcher conducted a survey to gain an insight into consumers' perception of the designer paper shopping bag that was sold in the store selling higher priced items.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates attributes that distinguishes effective packaging and that may be transferred to shopping bags to make them more attractive and more effective as advertising mediums.

Good packaging does not only have to provide protection, it has to be functional and cost-effective and its appearance has to have sales appeal (Byett et al. 1997). Good package design employing appropriate colour combinations is the key to attract consumers; it enhances point of sale and plays an influential and often decisive part in the success of a new product or brand. Graphic attributes such as colour, typography, images and even the name of a colour are those visible characteristics of packaging that distinguish products from one another.

Consumers' purchasing behaviours and decisions are influenced by cues such as brand name, packaging and the colour of the package (Tom et al. 1987). Whether a certain colour may indeed prompt consumer choice is complex to predict accurately and former consistent brand or product choices may suddenly vary, alternate or change altogether over time (Rogers Publishing 1996; Milotic 2003). It is therefore crucial to carry out market research to determine consumers' perception of a certain colour or of different colours before making decisions regarding colour and packaging. Managers do not always make the best or most appropriate colour choices

when it comes to packaging and advertising because they do not necessarily command any well-developed (design) frameworks to guide them (Gorn et al. 1997). Gorn et al. (1997) furthermore emphasize that colour selection might not in every instance be based on scientific evidence from the advertising industry but is rather based on artistic preference. Managers sometimes rely on the intuition of colour consultants (Grossman & Wisenblit 1999) whose advice is not necessarily based on empirical evidence (Gorn et al. 1997). In this chapter a number of articles in peer-reviewed academic journals as well as publications in trade journals are reviewed in order to identify those attributes and factors that product managers in conjunction with designers ought to consider when selecting colour and graphical attributes for packaging and shopping bags.

Colour forms an intricate part of our lives and influences many decisions we make (Rogers Publishing 1996). Colour often identifies a brand, it is used to differentiate between products (Tom et al. 1987) and it can even elicit an emotional response (Triplett 1996). The colour of a package may attract a consumer's attention and, when appropriately used as a decor element, can even create a positive ambiance in a store (Kessler 1997). Colour psychologist Angela Wright from an agency aptly named *Color Affects* postulates, "Color is noticed by the brain before shape or wording" (Centaur Communications 2004) and has an impact on toddlers, teenagers and adults (Kose 2008). Colour is one of the first things a baby reacts to (Kessler 1997) and it is even claimed that the colours in a television commercial may enhance a child's memory (Pretorius & Blignaut 1987). Colour can be a factor that determines the difference between a product succeeding or failing (Mortimer 2004; Kessler 1997) and the appropriate combination of colour and packaging is, therefore, essential.

Colour furthermore plays an important role in consumers' acceptance of food products. This applies not only to the colour of the product itself, but also to the colour of the packaging and the design of the product (Strugnell 2002). Colour not only affects consumers' acceptance of a product and subsequent buying patterns, it may even influence the manner in which they perceive the taste of a product. Consumers are sensitive to the appearance and/or colour of the food that they consume and thus expect food products to be appropriately coloured for an enjoyable, satisfying and nutritious experience (Collins 2004). In a study conducted by Strugnell (2002), students were initially presented with different concentrations of colourless sucrose solutions. This was done as to ensure that they could rank the different concentrations accurately. When these students were subsequently presented with differently coloured (i.e. blue, green, red and yellow) solutions of the same sweetness, the red solution was ranked as being the sweetest and the blue solution was ranked as being the least sweet. Strugnell (2002) explained that this phenomenon could be a result of the types of fruit and confectionary consumed in the United Kingdom. Consumers are namely "conditioned" to perceive red as sweet and blue or green as sour. Other researchers reported similar results. In an empirical study undertaken by Tom et al. (1987) it was reported that colour is a more influential cue than taste and that consumers also use colour to recognize products and brands. This conclusion was drawn after participants in their study mistakenly perceived vanilla pudding – coloured to resemble chocolate pudding – as having the taste of chocolate pudding. In addition, Tom et al. (1987) reported that consumers use colour as an indicator of temperature and also use colour to guess the weight of products. Consumers perceive pale-coloured objects as weighing less than identical dark-coloured objects.

Milotic (2003) conducted a study in which he focused on fragrance as a primary motivation for consumer choice. He argues that consumers find it difficult to recognize smells or fragrances because of the inability to retrieve smells from memory. Colour, however, when used consistently with a certain smell or fragrance, may help consumers to identify that particular smell or fragrance.

2.2 Colour attributes

Age and demographics may influence colour preference. This preference is in turn formed through associations consumers make with a specific colour. This explains why a pleasant experience connected with a certain colour can give rise to a preference for that colour (Grossman & Wisenblit 1999). Gender (Rogers Publishing 1996) and socio-economic background (Kose 2008) can also affect consumers' perception of a colour and subsequently their response to that colour. Children act almost exclusively on their emotions and the ideal food product would be colourful and sweet tasting (Collins 2004). Marshall et al. (2006) came to a similar conclusion in a study in which they observed 43 preschool children between the ages of three and five. They determined the role of package colour in product selection as well as whether preschool children make use of package colour to differentiate between product categories. Each subject had to choose one cereal packet, one biscuit packet and one canned beverage for him or herself as well as for a boy and for a girl respectively. Marshall et al. (2006) found that the preschoolers made package selections based on their favourite colours. Pink, purple and yellow proved to be the subjects' favourite colours as these were the most likely to be chosen in each of the three product categories. Pink was the favourite colour and appealed to both the boys and the girls. Purple was the subjects' second most favourite colour, followed by blue

and yellow. Current artistic designs seen on packaging are not consistent with preschoolers' favourite colours. Visser (2006), after studying cereal box colour and graphic design preferences of seven-year-old children, found that girls preferred pink and purple, whilst boys preferred blue, red and green. Adults can likewise develop colour preferences based on associations they have formed through experience. People form and may reinforce associations through the denotative and connotative connections they make between a specific colour and its intended meaning (Grossman & Wisenblit 1999) and these associations are influenced by factors such as age, gender, culture and demographics (Paul 2002; Mortimer 2004).

Age, gender and cultural background also have an influence on consumers' colour preference (Paul 2002). Kessler (1997) is of the opinion that bold, bright colours attract teenagers of both genders while male consumers appreciate neutral and understated colours. Women, on the other hand, appreciate a wider spectrum of colours (Kessler 1997). Paul (2002) explains that this might be due to the fact that women tend to see colour better than men do as men are 16 times more likely than women to be colour-blind. Margaret Miele, assistant professor of psychology at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, claims that our eyes mature as we get older. Our vision takes on a yellow cast and therefore older people tend to see very dark colours poorly (Paul 2002). Hedge (1996) reported similar findings and concluded that both the age of a person and the saturation of a colour have an effect on colour judgement.

Madden et al. (2000) explored the preferences of and the meanings associated with a range of colours in eight diverse cultures. These researchers namely found that the

colours black and brown are associated with being “sad” or “stale” by some of the groups, whereas other groups in the study associated the colours black and brown with being “formal” and “masculine”. Some subjects found blue, green and white as “gentle”, “peaceful” and “calming” whilst other groups associated these three colours with “beauty” and “pleasantness”. The combination of certain colours and also the value and chroma of a specific colour may affect the response from consumers. A bright green, for example, might not evoke the same feelings as an earthy and textured green. The value and chroma of a colour may also affect the manner in which consumers are likely to respond towards a particular colour when that colour is used in conjunction with another colour or product (Centaur Communications 2007). Colour not only influences consumers’ behaviour towards and perception of a product, but may also affect their emotional state (Centaur Communications 2007). Triplett (1996), in an article for *Marketing News*, reported that people tend to respond to particular colours in a uniform way and that colour can be used to elicit a specific emotional response from consumers. Gorn et al. (1997) employed a fabricated advertisement, in which they deliberately manipulated the colour of a certain graphical part, in order to test subjects’ emotional response. This advertisement, designed for a fictitious paint manufacturing company, was placed in the centre of a professionally prepared, four-colour dummy magazine. University undergraduates skimmed through the magazine and were asked to complete a questionnaire which included questions involving brand attitude and feelings. The results revealed that high levels of chroma and value produced feelings of excitement and relaxation. Higher values appeared to have a favourable impact on the attitude towards brands because of a greater feeling of relaxation.

Tom et al. (1987) found that consumers use colour to identify products and brands. Colour is thus not only an element of design, but it can play a major role in communicating brand personality (Ampuero & Vila 2006; Paul 2002; Madden et al. 2000), for example the colour red associated with Coca-Cola (Kessler 1997). Colour may even act as a sales code, for example the use of red (both the word and the colour) by CNA (Central News Agency) in their “Red Band Books” sale and by Edgars with their “Red Hanger” sale.

Consumers are becoming more demanding and a brand’s visual appearance has become even more important in today’s rapidly changing market (Ampuero & Vila 2006). Tom et al. (1987) suggest that marketers have first to identify the key attributes that consumers desire in a product or service and then design the critical cues to communicate these desired characteristics to consumers. Brands send a signal to consumers who respond to colour unconsciously most of the time (Mortimer 2004). Mimi Cooper, vice-president of The Cooper Marketing Group, remarked that colours send signals about the physical characteristics of a product (Triplett 1996) and certain colours can be used in fun ways to target a younger market (Kessler 1997). Preschoolers do show some brand awareness and this may account for the increasing popularity of red for canned beverages (such as used by Coca-Cola) and yellow for cereals. Children may have certain colour preferences for fizzy drinks and cereals, but researchers found limited evidence of preschoolers making the link between package colour and the brand they are able to recall (Marshall et al. 2006). Red might therefore be associated with fizzy soft drinks, but not necessarily or specifically with Coca-Cola. This phenomenon may be the result of the children’s limited exposure to packaging or may be related to their exposure to the colour of foods, but not

necessarily the colour of the packaging (for example the breakfast cereal sold under the name Coco Pops). Children, however, do make use of packaging cues such as graphic shapes and images when choosing products. When faced with a choice, children are bound to choose vitamins displaying a cartoon character such as Bugs Bunny on the packaging above a brand such as Tivisal children's vitamins. The vitamins displaying Bugs Bunny on the packaging are perceived to be "better" for the simple reason that the iconic image of Bugs Bunny invokes positive feelings that are then transferred to the product. Consumers thus use the cues that marketers send to them to identify and give meaning to brands and products.

Cooper (in Triplett 1996) stresses the necessity to update images and colour schemes to keep packaging fresh and exciting. Consumers have become more sophisticated when it comes to the use of colour and consumer demands and expectations are higher than in the past (Triplett 1996; Milotic 2003).

2.3 Graphic attributes

The battle for consumer attention is at shelf level (Centaur Communications 2003). It is claimed that good packaging design with appropriate and attractive colour combinations, catch the attention of consumers, influence sales and could make the difference between a potential customer walking past or buying (Kessler 1997). In order for packaging to attract consumers' attention quickly and to communicate effectively, designers of packaging need to know whom they are talking to, the market's interests and what is desired or expected from the product (Centaur Communications 2003). Sheridan (2001), who interviewed both graphic designer John Sayles and researcher Barbara Lang, justly postulates that good packaging

design is not inexpensive; packaging, however, can play a key role at point of sale to ensure that the brand stands out and is recognized (Rettie & Brewer 2000). Packaging should be treated as a billboard (Kessler 1997) and consumers' perception and their interpretation of type and graphic elements should be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding packaging (Rettie & Brewer 2000).

Ampuero and Vila (2006) argued that graphic elements in packaging may be combined in different ways to transmit the desired perception into the minds of consumers. They examined the possibilities of packaging variables (colour, typography, graphic shapes and images) influencing positioning perceptions. Their results indicated that consumers use graphic attributes such as image, shape, typography and colour to associate products with different income groups. They found that consumers from a higher income group prefer to associate with cool- or dark-coloured (mainly black) packaging that attests of elegance and have refined aesthetics, whilst price sensitive consumers associate with light-coloured (mainly white) packaging. Consumers also use graphic attributes such as image, shape, typography and colour to form associations with specific products. Ampuero and Vila (2006) also found that products with red in their designs are usually associated with or seen as representing patriotism, while illustrations of people on packaging are associated with products directed at price sensitive consumers.

It is not only the colour of packaging and the graphical elements that may affect consumers' decision to buy a product, but also the name of the colour that play a vital part in the way consumers process package colour and graphical elements. Miller and Kahn (2005) assessed whether flavour name and colour influence product choice.

They found that the name of a colour in itself influences consumers' propensity to purchase a product. In a similar study, Skorinko et al. (2006) investigated whether the names associated with different colours influence consumers' behaviour and documented comparable results as recorded by Miller and Kahn (2005). Consumers preferred products with exotic, fanciful or flamboyant names² above the very same products with generic names,³ regardless of the actual colour of the product. Consumers were more likely to purchase and were willing to even pay more for the former. Skorinko et al. (2006) concluded their article by aptly suggesting that whenever product sales should stagnate, it might be an indication to revamp product names in order to boost consumer interest and thereby sales.

2.4 Discussion and summary of the attributes

This chapter reviewed articles published in peer-reviewed journals and explanations and ideas put forward by design practitioners and package design practitioners. This discussion highlights and summarizes those broad areas for consideration when selecting colour and graphical attributes to be implemented in package design. The comments and results expounded in the articles seem to indicate that consumers have different preferences, that these preferences are dictated and shaped by external factors, that colour and graphical attributes might have a more substantial influence on consumer behaviour than one would expect and that colour can influence consumers' perception and senses. Age, gender, level of income, culture and even their place of residence may influence consumers' preferences.

² e.g. mocha, or ocean.

³ e.g. brown or blue.

Most designers are aware of the fact that the choice of colour and graphic attributes are dictated by the profile of the target market and that different markets differ in their preferences. The selection of graphic elements and colour is normally dictated by the client's brief and by the designer's personal preference and cultural background. The ideal route for designers is to take into account scientific evidence in addition to market research results and using this insight regarding consumer preferences.

Consumers not only vary in their colour preferences, but colour may even influence how consumers perceive the taste of foodstuffs or beverages that they eat or drink and colour may even assist in identifying the scent, fragrance or flavour of a product (Tom et al. 1987; Milotic 2003). The colour of a product or the colour of its packaging may furthermore be used to give an indication of the weight of a product and may even act as an indicator of the perceived temperature of certain products (Tom et al. 1987).

The name of a colour also plays a vital part in the way consumers react towards products. Consumers prefer products with lavish, fanciful or flamboyant names and are therefore more likely to purchase and even pay more for a product with such a name as the same product sold under a generic name (Skorinko et al. 2006). For example, consumers are more likely to purchase a towel, cosmetic item or linen when, with respect to its colour, that item is labelled as "seaweed", "mint" or "cherry" instead of simply green or red. It could therefore be an appropriate solution to change or re-evaluate product and colour names if sales should stagnate.

The colour of packaging can be used to indicate to customers that a certain product has a distinctive fragrance or scent. The use of the colour purple on packaging, for

example, can help to indicate that a certain product has a lavender scent. Products such as cat litter crystals and furniture polish come in different scents and fragrances, notably also lavender. As expected, the crystals of the cat litter and the can of furniture polish are then appropriately coloured purple to assist consumers to make the association with the lavender plant and as a result thereof reach the conclusion that the product has the pleasant fragrance of lavender. Different senses influence the way in which the colour of a product or the colour of packaging is experienced and can elicit a specific emotional response and by so doing sway the manner in which consumers react to a specific brand or product (Triplett 1996; Gorn et al. 1997). The colour purple, as indicated above, is associated with the lavender plant, but lavender is moreover known for its calming effect. It would therefore be appropriate to use purple for the colour of the packaging and/or the product itself if the product is used to relieve stress, for example foam bath liquid or bath crystals. A foam bath emanating a fragrance of lavender and appropriately coloured as well contributes to the intended function of the product, namely to reduce stress. Purple may, however, not be the ideal colour for the same product in countries where consumers are not familiar with the lavender plant. To be able to make an appropriate colour choice dictates that a designer simply has to gather specific information on the target market, such as their cultural taboos, colour preferences, culinary practices and even popular images in their television programmes in order to move across cultural barriers with ease.

Not only do consumers vary in their colour preferences, but the same individual may also prefer different colours for different product categories. Purple, for instance, would be the ideal colour for bedroom curtains, but would not (conventionally

speaking) be the preferred colour for a motor vehicle or the exterior of a house. Women appreciate a wider and brighter spectrum of colours (Paul 2002) while men favour more neutral colours (Kessler 1997). When designing for a target market consisting of women, teenagers and children, it would be best to make use of bright colours, as this is what attracts those markets. It is envisaged that children are bound to prefer a bright colour, regardless of the product; however, a female consumer might prefer pink packaging when purchasing cosmetic products, perfume or shoes, but this cannot be used as an indication to project which colour she would prefer for a motor vehicle or a couch.

Researchers seem to point out that consumers' level of income could be an indication of their colour and graphic preference. The fonts, images and illustrations on packaging aimed at a higher income group should therefore differ from the packaging aimed at the price sensitive consumer (Ampuero & Vila 2006). Product designers and managers thus have to carefully determine their consumers' preferences as determined by their level of income and then design products and packaging in line with those preferences.

One may conclude that the colour of packaging may indeed make the difference between a product succeeding or failing (Ampuero & Vila 2006; Mortimer 2004; Kessler 1997) and that the colour of packaging communicates to consumers before they notice any graphical attributes. Age, gender, culture and geographical location influence consumer preferences and these factors should be the departure point to determine the colour and design layout for any newly proposed packaging. The income group at which the product is aimed at and all aspects of the product have to

be taken into consideration as well. Guiding questions such as the following may help to provide direction during any stage of the development process of proposed packaging: How can the colour of the packaging assist in indicating the weight of the product or help intensify the taste thereof? Does the product require colour and graphical attributes to emphasize or enhance the perceived temperature of the product? Would it be advantageous if prospective customers associate the product with a certain scent, aroma or flavour and, if so, which colour would support, strengthen or reinforce this association? Is the product intended to generate an emotional response and, if so, which colour would best suit the packaging to elicit that response? If the name of a product consists of the name of a colour, for example green, how will consumers react towards that colour name or will a fanciful or flamboyant name, for instance lime, olive or mint, be more appropriate instead?

In light of the above, designers thus need to familiarize themselves with research results regarding graphic attributes, colour and consumer preference before designing new product packaging.

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Consumers' Willingness to Pay for Designer Paper Shopping Bags

3.1 Introduction

Packaging is the art, science and technology of transport and sales (Byett et al. 1997). A shopping bag can be likened to packaging in that it must not only protect its contents, but must also prepare the goods for transport and it has to sell what it protects. A study by Prendergast et al. conducted during 2001 showed that paper bags have more exposure and are stored for a much longer time than plastic shopping bags. Shaw (2003), after interviewing Dyess, a retail sales manager, remarked that the value of paper shopping bags lies in the option available to customers to reuse the bags and thus the opportunity for retailers to get their brand noticed by potential customers. Shopping bags thus far outlive their intended purpose (Bautista 1998) as consumers use and reuse shopping bags for a variety of purposes (Prendergast et al. 2001). Shopping bags are therefore suited to transform into an advertising carry-all (Bautista 1998).

Shopping bags signal consumers' preference (Edwards 2006), reflect the taste and habits of the person carrying them (Bautista 1998) and, as signature bags, have the power to reassure the shopper (Edwards 2006). In 2002, the American edition of *Time* magazine published a brief article on the personal secrets of a particular shopper, one of which is to carry a designer shopping bag when going shopping in order to receive first-class treatment from sales assistants and to attain shopping credibility.

Retailers are aware of the strong effect that great packaging has on the purchase intent of consumers. Shoppers involve themselves with store brands more readily when they feel that the packaging is entertaining and engaging (Dupuis 2007). Dupuis (2007) claims that consumers want to be surprised and entertained and the responsibility lies with the designer not only to create this entertainment and surprise, but also to influence, inform and motivate the shopper with the package design.

One may furthermore gain insight into trends by considering packaging. Trends are not accepted at first, but as a trend gains prominence and hence popularity, it transforms to mass public consciousness and helps to sell products. Package designers use design elements such as colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials as a means of expressing trends (Dupuis 2007). A shopping bag, transformed with design elements to a designer bag, can, just as great packaging often does, contribute to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand.

Shopping bags are signature carry-alls (Edwards 2006) and walking billboards (Logan 2006), which identify stores (Barbaro 2007). A market research department wished to determine how much of an impression a shopping bag makes on consumers. They then interviewed 740 shoppers via telephone. Two-thirds revealed that they read the advertising or messages printed on shopping bags (*Progressive Grocer* 1996).

Monica Shaw (2003), in an article for *Pulp & Paper*, commented on her attachment to brown paper bags. In the aforementioned article Shaw divulged how versatile, durable and easily identifiable a brown paper bag is and she refers to it as “An advertising machine” because of its graphics. Both the store owner and the consumer

benefit when making use of this portable art form. So does the brand owner. Ries-Taggart (2004), in a retail magazine, commented on the more than 100 shopping bags that were on display at a public library. She aptly stated that this exhibition indicates that this portable art form has become a visual feature of international retailing.

Byett et al. (1997) suggest that packaging should be regarded as a benefit; it should be optimized, rather than seen as a cost to be minimized. Barbaro (2007) remarked in a newspaper article that companies in the United States of America would rather opt to invest in costly redesigned bags, than fail to benefit from free advertising, for that might prove to be even more costly.

3.2 The testing phase

Prendergast et al. (2001) in their research found that consumers regarded the waterproof feature of plastic bags and the convenience feature of paper shopping bags as the most important attributes. They also found that consumers regarded a famous brand logo and attractive appearance to be more important for paper bags than plastic bags. Brits (2005) also determined consumers' perceptions of shopping bags and specifically their design preferences for a range of shopping bags. Eighty-three of 100 interviewees preferred a paper shopping bag instead of a plastic bag. Brits (2005) furthermore determined that the majority of the interviewees preferred a new designer paper shopping bag (adjusted with appropriate colour and graphic attributes) and the majority of the interviewees indicated that they are willing to pay for these bags. The aforementioned study also indicated that the purchasing of designer paper shopping bags could decrease if bag prices increase.

Kim, an associate professor at the Sunchon National University in Korea, conducted a study during 2002 to determine whether consumers reduced their usage of paper shopping bags after they had to pay for these disposable bags. Forty per cent of the respondents indicated that they did not feel any financial burden and 45% indicated that the price of the paper bag was low in comparison to what they normally spend in a department store. The price of paper shopping bags is namely approximately 1% of what consumers spend in a department store, but consumers strongly indicate a likelihood to decrease their purchasing of paper shopping bags should the price of the bags increase.

Shopping bags are advertising carry-alls and the store owner as well as the brand owner benefit when consumers use and reuse this portable art form. There is an awareness that consumers prefer packaging that is exciting and engaging (Dupuis 2007; Brits 2005). However, it is important to determine consumers' willingness to purchase these bags to ensure that store owners and brand owners get their brands noticed. The aim of this study was to determine whether consumers in South Africa will actually purchase a designer paper shopping bag as opposed to just indicate a willingness to purchase such a bag. The study also endeavoured to gain an insight into consumers' perception of the designer paper shopping bag sold at a store selling higher priced items. It was hypothesized that consumers will pay for designer paper shopping bags if the shopping bag represents a retail store selling up-market, branded items and if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high.⁴

⁴ The amount spent is considered to be relatively high if the value of the purchase items exceeds ZAR150.00 (approximately \$22.00).

3.3 Methodology

Two retail stores in Bloemfontein, South Africa, participated in the study. One of the stores sells up-market branded goods, such as clothes and shoes, while the other store sells similar but less expensive goods and accessories imported from the Far East. Each store received a unique paper shopping bag designed especially for the purpose of the testing phase. Two branches of the up-market store, located in two different shopping malls, received large paper bags, 275 x 130 x 395 mm, fitted with black rope handles. The researcher did not have complete and unqualified freedom to design the bag according to the guidelines as discussed in Chapter 2 above. The graphic attributes such as colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials on the bag had to represent and reflect the up-market brand of clothes and shoes sold in these stores. The graphic attributes in their branding, advertising and packaging, nonetheless, correlate well with the graphic attributes identified in Chapter 2. The colour schemes and graphics are, as suggested by Ampuero and Vila (2006), appropriate for consumers from a high income group. Consumers from this group seem to prefer cool- or dark-coloured packaging with refined aesthetics. Ampuero and Vila (2006) also found that illustrations of men, women and children on packaging are associated with products directed at price sensitive consumers. The researcher therefore precluded the use of any illustrations showing people in the design of the paper shopping bag of the store selling higher priced items. The bags were displayed and sold at the counter for ZAR10.00 (\$1.40) per bag. This store provides branded plastic shopping bags free of charge and similar in size as the paper shopping bag used for the study.

The store selling lower priced items is also located in a well-known, but different shopping centre. A smaller bag, 170 x 8 x 220 mm, also designed with identifiable features, was thought to be ideal for this store. A large number of items that are sold in this store include handbags, scarves and accessories. The smaller paper bags were for sale at the counter for ZAR5.00 (\$0.70) per bag. The store in question also provides a plastic T-shopping bag (which has sections cut out on opposite sides of the bag to form handles by which the bag can be carried), containing no recognizable printing features or colours, free of charge to customers. Consumers could choose whether to buy a designer paper shopping bag or to make use of the plastic bags provided by each of the stores free of charge. The designer paper shopping bags were made available for sale at the three different stores for a period of nine months. The store manager of each of the two up-market stores and the owner of the store that sells less expensive goods provided the total number of shopping bag sales at the end of each month respectively.

The researcher, after the testing phase, interviewed 100 subjects at the two upmarket stores to determine their perception of the designer paper shopping bag. Fifty subjects, conveniently sampled at each store (54 men and 46 women) participated in the survey. The sampling took place on a Friday between 10:00 and 14:00 and on a Saturday between 10:00 and 14:00. The purpose of this was to select a sample that reflected the typical customer frequenting the stores. The interviewees consisted of teenagers, students, working men and woman and even retired individuals. Ten willing university students participated in a pilot study to refine the questions and to ensure that the questions are and would be understood. The first section of the first three questions used a five-point Likert Scale, namely strongly agree, agree, neither

agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The second part of the first and third question respectively required the subjects to make a choice. The second part of Question 2 were open-ended. Question 4 asked the interviewees to express their opinion by means of choosing icons consisting of five different facial expressions. These expressions range from a face with an inverted smile, an inverted shallow smile, a neutral expression, a shallow friendly smile and a friendly smile. These questions are included in Appendix C.

3.4 The results

3.4.1 The results of the testing phase

It was hypothesized that consumers will pay for designer paper shopping bags if the shopping bags represent a retail store selling up-market, branded items and if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high. The results of the second part of the study and an analysis of the results are presented in the Table below. Only one bag was sold at the store selling lower priced goods. The limited number of sales of shopping bags at the lower priced store does not allow for any meaningful comparison between the up-market and the lower priced store. The Tables presented in this chapter reflect only the data and analysis of the data of the bags sold at the two branches of the up-market store.

Table 1: Value (in ZAR) of items sold with paper shopping bags at the up-market stores

	n	X	SD	Mode	Max	Min
Store 1	59	391	234	279	1000	0
Store 2	19	474	273	299	1126	136

It was furthermore hypothesized that consumers will pay for designer paper shopping bags if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high. Logistic tests were run to determine if the amount spent by customers has a significant effect on the maximum number of bags sold per month as well as on the total number of bags sold during the nine-month duration of the testing phase. The results of these three statistical tests are given in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Logistic univariate tests of significance of amount spent versus maximum number of bags sold per month

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta = 0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	10.4826	1	0.0012
Score	12.1882	1	0.0005
Wald	9.0240	1	0.0027

Table 3: Logistic univariate tests of significance of amount spent versus total number of bags sold during nine months

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta = 0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	5.6669	1	0.0173
Score	4.8603	1	0.0275
Wald	4.0761	1	0.0435

In both Tables 2 and 3 above, Wald’s Chi-square p-value was chosen as it is the most pessimistic statistic when it comes to rejecting the “BETA=0” hypothesis, i.e. rejecting the statement that the influential variable tested (in this case “amount spent”), has no effect on the number of bags sold. As can be seen from the Wald p-value statistics, the amount spent by the customers influenced both the maximum number of bags sold per month as well as the total number of bags sold during nine months. The p-values are below 0.05 in both cases (indicating a 95% confidence level). In only three of the 78 transactions at both branches the amount spent was less than ZAR150.00.

The possibility was considered that other factors in the data might have had a confounding effect on the results of the analysis. The time of year or geographical location of the stores might have had a significant effect on the number of bags sold. The influence of these two variables on the number of bags sold was subsequently tested.

Table 4: Logistic univariate tests of significance of time of year versus maximum number of bags sold per month

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta = 0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	8.4576	8	0.3901
Score	7.2440	8	0.5106
Wald	1.6414	8	0.9901

Table 5: Logistic univariate tests of significance of time of year versus total number of bags sold during nine months

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta = 0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	21.5406	11	0.0282
Score	14.2960	11	0.2170
Wald	4.2336	11	0.9626

This time the Likelihood Ratio Chi-square p-value was selected to be tested at the 95% confidence interval. This was done since the Likelihood Ratio test is the most likely of the three tests above to reject hypothesis BETA=0 (indicating that time of year has an influence on the number of bags sold). From Tables 4 and 5 above one can see that time of year (month) has no significant influence on the maximum number of bags sold, but still does influence the total number of bags sold. This intuitively makes sense since more bags were sold (in total) during certain months of the year.

Table 6: Logistic univariate tests of significance for shop location versus maximum number of bags sold per month

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta = 0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	1.2976	1	0.5854
Score	1.2753	1	0.5998
Wald	1.2652	1	0.6066

Table 7: Logistic univariate tests of significance of shop location versus total number of bags sold during nine months

Testing Global Null Hypothesis: Beta=0

Test	Chi-Square	DF	Pr>ChiSq
Likelihood Ratio	0.6043	1	0.4369
Score	1.5669	1	0.4515
Wald	1.6360	1	0.4252

The Likelihood Ratio was once again selected for testing at the 95% confidence level. It can be seen that the p-values of 0.5854 and 0.4369 from Tables 6 and 7 respectively are above 0.05. This indicates that the physical location of the stores had no influence on the number of bags sold between the two branches of the up-market store. Ideally the study would have liked to include the third store, which sells lower priced items, into the factor analysis for geographical location. However, since no bags were sold at the store, no data from the shop is available to test and the assumption has to be made that if location was not an influencing factor between the two stores selling higher priced items, the same would hold for the third store. The factor analysis has shown that the results and hence the tests done are not influenced by any other factors within the data to such an extent that it would give rise to misleading results.

3.4.2 The results of the survey

Question 1

Interviewees had to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree that the colours used in the design on the

paper shopping bag are representative of a store that sells clothes and accessories for outdoor living. Subjects were then asked to choose a colour scheme which in their opinion would be appropriate for a store that sells outdoor clothing and accessories. The first row of colour schemes represents the same colours as was used for the designer paper shopping bag. These colours correlated with the stores' current brand and colour schemes. These colours also symbolized the four classic elements namely earth, air, fire and water and which was thought to be ideal for a store that sells outdoor clothing and accessories. The first colour in the first row was a dirt brown, followed by dark mustard, burnt orange, olive green and earthy blue. The second and third rows consisted of the same colour schemes as was used for row one, but vary in colour value. As individuals get older, their eyes mature and take on a yellow cast – as explained by Margaret Miele (see Chapter 2 above) – and therefore may result in older individuals seeing very dark colours poorly (Paul 2002). The researcher therefore decided to include colour schemes with different colour values to accommodate these specific instances. In the second row, the colour value of each colour was reduced to 55% and in the third row the colour value of each colour was again reduced, this time to 18%. The fourth row consisted of the same colour scheme as was used for the first row, but in this instance a different chroma was used for each colour, namely brighter. Kessler (1997) is of the opinion that bold, bright colours attract teenagers of both genders. According to Kessler (1997), women appreciate a wider spectrum of colours and Paul (2002) explains that this might be due to the fact that women tend to see colour better than men do as men are 16 times more likely than women to be colour-blind. The researcher therefore replaced the dirt brown with red, the dark mustard with yellow, the burnt orange with bright orange, the olive green with green and the earthy blue with blue.

Ninety-eight of the 100 interviewees strongly agreed and two interviewees agreed that the colour scheme of the designer paper shopping bag is representative of a store that sells clothes and accessories for outdoor living. The majority of the interviewees (79) preferred the first colour scheme, which is the colour scheme used for the designer paper shopping bag. Thirteen interviewees preferred the brighter colour scheme, whereas only eight subjects indicated an interest in the colour scheme with a lower value (55%) used in the second row. The colour scheme is given in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: The colour scheme used for Question 1

Question 2

Question 2 dealt with the illustrations used in the design on the shopping bag. Eighty-one of the interviewees strongly agreed that the shopping bag contained appropriate illustrations that can be used to promote the goods sold in the store. A further nineteen subjects agreed that the illustrations were appropriate considering the goods sold in the store. Interviewees were asked to give an indication of what kind of illustrations they would include if they had to provide design guidelines for the design. Forty-nine interviewees stated that they would use the same kind of illustrations as used on the bag currently. Twenty interviewees indicated that they would include illustrations depicting a Jeep 4x4 on the paper shopping bags; fourteen suggested that individuals involved in a physical outdoor activity would be ideal and another eight subjects recommended that camping scenery be included in the design. Five subjects suggested that they thought a person could be included in the illustrations. Four interviewees suggested unusual outdoor sceneries, which included the bush, the desert and cliffs.

Question 3

Interviewees were asked to give their opinion with regard to the legibility of the typography and logo size for Question 3. Eighty-two strongly agreed and 18 agreed that the typography were highly legible and that the logo size was acceptable. Subjects were then asked to indicate whether they, if they were involved in the design of the shopping bag, would increase, decrease or keep the size of the logo unchanged. Fifty-six subjects indicated that they would keep the size of the logo unchanged, 37 suggested that they would prefer the logo size to be increased whereas seven subjects indicated that they would decrease the size of the logo.

Question 4

In Question 4 the interviewees were asked, if they should happen to be carrying such a paper shopping bag, whether they would feel self-assured. Eighty-three subjects strongly asserted that they would feel self-assured if they carried such a bag. Thirteen subjects said they would feel self-assured to some extent, and only four subjects indicated that the bag would have no effect on their confidence. These results are similar to the comments made in an article titled "I love Paris in the Fall" published in *Time* magazine in 2002 where shoppers are advised to carry a designer shopping bag when going shopping in order to receive first-class treatment from sales assistants and to attain shopping credibility. Fifty-four subjects stated that they believed that they could expect first-class treatment from sale assistants when carrying the paper shopping bag in question. Another thirty-five interviewees said that they felt it would have no influence on the treatment they get from sale assistants when carrying the bag. Nine interviewees were of the opinion that they could expect reasonable treatment from sale assistants. Two respondents explained that they thought they would get poor treatment, due to the fact that the sale assistants might think that the customer already supported another store and will therefore be unlikely to spend any more money.

3.5 Discussion of the results

Consumers will rather purchase a designer paper shopping bag sold at a well-known store selling branded, higher priced items than purchase one from a store that sells lower priced goods of which the brand names are unknown to them. It can therefore be recommended that if someone wishes to introduce new products, patents or marketing strategies or wishes to determine the effectiveness thereof, it would be

sensible to utilize stores known to customers, which sell branded items familiar to them.

The results further indicate that consumers are more likely to pay for a designer paper shopping bag when the amount spent in store is relatively high. It was found that the amount spent by customers who bought a designer paper shopping bag in only three of the 78 transactions was less than ZAR150.00. The higher the amount spent by the customer in store, the higher the probability that the consumer will purchase one or even more than one designer paper shopping bag. The time of year, in this case, had an influence on the maximum number of bags sold. The highest number of bags at each of the stores selling higher priced items was sold during the month of December which is a festive, holiday period in South Africa. The store which had a maximum number of 18 bag sales during December, also represents the store with the most bag sales during the course of the testing phase and also recorded the second most bag sales during the month of January. Most stores experience increased sales during the festive season and it would therefore explain the large number of bags sold during the month of December. Because of and during the festive season, consumers indulge in shopping more often and this might also have resulted in higher sales of the designer paper shopping bags. January is the month to buy bargains as after Christmas retailers commence to trade leftover stock. Stores tend to be busy and this might then explain the second most bag sales during January. The total number of bags sold during the course of the nine months of the testing phase was not as high as was expected. This could have been because of the worldwide recession, which also influenced South Africa. It stands to reason that during recessions consumers will

inevitably spend less than they usually do. Marketing strategies such as “buy one get one free” can also influence the sale of designer paper shopping bags.

The limited sales of shopping bags at the lower priced store did not allow testing of the hypothesis that consumers will pay for designer paper shopping bags if the shopping bag represents a retail store selling up-market branded items. There was, however, sufficient evidence to conclude that shoppers will purchase designer paper shopping bags if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high. The time of year might have an influence on the sale of designer paper shopping bags, but it is most likely external factors such as a festive season that affect sales, and not the bags as such.

The majority of the interviewees agreed that the existing colour scheme, namely dirt brown, dark mustard, burnt orange, olive green and earthy blue associate well with the clothes and accessories sold in the store. The interviewees were also of the opinion that the illustrations used on the paper shopping bag were appropriate, but did suggest a few ideas such as a photograph of a Jeep 4x4, individuals involved in a physical outdoor activity or a camping scene. Subjects appeared to be well informed about the Jeep brand. The subjects did not experience difficulty with the typography nor the size of the logo. Some (n = 37) subjects, nonetheless, favoured a larger logo. Most interviewees were of the opinion that the shopping bag would positively influence the treatment they get from sale assistants and they would feel confident when carrying the paper shopping bag in question.

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Conclusion, Recommendations and Summary

4.1 Introduction

Good packaging does not only have to provide protection, it furthermore has to be functional and cost-effective and its appearance without doubt has to have sales appeal (Byett et al. 1997). Graphic attributes such as colour, typography, images and even the name of a colour are those visible characteristics of packaging that distinguish products from one another. Whether a certain colour may indeed prompt consumer choice is complex to predict accurately while former consistent brand or product choices may suddenly vary, alternate or change altogether over time (Rogers Publishing 1996; Milotic 2003) and it is therefore crucial to carry out market research to determine consumers' perception of colour before making decisions regarding colour and packaging.

Gorn et al. (1997) state that managers do not always make the best or most appropriate colour choices when it comes to packaging and advertising because they do not necessarily command any well-developed (design) frameworks to guide them. These authors furthermore emphasize that colour selection might not in every instance be based on scientific evidence from the advertising industry but rather be based on artistic preference. Managers sometimes rely on the intuition of colour consultants (Grossman & Wisenblit 1999) whose advice is not necessarily based on empirical evidence (Gorn et al. 1997).

Byett et al. (1997) accurately defines packaging as the art, science and technology of transport and sales. A shopping bag can be likened to packaging in that it must not only protect its contents, but must also prepare the goods for transport and sell what it protects. Shopping bags signal consumers' preferences (Edwards 2006), reflect the taste and habits of the person carrying them (Bautista 1998) and as signature bags have the power to reassure the shopper (Edwards 2006).

Retailers are aware of the strong effect that great packaging has on the purchase intent of consumers. Dupuis (2007) found that shoppers involve themselves with store brands more readily when they feel that the packaging is entertaining and engaging. Consumers, as Dupuis (2007) furthermore established, want to be surprised and entertained and the responsibility lies with the designer not only to create this entertainment and surprise, but also to influence, inform and motivate the shopper with the package design.

Colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials are some of the attributes that designers have to keep in mind when designing packaging. A shopping bag, transformed with graphic attributes to a designer shopping bag, can contribute to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand, just as great packaging often does.

4.2 Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the survey set out to determine whether consumers will actually purchase a designer paper shopping bag as opposed to just indicate a willingness to purchase a bag. A follow-up survey determined consumers' perception of the designer paper

shopping bag that was sold in the store selling higher priced items. The results indicated that consumers will rather purchase a designer paper shopping bag sold at a well-known store, selling branded, higher priced items than purchase one from a store that sells lower priced goods of which the brand names are unknown to them. In order for packaging to attract consumers' attention quickly and to communicate effectively, designers of packaging need to know whom they are talking to, the market's interests and what is desired or expected from the product (Centaur Communications 2003). It can therefore be recommended that should a producer of goods or a merchant wish to introduce new products, patents or marketing strategies and wish to determine the effectiveness thereof, it would be sensible to utilize stores known to customers, which sell branded items familiar to them. Market research is thus paramount for establishing the probability of success regarding the import of new designs on packaging and shopping bags, especially designer paper shopping bags. The current research furthermore strongly points to the fact that the success rate for designer paper shopping bags are likely to be better concerning up-market stores selling higher-priced, branded goods.

The results of the survey indicated that consumers are more likely to pay for a designer paper shopping bag when the amount spent in store is relatively high. The higher the amount spent by the customer in store, the higher the possibility that the consumer will purchase not only one, but in some cases even more than one designer paper shopping bag. The time of year, in this case, had an influence on the maximum number of bags sold. The highest number of bags at each of the stores selling higher priced items was sold during the month of December. The store which had the highest number of shopping bag sales during December also recorded the second most

bag sales during the month of January. Most stores experience increased sales during the festive season and it would therefore explain the large number of bags sold during the month of December. Because of and during the festive season, consumers indulge in shopping more often and this might also have resulted in higher sales of designer paper shopping bags during this period. January is the month to buy bargains as after Christmas retailers commence to trade leftover stock. Stores tend to be busy and this might then explain the second most bags sales during January. The total number of bags sold during the course of the nine months was not as high as was expected. This might have been due to the worldwide recession which likewise influenced the economy of South Africa. During recessions, as can be expected, consumers tend to spend less than they usually do.

Consumers have become more sophisticated when it comes to the use of colour, their demands and their expectations (Triplett 1996; Milotic 2003). It is claimed that good packaging design with appropriate and attractive colour combinations catch the attention of consumers, influence sales and could make the difference between a potential customer walking past or buying (Kessler 1997). A well-designed paper shopping bag that can capture the attention of a shopper has the potential to add value to a shopping experience and to the market strategy of a company. Pre-testing designer paper shopping bags and surveying customers is one route to ensure that bags are appropriate for the store and the target market. The post testing survey indicated that the sample approved of the colour scheme, that the illustrations were appropriate, the typography easily legible and that they were happy with the size of the logo. Most interviewees were of the opinion that the shopping bag would

influence the treatment they get from sale assistants and that they would feel confident when carrying the paper shopping bag.

Graphic attributes such as colour, typography, images and even the name of a colour are those visible characteristics of packaging that influence consumers' purchasing behaviours and decisions, which may suddenly vary, alternate or change altogether over time. Images and colour schemes have to be updated constantly to keep packaging fresh and exciting. Product designers and managers thus have to carefully determine their consumers' preferences and then design products and packaging in line with those preferences. Consumers develop colour preferences based on associations they have formed through experience (Grossman & Wisenblit 1999). These associations are influenced by factors such as age, gender, culture and demographics (Paul 2002; Mortimer 2004). These variables should be the departure point to determine the colour and design layout for any newly proposed packaging. Seventy-nine subjects, who participated in the follow-up interviews of the study, chose the first row of colour schemes to be used on a designer paper shopping bag for a store that sells outdoor clothing and accessories. This row of colours represented the stores' current brand and colour scheme used for advertising and also symbolized the four classic elements, namely earth, air, fire and water – ideal for a store that sells outdoor clothing and accessories. It was this row of colour schemes that was used for the design of the designer paper shopping bag that was sold in the store. It can thus be concluded that the interviewees were well informed about the brand and represented the appropriate consumer market to be interviewed.

Gender (Rogers Publishing 1996) and socio-economic background (Kose 2008) can also affect consumers' perception of a colour and subsequently their response to that colour. Designers therefore should consider the specific target market and all aspects of the product when making decisions concerning colour. There are several guiding questions that may help to provide direction during any stage of developing packaging or shopping bags. How can the colour of the packaging assist in indicating the weight of the product or help intensify the taste thereof? Does the product require colour and graphical attributes to emphasize or enhance the perceived temperature of the product? Would it be advantageous if prospective customers associate the product with a certain scent, aroma or flavour and, if so, which colour would support, strengthen or reinforce this association? Is the product intended to generate an emotional response and, if so, which colour would best suit the packaging to elicit that response? If the name of a product consists of the name of a colour, for example green, how will consumers react towards that colour name or will a fanciful or flamboyant name, for instance lime, olive or mint, be more appropriate instead?

The lack of shopping bag sales at the store selling lower priced items did not allow for the testing of the hypothesis. It could be that consumers were not familiar with the store selling lower priced items of which the brand names were unknown to them. A more well-known store, selling lower priced items, could have resulted in additional shopping bag sales. Complications regarding store regulations, however, did not allow for the testing of this hypothesis as part of the study. There was, however, sufficient evidence to conclude that shoppers will purchase designer paper shopping bags if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high.

As mentioned previously, the time of year might have influenced the sales of bags, but it is most likely external factors such as a festive season that affect sales and not the shopping bags as such. It is recommended to first introduce a new packaging item via marketing strategies such as “buy one get one free” in order to increase shopping bag sales. It is also recommended to not introduce or test a new packaging item during a recession, when the economy is under pressure and consumers tend to spend less than usual.

Cooper (in Triplett 1996) stresses the necessity to frequently update images and colour schemes to keep packaging fresh and exciting. The post testing survey did indicate the possible inclusion of vehicles, people and outdoor activities as images on the bags. Stores could furthermore consider more than one designer paper bag to cater for the diversity of their consumers.

4.3 Summary

Colour forms an intricate part of our lives and influences many decisions we make (Rogers Publishing 1996). Colour identifies a brand, it is used to differentiate between products (Tom et al. 1987) and it may even elicit an emotional response (Triplett 1996). The colour of packaging can (and should) attract a consumer’s attention and, when appropriately used as a decor element, can even create a positive ambiance in a store (Kessler 1997). Colour psychologist Angela Wright from the agency aptly named Color Affects justly postulates, “Color is noticed by the brain before shape or wording” (Centaur Communications 2004) and has an impact on toddlers, teenagers and adults (Kose 2008). Colour is one of the first things a baby reacts to (Kessler 1997) and it is even claimed that the colours in a television

commercial can enhance a child's memory (Pretorius & Blignaut 1987). Colour can mean the difference between a product succeeding or failing (Mortimer 2004; Kessler 1997) and the appropriate combination of colour and packaging is, therefore, essential.

Colour furthermore plays an important role in consumers' acceptance of food products. This applies not only to the colour of the product itself, but applies also to the colour of the packaging and the design of the product (Strugnell 2002). Consumers' purchasing behaviours and decisions are influenced by cues such as the brand name and packaging which include the colour of the package (Tom et al. 1987). Colour not only affects consumers' acceptance of a product and consequential buying patterns, it may even influence the manner in which they perceive the taste of a product. Consumers are sensitive to the appearance and/or colour of the foodstuffs that they consume and thus expect food products to be appropriately coloured for an enjoyable, satisfying and nutritious experience (Collins 2004). In an empirical study undertaken by Tom et al. (1987), it was reported that colour is a more influential cue than taste and that consumers also use colour to recognize products and brands. This conclusion was drawn after participants in their study mistakenly perceived vanilla pudding – coloured to resemble chocolate pudding – as having the taste of chocolate pudding. In addition, Tom et al. (1987) reported that consumers also use colour to guess the weight of products and perceive pale-coloured objects as weighing less than identical dark-coloured objects and furthermore use colour as an indicator of temperature.

Milotic (2003) conducted a study in which he focused on fragrance as a primary motivation for consumer choice. He held that consumers find it difficult to recognize smells or fragrances because of the inability to retrieve smells from memory; colour, however, when consistent with or used consistently with a certain scent, smell or fragrance, can help consumers to identify a certain scent, smell or fragrance. The name of a colour also plays a vital part in the way consumers react towards products. Consumers namely prefer products with lavish, fanciful or flamboyant names and are therefore more likely to purchase and even likely and willing to pay more for a product with such a name as the same product sold under a generic name (Skorinko et al. 2006). For example, consumers are more likely to purchase a towel, cosmetic item or linen when – with respect to its colour – that item is labelled as “seaweed”, “mint” or “cherry” instead of simply green or red. It could therefore be an appropriate solution to change or re-evaluate product and colour names if sales should stagnate.

Not only do consumers vary in their colour preferences, but the same individual may also prefer different colours for different product categories. Purple, for instance, would be the ideal colour for bedroom curtains, but would not (conventionally speaking) be the preferred colour for a motor vehicle or the exterior of a house. This is due to the value and chroma of the colour purple. Women appreciate a wider and brighter spectrum of colours (Paul 2002) while men favour more neutral colours (Kessler 1997). It would therefore be a good idea to use a dull or deep purple for packaging a product intended for use by male consumers. When designing for a target market consisting of women, teenagers and children, it would be best to make use of bright colours, as this is what attracts those markets. It is envisaged that children are bound to prefer a bright colour, regardless of the product; however, a

female consumer might prefer pink packaging when purchasing cosmetic products, perfume, shoes or curtains – but this cannot be used as an indication to project which colour she would prefer the packaging to be for example a cellular phone or a fax machine. Researchers seem to also point out that consumers' level of income could be an indication of the colour of packaging or graphical attributes that they would presumably prefer.

Most designers are aware of the fact that the choice of colour and graphic attributes is dictated by the profile of the target market and that markets differ in their preferences. The selection of graphic attributes and colour is normally dictated by the client's brief and by the designer's personal preference and cultural background. The ideal route for designers is to take into account scientific evidence in addition to market research results and using this insight regarding consumer preferences. Researchers agree that consumers have different colour preferences and that variables such as age, gender, level of income, culture and even their place of residence influence their preferences. The appropriate usage and composition of graphical attributes and colour is therefore of the utmost importance when designing packaging. The fonts, images and illustrations on packaging aimed at a higher income group will therefore differ from the packaging aimed at the price sensitive consumer (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Preparatory market research is recommended to give proper insight into all the aspects of graphical attributes, in particular colour, as well as consumer preferences before attempting to advance new product packaging.

Shopping bags signal consumers' preference (Edwards 2006), reflect the taste and habits of the person carrying them (Bautista 1998) and as signature bags have the

power to reassure the shopper (Edwards 2006). Carrying a designer shopping bag when going shopping may help a shopper secure first-class treatment from sales assistants and attain shopping credibility.

Retailers are aware of the strong effect that great packaging has on the purchase intent of consumers. Shoppers involve themselves with store brands more readily when they feel that the packaging is entertaining and engaging (Dupuis 2007). Dupuis (2007), as referred to above, found that consumers want to be surprised and entertained and the responsibility lies with the designer not only to create this entertainment and surprise, but also to influence, inform and motivate the shopper with innovative package design.

Packaging also provides insight into trends. New fashion and product inclinations among consumers are not widely and immediately accepted at first, but as they gain mass popularity and establish new trends, they permeate public consciousness on a grand scale and in this fashion help to sell products. It thus stands to reason why package designers will and often do use graphic attributes such as colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials as a means of expressing trends (Dupuis 2007). An ordinary shopping bag, transformed with design elements to a designer shopping bag, can, just as great packaging often does, contribute to establishing trends and ultimately to the art and science of selling a product or promoting a brand.

Shopping bags are signature carry-alls (Edwards 2006) and walking billboards (Logan 2006) which identify stores (Barbaro 2007). A market research department interviewed 740 shoppers via telephone to establish how much of an impression a

shopping bag makes on consumers. No less than two-thirds of the interviewees revealed, as was reported in the magazine *Progressive Grocer* (1996), that they read the advertising or messages printed on shopping bags.

Monica Shaw (2003), in an article for *Pulp & Paper* aptly titled "Brown bagging it", commented on her attachment to brown paper bags. Herein she mentioned how versatile, durable and easily identifiable a brown paper bag is and refers to it as "An advertising machine" specifically because of its graphics. Both the store owner and the consumer benefit when making use of this portable art form. So does the brand owner.

Byett et al. (1997) rightly suggest that packaging should be regarded as a benefit that should be optimized, rather than seen as a cost to be minimized. Barbaro (2007) observed in a newspaper article that companies in the United States of America would rather opt to invest in costly redesigned bags, than fail to benefit from free advertising, for in the long run that might prove to be even more costly.

Prendergast et al. (2001) reported on a survey relating to consumer preferences for shopping bags in Hong Kong. Their research indicated that consumers regarded the waterproof feature of plastic bags and the convenience feature of paper shopping bags as the most important attributes. They also found that consumers regard a famous brand logo and attractive appearance more important for paper shopping bags than for plastic shopping bags. A similar study by Brits (2005) was conducted in South Africa to determine consumers' perception of shopping bags, their design preference and their willingness to purchase designer paper shopping bags. Brits (2005) found that

that 83 out of a total of 100 interviewees preferred a paper shopping bag instead of a plastic bag. She found that the majority of the interviewees preferred a new designer paper shopping bag (adjusted with the necessary colour and graphic attributes) and they moreover indicated that they are willing to pay for these bags. The study also indicated, however, that the purchasing of these bags could decrease if bag prices increase.

This study set out to determine whether consumers will actually purchase a designer paper shopping bag as opposed to just indicate a willingness to purchase a bag, as was found by Brits (2005). A paper shopping bag was designed to be sold in an up-market store that sells branded clothes and accessories. This bag contained appropriate graphic attributes, such as colour, typography, imagery, structure, form and materials, that represent and reflect the up-market brand of clothes and accessories sold in the store. An additional shopping bag, which contained graphic attributes representative of a store selling lower priced items, was designed and also made available for sale. It was hypothesized that consumers will pay for a designer paper shopping bag if the shopping bag represents a retail store selling up-market, branded items and if the amount spent on the purchase items is relatively high. Two retail stores in Bloemfontein, South Africa, participated in the study. One store sells up-market branded goods, such as clothes and shoes and the other store sells similar but less expensive goods and accessories imported from the Far East. Each store received a unique paper shopping bag. Consumers had the opportunity to either buy a designer paper shopping bag or they could make use of the plastic bags provided by each of the stores free of charge. The designer paper shopping bags were made available for sale at the three different stores for nine months. The results indicate that consumers are

more likely to pay for a designer paper shopping bag when the amount spent in store is relatively high. The higher the amount spent by the customer in store, the higher the possibility that the consumer will purchase one or even more than one designer paper shopping bag.

The researcher interviewed 100 subjects, 50 at each participating store, selling up-market, and branded items. The interviewees represented the typical consumer who would frequent the store. The sample ranged from teenagers, students, working men and women to retired individuals. The subjects completed four questions, structured in a Likert Scale format. The majority of the interviewees agreed that the colour scheme used for the design of the designer paper shopping bag, namely dirt brown, dark mustard, burnt orange, olive green and earthy blue were appropriate for the clothes and accessories sold in the store. Subjects agreed that the illustrations used on the paper shopping bag were appropriate, but did suggest a few alternative ideas such as a photograph of a Jeep 4x4, an individual or individuals involved in a physical outdoor activity or possibly a camping scene. The majority of the interviewees stated that they could easily read the typography and that they preferred the current logo size. Some subjects, however, preferred a larger logo.

Time magazine published an article in 2002 titled "I love Paris in the Fall" who let readers in on the personal secrets of a certain shopper, one of which is to carry a designer shopping bag when going shopping in order to receive first-class treatment from sales assistants and to attain shopping credibility. Most interviewees were of the opinion that the shopping bag would influence the treatment they could expect from

sale assistants positively and said that they would feel confident when carrying the paper shopping bag.

The total number of bags sold during the course of the nine months was not as high as was expected. This might have been due to the worldwide recession, which influenced the economy of South Africa. For this reason it is recommended to first introduce a new packaging item via marketing strategies such as “buy one get one free” and to introduce a variety of bags featuring different illustrations in order to cater for different customers and so increase shopping bag sales. Designer paper shopping bags are also luxury items and therefore it is recommended to consider economic conditions before introducing or testing a new packaging item.

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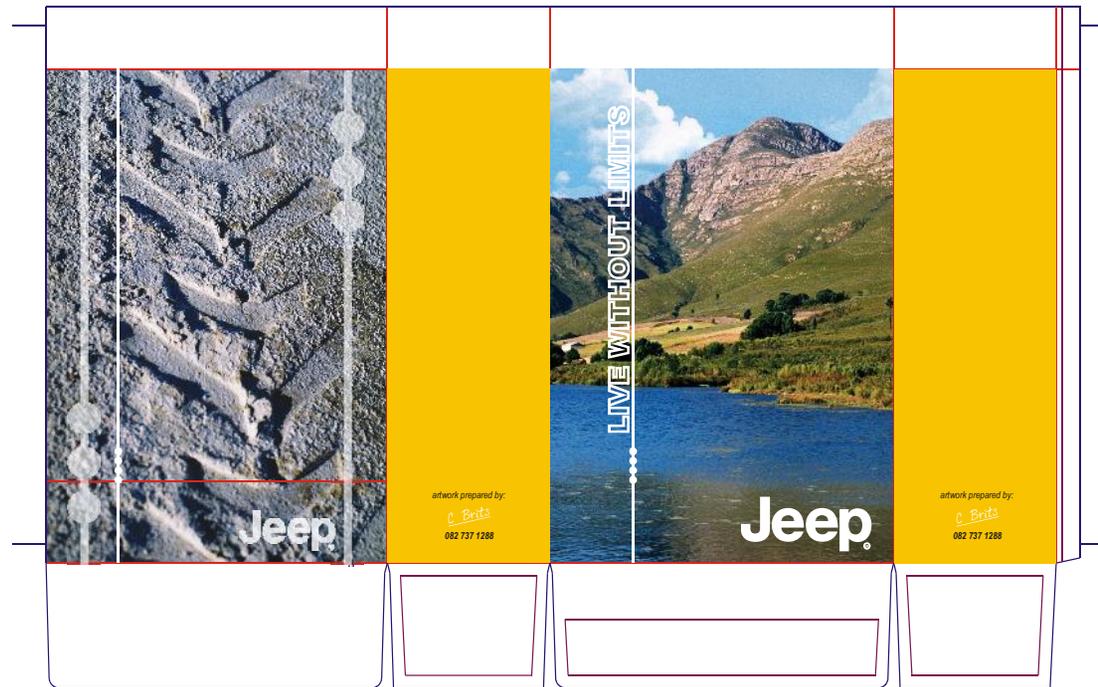


Figure 2: Template of the Designer Paper Shopping Bag: Jeep



Figure 2: Front View of the Jeep Designer Paper Shopping Bag



Figure 3: Rear View of the Jeep Designer Paper Shopping Bag

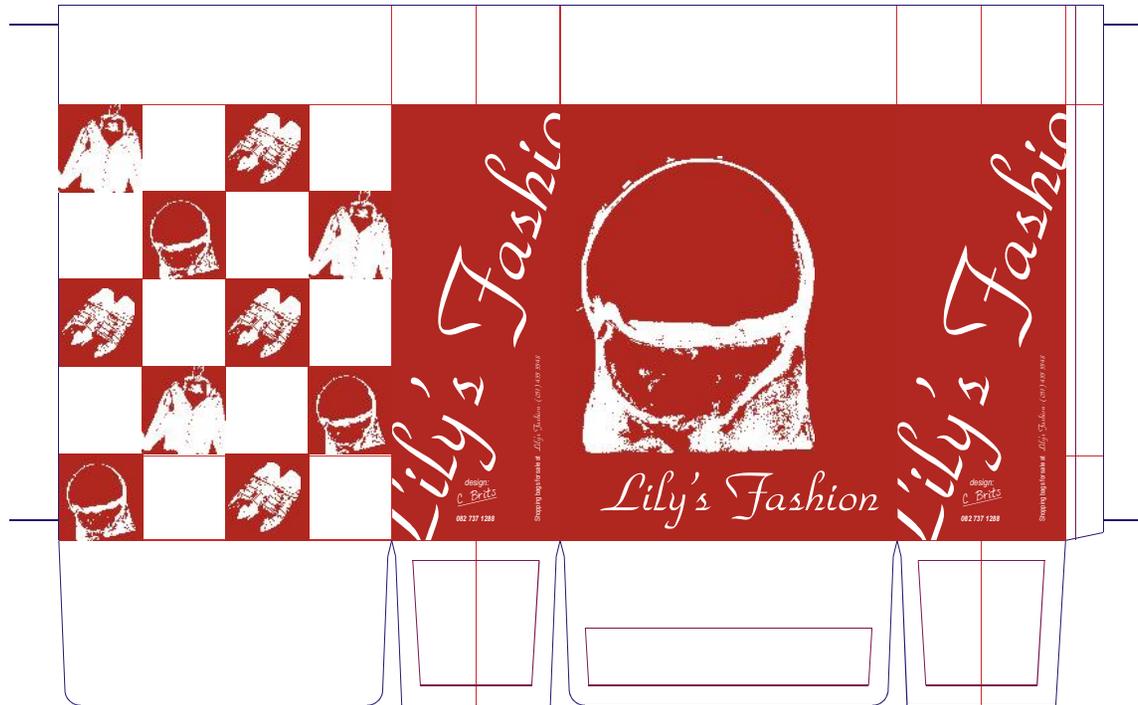


Figure 5: Template of the Designer Paper Shopping Bag: Lily's Fashion

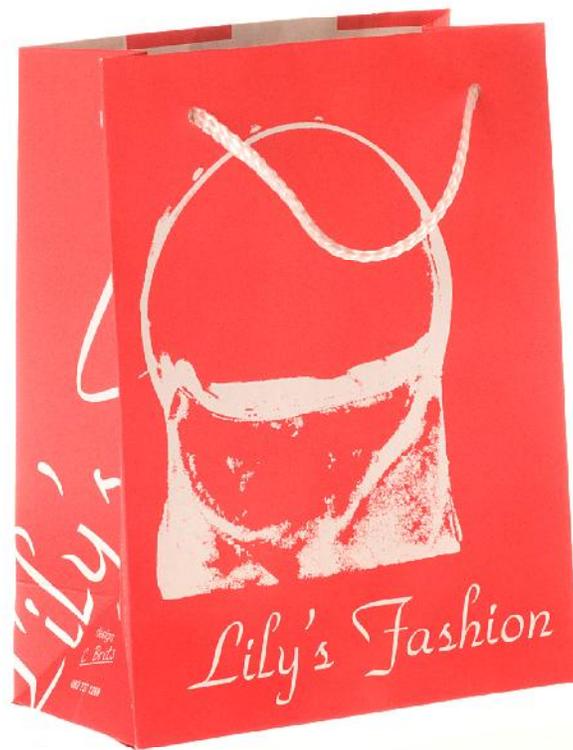


Figure 5: Front View of the Lily's Fashion Designer Paper Shopping Bag



Figure 6: Rear View of the Lily's Fashion Designer Paper Shopping Bag

Appendix C

Questionnaire

1 Colour

1.1 The colours used on the paper shopping bag are representative of a store that sells clothes and accessories for outdoor living.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

1.2 Which colour scheme will you choose if you are requested to design the bag for the store?



2 Illustrations

2.1 The illustrations used on the paper bag represent appropriate pictures that one can use to promote the goods sold in the store.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2.2 If you are asked to redesign the bag, what type of illustrations will you use?

3 Typography

3.1 The typography are legible and the logo the appropriate size.

Δ Strongly agree Δ Agree Δ Neither agree nor disagree Δ Disagree Δ Strongly Disagree

3.2 If you had to redesign the bag, which logo size would you choose and why?

Jeep

Jeep

Jeep

4 Brand name

4.1 A branded paper bag such as this will give you a feeling of being more self-assured.

If you carry this bag, how would it make you feel?

				
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4.2 A branded paper bag such as this could ensure first class treatment by sales people. If

you carry this bag, what treatment do you think you will get from sales people?

				
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