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A

**CONSUMER INFERENCES OF RETAIL STORE QUALITY  
FROM NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING**

**by**

**SANDRA L. LUEDER**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Business  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York**

**(2001)**

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**SANDRA LYNN LUEDER**

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Business in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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**Abstract****CONSUMER INFERENCES OF RETAIL STORE QUALITY  
FROM NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING****by****Sandra Lueder****Adviser: Professor David Rachman**

In the case of retail stores, advertising is an important extrinsic cue for perceived quality judgments since it influences consumer impressions or images of stores. A review of the quality, perceived quality, and retailing literatures revealed that little is known about specific newspaper advertising cues that consumers use to infer retail store quality. Two research questions were proposed for study: (1) Which design cues in newspaper ads are used by consumers to make inferences about retail store quality? and (2) How do design cues in newspaper ads impact perceived retail store quality? It was anticipated that answers to these questions could contribute positively to the consumer-retailer relationship.

Three design cues were selected for study: white space, typeface, and page balance. Four hypotheses were proposed, one for each of the three design elements individually and one for the three elements together. Eight original advertisements were created using these three design elements with each element presented in high quality and non-high-quality versions.

The main experiment was based on a convenience sample of 210 women, with each woman seeing an ad with three high quality cues, an ad with all three non-high-quality cues, and one of the remaining six ads with varying combinations of high quality and non-high-quality cues selected at random. Retail store quality perceptions were measured in terms of overall store quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality. Attitude toward the ad (Aad) and involvement were also measured.

While multicollinearity problems limited interpretation of the joint influence of the three quality cues, the results indicated that white space had the strongest individual impact on the perceptions of retail store quality and that when typeface and page balance were combined with white space, white space overwhelmed the effects of the other two variables. The belief that Aad would impact the inferences of retail store quality was supported. Analysis did not, however, indicate that the level of involvement with the product impacted the inferences of retail store quality.

This research makes a potentially important contribution to what is known about advertising tactical issues. Further research needs to be done in order to develop a more complete picture of how advertising design elements contribute to specific advertising effects on perceived retail store quality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Mom and Dad, always my rocks of Gibraltar. I hope you're smiling down on me on this glorious day.

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To my beautiful daughter, Helena, who can now brag that she has two doctors in the family.

And, finally, to my beloved husband, David, without whom this would all be meaningless.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of product and service quality has never been greater. A marketing priority of the 1980s, it became critical in the fiercely competitive, global markets of the 1990s and will continue to be a competitive imperative in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The belief that improving quality will lead to competitive advantage has served as a major impetus to the acceptance of quality as the new paradigm for organizational operations and strategy.

Faced with greater competitive pressures, the quality advantage of imports, and an increased emphasis on quality by consumers themselves (Schnaars 1991), companies see an increased and accelerated emphasis on quality as a competitive mandate. This is true whether the company offers a product, a service, or a combination of the two (such as retail stores) to the marketplace. Indeed, the drive for quality in products and services is worldwide and customer satisfaction has increasingly becoming a corporate goal (Bitner and Hubbert 1994), with many large companies already having implemented quality measurement programs in an attempt to relate customer evaluations of quality to product/service attributes (Hauser & Clausing 1988).

Fortunately, the most definitive finding from research based on the Profit Improvement from Marketing Strategy (PIMS) database supports this quality movement, indicating that the most important single factor affecting a business' performance in the long run is the quality of its products and services relative to those of competitors (Buzzell and Gale 1987).

Difficulty in implementation arises, however, from management's continued tendency to define and measure quality from the company's perspective rather than viewing quality the way the consumer does (Zeithaml 1988). Since it is the consumer who ultimately decides what quality is, such a focus would seem to be self-defeating. Therefore, management must actively and aggressively seek to understand the process by which consumers perceive and evaluate quality--particularly in the retail environment where the majority of consumer transactions take place.

### **Research Issue**

When consumers enter the marketplace, they usually do not possess complete information about product or service quality. Judgments and choices, therefore, are based on multiple sources of information such as friends, coworkers, experience, and the product and service cues which are available to them (Amirani and Baker 1995; Crane and Clarke 1988; Ford and Smith 1987). A cue is defined as a characteristic, event, quality, or object external to the consumer that is encoded and used to categorize a stimulus (Crane and Clarke 1988). It is a predictor, with no functional value in its own right--taking on value only to the extent that it predicts important benefits of the product or service (Mehotra and Palmer 1985). Each individual is an active interpreter who makes educated guesses about events which cannot be judged directly and draws inferences about associations and causal relations (Nisbett and Ross 1980; Amirani and Baker 1995). For example, seeing that a car has been made in Germany may lead to the inferential belief that the car is reliable.

Inference is the construction of meaning that goes beyond what is explicitly given (Ford and Smith 1987). It has been proposed (Amirani and Baker 1995; Anderson 1981) that the process of inference-drawing consists of two steps. First, a valuation process occurs when people transform a stimulus into its psychological counterpart. Second, an integration process occurs when people combine the pieces of information they have gathered from various sources, to include product and service informational cues, to form an overall judgment.

Because consumers rely heavily on quality cues rather than upon direct observation of what they presumably want to know (Oxenfeldt 1974-1975), it is important to understand how consumers use quality cues, which cues are actually perceived (since cues that are not perceived cannot influence consumer decision processes), and the impressions that are derived from such cues (Crane and Clarke 1988; Wheatley, Chiu, and Goldman 1981). The importance of this understanding cannot be overstated, especially given the fact that new cues are being emphasized all the time by the popular culture, and consumers can quickly read important meanings into cues that had been lying dormant (Mehotra and Palmer 1985).

What determines the consumer's selection of quality cues? When purchasing goods, the consumer has a number of available cues upon which to judge quality: tangible cues such as size, style, feel, taste. These are intrinsic quality cues, related to the physical composition of the product (Crane and Clarke 1988; Olson 1972; Olson and Jacoby 1972; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). When purchasing services, however, fewer tangible or intrinsic quality cues are available--limited, in most cases, to the service

provider's physical facilities, equipment, and personnel (Amirani and Baker 1995; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). When selecting or patronizing retail stores, the selection of quality cues would seem to be some combination of the quality cues for service and merchandise.

Consumers also look to extrinsic cues, i.e., market signals of quality (Bloom and Reve 1990; Gerstner 1985) that are related to the product but are not part of the product or service itself. Although extrinsic cues can be used either in the presence or absence of tangible or intrinsic cues, the absence of intrinsic cues upon which to make perceived quality judgments increases the importance of extrinsic cues. Well-known extrinsic cues commonly used for both product and service quality evaluations are price, advertising, and brand name (Amirani and Baker 1995; Crane and Clarke 1988; Dodds 1991; Mehotra and Palmer 1985; Monroe and Krishnan 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985; Steenkamp 1990; Wheatley, Chiu, and Goldman 1981). It is the linkage of one of these extrinsic cues, newspaper advertising, to perceived retail store quality that is the focus of this research.

In the case of retail stores, advertising is an important extrinsic cue for perceived quality judgments since such advertising can develop consumer impressions or images of stores--even for consumers who are unfamiliar with the store--and these images affect both store choice decisions and perceptions of merchandise carried. While it is true that little is known about the processes and dynamics that underlie the development and formation of store image (Hirschman 1981; Mazursky and Jacoby 1986), it is known that a store's image is composed of many dimensions, each interacting with the others to

influence the kind of image various consumer groups have of the store (DeLozier 1976). Advertising is among the most important factors that contribute to that image since the overall style and tone of an advertisement leave the consumer with a general “feeling” about the store (DeLozier 1976). Since quality-related issues are key elements in retailing and advertising strategies (Jacoby and Olson 1985), an important research question thus becomes: What is it about retail advertising in newspapers (the dominant medium for retailers) that serves as “information” or cues about the quality of the store? Clearly, a newspaper ad that sends a message of quality about the retailer is delivering important and useful information to the consumer, thereby delivering what has been referred to as “advertising value” (Ducoffe 1995).

### **Significance of the Research**

Consumer research devoted to the effect of advertising on perceived quality has taken two major routes. The first, focusing on the impact of advertising components on brand beliefs and attitudes, has identified several advertising elements that influence brand beliefs (seen as abstract dimensions of quality) about the intrinsic (or physical composition) attributes of the product or service: factualness (Holbrook 1978), concreteness (MacKenzie 1986), attribute prominence of advertising copy (Gardner 1983), the photograph (Mitchell & Olson 1981), and picture size and color (Percy 1983).

The second research route, investigating the impact of ads on extrinsic cues, has looked at, for example, the effects of price on perceived quality and purchase intentions (Gotlieb & Sarel 1991), the effect of a celebrity endorser on product price perceptions

(Frieden 1982), the effect of an ad's location in a prestigious magazine on perceived product price and perceived quality (Aaker & Brown 1972), the effect of the use of technical wording in an ad on the perceptions of price, durability, and ease of operation (Anderson & Jolson 1980), and the effects of ad size on perceptions of ad expenditures as well as overall quality (Kirmani 1990).

While the research from these two literature streams does provide insight into how advertising may impact quality perceptions, it appears that no research to date has explicitly investigated the effect of advertising on the perceived quality of stores. In particular, no research has been conducted to date that examines how the form and content of retail newspaper advertising contribute to consumers ascribing quality images to retailers. It is anticipated that such insights could contribute positively to the development of more effective and efficient advertisements by retailers who wish to communicate messages of quality.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Perceived quality is founded in a rich blend of several theoretical perspectives (Bettman 1979; Bruner 1957; Brunswik 1955; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Goodstein 1993; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Levy 1959; Mervis and Rosch 1981; Pavelchak 1989; Solomon 1983; Sujan and Dekleva 1987; Tom, Barnett, Lew, and Selmants 1987): (1) information-processing theory (logical thinker); (2) the experiential view of consumption, characterized by a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria; (3) categorization theory (i.e., a

stimulus is identified as a member of a class of objects, thus activating associated schematic knowledge); (4) symbolic consumption theory (i.e., products serve as symbols, hence being evaluated, purchased and consumed based upon their symbolic content); (5) the probabilistic functionalism theory of perception (i.e., the use of cues to reconstitute objects); and (6) the core-context theory of perception (i.e., prior experience can be seen as a template against which current experience is compared). However, it is categorization theory that is the most relevant to this research (Steenkamp 1990; Sujan and Deklava 1987; Zimmer and Golden 1988).

Because cues are used to categorize a stimulus object (Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992), and because marketers must recognize the importance of cues in the consumer's identification, categorization, and perception of a product or service (Tom, Barnett, Lew, and Selmants 1987), categorization theory is important in understanding consumer inferences of quality based on acquired cues (Steenkamp 1990). The category-based approach has been applied in a variety of other domains, including: evoked sets, product positioning, and inference making (Church, LaRoche, and Rosenblatt 1985; Cohen and Basu 1987; Sujan and Deklava 1987); product judgments (Sujan 1985); brand extension judgments (e.g., Boush and Loken 1991; Keller and Aaker 1992); product category assessments (Loken and Ward 1990); information search (Ozanne, Brucks, and Grewal 1992); and ad-related evaluations (Goodstein 1993; Krugman 1972; Sujan and Deklava 1987). Sujan and Deklava (1987), in particular, talk about categorization theory being useful in "... predicting the inferences that consumers make, i.e., the attributes that consumers ascribe to a product even when these [attributes] are not explicitly mentioned

in the advertising” (p. 372). Zimmer and Golden (1988) note that categorization theory may be just as useful in understanding how consumers view retail stores.

The basic premise of categorization, considered as one of the most basic functions of living creatures (Mervis and Rosch 1981), is that people naturally divide the world of objects around them into categories, enabling an efficient understanding and processing of the environment (Sujan 1985). Thus, if a new stimulus [e.g., a retail ad] can be categorized as an example of a previously defined category [e.g., ads for high quality retail stores], then the affect associated with the category can be quickly retrieved and applied to the stimulus (Cohen 1982; Fiske 1982; Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Sujan 1985).

A category exists whenever two or more distinguishable objects or events are treated equivalently, with this equivalent treatment taking many forms, e.g., labeling distinct objects or events with the same name or performing the same action on different objects (Mervis and Rosch 1981). Mervis and Rosch note further that while stimulus situations are unique, organisms do not treat them uniquely; rather, they respond on the basis of past learning and categorization. People attempt to categorize any attitude object immediately upon contact and, if successful, tend to behave in accordance with the recalled category evaluation (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986; Sujan 1985). Much of our behavior is guided by spontaneously activated attitudes, many of them categorical in nature (Fazio and Williams 1990), and our cognitive categories are seen as hierarchically organized (Pavelchak 1989). For example, a set of categories of increasing specificity would be ads, retail ads, and clothing store ads.

By categorizing, individuals devote less overall effort to processing (McMellon

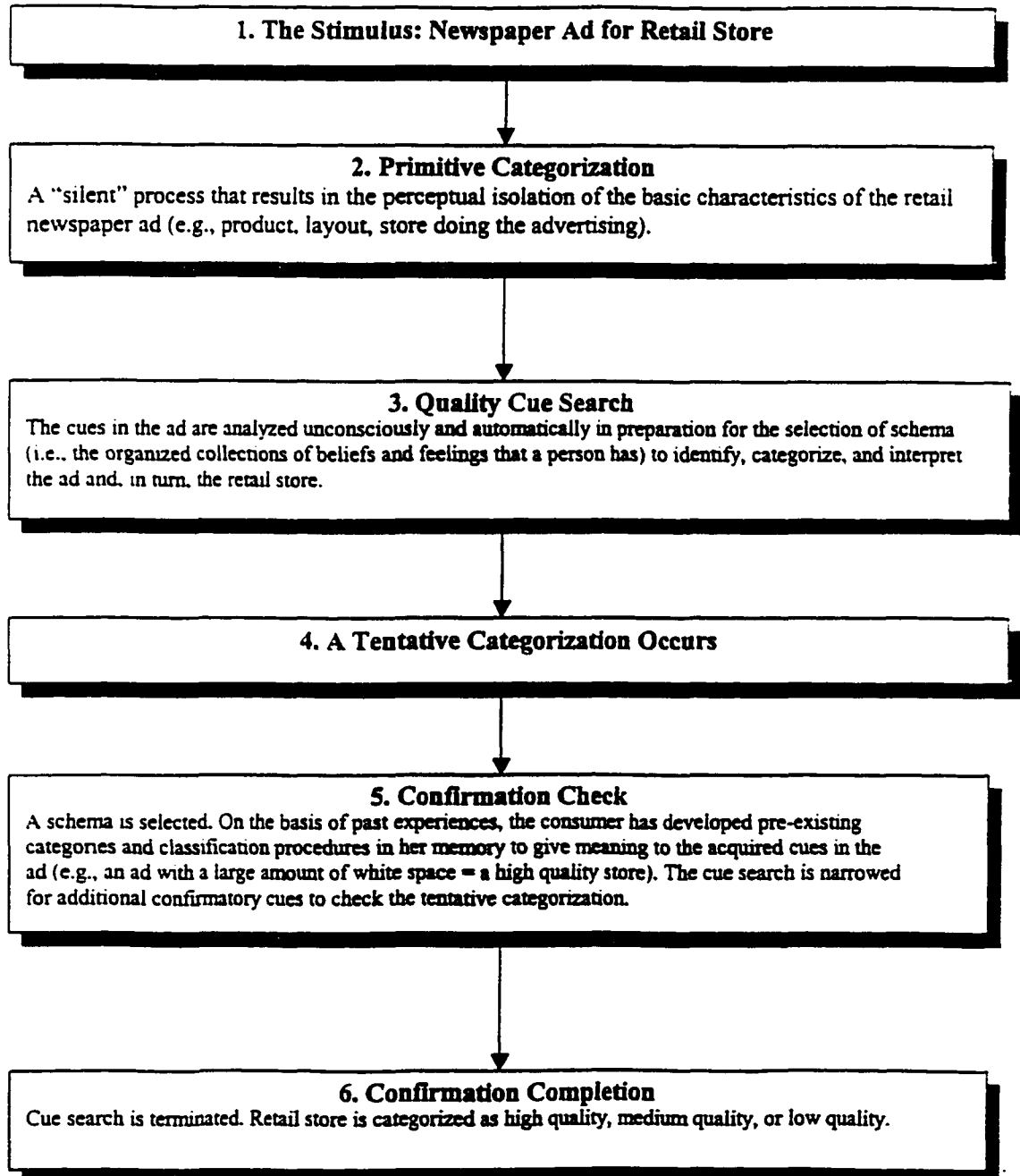
and Ducoffe 1995). Goodstein (1993) and McMellon and Ducoffe (1995), for example, both showed that ads typical of an evoked schema (i.e., a particular category) elicited relatively less extensive processing and evaluations, while those atypical of the schema motivated more extensive processing and evaluations. Categorization theory, then, specifies that organized prior knowledge related to a category is used in evaluations (Goodstein 1993). Further, when confronted with a stimulus, the perceiver will automatically attempt to match it with an evoked category description: when there is a match, the perceiver will evaluate the stimulus on the basis of the affect stored in the category's schema; when there is a mismatch, the evaluation is conceptualized to be piecemeal (Goodstein 1993, p. 88). In other words, incongruity between the stimulus and category expectations motivates people to process a stimulus in greater detail in order to form an evaluation (Fiske and Taylor 1991, p. 5). "If relatively category-oriented processes are successful, then the perceiver goes no further toward more attribute-oriented processes (Fiske and Neuberg 1990, p. 3). Alternately, only when there is a mismatch will more extensive processes be evoked (Boush and Loken 1991). Empirical evidence illustrates that this relationship is heightened when task importance is low (Maheswaran and Chaiken 1991 as cited in Goodstein 1993). It should be noted, however, that if the product category is one in which the ad viewer has particular interest, additional processing may occur beyond the point of categorization.

This research focuses on the categorization of newspaper advertising design cues. Since advertising is such an important extrinsic cue for evaluations of retail store quality, it is important for retailers to understand which cues--alone and in combination--are

categorized as “signals” of retail store quality. A conceptualization of categorization theory as it applies to inferences of perceived retail store quality based on newspaper ads is proposed as Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

**Categorization Theory and Perceived Retail Store Quality**



This research also briefly discusses the symbolic context presented by apparel in advertisements. Because a dress was selected as the product for the research advertisements, it is important to have a general understanding of the kinds of meanings and cues that apparel introduces to any consumer evaluation and inference process.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Following the introduction and theoretical foundation, Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature. Following a summary discussion, the review is divided into six sections. Section 1 discusses the quality construct. An overview of the different approaches to defining product quality and service quality are presented as a foundation to the subsequent discussions of perceived quality. Section 2 discusses perceived quality: its definitions and its application to products, services, and retail stores. Section 3 discusses the evaluative process of perceived quality judgments. Intrinsic and extrinsic quality cues are discussed, as is the cue utilization process. Given that ads provide information to consumers and quality cues are information for perceived quality judgments, the development of ads that are to serve as quality cues must be based on an understanding of both what quality is and how cues are used to make quality judgments. Section 4 discusses perceived quality and the retail store. Since it seems that perceived quality judgments for retail stores are a combination of perceived quality judgments for both merchandise and service, these are both discussed. Section 5 discusses the role that advertising plays in perceived quality judgments. A general discussion of the role of advertising is followed by a more specific discussion of

advertising form (e.g., white space and typeface) and its linkage to perceived quality assessments. The last section, Section 6, discusses the link between newspaper advertising and perceived retail store quality--the focus of this research. It would seem productive to ascertain whether retailers are providing cues in their advertising that relate to the dimensions underlying perceived retail store quality assessments by consumers (Day 1992).

Chapter 3 describes the research method: a statement of the problem and the resultant posing of two research questions; the four-step data collection process (i.e., depth interviews, ad creation, pretest via thought-listing, and the main experiment); and data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis and Chapter 5 summarizes the research study, also offering implications for practitioners. Appendices and references are presented at the end of the dissertation.

## CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Summary

Any attempt to understand perceived retail store quality--the word "perceived" used because all quality judgments are dependent on the perceptions, needs, and goals of the consumer (Steenkamp 1990) rather than existing in some kind of an objective state--must necessarily be inferred primarily from bringing together a diverse literature. The separate literatures of product quality, service quality, perceived product quality, perceived service quality, intrinsic and extrinsic quality cues (as a critical part of the perceived quality judgment process), retail merchandise quality, retail service quality, and overall retail service quality all contribute in important ways to understanding perceived retail store quality.

What can be concluded from the literature is that perceived retail store quality is some combination/interaction/weighing of intrinsic and extrinsic cues for merchandise and service quality (see Table 1). For merchandise, brand name is the quality cue used more frequently than any other information (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986), and for service, the number of salespersons per department appears to be the most salient quality cue (Mazursky and Jacoby 1986).

Although it has been suggested that it is difficult to generalize product and service research to the retail setting because the retail experience is very different from the product or service experience (Czepiel, Rosenberg, and Akerle 1975; Maddox 1977; Renouz 1973; Westbrook 1981), it is plausible to conclude that the commonality of brand

**Table 1**  
**A Summary of Cues That Affect Perceived Retail Store Quality Based on the Literature Review**  
**(Page 1 of 3)**

<b>Quality Cue</b>	<b>Retail Merchandise Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>	<b>Retail Service Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>
<b>Intrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Product-specific cues	Aaker 1992; Bonner and Nelson 1985; Casceiro 1988; Davis 1985; Eroglu and Machleit 1989; Lindquist 1974-1975; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986; Mehotra and Palmer 1985; Olshavsky 1985; Zeithaml 1988.	Not Applicable
<b>Intrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Physical facility	Not mentioned in the literature as an intrinsic cue.	Baker 1987; Biggers and Pryor 1982; Bitner 1990; Booms and Bitner 1981; Crane and Clarke 1988; Day 1992; Lindquist 1974-1975; Lovelock 1983; Maslow and Mintz 1956; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Rosenbloom 1981; Shostack 1977; Sweeney et al., 1992; Turley and Fugate 1992; Zeithaml 1988.
<b>Intrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Employees (particularly the number of salespersons per department)	Not applicable.	Bitner 1990; Crane and Clarke 1988; Day 1992; Dotson and Patton II 1992; Jolson and Spath 1973; Lindquist 1974-1975; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Solomon 1985; Sweeney et al., 1992; Zeithaml 1988.
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Price	Cox and Cox 1990; Davis 1985; Dodds 1991; Dodds, Monroe and Grewal 1985; Gardner 1971; Lambert 1972; Lindquist 1974-1975; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986; McConnell 1968; Monroe and Dodds 1988; Monroe and Krishnan 1985; Olson 1977; Peterson and Wilson 1985; Steenkamp 1990; Zeithaml 1988.	Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993; McConnell 1968; Olander 1970; Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992; Zeithaml 1981

**Table 1**  
**A Summary of Cues That Affect Perceived Retail Store Quality Based on the Literature Review**  
**(Page 2 of 3)**

<b>Quality Cue</b>	<b>Retail Merchandise Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>	<b>Retail Service Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Brand name	Davis 1985; Dodds, Monroe and Grewal 1985; Gardner 1971; Jacoby et al., 1978; Jacoby, Olson and Haddock 1971; Jacoby, Szybillo and J. Busato-Schach 1977; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986; Monroe and Krishnan 1985; Steenkamp 1990; Zeithaml 1988; Zimmer and Golden 1988.	Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993; Lusch, Dunne and Gebhardt 1993; Onkvisit and Shaw 1993.
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Store image	Darden and Schwinghammer 1985; Davis 1985; Dodds 1991; Lindquist 1974-1975; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Render and O'Connor 1970; Reynolds and Jamieson 1985.	Rosenbloom 1981
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Advertising content	Aaker and Brown 1972; Abernethy and Butler 1992; Abernethy and Franke 1996; Anderson and Jolson 1980; Farris and Reibstein 1979; Jacoby and Hoyer 1982; Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993; Stewart and Furse 1986; Stewart and Koslow 1989; Zanol 1984.	Abernethy and Butler 1992; Abernethy and Franke 1996; Freiden and Goldsmith 1989; Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993; Perry and Norton 1970; Stewart and Furse 1986; Stewart and Koslow 1989; Zanol 1984.
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Advertising form: typography and white space	Book and Schick 1988; Cutler and Javalgi 1993; DeLozier 1976; Dunn and Barban 1982; Jacobs 1972; Jacobs and Poillon 1992; Jewler 1995; Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993; Lucas and Benson 1985; Martineau 1957, 1958; Mitchell 1986; Ocko 1985; Parker 1993; Rosenbloom 1981; Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992.	Dunn and Barban 1982. DeLozier 1976; Martineau 1957, 1958; Rosenbloom 1981.
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Word of mouth communication	Arndt 1967; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955.	Biehall 1983; Carman 1990; Sweeney et al., 1992; Webster 1991.

**Table 1**  
**A Summary of Cues That Affect Perceived Retail Store Quality Based on the Literature Review**  
**(Page 3 of 3)**

<b>Quality Cue</b>	<b>Retail Merchandise Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>	<b>Retail Service Quality Cue Relevant Literature</b>
<b>Extrinsic Quality Cue:</b> Perceived level of advertising expenditures	Bauer and Greiser 1967; Kirmani and Wright 1989; Marquardt and McGann 1975; Milgrom and Roberts 1986; Nelson 1970, 1974; Schmalensee 1978; Woodside and Taylor 1978; Zeithaml 1988.	Not mentioned as a retail service quality cue.

names, price, advertising, and store image to merchandise and service quality assessments implies that these cues are also indicators of overall perceived retail store quality.

With respect to advertising and perceived quality judgments, the literature suggests that advertising can affect perceived quality directly or indirectly--directly by explicitly mentioning quality in the ad, indirectly through inferences drawn about overall quality from intrinsic cues, extrinsic cues, or abstract dimensions (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). The indirect effect is the focus of this research. Additionally, advertising form (e.g., white space, layout, typeface, and color) plays an important role in the quality perception process since it is the advertising content and advertising form that work together to produce the gestalt to which the consumer responds. Retail advertising, in particular, is concentrated in newspapers and, accordingly, newspapers are rated by consumers as the most informative retail advertising medium (King, Reid, Tinkham, and Pokrywczynski 1987). With the exception of the Jacobs and Poillon (1992) study on white space in newspaper grocery advertising, no studies on the linkage between newspaper advertising and perceived overall retail store quality have been published to date.

### **The Quality Construct**

Any discussion of perceived quality should be founded on an understanding of the meaning of the quality construct. This is difficult since it is readily acknowledged that defining quality is elusive. Schnaars (1991) captures the essence of the lack of definitional consensus when he talks about quality being a slippery term that when examined closely means different things to different people (p. 221). Castleberry and Resurreccion (1989)

define quality as a belief about the degree of excellence of a good or service that is derived by one's examining, consciously or unconsciously, relevant cues that are appropriate and available, and that is made within the context of prior experience, relevant alternatives, evaluative criteria, or expectations (p. 22). This definition is probably as close to a single, all-encompassing definition of quality as can be achieved.

### Product Quality

Several seemingly different approaches have been taken towards defining, and/or cataloguing the definitions of, the quality construct (see, for example: Aaker 1991; Crosby 1979; Curry and Faulds 1985; Evans & Lindsay 1989; Gale and Buzzell 1989; Garvin 1983; Garvin 1984; Garvin 1987; Holbrook & Corfman 1985; Juran 1974; Keuhn & Day 1962; Maynes 1985; Monroe & Krishnan 1985; Schnaars 1991; Thurston 1985; Zeithaml 1988). A closer look at these efforts, however, reveals that they are variations of the five major approaches to defining quality put forth by Garvin (1984), approaches that represent a synthesis of product quality definitions from philosophy, economics, marketing, and operations management.

Table 2 presents definitions and examples of each of these approaches from the literature. Careful study of these definitions and examples suggests that consumer perceived quality, the focus of this research, would seem to correspond most closely to the *user-based approach* (in which the goods and services that best satisfy a consumer's preferences are those that are regarded as having the highest quality) with strong influence from two other approaches:

- *product-based* (in which differences in quality reflect differences in the quantity of some ingredient or attribute possessed by a product); and
- *value-based* (in which quality is linked to performance at an acceptable price or conformance at an acceptable cost). In each of these three approaches we can see elements of applicability to the perceived quality of both services and retail stores.

### Service Quality

While the issue of service quality has received considerable attention in the marketing literature (e.g., Berry 1986; Bolton and Drew 1991; Cronin and Taylor 1994 and 1992; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988 and 1985; Sherden 1986; Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992; Teas 1993; Webster 1991; Wheatley, Chui, and Goldman 1981; Zeithaml 1988; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1988), service quality is also an elusive and abstract construct that is difficult to define and measure. This is because of service heterogeneity and intangibility, the problems associated with simultaneous production and receipt of a service, and the difference between mechanistic quality (i.e., involving an objective aspect or feature of a thing or event) and humanistic quality (i.e., involving the subjective response of people to objects, thereby being a highly relativistic phenomenon that differs between judges) [ Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Garvin 1983; Holbrook and Corfman 1985; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985].

**Table 2**  
**Five Approaches to Defining Quality**

<p><b>1. The Transcendent Approach.</b> <i>Quality is synonymous with innate excellence, being both absolute and universally recognized, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement.</i></p> <p>Quality can be defined broadly as superiority or excellence (Garvin 1988, p. 3).</p> <p>Quality is an objective or feature of a thing or event—something that is present whether or not anyone happens to notice it (Holbrook &amp; Corfman 1985, p. 33).</p> <p>Design excellence (Schnaars 1991, p. 224).</p> <p>Quality is the extent to which the <i>product or service</i> (my emphasis) delivers superior service (Aaker 1991, p. 85)</p>
<p><b>2. The Product-Based Approach.</b> <i>Differences in quality reflect differences in the quantity of some ingredient or attribute possessed by a product.</i></p> <p>Eight measures: performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality (Garvin 1987).</p> <p>Quality refers to the nature and quantity of ingredients, features, <i>or services included</i> (my emphasis) (Aaker 1991, p. 85).</p> <p>Product quality is often measured in terms of purity or grade of materials used (Keuhn &amp; Day 1962, p. 100)</p>
<p><b>3. User-Based Quality.</b> <i>Quality lies in the eyes of the beholder. Individual consumers are assumed to have different wants or needs. Those goods [or services] that best satisfy their preferences are those that are regarded as having the highest quality.</i></p> <p>Quality is whatever the customer says it is (Gale and Buzzell 1989, p. 8).</p> <p>Quality is pleasing customers, not just protecting them from annoyances (Garvin 1987, p. 103).</p> <p>In the final analysis of the marketplace, the “quality” of a product [or service] depends on how well it fits patterns of consumer preferences (Keuhn &amp; Day 1962, p. 101).</p> <p>Quality is not a straightforward property inherent in the product. It is the index that reflects the extent to which the customer feels that his needs, the product and his expectations for that product overlap (Thurston 1985, p. 127).</p>
<p><b>4. Manufacturing-Based Quality.</b> <i>Quality is defined as conformance to requirements.</i></p> <p>Quality products are those that need fewer repairs and last longer than competitors’ products. Products that work. (Schnaars 1991, p. 221-222.)</p> <p>Often mistaken for goodness, luxury, showiness, or weight. We must define quality as conformance to requirements. (Crosby 1979, p. 14-15.)</p>
<p><b>5. Value-Based Quality.</b> <i>A quality product provides performance at an acceptable price or conformance at an acceptable cost.</i></p> <p>Consumers will buy excellence only if they deem it to be of good value (Schnaars 1991, p. 228).</p>
<p><b>Source: Garvin 1984, p. 25-28, adapted.</b></p>

Goods businesses sell things and service businesses sell performances, thus making precise “manufacturing specifications” for uniform service quality difficult, if not impossible, to establish and enforce (Berry 1986; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1988). This makes it much more difficult for consumers to evaluate service quality than goods or product quality. The literature does, however, offer consistent support for the importance of performances in service quality (Gronroos 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1982; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985; Sasser, Olsen, and Wyckoff 1978). More recently, the prominence of performance in assessments of service quality has appeared in the service encounter literature (e.g., Bitner 1990; Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault 1990; Bolton and Drew 1991; Turley and Fugate 1992), in the literature associated with the performance-based measurement of service quality (SERVPERF) (e.g., Cronin and Taylor 1992 and 1994; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1994), and in the SERVQUAL (service quality assessment instrument) critique literature (e.g., Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, and Zeithaml 1993; Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992 and 1994; Teas 1993).

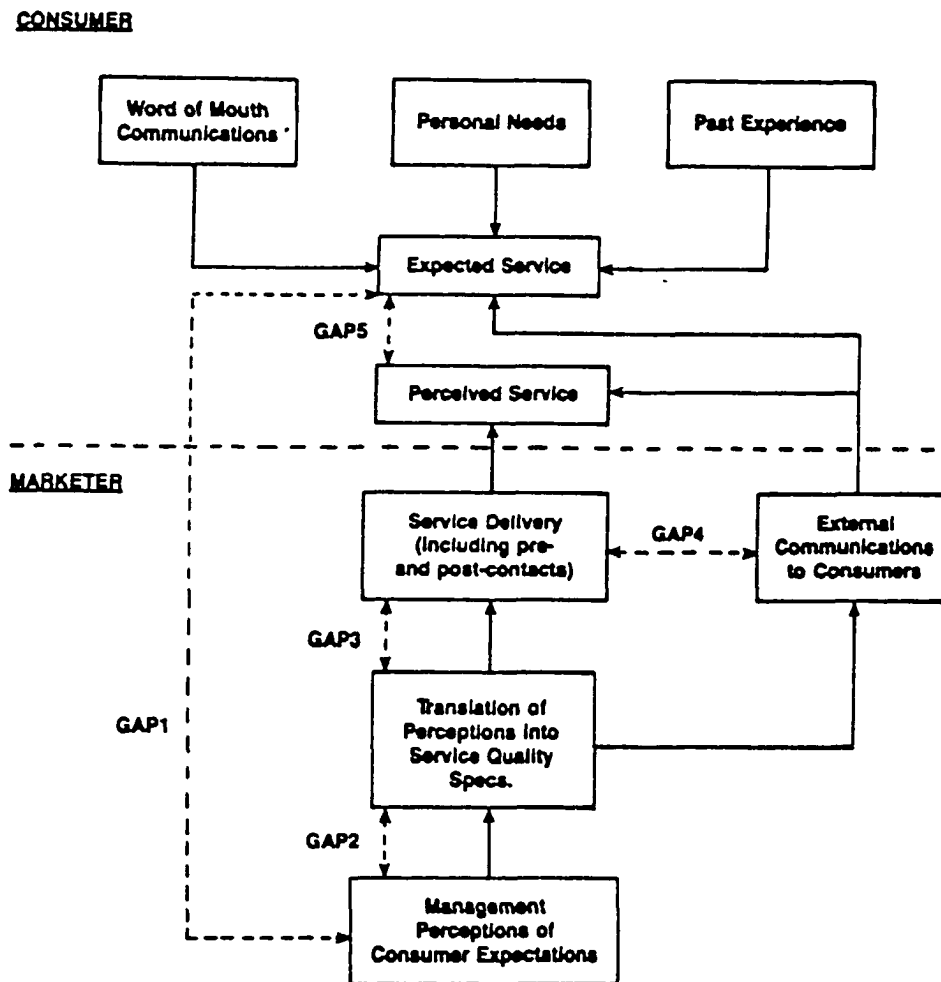
The seminal work in service quality was done by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1985 when they developed a model of service quality (see Figure 2). The model emerged as a result of a series of focus group interviews with executives and consumers in several service industries where it was found that consumers “used basically similar criteria in evaluating service quality ... regardless of the type of service” (p. 46). These criteria, labeled determinants of service quality, included reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/ knowing the customer, and various tangibles.

The service quality model identified four quality gaps on the service marketer’s side and a fifth gap on the consumer side (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985).

*GAPI: Consumer expectation-management perception gap.* Service firm executives may not always understand what features connote high quality to consumers in advance, what features a service must have in order to meet consumer needs, and what levels of performance on those features are needed to deliver high quality service.

*GAP2: Management perception-service quality specification gap.* A variety of factors--resource constraints, market conditions, and/or management

Figure 2  
Service Quality Model



Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985, p. 44.

\*\*\*\*\*

indifference--may result in a discrepancy between management perceptions of consumer expectations and the actual specifications established for a service.

*GAP3: Service quality specifications-service delivery gap.* Even when guidelines exist for performing services well and treating consumers correctly, high quality

service performance may not be a certainty.

*GAP4: Service delivery-external communications gap.* Media advertising and other communications by a firm can affect consumer expectations. The firm must be certain not to promise more in communications than it can deliver in reality.

*GAP5: Expected service-perceived service gap.* The key to ensuring good service quality is meeting or exceeding what consumers expect from the service.

Judgments of high and low service quality depend on how consumers perceive the actual service performance in the context of what they expected.

Based on the focus group interviews, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed a 22-item measurement instrument which they claimed could be used to measure quality across service and retailing organizations. Basically, SERVQUAL measures the fifth gap in their service quality model, i.e., the gap between customer expectations of service and perceptions of the service quality actually received, along the following five dimensions of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988, p. 23):

- |    |                        |   |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b>Tangibles:</b>      | Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel                           |
| 2. | <b>Reliability:</b>    | Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately                     |
| 3. | <b>Responsiveness:</b> | Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service                              |
| 4. | <b>Assurance:</b>      | Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence |
| 5. | <b>Empathy:</b>        | Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.                     |

These five dimensions fully integrate the aforementioned ten determinants of service quality.

Because they appear to capture the dimensions of service quality, it is the ten evaluation criteria and/or five specific components that have served as the basis for much of the subsequent service quality and perceived service quality research (e.g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992 and 1994; Teas 1993; Webster 1991), and this is very helpful for establishing a foundation for understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic cues that may be relevant to service quality perceptions in a retail setting.

### **Definitions of Perceived Quality**

While the term "perceived quality" is commonly used instead of "quality" to stress that quality judgments are dependent on the perceptions, needs, and goals of the consumer (Steenkamp 1990), many different definitions and operationalizations have been offered. To provide the best context for understanding how newspaper advertising influences the perceptions of retail store quality, it is appropriate to define perceived quality in terms of product, service, and retail stores since retail stores are clearly a "mix" of product, service, and store perceptions.

It has been noted that the retail experience is very different from the product or service experience (Czepiel, Rosenberg, and Akerle 1975; Maddox 1977; Renoux 1973; Westbrook 1981). The consumer's set of experiences with a retailer are diverse and typically include repeated contacts over time, with these contacts often spanning a wide range of consumer activities, and may include browsing, shopping, searching for information, bargaining, purchasing, complaining, and bill-paying (Higie, Feick, and Price 1987; Westbrook 1981). It is thus difficult to generalize product and service research to

the retail setting. In particular, the nature and role of interpersonal communications, as well as the characteristics of key communicators, may be quite different for retail settings (Guiltinan and Monroe 1980).

### Perceived Product Quality

Reynolds and Jamieson (1985) define perceived product quality as product-class-specific translations of image, with image defined as the set of meanings or associations with respect to a particular product or product class that a person has stored in memory. Kamakura and Russell (1991) maintain that brand value can be measured at the preference-formation stage of the choice process as the overall perceived quality of the product. Bonner and Nelson (1985) observe that the sensory attributes of food products drive the perceived quality evaluation in the broad product class of food. Davis (1985) links physical quality and brand labeling to perceptions of clothing quality. And considerable research (e.g., Andersen and Cunningham 1972; Eroglu and Machleit 1989; Lillis and Narayana 1974; Gaedeke 1973; Han and Terpstra 1988) has shown country of origin to be important in buyers' evaluations of product quality.

More broadly, Juran (1974), Keuhn and Day (1962), and Thurston (1985) are among those who see perceived quality as fitness for use, given the needs of the consumer. Monroe and Krishnan (1985) and Aaker (1991) see it as a comparative concept, in the sense of the evaluation being influenced by the available alternatives, with Monroe and Krishnan (1985) further including the idea of consumer satisfaction relative to the available alternatives. Steenkamp (1990, p. 317) defines perceived product quality as an

idiosyncratic value judgment with respect to the fitness for consumption which is based upon the conscious and/or unconscious processing of quality cues in relation to relevant quality attributes within the context of personal and situational variables.

Notwithstanding the varied definitions, the literature is replete with conceptual and empirical studies of perceived product quality evaluations (e.g., Bonner & Nelson 1985; Brucks & Zeithaml 1991; Eroglu & Machleit 1989; Jacoby, Olson, and Haddock 1971; Olson 1972; Olson 1978; Olson and Jacoby 1972; Zeithaml 1988), and this is very helpful for establishing a foundation for understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic cues that may be relevant to merchandise quality perceptions in a retail store setting.

### Perceived Service Quality

The services side of the perceived quality debate is clearly relevant to the quality perceptions of retailers since retail stores are a combination of product and service. Most of the literature focuses, albeit without consensus, on definitions of quality in a services context (see for example: Albrecht & Zemke 1985; Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault 1990; Czepiel et al. 1985), and it would seem that “service quality” and “perceived service quality” are terms used interchangeably.

Perceived service quality is variously defined as:

- \* a subjective rather than objective reality (Jacoby and Olson 1985);
- \* the consumer’s judgment about a firm’s [or service’s] overall excellence or superiority (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988);
- \* similar to an individual’s general attitude toward the firm [or service] (Zeithaml 1988);

- \* a form of attitude, a long-run evaluation (Cronin & Taylor 1992), with attitude being seen as the customer's global evaluation of a product/service offering (Bolton & Drew 1991);
- \* being "driven" by the difference between consumers' expectations about the performance of a general class of service providers and their assessment of the actual performance of a firm within that class (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1985);
- \* based on comparisons of a consumer's expectations of service performance with their perceptions of actual performance (Day 1992); and
- \* an evaluation that does not require experience with the service or provider (Taylor & Baker 1994).

A review of these approaches shows them to be complementary, with each one taking a different but not conflicting tack towards defining the perceived service quality construct. Many of the approaches would also work well in defining product quality. What can also be observed is the salience of the notions that: (1) perceived service quality is the result of a comparison between expectations and actual performance, a notion that has received consistent support in the service quality literature (e.g., Gronroos 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1982; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985 and 1988; Sasser, Olsen, and Wyckoff 1978; Teas 1993; Webster 1991); and (2) perceived service quality, when referring to a specific transaction, is akin to satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988).

### **Perceived Retail Store Quality**

Given that retail stores comprise both product and service elements, defining perceived quality for retail stores immediately brings into play both perceived product

quality and perceived service quality. The issue of quality in a retail setting has been addressed in several different ways--e.g., as influenced by store shopping experiences (Kerin, Jain & Howard 1992); as inferred in studies of the components of store image (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Steenkamp and Wedel 1991); as inferred in studies of price and store image relationships (Cox & Cox 1990); and as linked to retailer desires for achieving a high-quality image for their stores (Olshavsky 1985). Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) indicate empirically that brand name information is the most important cue in forming quality-of-merchandise impressions, and--in the case of department stores--the number of salespersons per department is the most salient cue for evaluating service quality.

Although Darden and Schwinghammer (1985) discuss retail store quality within the context of department, mass merchandise, discount, and specialty stores, most of the retail store quality research applies either implicitly or explicitly to department stores. Therefore, the research herein focuses on department stores since specific price and quality cues can vary across type of retailer, e.g., department store vs. supermarket (Hansen and Deutscher 1977-1978; Tigert 1983).

### **Perceived Quality Judgments: The Evaluative Process**

Given the lack of definitional consensus with respect to both the quality and perceived quality constructs, it is not surprising that there is also a lack of consensus about how to conceptualize the perceived quality judgment process. The literature offers several conceptualizations and models of the process--either wholly or in part (e.g., Brucks &

Zeithaml 1991; Eroglu & Machleit 1989; Mehotra & Palmer 1985; Olshavsky 1985; Olson 1972; Steenkamp 1990; and Takeuchi & Quelch 1983)--as well as several conceptualizations of consumer choice and evaluative judgments (e.g., Bettman, Johnson & Payne 1988; Holbrook 1981; and Kamakura & Russell 1991) that suggest additional dimensions (e.g., the inclusion of affect).

Typically, the information processing paradigm (Bettman 1979) that is so commonplace in consumer research has been used as a framework for studying the quality perception process. The general thrust of this paradigm is that the consumer is a logical thinker who interacts with his or her choice environment, seeks and takes information from various sources, processes this information, and then makes a selection from among some alternatives; thus, the emphasis is on the cognitive processes that occur after exposure to a stimulus and before the overt behavioral response to that stimulus (Bettman 1979; Brucks 1985; Holbrook & Hirschman 1982).

Study of the perceived product quality judgment has focused consistently on the use of quality cues or signals, i.e., product-related information, as the major basis for forming inferences about product quality--a focus that is in sync with the information and acquisition component of Bettman's (1979) information processing model. Equivalent research in the area of services, however, is still in its infancy--with little understanding of the cues that are most important to services customers and how these cues are traded off against one another (Sweeney, Johnson & Armstrong 1992).

### Quality Cues

Quality cues are informational stimuli that consumers associate with the quality of the product (or service), and that can be ascertained prior to and after consumption (Steenkamp 1990, p. 312). Thus, the consumer uses perceptual cues to make judgments about actual product or service quality.

**Intrinsic** quality cues are related to the composition of a product or service, meaning that a product or service would be physically changed if such a cue were varied (Olson 1972; Olson & Jacoby 1972). Examples on the product side include color (Casciero 1988; Tom et al. 1987); flavor, texture, and degree of sweetness for beverages (Zeithaml 1988); door surfaces in refrigerators (Mehotra and Palmer 1985); suds for detergents (Aaker 1992); fabric type and construction details for clothing (Davis 1985); and color differences for cars, trucks, or buses (Casciero 1988).

It is not clear what cues are intrinsic within a service context. The cues that may be identified as intrinsic may actually surround the service (e.g., physical facilities) as opposed to being an intrinsic part of it (Crane and Clarke 1988; Sweeney, Johnson and Armstrong 1992). However, the following have been suggested as examples of intrinsic cues for services: location, physical facilities, equipment, appearance of personnel, willingness to help customers and provide prompt service (responsiveness), knowledge and courtesy of employees (assurance), demeanor of supplier; number of personnel, and merchandise selection (Crane and Clarke 1988; Day 1992; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Sweeney, Johnson and Armstrong 1992; and Zeithaml 1988).

**Extrinsic cues**, also referred to as market signals of quality (Bloom and Reve 1990; Gerstner 1985), are related to the product or service but are not a part of the service or physical product itself. Thus, changing the quality cue would have no impact on the “anatomy” of the service or product. Common examples of extrinsic product cues are price (Bagwell and Riordan 1991; Gerstner 1985; Pincus and Waters 1975; Tellis and Wernerfelt 1987), advertising (Nelson 1974), store image (Dodds 1991; Szybillo and Jacoby 1974), brand popularity (Smallwood and Conlisk 1979), packaging (McDaniel and Baker 1977; Stokes 1985), country of origin (Eroglu and Machleit 1989; Kono 1984; White and Cundiff 1978) and brand label on clothing (Davis 1985).

For services, suggested extrinsic cues include price, advertising, word-of-mouth communication, sales promotion, store image, and brand names (Crane and Clarke 1988; Davis 1985; Day 1992; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Webster 1991).

A small number of cues are difficult to classify as either intrinsic or extrinsic. For example, package could be part of the physical composition of the product (intrinsic) or protection and promotion for the product (extrinsic) (Zeithaml 1988). For services, intrinsic and extrinsic cues are particularly difficult to distinguish given the intangibility of services. As a result, service dimensions such as physical facilities could easily be categorized as both intrinsic (the service cannot be delivered without a physical space) and extrinsic (the physical facilities serve as a cue for those who may be considering using the service). This difficulty signals the need for careful and precise definition of intrinsic and extrinsic cues when studying perceived quality judgments.

### Cue Utilization

Previous research suggests that extrinsic cues are used more often in product quality evaluations when concrete attributes (i.e., intrinsic cues) are not readily available; however, other things being equal, intrinsic cues will be more strongly related to quality perception than will extrinsic cues (Jacoby, Olson and Haddock 1971; Jacoby, Szybillo and Busato-Schack 1977; Olson 1972; Olson and Jacoby 1972; Pincus and Waters 1975; Zeithaml 1988).

In the case of services, managers need to determine which cues are most important to customers and how the cues are traded off against each other (Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992). However, it is reasonable to hypothesize that, as with tangible products, intrinsic cues are the most important for judging the quality of a service.

It is desirable to try to understand the dimensions of cue utilization when seeking to understand how quality perceptions come into being--whether these perceptions are associated with products, services, or a combination of the two. Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider cue choice and importance, cue interaction, and cue combination.

#### **Choice and Importance**

Olson (1977) proposed a cue utilization process consisting of two stages: (1) cue choice and acquisition and (2) the cognitive processing required to reach an evaluative judgment about the stimulus. He did not, however, offer any insights into the factors that determine cue choice and acquisition beyond identifying three types of determinants: attributes of the product [or service] category; characteristics of the consumer; and specific features or dimensions of the informational cues themselves (p. 283). Mehotra

and Palmer (1985) suggest that the consumer's selections of cues is governed by his/her ability to infer important benefits of the product [or service]; thus, it is the predictive aspect of cues which give them their importance. Unfortunately, a consumer's choice of quality cues--for either product or service--and her assignment of importance will be accompanied by her uncertainty: uncertainty regarding which cue(s) to use; uncertainty regarding the completeness and reliability of the information about each cue; and uncertainty about the predictive accuracy of each cue (Olson 1972, p. 13).

### **Interaction**

Some researchers have suggested that consumers consider quality cues holistically and interactively rather than considering them in isolation or in sequence (Belizzi, Kreuckeberg, Hamilton, and Martin 1981; Crane and Clarke 1988; Mazursky and Jacoby 1986; Mehotra and Palmer 1985; Steenkamp 1990; Tom et al., 1987). In particular, the effects of intrinsic or extrinsic cues on perceived quality may show themselves mostly through interactions with other cues rather than through their main effects (Wheatley, Chiu, and Goldman 1981)--and such interaction effects have, in fact, been observed in multi-cue settings (Olson 1972; Olson 1977; Olson and Jacoby 1972). There is no consensus, however, on how quality cue interactions occur, the direction of such interactions, or the complexity of the interactions.

### **Cue Combination**

Olson (1972) observed that because the cues that influence quality perceptions probably interact with each other, they probably do not combine in an additive way. Two empirical studies of combination rules for quality evaluative judgments provided support

for this assertion by reporting that product quality was judged by averaging rather than adding information (Troutman and Shanteau 1976). However, it can be expected that the consumer will use different quality cues interchangeably depending on the product decision context or situation. In fact, consistent with the lens model of perception (Brunswik 1955; Postman and Tolman 1959), the consumer--when confronted with whatever quality cues are available and knowing that such cues are of limited validity--will be forced to adopt a "probabilistic" strategy, i.e., to combine and weight the cues in order to make a perceived quality inference.

### **Perceived Quality and the Retail Store**

In most retail store situations, the customer receives service and a product whose quality is likely to be evaluated through use (Carman 1990). Thus, perceived quality judgments for retail stores would seem to be a combination of perceived quality judgments about merchandise (product) and service. Since it has been demonstrated empirically (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985) that substantial differences exist in the information used to form impressions of quality of merchandise versus quality of service, it is appropriate to discuss the two quality perception processes separately. It has been suggested that tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance) and personal attention (understanding and access) weigh most heavily in customer perceptions (Jacoby and Olson 1985) and that consumers differentially weigh various store characteristics to arrive at a unified impression of a store (Kerin, Jain, and Howard 1992). Further, it is important to note that, in order to understand perceived quality, one needs to know what meaning the

consumer is giving to specific attributes of the store or product and the additional associations or linkages that connect relevant concepts (Reynolds and Jamieson 1985). Darden and Babin (1994) found that retail environments can be differentiated in terms of the emotional qualities that consumers attribute to them, with consumers perceiving higher overall quality in a retail environment they associated with a high level of pleasantness (e.g., courteous and friendly employees) and activity.

### **Perceived Quality of Merchandise**

Merchandise refers to the goods offered by a retail outlet (Lindquist 1974-1975). Impressions of merchandise quality are produced as a result of an image-development process that is little understood. Models that describe the dynamics of the image-development process are seemingly non-existent (Hirschman 1981; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985). In his study of retail satisfaction, Westbrook (1981) found that the selection of merchandise available within store departments, the assortment of departments in the store, their stock levels, and the general level of merchandise quality and fashion impact most heavily on customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction relative to store merchandising policies. These findings must be considered cautiously, however. Most scholars working in this area agree that both quality assessments and satisfaction are concerned with the difference between expectations and perceptions (Carman 1990; Olshavsky and Miller 1972; Olson and Dover 1976). Where the two can be distinguished is in the understanding of quality as an enduring, global attitude and satisfaction as related to a specific transaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988). The relationship between the two is

that a customer's perception of merchandise quality is directly affected by her satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the merchandise (Bolton and Drew 1990; LaBarbera and Mazursky 1983).

It is generally understood that quality impressions of merchandise are necessarily linked to quality attributes, i.e., what the product is perceived as doing or providing for the consumer, and that it is these attributes that form the basis for the use of quality cues (Steenkamp 1990). Since quality attributes can only be determined by consuming the product, consumers--in general--will look to quality cues when choosing between merchandise alternatives. Thus, the value of a quality cue is in its perceived predictive relationship with quality attributes and quality cues are important only to the extent that they are perceived to be a means to certain ends that are valued by the consumer, i.e., the benefits or quality attributes (Steenkamp 1990). However, before designing the critical quality cue(s), the retailer must first identify the quality attributes that the targeted consumers desire in the merchandise (Tom, Barnett, Lew, and Selmants 1987). These attributes, or benefits, must then be correctly communicated to the consumer.

### **Merchandise Quality Attributes**

Merchandise quality attributes (accounted for in the product-based approach to quality, i.e., differences in quality reflect differences in the quantity of some ingredient or attribute possessed by a product), are used in a consumer decision-making protocol that reflects an interplay between the tangible aspects of product features--what the consumer sees--and the abstract notions of functional benefits--what the consumer wants (Mehotra

and Palmer 1985). Benefits describe what products mean to people and they are product- or merchandise-specific. For example: quality attributes for refrigerators include durability, workmanship, appearance, and ease of cleaning (Mehotra and Palmer 1985); for cold, boxed cereal they may include nutrition, taste, and convenience (Bonner and Nelson 1985); and, across food categories, the attributes given the most weight are the sensory signals: rich/full flavor, natural taste, fresh taste, good aroma, and looking appetizing (Bonner and Nelson 1985).

Even given the merchandise-specific nature of quality attributes, however, it is possible to propose a list of general attributes that are used in various combinations to assess product (merchandise) quality. These attribute categories would include, for example, reliability, durability, conformance to specifications, wearability, style, functionality, ease of use, performance, product features, serviceability, prestige, and aesthetics (Garvin 1984, 1987; Zeithaml 1988). The meaning of each of these attributes, in the relevant combination, will necessarily be merchandise-specific, as should be the associated quality cues.

### **Merchandise Quality Cues**

Although it is the intrinsic quality attributes that generally provide the utility sought in the merchandise (Bonner and Nelson 1985), it is the quality cues that are used by consumers to form inferential beliefs with respect to these quality attributes. In fact, it would seem that the consumer's cognitive structure exhibits a great deal of interaction

between specific product cues (means) and several different benefits (ends)(Mehotra and Palmer 1985).

### **Intrinsic Merchandise Quality Cues**

As stated earlier, intrinsic cues will be more strongly related to quality perceptions than will extrinsic cues--other things being equal (Jacoby, Olson, and Haddock 1977; Olson 1972; Olson and Jacoby 1972; Pincus and Waters 1975; Zeithaml 1988). Most of the research concerns itself with specific product categories rather than with the merchandise assortments characteristic of the retail store (see, for example: Davis 1985; Bonner and Nelson 1985; Mehotra and Palmer 1985). The only intrinsic cues specifically linked to overall merchandise quality impressions are merchandise material and merchandise colors (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985). It may be, however, that intrinsic cues across different merchandise categories are combined in some way to form quality impressions of retail store merchandise in general. This is an issue that has not been explored in the research.

### **Extrinsic Merchandise Quality Cues**

The most extensive discussion of merchandise quality cues in a retail store context is with respect to extrinsic cues, with much of the discussion occurring in the store image and store patronage literature (see, for example: Darden and Schwinghammer 1985; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Reynolds and Jamieson 1985).

Brand names, perceived level of advertising expenditures, price, and store image are the extrinsic quality cues most commonly identified for merchandise (Davis 1985; Darden and Schwinghammer 1985; Dodds 1991; Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991;

Kirmani and Wright 1989; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986; Monroe and Krishnan 1985; Nelson 1970, 1974; Steenkamp 1990; Zeithaml 1988), with brand name being the cue used more frequently than any other information (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985, 1986). Also of relevance are the advertising communications themselves.

### **1. Brand Names**

Brands can be national (the "name" brands, heavily advertised), generic (the "no name" brands), or private (store labels), with the generic brands found primarily in supermarkets (Bellizzi, Krueckeberg, Hamilton, and Martin 1981). Strong brand names and private labels have become immensely important in the fashion industry (Salmon and Cmar 1987).

The issue of product quality underlies the competition among generic, private, and national brands with Bellizzi, Krueckeberg, Hamilton, and Martin (1981) reporting empirically that: (1) national brands are perceived as superior in terms of reliability, prestige, quality, and other characteristics; (2) generic brands are said to be generally inferior; and (3) private brands are psychologically positioned between national and generic brands on many of the rating scales.

A relatively recent phenomenon is the retail store that becomes the brand. Some retailers who have a lot of equity with their customers, e.g., The Gap, Brooks Brothers, and Sears, have built on their equity and transferred it to their products (Mogelonsky 1995). The result is a number of brands that have become national brands in their own right, with all the associated status and brand equity. Although there seems to be no

specific research in this area, the popular press has taken note of the trend (Mogelonsky 1995).

Consumers simplify the complex reality associated with stores and their merchandise via use of brand names that represent “chunks” of information (Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Stokes 1985). A brand name is more than, for example, the label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It tells consumers many things-- not only by the way it sounds (and its literal meaning if it has one) but also via the body of associations it has acquired as a public object over a period of time (Gardner and Levy 1955). Brand name serves as an extrinsic signal for a chunk of intrinsic cues, e.g., the brand name of Ivory signals the following intrinsic quality cues: white, floats, pure (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993), thus wielding power in the marketplace for both the consumer and the firm.

The power of brand names is captured in the notion of brand equity, defined as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers (Aaker 1991, p. 15). The brand assets and liabilities can be grouped into the five categories of brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations in addition to perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships (Aaker 1991). These categories work together to provide value to the customer and the firm.

Because a brand will have associated with it a perception of quality not necessarily based on a knowledge of detailed specifications (Aaker 1991, p. 19), brand names serve as

a “shorthand” for quality (Jacoby, Szybillo, and Busato-Schach 1977; Jacoby, Chestnut, Hoyer, Sheluga, and Donahue 1978; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Zeithaml 1988), and this eases the processing of the extensive information associated with retail stores. Further, such chunking may explain the relative dominance of brand name information over price information in consumer quality judgments (Jacoby, Olson, and Haddock 1971; Jacoby, Szybillo, and Busato-Schach 1977; Gardner 1971). These findings are consistent with the belief by clothing retailers, for example, that consumers associate designer labels in clothes with quality in the merchandise as well as status. Retailers also believe that the name alone may not be sufficient to sell the product; once attracted to the brand, the consumer looks for quality in the fabric and construction (Davis 1985).

## **2. Perceived Level of Advertising Expenditures**

Level of advertising expenditures has been related to product quality (Kirmani and Wright 1989; Woodside and Taylor 1978; Milgrom and Roberts 1986; Nelson 1970, 1974; and Schmalensee 1978). It is argued that high perceived advertising expense (determined through direct observation of the advertising campaign, ad content that mentions elements, or news stories and product announcements) signals high quality since consumers believe that “putting your money where your mouth is” encourages the expectation of a high quality product (Kirmani and Wright 1989). It is further argued that for goods whose attributes are determined largely during use (i.e., goods with experience properties), higher levels of advertising signal higher quality because level of advertising--rather than the actual claims made--informs consumers that the company believes the goods are worth advertising (i.e., of high quality) (Schmalensee 1978; Zeithaml 1988).

### 3. Price

Price has long been viewed as one of the most commonly used signals of product quality, the assumption being that “you get what you pay for” (Jacobson and Aaker 1987). Much of the literature is based on the assumption that a general price-perceived quality relationship exists (Olson 1977; Zeithaml 1988). Monroe and Krishnan (1985) conclude that, in general, people do make positive inferences about product quality on the basis of price and this supports the conclusion reached by Olson (1977) in his early summary of the literature. Because consumers do not always know or remember actual prices of merchandise, they encode prices in ways that are meaningful to them, e.g., “expensive” or “cheap” (Dickson and Sawyer 1985; Zeithaml 1982, 1983, 1988). It is this encoded or perceived price that is linked to merchandise quality impressions (Jacoby and Olson 1985; Zeithaml 1988).

Except for wine and perfume, the most positive price-perceived quality links have been found in durable rather than in nondurable or consumable products (Cox and Cox 1990; Davis 1985; Gardner 1971; Lambert 1972; Peterson and Wilson 1985). Price image appears to be a particularly important competitive tool for retailers of packaged goods (Cox and Cox 1990), with various studies indicating that a store’s perceived price level is either the first or second most important patronage criterion in both supermarkets (Arnold, Oum, and Tigert 1983) and drugstores (Nickel and Wertheimer 1971). Wheatley, Chiu, and Goldman (1981) found that for carpeting, as physical quality increased, extrinsic cues such as price affected perceptions of quality more than did the carpet’s physical quality. Additionally, an interesting price-quality nuance is that retailers

selling above the market, such as Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom, usually end their prices with even numbers that have come to denote quality (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 330).

The influence of price on quality perceptions has also been observed to be stronger in the presence of brand information (whether national, generic, private, or retail-store-as-brand than by itself--thus implying that brand name does not dominate the influence of price on quality perceptions (Monroe and Krishnan 1985). In a related fashion, price cues should have an increasingly powerful effect on product evaluations in cases of low brand familiarity or absence of a brand name (Monroe and Krishnan 1985). It is also to be noted that when store name is favorable, i.e., when there is a positive store image, the strength of prices increases for perceptions of quality (Dodds 1991). Additionally, some consumers may choose high-priced brands in order to reduce the risk of choosing inferior products (Shapiro 1970).

There is, however, conflicting evidence. Several studies (Gerstner 1985; Swan 1974) show a weak association between price and perceived quality. Other studies show the relationship to be nonlinear (Peterson 1970; Peterson and Jolibert 1976) and to vary across individuals (Zeithaml and Berry 1987; Zeithaml 1988) and products (Gerstner 1985; Gardner 1971; Peterson and Wilson 1985; Zeithaml 1988). Further, price seems to be of less importance or does not behave in an additive fashion when other product quality cues--such as brand name, store image or name, and/or product familiarity/knowledge--are present and when other information such as readily accessible intrinsic cues and level of advertising is available (Dodds and Monroe 1985; Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991; Enis

and Stafford 1969; Gardner 1971; Peterson and Wilson 1985; Rao and Monroe 1988; Rexeisen 1982; Zeithaml 1988). Some multi-cue studies have found that price affects perceived product quality (Cox and Cox 1990; Erickson and Johansson 1985; Wheatley, Chiu, and Goldman 1981) while others have found no price-perceived quality relationship (Pincus and Walters 1975; Szybillo and Jacoby 1974). This contrasts with others who conclude that while price is of considerable importance, it probably is not as important as brand name in perceived quality judgments (Stokes 1985).

Past research has, however, clearly established that some consumers use price as a cue to quality for some products (Peterson and Wilson 1985). Thus, higher perceived prices tend to lead to greater perceived quality and, consequently, to an increased willingness to purchase based on perceived quality (Dodds 1991). It is just not clear when and under what conditions buyers impute quality on the basis of price and other information (Monroe and Dodds 1988; Peterson and Wilson 1985).

#### **4. Retail Store Image**

Store image, an important extrinsic cue in the merchandise quality impression process, has been defined in a variety of ways. It has been defined as the overall attitude toward the store based upon the perceptions of relevant store attributes (Bearden 1977; Doyle and Fenwick 1974-1975; James, Durand, and Dreves 1976; Korgaonkar, Lund, and Price 1985; Marks 1976; Steenkamp and Wedel 1991). Martineau (1958) produced the seminal discussion of store image while concentrating on personality aspects of the store. He described a store's personality as the way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional qualities (such store elements as merchandise selection, price

ranges, credit policies, store layout, and other such qualities that can be more or less objectively compared with those of a competitor) and partly by an aura of psychological reactions (e.g., a sense of belonging, the feeling of warmth or friendliness, or possibly a feeling of excitement or interest). He then went on to describe four elements of image: layout and architecture, symbols and colors, advertising, and sales personnel.

Oxenfeldt (1974-1975, p. 9) submits that store image . . .

is more than a factual description of its many characteristics. In many cases, it is less like a photograph than like a highly interpretive portrait. In other words, an image is *more than the sum of its parts*. It represents interaction among characteristics and includes (or is strongly affected by) extraneous elements. It also has some emotional content--i.e., it includes an element of being drawn toward or repelled by the store. It is *not* simply someone's impersonal observations of a store's characteristics. Thus, I consider image a combination of factual and emotional material. The customer reacts to the store's characteristics, as he views them, in an emotional way. That is, some customers may feel toward one store as toward a warm, trustworthy, helpful friend. Other stores may seem to these same people deceitful, exploitative, unpleasant, and antagonistic.

The point stressed is that many customers will not only hold factually biased opinions about a store but will FEEL certain ways toward it. This latter emotional state is what I would call an image. Observe that many others use the term simply to designate the opinions and impressions that potential customers hold of a store.

Arons (1961), Kunkel and Berry (1968), and Lindquist (1974-1975) offer some of the most widely cited definitions of retail store image which are based on consumer perceptions of many store characteristics. More recently, Dichter (1985) described what an image is and what it is not. It describes not individual traits or qualities, but the total impression an entity makes in the minds of others. An image is not anchored in just objective data and details. It is the configuration of the whole field of the object, the advertising, and, most important, the customer's disposition and the attitudinal screen through which she observes.

A common way to operationalize and subsequently assess image is through

decomposing it into its component dimensions. Lindquist (1974-1975) reports that the most mentioned retail store attributes are merchandise selection or assortment, merchandise quality, merchandise pricing, and locational convenience. The dominance of merchandise should be noted. A mere detailing of what are, in effect, attribute descriptors of stores (see Table 3), however, falls short of capturing a complete understanding of the underlying reasons for their importance to consumers (Reynolds and Jamieson 1985).

Store image is important to consumers because of its symbolic power. Since the human mind can handle only a certain number of complex situations and stimuli, it attempts to simplify circumstances and thus abstracts only a few meanings that appear salient (Boulding 1956). These symbolic images are used to summarize a vast array of values and meanings. By personalizing these symbols or objects we allow ourselves an avenue for interaction with them. Hence, grounds are found by humans to continue to either like or dislike these symbols in a manner similar to liking or disliking a person. In the case of retailers, unfavorable images tend to adversely affect both patronage and purchase behavior, while favorable images are apt to impact positively on such behavior (Jacoby and Mazursky 1984; Korgaonkar, Lund, and Price 1985; Stanley and Sewall 1976). Of additional relevance to retailers are the observations that: (1) retailers trigger subjective impressions and images no matter what they do (Oxenfeldt 1974-1975); (2) almost all customers have impressions--and fairly strong ones--about many individual stores, including some with whom they have not even dealt (Oxenfeldt 1974-1975); and (3) store image has been found to be related to the additional key retail success concepts of store loyalty (Lessig 1973; Sirgy and Samli 1989) and the share of the household

**Table 3**  
**Attribute Descriptors (Image) of Stores**

From Oxenfeldt 1974-1975	From Zimmer & Golden 1988	From Lindquist 1974-1975
<p><b>1. Reality Factors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Quality--Search out lines offering the best value</li> <li>b. Breadth of assortment</li> <li>c. Depth</li> <li>d. Minimum out-of-stocks</li> <li>e. Currency of styling</li> <li>f. Quick special orders</li> <li>g. Credit</li> <li>h. Enough sales help</li> <li>i. Speedy checkout</li> <li>j. Easy return/repair, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Intangible but genuine substantive benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Friendliness--personal relations</li> <li>b. Pleasureableness</li> <li>c. Familiarity</li> <li>d. Trust</li> <li>e. Helpfulness</li> <li>f. Ego-gratification--feeling of being liked and admired</li> <li>g. Cleanliness</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Fantasies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. "The best people shop there"</li> <li>b. "Known to be the best store"</li> <li>c. "You'll meet fascinating people there when you shop"</li> </ul>	<p>Good/bad value Shows newest styles before/after other stores Carries/does not carry brand names Interesting/uninteresting merchandise Merchandise is/is not clearly marked Friendly/unfriendly Lay-away available/not available Adequate/inadequate number of salespeople Fast/slow checkout Pleasant/unpleasant customers Friends do/do not shop there Attractive/unattractive decor Near/not near other stores where I want to shop Assertive/passive Objective/impulsive Comfortable/uncomfortable Intimate/social Formal/casual Fair/unfair Honest/dishonest Been in community a long/short time</p> <p><b>Nonattribute-specific image dimensions used in the literature</b></p> <p>Good/bad overall impression Improving/falling behind High/low caliber Enjoyable/not enjoyable A nice/not a nice place to shop Evaluation of specific products (e.g., food, clothing, etc.) Store like others/unique</p>	<p><b>Merchandise Quality</b> Selection or assortment Styling or fashion Guarantees</p> <p><b>Service</b> General Salesclerk Presence of self-service Ease of merchandise return Credit policies Delivery</p> <p><b>Clientele</b> Social class appeal Self-image congruency Store personnel</p> <p><b>Physical Facilities</b> Elevators Lighting Air Conditioning Washrooms Store layout Aisle placement and width Carpeting Architecture</p> <p><b>Convenience</b> General Locational Parking</p> <p><b>Promotion</b> Sales promotions Advertising Displays Trading stamps Symbols and colors</p> <p><b>Store Atmosphere-Congeniality</b> Feeling of warmth, acceptance, or ease</p>

budget spent in the store (Hildebrandt 1988).

The linkage between store image and perceived merchandise quality has not been given much attention. This is surprising since it has been recognized that a unique store image is one of the retailer's most valuable marketing assets [creating a competitive advantage that is not easily duplicated by other retailers (Rosenbloom 1983)], that stores may emphasize different image attributes as part of their marketing strategy (Steenkamp and Wedel 1991), and that the quality perceptions of shoppers are affected by retail image (Darden and Schwinghammer 1985). Render and O'Commor (1976) showed that the image of stores in some cases does relate to the perceived quality of some product categories. Jacoby and Mazursky (1984) reported that a store's image is most likely determined by the combined assortment of brands, given that stores generally carry a variety of brands. Accordingly, a retailer with a relatively low image (e.g., K-Mart, Woolworth, Target, Marshall's, JC Penney, Montgomery Ward, Walmart, Sears) might be able to improve this image by associating it with a more favorably evaluated brand or manufacturer image while a very favorable retailer image (e.g., Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdale's, Marshall Field's, Lord and Taylor, Saks Fifth Avenue) is likely to be damaged if it somehow becomes connected with brands having less positive images (Jacoby and Mazursky 1984; Reynolds and Jamieson 1985; Zimmer and Golden 1988).

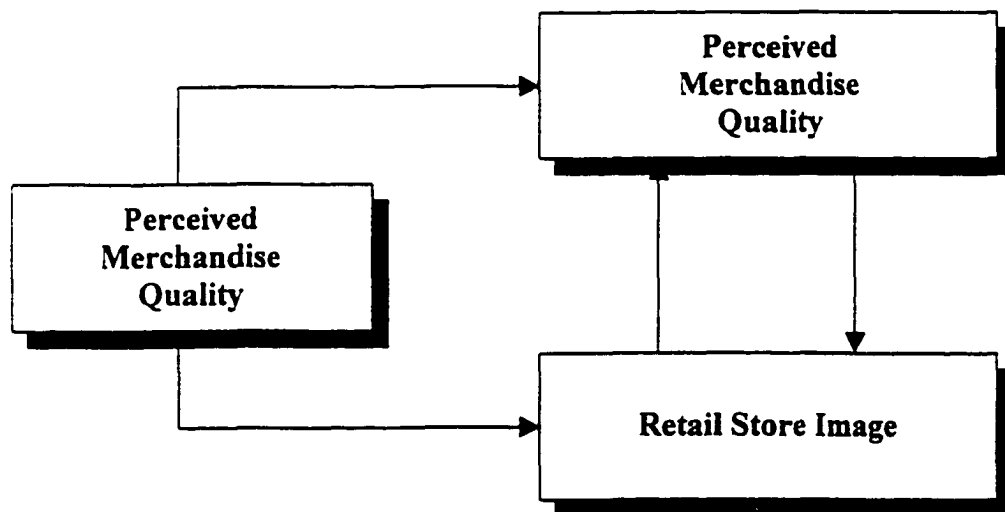
By extension, we may infer several things (see Figure 3): (1) a positive image will lead to an impression of higher perceived merchandise quality; (2) higher perceived merchandise quality will contribute, in turn, to a more favorable store image; and (3) more positively evaluated brand names tend to contribute to a more positive retail store image

and to higher perceived merchandise quality. Brand images, thus, may be more potent than store images (Zimmer and Golden 1988) although it is also true that once the buyer is familiar with a store, that store's image becomes an "anchor" of expected quality (Dodds 1991).

### **Perceived Quality of Retail Store Service**

Because competing retailers may sell many identical products, the quality of service is a primary means of competitive differentiation (Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml 1983). Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived service quality, generally, as the

**Figure 3**  
**Relationship Between Brand Name, Merchandise Quality, and Retail Store Image**



customer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service--such an assessment being the result of a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service

performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) further posit that perceived service quality exists along a continuum ranging from ideal quality to totally unacceptable quality, with some point along the continuum representing satisfactory quality. While these and similar assertions about perceived service quality (e.g., Bolton and Drew 1991; Day 1992) are helpful in providing a foundation for the understanding of perceived retail service quality, they offer limited insights into the components or dimensions of perceived quality impressions for retailers. Little research has investigated retail store service quality in specific contexts.

Tauber (1972) suggests that some of the non-product satisfactions offered by retail outlets may be as significant as, if not more significant than, product-related satisfactions in determining customer patronage. Westbrook (1981) concluded that consumers derive satisfaction or dissatisfaction from individual experiences in the store as well as in the use of each product or service purchased from the store and that the most influential components of retail satisfaction are satisfaction with store sales persons, special store sales, products/services purchased at the store, store environment, and value-price relationships offered by the store.

Westbrook (1981) and Reeves, Bednar, and Lawrence (1995) found the human interaction component to be important in evaluating retail outlets, providing support for the notion that customer satisfaction--and the subsequent perceived retail service quality assessments--are heavily influenced by store sales persons. It is not surprising, then, that firms noted for high-quality service (e.g., Nordstrom's) view their service personnel as a key resource. They understand well that service quality is best understood as a

relationship, not merely between a customer and a company but the personal relationship between a customer and the particular employee that the customer happens to be dealing with (Sherden 1986). Contrast this with the many large department stores and supermarkets that use poorly trained and motivated personnel who adversely affect their merchandising presentations, human interactions, and product logistics (Rauch 1991).

Defining perceived retail service quality is complicated by the lack of agreement on what retail service is. As noted by Dotson and Patton III (1992): many (including some customers) think service is a single, global, unidimensional construct encompassing the way customers are treated; others see service as comprising many components ranging from facilities services (parking, restrooms, handicap ramps, etc.) to the intangibles such as credit, warranties, and advice; many store managers perceive gift wrapping and special ordering as services to the customers but treat the return counter as a pain in the neck; and others feel that every contact they have with a customer is a service. While these observations were made in the context of customer perceptions of department store service, similar problems of retail service definition can be extended to all types of retailers.

The more recent perceived shopping experience and service encounter literatures have contributed to an understanding of perceived retail service quality. Store shopping experience--which specifically excludes merchandise price and quality considerations--emerges from a consumer's interaction with a store's physical surroundings, personnel, and customer-related policies and practices (Kerin, Jain, and Howard 1992). The exploratory investigation by these authors yielded five store attributes that accounted for a

pleasant or unpleasant store shopping experience in a supermarket: (1) store cleanliness; (2) overall variety and selection; (3) check cashing policy; (4) friendliness or helpfulness of checkers, baggers, and other store personnel; and (5) waiting time in check-out lines. All of these attributes except for overall variety and selection are clearly related to store service.

The term "service encounter" has attained widespread use in marketing speeches, articles, and research in a few short years (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault 1990). The term has been defined variously as: the dyadic interaction between a customer and a service provider (Surprenant and Solomon 1987); role performance (Solomon et al., 1985); and a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with a service--encompassing all aspects of the service firm with which the consumer may interact, including its personnel, its physical facilities, and other visible elements--but which can also occur without any human interaction (Shostack 1985). A service encounter in a retail store can be characterized by all of these except for the final caveat. As such, the focus for certain retailers must be on the personal interactions between customers and employees, especially considering that in many cases the service encounter *is* the service from the customer's point of view (Bitner 1990). This focus necessarily emphasizes further the importance of store personnel in assessments of service quality. Retail managers should acknowledge the importance of managing and controlling every individual service encounter to enhance overall perceptions of service quality (Bitner 1990).

### **Retail Store Service Quality Attributes**

While some argue that different service quality dimensions may be used for different types of retailers (Carman 1990; Reeves, Bednar, and Lawrence 1995) given that technical aspects of the service delivery process are, in most cases, industry- [or retailer-] specific (Babakus and Mangold 1992), little attention has been given to the identification of retail store service quality attributes. It is possible to identify several different approaches to identifying such attributes. Hansen and Deutscher (1977-1978) developed a list of the top ten and bottom ten attributes in department store and grocery store selection. Dotson and Patton (1992) ranked 16 selected department store service attributes, categorizing the attributes as either risk reducers, basic services, or support services. Jolson and Spath (1978) developed a consumer ranking of factors of retail store patronage, their study based on eight types of stores: women's apparel shop, gift shop, jewelry store, family shoe store, hardware store, department store, drugstore, and supermarket. Mazursky and Jacoby (1985) studied three hypothetical stores and ranked service quality attributes according to a single store evaluation and to the three stores being evaluated simultaneously. Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt (1993, p. 463-468) presented five criteria (e.g., time and convenience) that consumers use to evaluate retail services. A review of these different approaches reveals that a number of similarities exist in what is important to shoppers in evaluating retail store service, e.g., helpful personnel and easy return/exchange policies. There are, however, enough differences in the nature and importance of attributes between store types to warrant further examination (Hansen and Deutscher 1977-1978).

### **Retail Store Service Quality Cues**

As with merchandise, consumers look for surrogates or cues from which they can make inferences about service quality (Amirani and Baker 1995; Bitner 1990; Crane and Clarke 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). Tangible and intangible cues help consumers to understand the retailer's implicit service promises (i.e., service-related cues that lead to inferences about what the service should and will be like) because the consumers believe that the cues are related to and predictive of the benefits rendered by a service (Amirani and Baker 1995; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1993). Often, however, the only cues available for perceived retail store service quality judgments are the store's physical facility and its employees (Bitner 1990; Turley and Fugate 1992)--both considered to be intrinsic cues--although consumers may also look to extrinsic cues for making inferences. Retailers need to understand which cues are the most important to potential customers in making these inferences and forming service expectations and, in turn, which cues to promote to attract their own and competitors' customers (Amirani and Baker 1995).

#### **Intrinsic Quality Cues**

Remembering the conceptual difficulties associated with identifying intrinsic cues within a service context, i.e., that some cues identified as intrinsic may actually surround the service (for example, physical facilities) as opposed to being an intrinsic part of it, the nine intrinsic cues for perceived retail store service quality assessments can be collapsed into four physical facility categories (i.e., location, frequently identified as separate from physical facilities; the facility itself; equipment; and merchandise selection) and five

employee categories (i.e., appearance of personnel; responsiveness, seen as the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; knowledge and courtesy; demeanor of the supplier; and the number of personnel). Although these cues were identified within the context of general perceived service quality assessments, they can, by extension, be applied to retailers as well.

### **1. The Physical Facility**

Because of the simultaneous production and consumption of retailer services that cause consumers to be involved in the production process, the consumer must enter the retail service “factory” in order to “consume” the service (Bateson 1989; Lovelock 1983). The service factory ( i.e., the store’s general facilities) includes such things as elevators, lighting, air conditioning, washrooms, store layout, aisle placement and width, carpeting, and general architecture (Rosenbloom 1981)--and changes in the service factory almost always result in consumer behavior changes, thus making management of the retail services facility a key focus of both service production and consumption (Lovelock 1983; Turley and Fugate 1992). Further, if a consumer’s primary contact with a store relates to one department, perceptions will be based on only that department (Kerin, Jain, and Howard 1992).

Turley and Fugate (1992) identified five dimensions associated with service facilities (i.e., atmospheric/image, operational, locational, consumer use, and contact personnel) and their focus on facility-driven services can be extended to other kinds of retailers. It is from these dimensions that consumers draw the tangible cues from which to make their retail service quality assessments --and whatever cues are readily available to

them will be used. Physical evidence such as environmental design, decor, signage, and business cards help to establish the firm's image and influence customer expectations (Baker 1987; Bitner 1990; Booms and Bitner 1981; Shostak 1977). At the next stage of the evaluation process, elements of physical evidence such as noise level, odors, temperature, colors, textures, and comfort of furnishings may influence perceived performance in the service encounter (Bitner 1990) and research suggests that such variations in physical environment can affect perceptions of an experience independently of the actual outcome (e.g., Biggers and Pryor 1982; Maslow and Mintz 1956). At the same time, however, the degree of prior knowledge consumers have about retailers in general or in particular will influence the cues used to make perceived service quality assessments (Rao and Monroe 1988) because consumers know which attributes (or cues) are most useful for discriminating between brands (or stores) and can more quickly determine which alternatives are inferior (Brucks 1985).

## **2. Employees**

Many studies have documented the importance of the store's clerks and sales personnel in the consumer's choice of a store (Jolson and Spath 1973). Dotson and Patton III (1992) found that the strong "attractors" for department stores were personnel who cared about the customer and were competent in performing the service, with store personnel who did not seem to care or who could not provide the service properly being sure bets to drive customers away. Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) found that in evaluating the quality of service the number of salespersons per department appeared to be the most salient cue. This followed up on their 1985 research that identified number of salespersons

per department, number of cashiers per department, merchandise-return policy, and number of fitting rooms as the four most heavily accessed properties (cues) when forming retail service quality impressions. Note that the first three are related to personnel and the last is related to the retail facility. This is consistent with the Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong (1992) conclusion that, overall, more personal sources of information such as past experience with similar restaurants (or, by extension, similar retailers), word-of-mouth, and manner of employees are relatively more important in aggregate than nonpersonal cues such as location, price, advertising, and physical facilities.

Solomon (1985) talks about how the visual inspection of dress and nonverbal cues as to the demeanor of both the service firm personnel and other customers in the service facility help customers in categorizing the firm and forming pre-experience expectations for the service encounter. Similarly, the attitudes and behaviors of service personnel also influence perceived service performance (Bitner 1990).

It must be emphasized that assessments of the quality of personal service are made not on an absolute basis but relative to the customer's expectations--the result being, for example, customers who expect high levels of personal service being fairly unimpressed when it is provided (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 466). The expectations in stores like Wal-Mart, where customers want to be left alone to shop and don't want to be pressured into buying things they don't need (thereby rendering too much personal service as a negative), are very different than in Nordstrom's stores where the customer perceives elegantly designed stores featuring the top names in fashion backed by excellent service and a helpful sales staff. In Nordstrom stores, the many associates on the floor are trained

to introduce themselves, tell the customer they are standing by if help is needed, and then back away rather than pressure the customer (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 467).

### **Extrinsic Retail Service Quality Cues**

Extrinsic cues, either alone or in combination with intrinsic cues, are used by consumers in making perceived quality evaluations of retail store service. Such cues are another part of the process whereby consumers look for tangible evidence of what they are about to experience in a given service encounter (Bitner 1990). Unfortunately, the consideration of extrinsic cues vis-a-vis perceived service quality assessments in the literature is scanty--with suggested extrinsic cues such as price, advertising, word-of-mouth communication, store image, and brand name (Crane and Clarke 1988; Davis 1985; Day 1992; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985; Webster 1991) receiving only cursory treatment. The consideration given to extrinsic cues for perceived retail service quality has been less, making it necessary to draw inferences from related service contexts.

#### **1. Price and Retail Service Quality**

In the absence of tangible evidence on which to evaluate service quality, some authors have suggested that price becomes a pivotal quality indicator in situations where other information is not available (McConnell 1968; Olander 1970; Zeithaml 1981). Pricing levels are an obvious area about which customers form expectations but its role in service quality is not always appreciated--i.e., how actual prices compare to the consumer's expectations regarding price levels in most stores they enter can play a critical role in the consumer's evaluation of service quality (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 467). More specifically, customers will generally expect more attention from personnel in

a store with high prices than from a discount retailer. High prices in a store will be linked to an air of pampering, and customers will expect the sales staff to convey that pampering style of luxury or status (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 521). Thus, high perceived prices will be linked to customer expectations of high service quality (Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992).

## **2. Brand Names**

Just as brand names (whether national, generic, private, or retail-store-as-brand-name) serve as a shorthand for perceived retail merchandise quality, they also convey messages about service quality. Brand name is an extrinsic signal for a chunk of intrinsic cues, e.g., "Federal Express" connotes fast, on time, reliable (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). A retailer that features mostly name-brand items in its ads, for example, risks conveying a high priced image but the retailer's high-quality position is enhanced (Lusch, Dunne, and Gebhardt 1993, p. 488), thus leading consumers to expect high quality service. Since there is generally no objective measure of the quality of a professional [or retail] service, the customer really buys confidence in the company (Onkvisit and Shaw 1989), and the selection of brand name merchandise is an effective way to build that confidence. It can be concluded, therefore, that more positively evaluated brand names tend to contribute to a more positive retail store image and to higher perceived service quality.

## **3. Store Image**

A store's image is comprised of many tangible and intangible factors--e.g., merchandise, physical facilities and location, policies and advertising, clientele mix, store atmosphere, and the attitudes and personalities of the store's employees (especially its

salespeople)--and the specific nature of the pertinent image factors will likely be retailer-type specific. Accordingly, perceived retail store service quality impressions will be formed vis-a-vis service encounter expectations which, in turn, will be influenced by type of retailer (e.g., department store versus supermarket versus specialty store). Not all store image attributes will be relevant to all kinds of retailers under all circumstances (Rosenbloom 1981, p. 131).

#### **4. Word-of-Mouth Communication**

One of the most widely accepted notions in consumer behavior is that word-of-mouth communication (WOM) plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes, expectations, and behaviors (Brown and Reingen 1987; Dichter 1966; Katona and Mueller 1955; Kiel and Layton 1981; Udell 1966; Webster 1991; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry 1990), with consistent demonstration that interpersonal information exchange is prevalent and has a strong impact on consumer preferences and choices (Arndt 1967; King and Summers 1967). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that WOM was the most important source of influence in the purchase of household goods and food products: seven times as effective as newspapers and magazines; four times as effective as personal selling; and twice as effective as radio advertising in influencing consumers to switch brands. Later studies demonstrated the continued importance of WOM communication--e.g., Biehal (1983) in the adoption of an automotive repair center; Feldman and Spencer (1965) regarding consumer services; Arndt (1967) regarding the purchase of a new food product; and Richins (1983) regarding negative WOM by dissatisfied customers. More recently: Sweeney et al. (1992) found that the manner of employees and WOM dominated

service quality expectations in a restaurant setting; Carman (1990) noted in his retailer study of consumer perceptions of service quality that, presumably, service quality expectations come mainly from past experience with similar services, but WOM and mass media also play roles; and Webster (1991) showed that, overall, WOM communications and past personal experience seem to have the greatest effect on consumers' expectations of service quality.

There are a few studies on WOM communication in the retail setting (Moschis 1976). Some researchers have suggested the significance of identifying individuals who talk about shopping and influence others' awareness, attitudes, and purchases (Kelly 1967; Rich and Jain 1968; Samli 1970), but little empirical research is available on the topic (Higie, Feick, and Price 1987). Still, both research and theory suggest that retailers rely heavily on favorable WOM (Higie, Feick, and Price 1987) with one study indicating that up to 40 percent of a retailer's clientele were attracted by the recommendations of friends (Samli 1970).

The specific linkage between WOM communication and perceived retail store service quality has not been studied to date. However, given the generally accepted importance of WOM in consumer behavior and in retail settings in particular, we can make the assumption that WOM does play a role in the formulation of perceived retail store service quality expectations and judgments.

### **Advertising and Perceived Quality**

Advertising is an important extrinsic cue in the quality perception process because

it signals product and/or service quality information (i.e., intrinsic cues) that consumers can acquire only by experiencing the good or service (Bagwell and Ramey 1994). This is consistent with the hierarchy-of-effects model, a conceptual model of consumer choice which maintains that consumers form perceptions of a particular brand in response to the physical product and to psychosocial cues such as advertising messages (Hauser 1984; Kamakura and Russell 1991).

Because quality perceptions do not require experience with the service provider or with the product (Taylor and Baker 1994), marketers need to communicate the quality of their product and/or service (Castleberry and Resurreccion 1989). Research has shown that marketers need to advertise the “quality” of their products in order to maximize revenues (Farris and Reibstein 1979) and that not addressing quality will result in lower quality ratings, less favorable attitudes, and lower intentions to purchase by consumers (Castleberry and Resurreccion 1989). Additionally, as mentioned earlier, heavily advertised brands tend to receive higher quality ratings (Bauer and Greiser 1967; Marquardt and McGann 1975). With respect to the quality of service performance in particular, it has been suggested that promotional messages emphasizing quality can also be used to influence perceptions of quality (Freiden and Goldsmith 1989).

An ad is a very complex stimulus, with one part being content (i.e., the copy itself) and the other part being form (Harris, Sturm, Klassen, and Bechtold 1986; Mitchell 1986). It is the blending of these form and content components that advertisers use to maximize the impact on such consumer response variables as attention, brand beliefs, and brand attitudes (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). Thus, advertising a product or service is not a

matter of isolated messages but, rather, an activity that calls for analyses of attitudes and motives (Gardner and Levy 1955).

Consumers prefer advertising that helps in decision making, and advertising with information that differentiates a brand (or store or service) from its competitors has been shown to increase recall, comprehension, and persuasion (Abernethy and Butler 1992; Abernethy and Franke 1996; Stewart and Furse 1986; Stewart and Koslow 1989; Zanot 1984). The importance of information in an ad is supported by Ducoffe's (1995) empirical study that found ad informativeness to be strongly correlated with overall advertising value. At the same time, however, it must be kept in mind that perhaps the *quality* of the information used to promote a product is more important than the *quantity* of information (Troutman and Shanteau 1976).

Advertising gives a product or service favorable meanings in consumers' minds (Durgee and Stuart 1987), signaling the ability to satisfy both emotional and rational needs (Agres 1990). As noted by Ernest Dichter in 1949, the intangible implications of an ad are often more significant than its actual content. No item of merchandise is ever sold unless a psychological need exists which it satisfies. Advertising's goal, then, is to activate human needs as they exist in the customer.

The ad receiver reacts to the specific aspects of the message as well as to its total gestalt (Friedmann and Zimmer 1988; Gardner 1976); this leads to the drawing of inferences. Inference-drawing, when applied to advertising texts, may lead the consumer to believe things about a product or service that were never explicitly stated, e.g., an ad states that a mouthwash fights germs and the reader infers that it destroys germs (Harris,

Sturm, Klassen, and Bechtold 1986). It is incumbent upon an advertiser interested in positively influencing perceived quality judgments, therefore, to carefully blend form and content ad components with intrinsic and extrinsic cue information so as to contribute to the desired quality inferences--not an easy task since inferred meanings are a unique function of each receiver's total sum of prior experiences and the set of expectations s/he brings to the situation (Jacoby and Hoyer 1982).

Advertising can affect perceived quality directly or indirectly: directly by explicitly mentioning quality in the ad, indirectly through evoking inferences about overall quality from intrinsic cues, extrinsic cues, or abstract dimensions (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). In the direct effect research, a question has been raised about whether explicit claims of overall quality are more effective than ads in which quality must be inferred from more concrete attributes (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). In the indirect effect research, it has been posited, however, that ads in which intrinsic and extrinsic cues are consistent with each other (i.e., point to the same abstract dimension) are more effective than those in which these cues are inconsistent (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993).

### **Advertising Form and Perceived Quality**

Although it has been observed that ad agencies may find it more difficult to portray quality for services than for products, perhaps largely due to the intangibility and evaluation-difficulty of services, product quality is often portrayed nonverbally in ad visuals by, for example, sharply contrasting colors (e.g., black/silver or black/gold) or by using prestigious people (Cutler and Javalgi 1993). It is this nonverbal component that

serves as the form of any print advertisement and the relationship of advertising form to content is an important one. Form does more than contain the poetic [or copy] stuff: it organizes it; it shapes it; it defines its meaning (Stern 1988).

Advertising form encompasses the ambience of the ad, the design, the use of white space, the significant images and symbols, the typefaces used, balance, color, ad and picture sizes, and the item itself (and its role and function in society) (Berger 1982, p. 136; Gelb, Hong, and Zinkham 1985). This visual or form element of an ad may affect brand attitudes (e.g., quality perceptions) in at least two ways: (1) individuals may form (quality) inferences about the advertised brand or store based on the visual information presented, with these inferences possibly resulting in the formation or change of (quality) beliefs about the advertised brand or store; and (2) if the visual element is positively or negatively evaluated, it may have an effect on brand/store quality impressions or brand attitudes that operates through attitude toward the ad (Mitchell 1986). Thus, consumer quality beliefs are affected by both advertising content and advertising form.

With respect to retail advertising in particular, DeLozier (1976) observes that the general style and tone of a store's advertisement is perhaps more important than the content of the ad.

. . . Consumers forget much of what the advertiser says in his message. But they do retain a general "feeling" about the store based on the overall style and tone of an advertisement. Consumers perceive various art styles, typography, and tones as cues to a store's personality. Thus the symbolism used in a store's advertising is a cue to its overall image and must be consistent with the personality the store projects through its design, store personnel, and other image cues . . . (p. 207)

Thus, advertising form plays an important role in communicating a quality image message.

Advertising form functions as an advertising code that is learned by consumers who, in turn, “break” the code to take meaning from the ad. People learn, for example, to associate simplicity, spaciousness (i.e., large amounts of white space), and formal structure (axial balance) with quality and “class” (Berger 1982, p. 137; Gelb, Hong, and Zinkham 1985). Interestingly, however, the linkage of advertising form to quality perceptions is very limited in the literature, with the linkages that do exist commonly offered--briefly--within the context of advertising layout [i.e., a pleasing arrangement of elements into a meaningful message, comprising headline, body copy, illustration, other design devices, and white space (Jewler 1995, p. 137)] discussions. The cleanest and most direct linkages between advertising form and perceived quality seem to be in the areas of white space, typeface, and color. Because of this research’s focus on newspaper advertising, with its very limited use of color, the discussion will be limited to white space and typeface.

### **White Space**

White space, i.e., blank or “negative” space or any uninterrupted expanse of a single color, including black or white (Bovee, Thill, Dovel, and Wood 1995, p. 252; Jewler 1995, p. 138-139), provides contrast as well as a resting place for readers’ eyes as they begin moving through the publication or ad (Parker 1993, p. 89). White space is one of the most undervalued tools of graphic design, and it can take many forms (Parker 1993, p. 89-90).

1. The open area surrounding a headline. The attention-getting power of a headline may be enhanced more by extra white space around it than by larger type.

2. The page margins of an advertisement or publication. Wide margins direct the readers' attention into the center of the page.
3. The vertical space between columns of type. The wider the columns, the more space needed between them.
4. The space created by ragged endings of unjustified type. This space relieves the monotony of large expanses of evenly measured text.
5. Paragraph indents and extra line space between paragraphs. These small but effective increments of space can open up a page layout.
6. Leading between lines of type. Tightly packed lines of type "darken" a publication page.

White space can sometimes communicate as effectively as the text or illustrations, so much so that if you want to tell people that you have a prestigious product or that your store is for the "carriage trade," it is wise to use plenty of white space so that the layout will convey this impression. White space can create an image of high quality, elegance, prestige, or status while a cluttered and crowded ad will create a more low-priced and low-quality impression (Book and Schick 1988; Jacobs and Poillon 1992; Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 1992), and a great expanse of white space often results in a feeling of exclusivity (Jewler 1995, p. 139).

In addition to being an undervalued graphic design tool, white space is probably the most underestimated element in newspaper advertising (Book and Schick 1988). Solid masses without any breathing space are usually unattractive whereas more white space pays off in attention value (Book and Schick 1988, p. 96). Thus, retail stores wishing to communicate a quality message in their ads must carefully consider the use of white space. However, "... white space should not be seen as blank space. It is an element in the ad and

it should be carefully designed and placed as any other element. Used lavishly, it becomes an exclamation point.” (Ocko 1985).

As a result of this literature review, the following research hypothesis was proposed:

***Hypothesis 1. Greater amounts of white space in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality.***

### **Typeface**

Typeface refers to the basic design of type, i.e., the different styles of letters as they are printed (Bovee, Thill, Dovel, and Wood 1995, p. 261; Swann 1987, p. 44). For many creative directors who develop advertising messages, the selection of a particular print type style is an important decision because the impression made on the reader is dependent on the type style used (Tantillo, DiLorenzo-Aiss and Mathison 1995). Indeed, when you design the visual appearance of a message, you are adding some interpretation to it because choosing a typeface to set a word in is part of manipulating the meaning of that word (Spiekermann and Ginger 1993). Appropriate typography helps people to read the advertising message (Ogilvy 1985, p. 96-101), influences the readability and selling power of the message (Schmid 1993), and--when suited to the objectives and strategy of advertising campaigns--enhances communication with the target audience (Bovee et al., 1995, p. 262).

The typeface you choose sends an important message about your message--conveying mood, communicating attitude (Craig 1992; Jewler 1995, p. 161; Parker 1993, p. 51; Solomon 1991). Type is used to print the story of the goods and it is a part of the

layout, thereby sharing in the appearance of the ad: many times the style of typeface is selected as an essential part of the layout, carrying with it subtle representations of dignity, fanciness, stability or grace, power, beauty, ugliness, simplicity (Lucas and Benson 1985; Nelson 1981). The appropriateness of the typeface for the goods or for some quality of the goods applies chiefly to the headlines, with people agreeing to a surprising extent on the meanings and qualities suggested by certain characteristics of typefaces (Lucas and Benson 1985, p. 181; Swann 1987, p. 50-51). Typeface examples and their associated meanings are presented in Figure 4.

The visual, nonverbal aspects of type are a powerful communication force, quite apart from what the words themselves are trying to say (Bovee et al., 1995, p. 263). In fact, type has been called "the visible voice," meaning that the type style itself has something to say (McWade 1990 as cited in Bovee et al., 1995, p. 263). Thus, choosing the right type is a crucial part of ad design.

As a result of this literature review, the following research hypothesis was proposed:

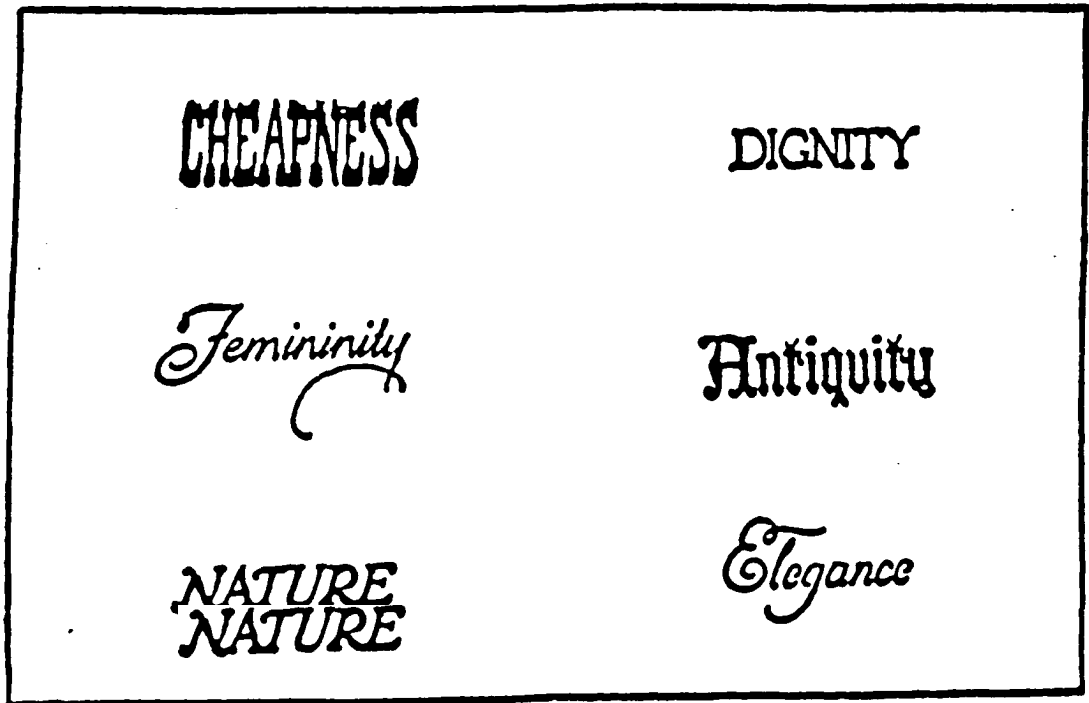
***Hypothesis 2. The use of "high quality" typeface in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality.***

## **Gestalt**

It must be remembered, however, that as important as typeface and white space are individually to the communication of quality, it is the *gestalt* or appearance of the whole advertisement that will ultimately influence the extent to which a message of quality

is sent and received (Jewler 1995, p. 139; Lucas and Benson 1985, p. 176). It is the gestalt of the ad that will produce the psychological results in the mind of the reader

**Figure 4**  
**Typeface Examples and Their Associated Meanings**  
 (Page 1 of 2)



(Source: Lucas and Benson 1930, p. 181)

Figure 4  
Typeface Examples and Their Associated Meanings  
(Page 2 of 2)



(Source: Swann 1987, p. 51)

that are necessary for ad effectiveness (Dichter 1949). More specifically, once "quality" has been selected as the ad's underlying message, the words and pictures in the ad should work together to reinforce the message, and the alphapictorial (word and picture) components should use gesture, art, myth, and symbol to give emotional impact, to create desire (Zakia 1986). to create an expectation of quality.

Thus, the following research hypothesis was proposed:

***Hypothesis 3. The greater the number of "high quality" design cues in a retail store newspaper ad, the more positive will be the perceived quality evaluation of the store.***

### **Newspaper Advertising and Perceived Retail Store Quality**

Newspaper ads were selected as the focus of this research due to their dominance for retail advertising. Newspaper advertising is, in fact, primarily for local retail establishments, representing at least 60 percent of retail advertising expenditures and 85 percent of newspaper revenues (Abernethy 1992; Levy and Weitz 1992, p. 542). As the key advertising medium for retailers, it is not surprising, therefore, that newspapers are rated as the most informative retail advertising medium (King, Reid, Tinkham, and Pokrywczynski 1987), with price, availability (i.e., where the product can be purchased and when it will be available for purchase), and product quality/special services information commonly available. In an empirical study of newspaper ad impact in nonmetropolitan markets, for example, Lynn (1981) found that ad exposure is high and that ad content is widely read and persuasive. Lynn's study found further that television advertising is used as a form of general surveillance of products and services while

newspapers are used to obtain more specific information. In keeping with this consumer use of newspaper ads, such ads have been shown to contain more information than both television and magazine advertising (Abernethy 1992; Abernethy and Franke 1996).

The literature streams that are probably the most relevant to the study of newspaper advertising as an influence on the perceived quality of retail stores are: (1) the body of research that examines the impact of advertising components [i.e., copy (claims, appeals, headline) and executional elements such as media vehicle, celebrities or other spokespeople, bleed color, layout, photos, size, frequency, music, and camera techniques] on brand beliefs and attitudes; and (2) the research that investigates the impact of ads on extrinsic cues, with its focus on quality rather than on brand attitude. For example, Mitchell (1986) proposes a structural model in which the visual and verbal components of an ad affect product (i.e., brand) attribute beliefs. These cues may be stated explicitly in ad claims (e.g., Crest fights cavities, or Chrysler comes with a 7-year/70,000 mile warranty), or they may be inferred from ad elements (Kirmani and Zeithaml 1993). A photo of a cat, for example, may suggest that a facial tissue is soft. Frieden (1982) found that the presence of a celebrity endorser affected perceptions of the price (i.e., extrinsic cue) of the product. Aaker and Brown (1972) reported that an ad in a prestigious magazine affected perceived product price (extrinsic cue) and perceived quality under some conditions. Anderson and Jolson (1980) found that the use of technical wording in an ad for a computer affected perceptions of price (extrinsic cue), durability (intrinsic cue), and ease of operation (intrinsic cue).

Creating retail advertising is challenging because you not only have to sell a

variety of competing brands, you have to sell the store: as the place to shop instead of at your competitors' (who may offer the same merchandise at the same or lower prices) and as preferable to shopping electronically (e.g., television shopping programs and the Internet) or through a catalog (Jewler 1995, p. 284). The quality of the store's merchandise is an important product message to relate to customers, with even the smallest detail able to tell a big story (Jewler 1995, p. 288), but it is also important to convey information about the kind of service that a customer can expect.

Martineau (1958) identified advertising as one of the four ingredients of a store's personality (the other three being layout and architecture, symbols and color, and sales personnel). Accordingly, all advertising is contributing to the image of the store, with consumers attending to subtle stylistic cues (e.g., art styles, typography, and tone) in a retail ad to draw inferences about the store's level of price, service, prestige, etc. (DeLozier 1976; Martineau 1957). Retailers, therefore, should be interested in the broad effect of an ad on the store's image, especially its price image (Cox and Cox 1990), since research by Buyukkurt (1986) indicates that consumers' first impressions of store pricing are very important, with impressions of overall price levels often persisting even in the presence of subsequent, contradictory price information. Consumers' overall first impressions of stores may similarly persist. Jacoby and Mazursky (1985) note that it is generally agreed that consumers form impressions (or images) of stores, brands, and manufacturers and that these impressions can later exert a major impact on shopping behavior. Thus, in order to differentiate itself, each retail store has to rely heavily on what it connotes or means symbolically in the eyes of consumers (Durgee and Stuart

1987), and retail advertising plays a critical role in this process. By learning the fundamental properties of the stores that consumers associate with quality of service and/or merchandise, then, channels of communication between retailers and consumers may be improved (Castleberry and Resurreccion 1989; Mazursky and Jacoby 1985).

Jacobs and Poillon (1992) analyzed white space in newspaper grocery advertising, concluding that white space can create an image of high quality, prestige, or status and that products and store names from ads with more white space have higher retention. Dunn and Barban (1982) note that plenty of white space can be used to convey the impression of your product or store being for "the carriage trade." Jacobs (1972) observes that more white space should be given to expensive items than less expensive ones. Specific to newspaper ads, it has been noted that, in most cases, white space in an ad will draw attention to it because of the clutter commonly found in newspapers (Jacobs and Poillon 1992; Parker 1993)--and the more cluttered and crowded an ad, the more low-priced and low quality the ad [and store] will seem (Jacobs 1972). And Jewler (1995, p. 139) states that white space is particularly important in newspaper ads because of the way it will contrast with the gray editorial content surrounding the ad. Thus, the judicious use of white space can set the ad apart from its surroundings, protecting the ad from the encroachment of other material.

Gardner and Houston (1986) studied the effects of verbal and visual components of retail (restaurant) communications and found that the effect of pictures on memory is longer lasting than the effect of words. These findings are consistent with those of Mitchell (1986). Perry and Norton (1970) observed that women's clothing stores should

stress their courteous and dependable service in ads rather than putting as much emphasis on the price and quality aspects of the store--an interesting observation since contemporary thinking classifies "courteous and dependable service" as an important quality cue. Martineau (1958) concluded that the symbolic meaning of a store's advertising must be consistent with the character of the store itself. Berger (1982, p. 143) noted that we learn to associate certain kinds of advertisements with certain kinds of fashions (a reasonable extension being that we probably learn to associate certain kinds of advertisements with certain kinds of stores). And Rosenbloom's analysis of a Brooks Brothers ad concluded that the uncluttered layout, dignified illustration, and understated copy--along with the classic Brooks Brothers golden fleece logo and reference to the long history of Brooks Brothers--leave little doubt that it is the advertisement of a high quality store (1981, p. 295-296).

To date, however, there is no significant literature or empirical research base from which to draw that specifically examines the role of newspaper advertising's use of intrinsic and/or extrinsic quality cues in overall perceived quality assessments for retail stores.

### **Apparel as Cue**

Two criteria were used for selecting the product to appear in the advertisements for this research (Gardner and Houston 1986; Gotlieb and Sarel 1991; Mitchell 1986). First, the product had to be relevant to women, the selected subject group (see **Subjects**, p. 85). Second, the product had to be one that all women would likely have purchased

within the preceding 12 months and used so they would have enough knowledge about it to effectively process the form and content information in the advertisements. Based on these criteria, a dress was selected. However, because apparel is a particularly powerful nonverbal system of communication (see, for example: Compton 1962; Douty 1963; and Holman 1976), it is appropriate to discuss briefly why this system of communication provides its own cues for any consumer inference process.

Clothing is a high-involvement purchase for most people since it is relatively costly and its visibility produces social consequences for the wearer. Additionally, because different clothing is often worn for different occasions and, for some, because of the transitive nature of fashion, clothing is likely to be a product class with which the consumer must be concerned on a reasonably regular basis (Gutman and Alden 1985, p. 102). Dress and appearance are laden with meanings, often providing the most immediate and apparent visual cues about age, gender, ethnicity, social status, and social roles (Damhorst 1999). Dress protects the body from the environment—physical, psychological, and social—and:

. . . It expresses relationships, steers individuals to approach or avoid others, shapes actions toward others, reflects how people feel about themselves, and expresses personal values and values of the society in which an individual lives. Dress can be a sign or symbol that refers to and stands for meanings not inherent in the material or object . . . . (Turner 1991).

The meanings of dress, however, do not occur in isolation. Rather, meanings are created by individuals living day by day within cultures and interacting daily with the objects and materials of dress—i.e., they are directly attributable to the social interaction

one has with others (Blumer 1969; Damhorst 1999). Thus, as David (1992) maintains, dress serves as a kind of visual metaphor for identity, registering the culturally anchored ambivalence that resonates with and among identities

Unfortunately, there is not a stability of meanings. Instead, the meanings evoked by the clothing code (i.e., fabric, texture, color, pattern, volume, silhouette, and occasion) are forever shifting or “in process” as a result of symbolic interactionism (Davis 1992). As noted by anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir (1931, p. 141) almost sixty years ago:

The chief difficulty of understanding fashion in its apparent vagaries is the lack of exact knowledge of the unconscious symbolism attaching to forms, colors, textures, postures, and other expressive elements of a given culture. The difficulty is appreciably increased by the fact that some of the expressive elements tend to have quite different symbolic references in different areas . . .

This instability of meanings is exacerbated by the complexity of the functions of apparel. Holman (1980) proposed a taxonomy of the functions performed by apparel (Table 4). While this taxonomy uses a definition of apparel that is broader than just clothing—e.g., jewelry, shoes, hair clips and ribbons—it is clear that the multiple functions of apparel offer a robust system of cultural communication cues that would be separate from, but not irrelevant to, other cue systems such as the advertising design and quality cues that were the focus of this research.

**Table 4**  
**A Taxonomy of Apparel Functions**

(Source: Holman 1980)

Function of Apparel	Definition	Use of Apparel
Parasomatic	Apparel which temporarily modifies or alters some attribute of the body	Camouflage (true nature of body is hidden) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hiding the body</li> <li>• altering body form</li> </ul> Display (when viewer's attention is directed toward the body or some part of the body) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revealing the body</li> <li>• drawing attention</li> </ul>
Utilitarian	The rational purpose of apparel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protecting the body</li> <li>• other rational uses such glasses for reading, watch for telling time</li> </ul>
Aesthetic	Beautiful in itself, pleasing in some non-verbal way; user wishes to display that beauty or improve his/her overall beauty or attractiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beauty of apparel</li> <li>• enhance body or beauty</li> </ul>
Mnemonic	Worn for the purpose of reminding either the user or those observing the use about some event that occurred in the past or one enduring into the present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Souvenir: reminder of past activities</li> <li>• Affect display: trigger memories of emotion</li> </ul>
Emblematic	What the apparel "says" about the user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denotative: group membership identification</li> <li>• Connotative: social class of user; political, other attitudes</li> </ul>
Illustrative	Apparel takes on a dynamic quality that punctuates or accentuates verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuate speech</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 3. METHOD AND ANALYSIS

### Statement of the Problem

The literature has not established several things: (1) the cues, intrinsic or extrinsic, that consumers use to formulate perceptions of overall retail store quality; (2) the specific newspaper advertising cues, i.e., form and content, that consumers use to determine or categorize overall retail store quality; and (3) the role that newspaper advertising cues play in overall perceived quality judgments. Given the consumer's demand for quality, the intense competition that characterizes the retail business today, and the need to communicate the quality of goods and/or services (Castleberry and Resurreccion 1989), this knowledge gap may severely hamper the ability of department store retailers to effectively and efficiently communicate a message of quality to consumers. This, in turn, reduces the value of advertising to the consumer, the ultimate result perhaps being reduced retailer profitability.

To close this knowledge gap, while acknowledging the exploratory nature of this dissertation research, the following two general research questions are proposed: (1) Which design cues in newspaper ads are used to make inferences about retail store quality? and (2) How do design cues in newspaper ads impact perceived retail store quality? The impact of design elements on perceived quality has been selected since price and brand name as quality cues have already been studied extensively and the relationships seem to be clear (e.g., high prices tend to signal high quality, brand names tend to signal high quality).

## **Method**

The goal of this exploratory research was to better understand how the design elements in retail newspaper advertising contribute to consumer inferences of overall retail store quality. This section discusses the four-step data collection process (i.e., depth interviews, ad creation, thought-listing pretest for the ads, and main experiment) and the data analysis process.

### **Depth Interviews (Data Collection: Step 1)**

Depth interviews were conducted to identify the dominant advertising design elements that are used to convey a message of quality in general and in retail newspaper ads in particular. The interview results were used to determine which design elements to manipulate in the research experiment. The participants, creative directors/designers from leading advertising agencies in the New Haven, CT and Hartford, CT metropolitan areas and one professor of graphic design at a northeastern university, were recruited by telephone. The sampling frame for the creative directors and designers was "Advertising Agencies and Counselors" listed in the 1997-1998 New Haven (40 listings) and Hartford, CT (75 listings) yellow pages. The professor of graphic design, a faculty member at the same University as the researcher, was known to the researcher for his expertise in graphic design and typography.

When first contacted by telephone, each prospective participant was offered a brief explanation of the study and his/her role as a participant. Permission to audiotape was requested and confidentiality was assured (McCracken 1988). All participants

consented to the audiotaping. For those who agreed to participate, arrangements were made to conduct the depth interview in the participant's office. Where possible, a permission form (Appendix A) was faxed to the participant to sign and bring to the interview. The form confirmed permission to audiotape, requested permission to use the results of the interview for research purposes, and further explained the overall purpose of the interview. Ten interviews were initially planned but since the information quickly became repetitive, only three interviews were actually conducted. However, one interview included two people who had more than 25 years of retail advertising experience between them.

The depth interview, a qualitative research technique, is an unstructured one-on-one interview in which the direction of the interview is guided by the responses of the interviewee: the interviewer probes each answer and uses the replies as a basis for further questioning (McDaniel and Gates 1991, p. 188) in order to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings on a topic (Malhotra 1993, p. 168; Miln 1979). Additionally, the depth interviews were used to help understand design vocabulary and how creative directors/designers think.

The depth interview was chosen for two reasons. First, it was believed that such interviews would be the best way to obtain the information needed for this research. Second, it was believed that advertising creative directors/designers fall into the category of hard-to-reach respondents, thus making depth interviews the only available alternative (Miln 1979). Attempting to survey hard-to-reach individuals by mail or telephone generally yields a low response rate, and the schedules of such individuals

often prevent their attending a focus group session (Miln 1979).

At the start of each interview, the researcher assured the participant of anonymity and requested that he/she read and sign a permission form (Appendix A) if he/she had not done so already. Each interview participant was then told that the researcher wanted to understand how a designer designs for quality. Specifically, each interviewee was asked to identify the design elements that are used and, for each element, to explain why and how it is used. Each interviewee was also asked if there are any differences between designing for quality in general and designing for quality in newspaper retail ads.

Each interview lasted for 1-1 ½ hours. Upon completion of the interviews, a list of the identified design elements was generated (i.e., white space, typography, formal balance, quality of photograph or drawing, and color) and the three elements that were mentioned the most frequently in the interviews were identified as the dominant design elements. These three elements were white space and typeface (consistent with the dominant advertising form components identified in the literature), and formal balance.

As a result of the depth interviews, a fourth research hypothesis was proposed:

***Hypothesis 4. The use of formal balance in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality.***

The three design elements were used in step 2 of the data collection process: Ad Creation.

**Ad Creation (Data Collection: Step 2)**

Using the three dominant design elements obtained from the depth interviews, a series of eight one-page advertisements were created (Appendices B-I, inclusive). Each of the three individual design elements were represented in high quality and non-high-quality versions of the ads as indicated in Table 5. The ads were created for the thought-listing pretest to test whether the eight ads used in the main experiment communicated the quality messages they were supposed to communicate. All ads were the same 8 ½ x 11 inch size. Selection of the typefaces and dress for the ads was based on two pretests for typeface selection and one pretest for dress selection. The second typeface pretest was necessary because the first pretest was inconclusive for selection of the non-high-quality typeface.

**Table 5**  
**Representation of Advertising Design Elements**  
**in Created Advertisements**

<b>Ad Number</b>	<b>High Quality Font</b>	<b>High Quality White Space</b>	<b>High Quality Balance</b>	<b>Non-High Quality Font</b>	<b>Non-High Quality White Space</b>	<b>Non-High Quality Balance</b>
1	x	x	x			
2	x	x				x
3		x	x	x		
4		x		x		x
5	x		x		x	
6	x				x	x
7			x	x	x	
8				x	x	x

## **Subjects**

The subjects for the dress and first typeface pretest were a convenience sample of 32 women faculty, staff, and administrators at a medium-sized New England public university and a small New England private college. All subjects were recruited by the researcher in person or by telephone and/or email using employee directories. The sample had a mean age of 46 with an age range of 25 to 69. Women were chosen as the subject group for this study because they are the dominant retail shoppers.

The subjects for the second typeface pretest were a convenience sample of 12 women faculty and staff at the public university. All subjects were recruited by the researcher and included women from the first pretest sample.

### **Procedure: Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**

Each subject was provided with a manila envelope that contained the pretest packet. The pretest packet was left with each subject and arrangements were made for pickup by the researcher.

Attached to the outside of each packet was a permission form (Appendix J, color coded bright yellow for the first pretest) and a legal-size envelope (also color coded bright yellow). Each subject was instructed to read the permission form, sign it, put it into the yellow envelope, seal the envelope, and either clip the sealed envelope to the *outside* of the manila envelope or put it *inside* the manila envelope. Each subject was then instructed to proceed further.

The pretest packet (Appendix K) contained five dress and four typeface style questionnaires, one page of general directions, and one page of specific directions for

both the dress and typeface sections. After completing the dress questionnaires, each participant read a short passage and completed a connect-the-dot exercise (included in Appendix K) as a means of clearing short-term memory. They then proceeded to the typeface questionnaires.

After completing all questionnaires, each subject was instructed to return the pretest materials to the manila envelope. The packet was then returned to the researcher. The yellow envelopes were then separated from the pretest packets in order to protect the confidentiality of each subject's responses.

The entire process for each subject took 10-15 minutes.

#### **Procedure: Typeface Pretest 2**

For the second typeface pretest, each of the 12 subjects was given a packet (Appendix N) of three typeface styles to evaluate (Table 5). The packets were left with the subjects and arrangements were made for the researcher to pick them up. Since the women in the second pretest came from the first pretest sample, no additional permission forms were required.

Each subject evaluated the three typeface styles against the same seventeen 7-point semantic differential scales that were used in the first typeface pretest. After completing the questionnaires, each subject returned the packet to the researcher. The evaluation process took about 5 minutes.

#### **Product Pretest**

Two criteria were used for selecting the product to appear in the advertisements (Gardner and Houston 1986; Gottlieb and Sarel 1991; Mitchell 1986). First, the product

had to be relevant to women, the selected subject group. Second, the product had to be one that all women would likely have purchased within the preceding 12 months and used so they would have enough knowledge about it to effectively process the form and content information in the advertisements. Based on these criteria, a dress was selected.

The purpose of the dress pretest was to select a dress that was neutral enough not to detract from the typeface, white space, and balance manipulations. Five dresses were selected from a department store catalog and a department store advertisement (see Appendix K). The dresses were presented to the participants in two different orders to control for order effects.

Each dress was evaluated against twelve 7-point semantic differential scales that were considered to be best for indicating a high quality vs. non-high-quality image. The scale selection was based on the depth interviews and Tantillo, DiLorenzo-Aiss and Mathiesen (1995). Using profile analysis, a technique that is used to isolate strong and weak attributes of products, brands, advertisements, etc. (Tull and Hawkins 1990, p. 348), an image profile map was then constructed for each dress (Appendix L). The profile analysis involved: (1) tabulating the subject responses and computing the mean value assigned to each adjective pair for each dress; (2) plotting the mean for each adjective pair; and (3) linking the individual points with a line to form a visual image of each dress.

### **Typeface Pretests**

The typeface literature review and the indepth interviews resulted in the selection of four typeface styles for the first typeface pretest (Table 5). The objective

was to select one typeface with a strong high quality image and one typeface with a strong non-high-quality image. Thus, the four pretest styles had to be significantly different from each other.

Each typeface was evaluated using seventeen 7-point semantic differential scales. The scale selection was based on the indepth interviews and Tantillo, Di-Lorenzo-Aiss and Mathiesen (1995). The scales were presented in the same typeface that was being evaluated in order to maximize the impact of the typeface. The word at the top of each typeface evaluation sheet was "Handgloves." This word was selected because it contains enough relevant shapes to judge an alphabet (Spiekermann and Ginger 1993).

**Table 6**  
**Pretest Typeface Styles**

Pretest Number	For High Quality	For Non-High-Quality
<b>Pretest #1</b>	<b>Bauhaus 93</b> (Bauhaus 93)  Garamond (Garamond)	Courier (Courier)  <b>STENCIL</b> (Stencil)
<b>Pretest #2</b>	Garamond (Garamond)	CurtzMT (CurtzMT)  Jester (Jester)

Using the same profile analysis that was used for the dress pretest, a profile map was constructed for each typeface. The four image maps were then compared with one another and a high quality typeface was selected. Because the results were inconclusive

for the non-high-quality typeface, a second pretest was conducted.

The second typeface pretest included the high quality typeface for comparison and confirmation and two additional styles: "CurtzMT" and "Jester" (Table 5). These typefaces were selected by the researcher as being dramatically different from the traditional, high quality typeface that was selected.

### **Ad Creation**

With the completion of all dress and typeface pretests, the eight ads were created (Appendices B-I) for the thought-listing pretest as follows.

1. Each ad was created for an 8 ½ x 11" piece of paper. The dress selected as a result of the pretest (the sheath dress pictured in Appendix K, p. 7) was scanned by computer and then manipulated using Corel Draw 5.0 so that the dress would: (a) consume a proportionately appropriate percentage of the page; (b) be at a high enough resolution, i.e., 600 dpi, to lend itself to high quality black and white copier duplication for the data collection packets.
2. Each of the eight ads had a different combination of the three design variables (see Table 5):
 

High quality white space	Non-high-quality white space
High quality typeface	Non-high-quality typeface
High quality balance (formal)	Non-high-quality balance (informal)
3. Typeface was operationalized with "Garamond" for high quality and "CurtzMT" for non-high-quality. These typefaces were available in WordPerfect 7.0 .

4. Page balance was operationalized with formal balance for high quality and informal balance for non-high-quality. Under formal balance (symmetry), every item that goes on one side of the ad is repeated, in size or shape, on the other, i.e., items on an imaginary vertical center line spill over in equal portions on the left and on the right (Nelson 1981, p. 115). Under informal or asymmetrical balance, there is a different distribution of items on each side of the imaginary vertical center line in an ad.
5. White space was the most difficult cue to operationalize. It was not possible to change the size of the dress because this would have compromised the integrity of the cue manipulations. It was decided to operationalize high quality white space by having nothing in the ad except for the model, headline, copy, and a thin border line around the ad. The non-high-quality white space was operationalized by using large black starbursts, small black stars, suns, and a thick border line around the ad.
  - a. The border lines were from WordPerfect 7.0 software.
  - b. The large black starbursts were enlargements of starbursts from ads created by one of the advertising creative directors in the depth interviews.
  - c. The suns were copies of Corel Draw! (1993) clip art.
  - d. The small black stars were made from copies of dark blue star-shaped stickers.
6. In addition to the manipulation of typeface, white space, and balance, each ad had four constant elements: headline, hypothetical store name,

hypothetical brand name, and the following copy :

*Madeline Montgomery*. Short-sleeved crepe sheath dress.  
Misses' sizes. Black or plum.

The headline ("For day or night") was thought to be neutral in its information, thus not distracting from the manipulations in the ads.

Hypothetical store name (Foley's) and brand name (Madeline Montgomery) were used so that attitudes toward existing stores would not confound the results. Thus, store and brand name beliefs and inferences would necessarily be based on the contents of the stimulus ads and general product category knowledge rather than on prior knowledge or attitudes about specific stores and brands (Smith 1991).

7. No price information was included in the ads because of the strong established linkage between price and perceived quality evaluations. It was believed that any price information whatsoever would confound the results.

### **Thought-Listing Pretest (Data Collection: Step 3)**

In the study of advertising effects, cognitions are clearly relevant. Cognitions are what people think and what people say to themselves when they are exposed to persuasive communications designed to change their attitudes on personally important issues (Cacioppo and Petty 1981; Tarico et al., 1986). Ultimately, it is the person's own

self-statements that produce change or resistance. If favorable thoughts are generated about a message, persuasion results; if counterarguments are produced, resistance results (Cacioppo and Petty 1981).

One of the most popular self-report devices for obtaining and assessing cognitions has been the thought-listing technique, developed by Brock and Greenwald (Brock 1967; Greenwald 1968), in which subjects are asked to record their thoughts relevant to some stimulus situation (Tarico et al., 1986). Listed thoughts have served as independent variables and dependent variables, and the procedure has been used in research relating thoughts to various behaviors, affects, or states (Tarico, VanVelzen, and Altmaier 1986). Thought-listing was used in this research to assess how people think as they processed a retail newspaper ad and to determine whether the selected design elements affected their categorization of a retail store as high, medium, or low quality.

### **Subjects**

The subjects for the thought-listing procedure were a convenience sample of 32 female faculty, staff, and graduate students at a New England public university. These subjects were a different group than those participating in the dress and typeface pretests.

Each subject was recruited by the researcher either in person or by telephone call and/or email request. For the graduate student subjects, the researcher asked the professor for permission to come to her class to recruit volunteers. The sample had a mean age of 42 with an age range of 24 to 69.

As an incentive to participate, each subject was offered one chance to win a \$50 lottery. The signed informed consent form from each of the 32 subjects was given a number. Each number was put on a small piece of paper, folded, and put into a bowl. The winner was selected by a disinterested party by drawing one of the numbers from the bowl.

### **Procedure**

In the individual thought-listing sessions each subject read and signed a participant consent form (Appendix O), was told that the study concerned the analysis of advertisements, and was assured that her name would not be associated with her responses. Once signed, the consent forms were collected by the researcher before proceeding further.

Each subject was also provided with a booklet of response sheet sets, one set for each of four ads. Included with each booklet were four manila envelopes, each marked on the front with a number from 1 to 4. These four envelopes each contained one advertisement. All subjects received Ads1 and 8 plus two additional ads selected at random from Ads2-7.

1. Ad1 had all three high quality cues (Appendix B) and Ad8 had all three non-high-quality cues (Appendix I). All subjects saw these two ads since it was believed that they had to see both extremes as a basis for comparison.
2. The two additional ads, random selections from Ads2-7 (Appendices C-H), were selected as a means of reinforcing the strength of the extremes in Ads1 and 8 with the expectation that reactions would lie somewhere between those for Ads1 and 8.

3. The total number of ads to be viewed was limited to four so as not to overwhelm each subject with too many evaluations. In order to preserve the integrity of the manipulations, the ads could not be dramatically different from each other, with the exception of Ad1 and Ad8. Therefore, too many ad evaluations would likely blur the distinctions between the ads to the point where the evaluations would be of questionable value. It was believed that four would be a reasonable number.

A sample of the response sheet sets is included as Appendix P. The procedure then continued as follows:

4. All subjects were referred to the two pages of directions (Appendix P), color coded blue for the pretest. The researcher read the directions out loud and allowed time for questions to ensure understanding of the procedures to be followed. The group was then asked to wait until the signal to begin. When that signal was given, each participant was to *remove* the ad in envelope #1, look at it, and proceed to the thought-listing form.
5. On the thought-listing form for each ad (see Appendix P), each subject recorded all thoughts she had about the ad being viewed and the quality of the retail store that was doing the advertising. Each box on the form was limited to one idea or thought in order to unitize the thoughts, i.e., to break down the protocols into individual units of cognitive response, so that their content could be analyzed (Cacioppo and Petty 1981).

Additionally, each subject rated each of her thoughts as positive, negative, or neutral/irrelevant. This categorized the polarity of each listed thought within context, i.e., in the presence of the stimulus.

5. After viewing each ad, each subject responded to the following three questions about store quality (Appendix P):
  - What kind of overall quality would you expect in the store that is running this ad?
  - What kind of merchandise would you expect in the store that is running this ad?
  - What kind of sales assistance would you expect in the store that is running this ad?

The possible responses for each question were high quality, above-average quality, average quality, below-average quality, low quality, and don't know.

7. When each subject was finished with an ad, she was instructed to return it to its marked envelope and wait for the signal to proceed to the next ad.
8. Once all four ads had been evaluated, each participant filled out the age and household income questionnaire on the last page of the packet.
9. Upon completion of the task, each subject returned the response sheet packet and the four ad envelopes to the researcher.

The time allowed for the showing of each ad and all associated activities was 3 minutes. This was consistent with the 2-3 minute time interval used most commonly for thought-listing procedures (Brock 1967; Cacioppo and Petty 1979; Petty and Cacioppo 1979a; Petty and Cacioppo 1979b; Petty et al., 1976; Wright 1973).

### **Content Analysis of Listed Thoughts**

A content analysis--i.e., "a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative, and generalizable description of communications content" (Kassarjian 1977, p. 10)--was conducted on the subjects' listed thoughts. This type of analysis was seen as particularly appropriate here because each subject used her own language and mode of expression. The results of this content analysis served as input to the final selection of ads for the main experiment.

The contents of the thoughts were coded by two trained female judges who were blind to the experimental conditions and the objectives of the experiment (Cacioppo and Petty 1981). The procedure was as follows (Abernethy 1992, adapted):

1. Each judge (coder) was given both a detailed instruction sheet on

how to code the listed thoughts and training in how to analyze the thoughts (Appendix Q).

2. In order to clarify the instructions, five practice thoughts were coded by each of the two judges and then discussed with the researcher.
3. Each thought was coded twice to assess the reliability of the coding procedure. Intercoder reliability was determined by comparing the coding of each thought across both coders and calculating the percentage of total thoughts that were coded exactly the same. The intercoder reliability was 83% when considering this strict one-to-one coding agreement. However, the intercoder reliability increased to 92% when there was agreement as to the category of coding, e.g., high quality, but disagreement about which code to assign. For example, an "exclusive store" thought was coded as high price (code 3) and high quality merchandise (code 5) by the two coders. Both codes were associated with high quality; the difference of opinion was with respect to the *specific* code to assign.

The ideal objective was to equal or exceed the 85% minimum average intercoder reliability suggested by Kassirjian (1977). Intercoder reliability refers to the percent of agreement between several judges processing the same communications material, i.e., the degree of consistency between coders applying the same set of categories to the same content (Kassirjian 1977).

However, while Kassirjian (1977) warns that content analyses with reported reliabilities of less than 80% should be treated with suspicion, Reeves, Bednar, and Lawrence (1995) note in their content analysis study of bank performance that their three coder group reliabilities--i.e., .76 ( $p < .01$ ) for the first coder group, .82 ( $p < .01$ ) for the second coder group, and .74 ( $p < .01$ ) for the third coder group--are particularly strong for exploratory research (p. 60). Given the exploratory nature of the research discussed herein, therefore, there would appear to be some flexibility in the interpretation of reported reliabilities.

Because the categorization of a thought (i.e., cognitive response) requires an interpretation of the responses, each judge was instructed to read all of the thoughts

listed by a subject and all of the coding categories prior to coding any of the listed thoughts (Cacioppo and Petty 1981).

Each thought was coded initially as being either a “quality” thought (i.e., related to retail store quality) or a “non-quality” thought (i.e., having nothing to do with retail store quality). The two judges coded the thought content according to the categories provided as Appendix Q .

In order to more fully diagnose the listed thoughts, the coders also considered the subject-reported polarity or salience of each thought (Cacioppo and Petty 1981; Cacioppo, Harkins, and Petty 1981). “polarity” referring to the degree to which the response is in favor of or opposed to the ad or retail store. The most consistent finding in cognitive-response research has been that there is a relationship between the favorableness of the responses elicited by the referent and the evaluation of the referent, whether it be a communication (e.g., Brock 1967; Greenwald 1968; Wright 1974) or the self (Cacioppo, Glass, and Merluzzi 1979; Glass, Gottman, and Schmurak 1976; Lazarus 1966; Mirels and McPeck 1977). The polarity dimension for this research included: (1) “favorable thoughts,” i.e., statements that were positive toward or supportive of the advertising message or retail store; (2) “neutral/irrelevant thoughts,” i.e., statements that neither favored nor opposed the advertising message or retail store; and (3) “unfavorable thoughts,” i.e., statements that were negative toward or in opposition to the advertising message or retail store.

### **Main Experiment (Data Collection: Step 4)**

#### **Design**

The experimental design was a 2 x 2 x 2 between groups factorial design (see Figure 5). The experiment exposed the subjects to three dress advertisements, each of which was a different manipulation of typeface, white space, and balance. Each subject saw the ad with all three high quality cues (Appendix B), the ad with all three non-high-quality cues (Appendix I), and one ad selected at random from the remaining six ads (Appendices C-H). Each ad was seen by the following number of people:

	<u>Number of People Who Saw the Ad</u>
Ad1 (All three high-quality cues)	210
Ad2	34
Ad3	35
Ad4	35
Ad5	36
Ad6	36
Ad7	35
Ad8 (All three non-high-quality cues)	210

#### **Measures**

The effects of the experimental treatments on perceived quality of the retail stores were measured. Retail store quality was measured on a five-point scale of high

**Figure 5**  
**Research Design**

	High Quality Typeface		Low Quality Typeface	
	High Quality Whitespace	Low Quality Whitespace	High Quality Whitespace	Low Quality Whitespace
High Quality Visual	1 (111)	2 (112)	3 (121)	4 (122)
Low Quality Visual	5 (211)	6 (212)	7 (221)	8 (222)

quality, above-average quality, average quality, below-average quality, or low quality (Stokes 1985).

Attitude toward the ad was also measured since the link between consumers' attitude toward an ad and their attitude toward the brand being advertised (in this case a retail store) has been established (Edell and Burke 1986; Lutz 1985; MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch 1986; Petty and Cacioppo 1979b). Attitude toward the ad was measured by the mean of three seven-point scales anchored by the adjectives "good (1)-bad (7)," "like very much (1)-dislike very much (7)," and "pleasant (1)-unpleasant (7)" (Mitchell 1979, 1986). This scale was used for two measures in Mitchell's 1986 study, and the coefficient alphas of 0.92 and 0.89 indicated a high degree of internal consistency (p.16).

Lastly, product involvement was measured since involvement has emerged as an important factor in studying the effectiveness of advertising (Zaichkowsky 1994, 1986). As involvement increases, consumers increasingly focus their comprehension processes on interpreting the product-related information in the advertisements, thus producing more inferences about the advertised products (Celsi and Olson 1988). Involvement was measured using the Zaichkowsky (1994) scale of ten 7-point semantic differential scales (internal scale reliability over .9). The scale ranged from 1 for low involvement to 7 for high involvement.

### **Subjects**

The subjects were 210 female faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students at a New England public university and a New England private college. Also included in the sample were mothers of students at a New England private school. Each

subject was recruited by the researcher either in person or by telephone and/or email. In the case of graduate students, the researcher was given permission by the professors to come to their classes to recruit participants.

As an incentive to participate, each subject was offered the chance to win one of three \$25 lotteries. Each subject's signed informed consent form was given a number. The numbers were put on small pieces of paper, folded, and placed in a bowl. A disinterested party selected three numbers as the winners.

### **Procedure**

Each subject was given a packet that contained a participant consent form (Appendix R) and the experimental materials. Each subject read and signed the consent form, was told that the study was concerned with the analysis of advertisements, and was assured that her name would not be associated with her responses. All signed consent forms were collected by the researcher before proceeding further.

The subjects were then directed to the experimental materials: a product involvement measurement instrument, three subject response sheets (one for each ad), and three manila envelopes, each of which contained one print ad and was marked with the number 1, 2, or 3. To control for order effects, the ads were given to the subjects in different orders. The researcher gave verbal directions and the experiment proceeded as follows:

1. The product involvement questionnaire (Appendix S) was administered first. Each subject was then asked to wait until the signal was given before proceeding to the first ad.

2. When the signal was given, each subject removed the ad in envelope #1, looked at it, and then responded to the quality evaluation and advertisement questions on the response sheet (Appendix T). When finished, the ad was returned to its envelope and the subject waited for the signal to proceed to the next ad.
3. When all three ads had been evaluated, each subject filled out the age information questionnaire on the last page of the packet (Appendix U).
4. Upon completion, all materials were returned to the researcher.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to obtain initial indications of relationships between the dependent and independent variables. A statistically significant correlation ( $p < .01$ ) between a quality measure (i.e., overall store quality, merchandise quality, or sales assistance quality) and a design element (i.e., white space, typeface, or page balance) was considered initial support for the relevant hypothesis. However, the relative size of the correlation was also important. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 99), correlations around .30 have been considered satisfactory in the social sciences, and they suggest that correlations below this level are usually of little practical value even if they are statistically significant. They also suggest that correlations in the .30 to .50 range be considered of moderate magnitude, while correlations exceeding .50 indicate relatively strong relationships between two variables. It is this Ajzen and Fishbein convention that was used to judge the correlations of the research herein.

Regression analysis was used to test the four research hypotheses further. Broadly speaking, regression analysis is a method of analyzing the variability of a dependent variable by resorting to information available on one or more independent variables; an answer is sought to the question, "What are the expected changes in the dependent variables as a result of changes (observed or induced) in the independent variables?" (Pedhazur 1982). *Multiple* regression, the predominant method for studying the influence of quality cues on purchase decisions (Amirani and Baker 1995), allows examination of the individual and collective effects of a set of independent variables on a dependent variable. The dependent variables in this research were overall retail store quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality. The independent variables were white space, typeface, and page balance. Hypothesis support was indicated by an F-statistic that was statistically significant at the .05 level or better.

Effect size analysis was also used. Effect size is a term used to refer to the strength of a relationship or the magnitude of a difference between variables (Peterson, Albaum, and Beltrami 1985, p. 97). More precisely, Cohen (1988, pp. 9-10) refers to effect size as the degree to which the null hypothesis is false or "... the *degree* to which the phenomenon is present in the population". The null hypothesis always means that the effect size is zero (Cohen 1988, p. 10). The use of effect size analysis is consistent with Sawyer and Peter's (1983) position that the major results of any empirical study, whether the prime purpose is description, prediction, or explanation, are the descriptive statistics that indicate the nature and size of any obtained effects. Thus, effect size is a useful index of the magnitude of what an experiment has accomplished.

Unlike statistical significance, however, there is no simple numerical value or index that can be used when evaluating effect size—the result being that considerable research judgment is required (Peterson, Albaum, and Beltrami 1985). Experience has shown that in many areas of behavioral research, small effect sizes are the norm. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) have reported that effect sizes greater than 0.25 are very rare in behavioral research and Cohen (1977) has described effect sizes of 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 as, respectively, small, medium, and large—although he also makes the cautionary point that small, medium, and large effect size conventions will differ depending on the statistical test being used. For example, basing effect size on the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) results in the characterization of  $r = .10$  as a small effect size,  $r = .30$  as medium, and  $r = .50$  as large (Cohen 1988, p. 79-81). Since the Pearson coefficient was used in this research, it is this Cohen (1988) convention that was used to judge the effect sizes of the simple linear regression models.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Results were obtained from the dress pretest, the two typeface pretests, the thought-listing activity, and the main experiment.

### Dress Pretest

As a result of the subjects' completion of the twelve 7-point semantic differential scales for each of the five dresses in the pretest packet (Appendix K), the subject responses were tabulated and a mean value was assigned to each adjective pair for each dress (see Table 7). The mean value for each adjective pair was then plotted and the twelve individual points were linked with a line to form a visual image of each dress. The resulting five image profile maps were then visually compared with one another and the dress with the image profile that clustered most closely *overall* to the neutral point on the twelve scales was selected for the ads (see Appendix L, p. 1).

### Typeface Pretests

Using the same profile analysis that was used for the dress pretest, a profile map was constructed for each of the four typeface styles based on the data in Table 8. The four image profile maps were then visually compared with one another. The "Garamond" typeface emerged as the best overall choice for communicating a high quality image (see Appendix M, p. 2) but the results were inconclusive for the non-high-quality typeface.

As a result of the second typeface pretest, new image profile maps were constructed (see Appendix N), and the "CurtzMT" typeface emerged as the best

overall choice for communicating a non-high-quality image in the ads (Appendix N,

p. 2).

**Table 7**  
**Mean Values for Semantic Differential Scales: DRESS PRETEST**

(NOTE: Standard deviations are in parentheses below each mean value.)

<b>Semantic Differential Scale Adjective Pairs</b>	<b>Dress 1 (Sheath)</b>	<b>Dress 2 (Plaid)</b>	<b>Dress 3 (Scarf)</b>	<b>Dress 4 (Pleated)</b>	<b>Dress 5 (Print)</b>
Beautiful (1) - Ugly (7)	3.42 (1.03)	5.32 (1.64)	3.61 (1.26)	4.84 (1.42)	4.77 (1.69)
Charming (1) - Not Charming (7)	3.42 (1.34)	5.77 (1.38)	3.74 (1.46)	4.90 (1.62)	4.87 (1.52)
Expensive (1) - Cheap (7)	3.58 (1.31)	4.13 (1.41)	3.90 (1.09)	3.58 (1.41)	3.94 (1.29)
Stylish (1) - Not Stylish (7)	3.19 (1.45)	5.52 (1.55)	2.58 (1.09)	4.71 (1.62)	4.29 (1.77)
Elegant (1) -Not Elegant (7)	3.87 (1.68)	5.93 (1.43)	4.68 (1.58)	4.55 (1.77)	4.52 (1.67)
Traditional (1) - Not Traditional (7)	2.84 (1.53)	2.94 (1.90)	4.29 (1.74)	2.61 (1.54)	4.48 (1.50)
Ordinary (1) -Not Ordinary (7)	3.32 (1.81)	2.97 (1.83)	3.67 (1.65)	2.90 (1.72)	4.35 (1.74)
Rich (1) - Not Rich (7)	3.94 (1.24)	4.65 (1.36)	4.13 (1.12)	3.90 (1.68)	3.90 (1.47)
Upper Class (1) - Lower Class (7)	4.45 (1.21)	4.06 (1.21)	4.68 (0.98)	4.84 (1.19)	4.42 (1.06)
High Quality (1) - Low Quality (7)	3.68 (1.22)	3.94 (1.44)	3.90 (0.98)	3.61 (1.50)	3.71 (1.27)
Young (1) - Old (7)	4.13 (1.41)	2.55 (1.23)	5.39 (1.36)	2.48 (1.34)	3.74 (1.46)
Exciting (1) - Boring (7)	4.74 (1.57)	5.68 (1.42)	4.52 (1.31)	5.71 (1.24)	4.52 (1.36)

**Table 8**  
**Mean Values for Semantic Differential Scales: TYPEFACE PRETESTS**

(NOTE: Standard deviations are in parentheses below the mean values.)

Semantic Differential Scale Adjective Pairs	#1 Stencil	#2 Garamond	#3 Bauhaus	#4 Courier	#5 Curtz-MT	#6 Jester
Formal (1) - Casual (7)	5.00 (2.19)	3.23 (1.96)	5.35 (1.98)	3.69 (1.98)	6.58 (0.90)	6.17 (1.59)
Exciting (1) - Not Exciting (7)	4.87 (1.94)	4.32 (1.51)	4.19 (2.09)	5.07 (1.67)	3.25 (1.91)	4.42 (1.88)
Stylish (1) - Not Stylish (7)	4.55 (2.06)	3.33 (1.54)	4.10 (2.26)	4.38 (2.11)	3.50 (2.02)	3.83 (1.53)
Traditional (1) - Not Traditional (7)	4.68 (2.02)	2.48 (1.52)	5.42 (1.77)	2.83 (1.87)	6.58 (0.67)	5.08 (1.68)
Young (1) - Old (7)	3.90 (1.72)	4.06 (1.29)	3.23 (1.73)	4.48 (1.15)	2.08 (1.31)	2.67 (1.37)
Beautiful (1) - Ugly (7)	4.71 (1.47)	3.55 (1.26)	4.58 (1.59)	4.07 (1.49)	3.25 (1.66)	3.92 (1.31)
Gentle (1) - Rough (7)	5.23 (1.80)	2.97 (1.18)	4.97 (1.49)	2.93 (1.65)	3.50 (1.88)	4.08 (1.62)
High Quality (1) - Low Quality (7)	4.26 (1.46)	2.94 (1.18)	4.29 (1.57)	3.34 (1.40)	4.08 (1.83)	3.83 (1.53)
Legible (1) - Not Legible (7)	3.06 (1.86)	2.10 (1.37)	4.00 (1.86)	1.79 (1.11)	4.25 (1.82)	2.50 (1.57)
Rich (1) - Poor (7)	4.26 (1.46)	3.32 (1.01)	4.35 (1.02)	3.52 (1.27)	4.42 (1.35)	3.58 (1.10)
Downscale (1) - Upscale (7)	3.52 (1.77)	4.45 (1.06)	3.52 (1.31)	4.41 (1.32)	4.67 (1.87)	4.08 (1.57)
Elegant (1) - Not Elegant (7)	5.03 (2.07)	3.77 (1.65)	4.81 (1.76)	4.07 (2.00)	5.50 (1.78)	4.42 (1.68)
Humorous (1) - Not Humorous (7)	5.23 (1.78)	5.26 (1.48)	4.19 (2.10)	5.34 (1.65)	3.00 (2.22)	2.75 (1.66)
Lower Class (1) - Upper Class (7)	3.94 (1.41)	4.94 (0.93)	3.90 (0.99)	4.41 (1.27)	4.17 (1.7)	3.92 (1.08)
Loud (1) - Quiet (7)	2.58 (2.03)	5.39 (1.09)	2.71 (1.66)	5.48 (1.15)	4.25 (1.54)	4.08 (1.16)
Neutral (1) - Not Neutral (7)	4.84 (1.81)	3.29 (1.42)	4.77 (1.42)	3.18 (1.63)	5.00 (1.91)	4.50 (1.45)
Expensive (1) - Cheap (7)	3.48 (1.81)	4.94 (1.00)	3.90 (1.59)	4.59 (1.27)	3.42 (1.51)	3.92 (1.08)

### **Thought-Listing Pretest**

A summary of the thought-listing pretest data is included in Table 9. It was determined from this data that the created ads were communicating the high quality and non-high-quality messages needed for the main experiment. More specifically:

1. The ad with all three high quality design cues (Appendix B), evoked a higher percentage of high quality and above-average quality ratings for overall store quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality than did the ad with all three non-high-quality design cues (Appendix I).
2. The ad with all three non-high-quality design cues (Appendix I) evoked a higher percentage of below-average quality and low-quality ratings for overall store quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality than the ad with all three high quality design cues (Appendix B).
3. The results for the other six ads (Appendices C-H), while mixed, also indicated an overall trend of evoking a greater percentage of high quality and above-average quality ratings for the ads with more of the high quality design cues than those ads with more of the non-high-quality design cues.

It must be noted, however, that there was a smaller difference than was expected between Ad1 (all three high quality cues) and Ad8 (all three non-high quality cues) on overall store quality, i.e., 58.1% and 51.7%, respectively. Also, the “lower quality” ads (Ads 2-7) received many more high quality and above-average quality evaluations than were expected and these evaluations did not occur in the expected pattern. Specifically, it was expected that the high quality and above-average quality ratings would decline in a

**Table 9**  
**Summary of Thought-Listing Pretest Data**  
**(Page 1 of 2)**

Ad #1 (Appendix B) N = 31 High quality thoughts: 47% Thoughts about dress and model: 28%			Ad #2 (Appendix C) N = 15 High quality thoughts: 52% Thoughts about dress and model: 31%		
High quality white space High quality typeface Formal balance			High quality white space High quality typeface Informal balance		
Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality			Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality		
Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality	Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality
Overall store quality	58.1%	16.0%	Overall store quality	46.6%	33.3%
Merchandise quality	64.6%	12.9%	Merchandise quality	46.7%	26.7%
Sales assistance quality	58.1%	16.3%	Sales assistant quality	50.0%	35.7%
Ad #3 (Appendix D) N = 13 High quality thoughts: 48% Thoughts about dress and model: 47%			Ad #4 (Appendix E) N = 10 High quality thoughts: 52% Thoughts about dress and model: 18%		
High quality white space Non-high-quality typeface Formal balance			High quality white space Non-high-quality typeface Informal balance		
Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality			Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality		
Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality	Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality
Overall store quality	53.9%	0%	Overall store quality	50.0%	10.0%
Merchandise quality	61.5%	0%	Merchandise quality	50.0%	0%
Sales assistance quality	45.5%	9.1%	Sales assistance quality	40.0%	10.0%

**Table 9**  
**Summary of Thought-Listing Pretest Data**  
**(Page 2 of 2)**

<b>Ad #5      Non-high quality white space</b> <b>(Appendix F)    High quality typeface</b> <b>                  Formal balance</b>  <b>N = 11</b> High quality thoughts: 47% Thoughts about dress and model: 13%  Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality			<b>Ad #6      Non-high- quality white space</b> <b>(Appendix G)    High quality typeface</b> <b>                  Informal balance</b>  <b>N = 10</b> High quality thoughts: 13.2% Thoughts about dress and model: 13%  Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality		
Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality	Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality
Overall store quality	54.5%	18.2%	Overall store quality	10.0%	50.0%
Merchandise quality	36.4%	9.0%	Merchandise quality	10.0%	50.0%
Sales assistance quality	30.0%	20.0%	Sales assistance quality	10.0%	50.0%

<b>Ad #7      Non-high quality white space</b> <b>(Appendix H)    Non-high-quality typeface</b> <b>                  Formal balance</b>  <b>N = 10</b> High quality thoughts: 27.6% Thoughts about dress and model: 25%  Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality			<b>Ad #8      Non-high quality white space</b> <b>(Appendix I)    Non-high-quality typeface</b> <b>                  Informal balance</b>  <b>N = 31</b> High quality thoughts: 40.5% Thoughts about dress and model: 24%  Percent of Sample Indicating These Levels of Quality		
Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality	Quality Dimension	High Quality and Above-Average Quality	Below-Average and Low Quality
Overall store quality	50.0%	20.0%	Overall store quality	51.7%	27.6%
Merchandise quality	50.0%	20.0%	Merchandise quality	50.0%	25.0%
Sales assistance quality	37.5%	25.0%	Sales assistance quality	30.7%	34.6%

more linear pattern from Ad1 to Ad8. This did not happen. Instead, the quality ratings occurred in an irregular pattern. For example:

1. Ad3 (one non-high quality cue) had a much lower incidence of below-average and low quality ratings than for *both* Ad1 (all three high quality cues) and Ad8 (all three non-high quality cues).
2. Ad2 (two high quality cues) received much higher below-average and low quality ratings than did Ad6 (also with two high quality cues).

The irregular pattern may have occurred because the thought-listing pretest cells ranged from 10-31 subjects. Ads 2-7, in particular, were evaluated by fifteen people or less, resulting in quality evaluations that may have been artificially skewed. A way to counter this in the future, although difficult to implement, would be a totally within-subject design with a larger sample.

### **The Main Experiment**

To assess whether the manipulation of white space, typeface, and page balance had an impact on inferences of retail store quality, descriptive statistics were first analyzed (Table 10). The data for the quality measures was collected from the answers to the following three questions:

1. What kind of overall quality would you expect in this store?
2. What kind of merchandise would you expect in this store?
3. What kind of sales assistance would you expect in this store?

The answers were coded on a five-point scale from (1) for high quality to (5) for low quality. The coding scheme for the advertising design cues assigned a "1" to the ad with

the high quality cue and a "0" to the ad *without* the high quality design cue.

The data for product involvement was the mean of ten semantic differential scales ranging from (1) for low involvement to (7) for high involvement. Attitude toward the ad was measured as the mean of 7-point Likert scales for three adjective pairs: "good-bad," "like very much-dislike very much," and "pleasant-unpleasant," with (1) representing the most positive attitude and (7) representing the most negative attitude.

The hypotheses were tested using correlation analysis and both simple linear and multiple regression analysis where white space, typeface, and page balance were the independent variables either singly or in combination (i.e., all three) and overall store quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality were the dependent variables. Effect size analysis was also used.

The results of all analyses are presented in Tables 10-19.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics for the experiment are presented in Table 10. The following observations were made.

1. Internal to each advertisement, the mean values for the three quality measures were virtually identical. This indicated that the subjects had difficulty in distinguishing between the measures.
2. Ad1 (all three high quality cues) elicited higher quality ratings than Ad8 (all three non-high quality cues). However, Ad1 also had a greater variability of responses

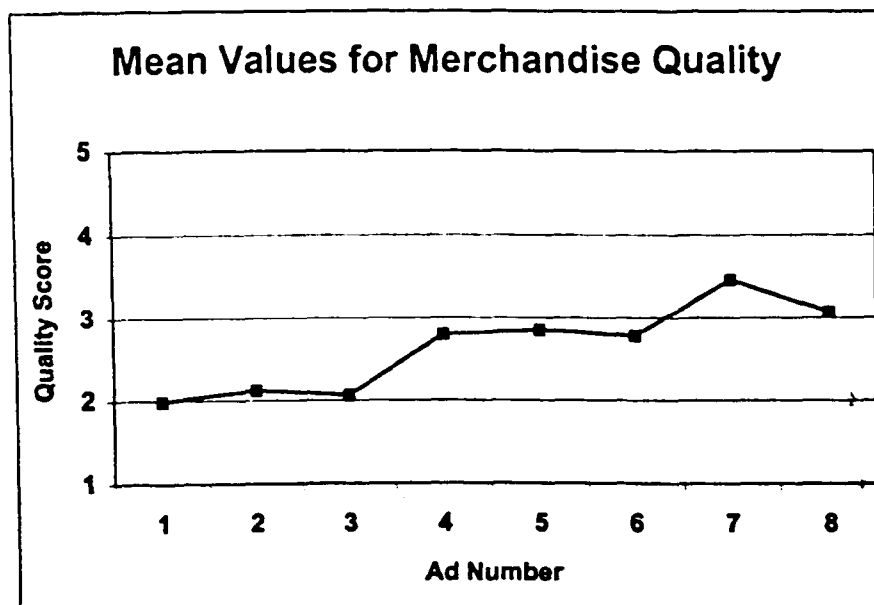
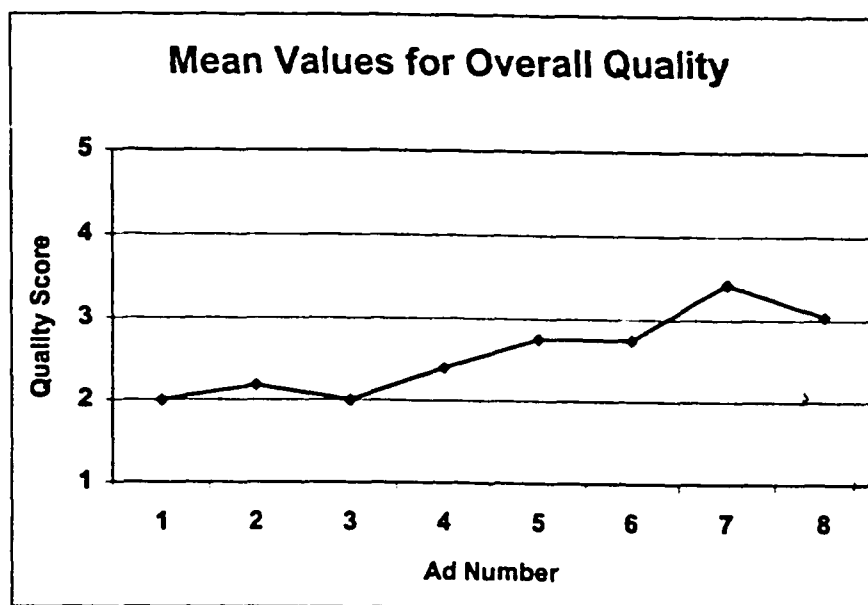
**Table 10**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Measures**

Measure		Ad #1	Ad #2	Ad #3	Ad #4	Ad #5	Ad #6	Ad #7	Ad #8
		High quality white space ***** High quality typeface ***** Formal balance	High quality white space ***** High quality typeface ***** Informal balance	High quality white space ***** Non-high Q typeface ***** Formal balance	High quality white space ***** Non-high Q typeface ***** Informal balance	Non-high Q white space ***** High quality typeface ***** Formal balance	Non-high Q white space ***** High quality typeface ***** Informal balance	Non-high Q white space ***** Non-high Q typeface ***** Formal balance	Non-high Q white space ***** Non-high Q typeface ***** Formal balance
<b>Overall Quality</b>	Mean*	2.00	2.18	2.00	2.40	2.76	2.75	3.43	3.04
	S. D.(CV)**	.84 (41.79)	.52 (23.93)	.80 (40.22)	.91 (38.08)	.96 (34.55)	1.00 (36.23)	.92 (26.74)	1.06 (34.81)
	N	210	34	35	35	34	36	35	210
<b>Merchandise Quality</b>	Mean*	1.99	2.12	2.06	2.38	2.85	2.78	3.46	3.07
	S. D. (CV)**	.81 (40.92)	.64 (30.24)	.83 (40.19)	.92 (38.69)	.96 (33.57)	1.05 (37.62)	.95 (27.48)	1.03 (33.46)
	N	209	34	36	34	34	36	35	209
<b>Sales Quality</b>	Mean*	2.00	2.06	1.97	2.44	2.79	2.97	3.43	3.12
	S. D.(CV)	.89 (44.43)	.70 (34.19)	.84 (42.83)	.99 (40.58)	1.07 (38.18)	1.08 (36.40)	1.04 (30.25)	1.06 (33.85)
	N	209	33	36	34	34	36	35	209
<b>Quality Mean</b>	Mean*	2.00	2.14	2.02	2.42	2.8	2.83	3.41	3.07
	S. D.(CV) **	.81 (40.33)	.65 (30.15)	.79 (39.07)	.88 (36.29)	.95 (33.89)	.99 (34.97)	.93 (27.37)	.99 (32.33)
	N	210	33	36	34	34	36	35	210
<b>Attitude Toward the Ad</b>	Mean***	3.04	2.95	3.05	3.41	4.5	4.08	5.08	4.63
	S. D. **	1.28 (42.0)	1.12 (38.03)	1.11 (36.53)	1.44 (42.22)	1.25 (27.74)	1.45 (35.53)	1.15 (22.59)	1.45 (31.38)
	N	209	33	36	36	34	36	35	210
<b>Involvement</b>	Mean = 4.79 S. D.** = 1.18 (24.74) N = 210	<b>* Quality Rating Scale:</b> 1 = High quality 2 = Above average quality 3 = Average quality 4 = Below average quality 5 = Low quality				<b>*** Aad Rating Scale:</b> 1 = Most positive attitude 7 = Most negative attitude			
	1 = Low involvement 7 = High involvement								
**S. D. = Standard deviation; CV = Coefficient of Variation									

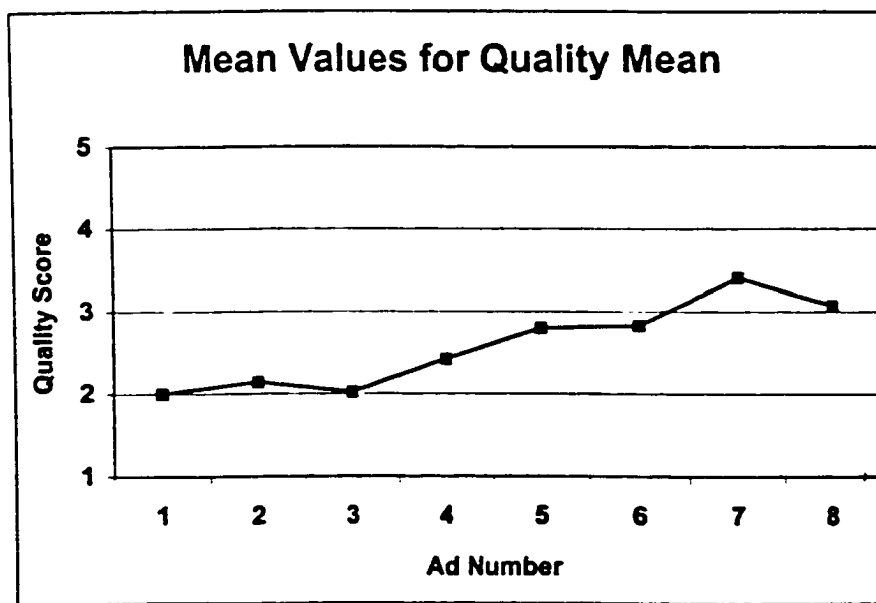
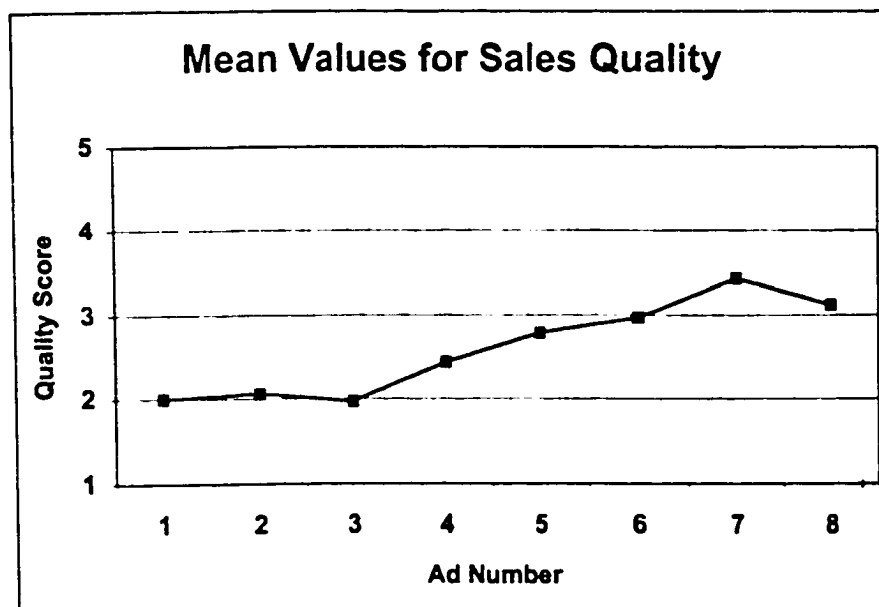
on all quality measures than did Ad8. It was concluded that Ad8 evoked more consistent evaluations than Ad1.

3. There was a general pattern of lower quality evaluations as the subjects moved from Ad1 to Ad8. The pattern was not a straight line, however (Figure 6). This may have been a result of the differing sample sizes, i.e., Ads1 and 8 were both seen by 210 subjects while Ads2 through 7 were only seen by 34-36 subjects each. The small sample sizes may have skewed the results in one direction or the other but it still should be noted that any skewness did not eclipse the general pattern of quality evaluations.
4. Rank ordering the ads on the quality measures (Table 11) reinforced the pattern of lower quality evaluations as the subjects moved from Ad1 to Ad8, also revealing that:
  - a. Ad7 (two non-high quality cues) elicited lower quality ratings than did Ad8 (three non-high quality cues) on all quality measures. The only difference between the two ads was page balance. Ad7 also had much lower response variabilities than did Ad8, indicating a greater consistency of lower quality inferences from Ad7. Also of interest was that Ad7 had the lowest response variability on all quality measures across all eight ads for overall store quality.

**Figure 6**  
**Mean Values for Quality Measures: Visual Presentation**  
(Page 1 of 2)



**Figure 6**  
**Mean Values for Quality Measures: Visual Presentation**  
(Page 2 of 2)



**Table 11**  
**Rank Ordering of the Advertisements by Quality Measure**

Quality Measure	Ad Numbers							
	Ad1	Ad2	Ad3	Ad4	Ad5	Ad6	Ad7	Ad8
Overall store quality	1	3	1	4	6	5	8	7
Merchandise quality	1	3	2	4	6	5	8	7
Sales Assistance Quality	2	3	1	4	5	6	8	7
Quality Mean	1	3	2	4	5	6	8	7

- b. Ad1 (all high quality cues) and Ad3 (two high quality cues) alternated as the ad that elicited the highest quality rankings on all quality measures except for overall store quality where they tied for first place. Interestingly, even though the samples differed significantly in size for each of these two ads, the response variabilities were very close—but they were also much higher than the response variabilities of the two ads that elicited the lowest quality ratings.
- c. Ads 2, 4, 7, and 8 elicited the same individual internal ratings on all quality measures and displayed significantly lower response variabilities than the two ads that elicited the highest quality ratings (Ads 1 and 3). This indicated a consistency of subject responses.
- d. With the exception of Ad7 where no one gave a rating of less than 2 (for above-average quality), all ads evoked quality ratings that ran the gamut from 1 (high quality) to 5 (low quality). See Table 12. This was probably indicative of differing tastes and the subtlety of cue effects.

**Table 12**  
**Additional Descriptive Statistics for the Quality Measures and Aad**

<b>Quality Measure and Statistic</b>	<b>Ad1</b>	<b>Ad2</b>	<b>Ad3</b>	<b>Ad4</b>	<b>Ad5</b>	<b>Ad6</b>	<b>Ad7</b>	<b>Ad8</b>
<b>Overall Quality *</b>								
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Maximum	5	3	4	5	4	5	5	5
Median	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	3
<b>Merchandise Quality *</b>								
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Maximum	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5
Median	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	3
<b>Sales Assistance Quality *</b>								
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5
Median	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	3
<b>Aad **</b>								
Minimum	1	1	1	0	2	1	7	1
Maximum	7	5.67	6	7	6.33	7	5.33	7
Median	3	3	3	3.5	4.50	4	3	4.67
<p><b>* Quality Measure Codes:</b>  1 = High quality  2 = Above-average quality  3 = Average quality  4 = Below-average quality  5 = Low quality</p> <p><b>** Aad Codes:</b>  1 = Most positive attitude  7 = Most negative attitude</p>								

5. One disappointing finding was that none of the mean values elicited from the “lower quality” ads fell between 4 (below-average quality) and 5 (low quality). A

mean of 5.00 could not, of course, reasonably be expected to occur since it would have required a unanimity of evaluation by the subjects (just as a mean value of 1.00 could not be expected for the same reason). The number of lower quality ratings apparently could not mathematically offset the number of higher quality ratings. An interesting caveat, however, is the general pattern of *increasing* median values as the subjects moved from Ad1 to Ad8.

- Ads 1 - 4 ..... Median = 2
- Ads 5, 6, 8 ..... Median = 3
- Ad7 ..... Median = 4

This indicated, overall, that the subjects were detecting the cue manipulations.

6. Based on the statistics for Aad, the following was observed.
  - a. Overall, there was a pattern of liking the ads less as the subjects moved from Ad1 (all high quality cues) to Ad8 (all non-high quality cues).
  - b. The subjects liked Ad2 (two high quality cues) better than Ad1 (all high quality cues). The only difference between the two ads was page balance, with Ad2 having informal balance. This preference may be explained by the subjects reacting more positively to the more active and dynamic look of an off-center layout.
  - c. The subjects liked Ad7 the least. This is consistent with Ad7 eliciting the lowest quality ratings based on mean values and the “lowest quality” median value (4).

- d. Ad7 had the lowest response variability (22.59) for Aad, indicating a higher clustering of responses around the mean.

### **Summary**

Although the results were mixed, it was clear that the subjects did perceive differences in the research advertisements. Ad1 (all high quality cues) elicited “above-average quality” ratings across all quality measures even though there was high response variability. Ad1 also ranked #1 on the quality mean measure. Rather than Ad8 (all non-high quality cues) evoking the lowest quality ratings of all the ads, as was hypothesized, Ad7 evoked such ratings—and at a much lower response variability than either Ad1 or Ad8. In general, the remaining ads elicited quality ratings in the expected pattern of high quality to low quality.

It was also clear from the data, however, that the subjects were not able to distinguish between the quality measurements since, internal to each ad, the ratings assigned to each of the three measurements were virtually identical.

### **Correlation Analysis**

The correlations for the dependent and independent variables as well as the attitude toward the ad (Aad) and involvement measures are presented in Table 13. The following observations were made.

1. Reinforcing what was first detected in the descriptive statistics, the subjects were apparently unable to distinguish between the three quality measures. Overall store

**Table 13**  
**Pearson Correlations**

(NOTE. Order of data presentation: Correlation coefficient-Probability-Sample size)

	Overall Quality	Merchandise Quality	Sales Assistance Q	Quality Mean	White Space	Typeface	Page Balance	Aad Mean	Involvement Mean
Overall Quality									
Merchandise Quality	.94 < .001 (627)								
Sales Assistance Q	.86 < .001 (626)	.87 < .001 (626)							
Quality Mean	.97 < .001 (629)	.97 < .001 (626)	.95 < .001 (626)						
White Space	-.44 < .001 (626)	-.46 < .001 (626)	-.46 < .001 (629)	-.47 < .001 (629)					
Typeface	-.36 < .001 (626)	-.38 < .001 (626)	-.36 < .001 (626)	-.38 < .001 (629)	.77 < .001 (629)				
Page Balance	-.26 < .001 (629)	-.27 < .001 (626)	-.27 < .001 (626)	-.28 < .001 (629)	.66 < .001 (629)	.66 < .001 (629)			
Aad Mean	.74 < .001 (628)	.76 < .001 (625)	.72 < .001 (625)	.76 < .001 (628)	-.47 < .001 (628)	-.39 < .001 (628)	-.27 < .001 (628)		
Involvement Mean	-.13 .06 (210)	-.11 .11 (209)	.09 .20 (209)	-.12 .07 (210)	.00 > .99 (210)	.00 > .99 (210)	-.00 < .001 (210)	-.22 < .001 (209)	

quality, merchandise quality, and sales assistance quality were highly correlated (Table 14). These correlations far exceeded the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention of .50 for relatively strong relationships.

**Table 14**  
**Quality Measure Intercorrelations**

(Note. Order of data presentation: Correlation–Probability)

	Overall Store Quality	Merchandise Quality	Sales Assistance Quality	Quality Mean
Overall Store Quality				
Merchandise Quality	.94 < .001			
Sales Assistance Quality	.86 < .001	.87 < .001		
Quality Mean	.97 < .001	.95 < .001	.95 < .001	

Given these correlations and the even higher correlations between the individual quality measures and the quality mean, it was decided to collapse the three individual quality measures into a single dependent variable: quality mean. This resulted in the following four revised hypotheses for testing.

***Hypothesis 1.*** Greater amounts of white space in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

***Hypothesis 2.*** The use of “high quality” typeface in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

***Hypothesis 3.*** The use of formal balance in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

**Hypothesis 4.** The greater the number of “high quality” design cues in a retail store newspaper ad, the more positive will be the perceived quality evaluation of the store as measured by the quality mean.

2. Looking at the correlations between the quality mean and the dependent variables:
  - a. The strongest correlation ( $r = -.47, p < .001$ ) was with white space. This was very close to the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention of .50 for a relatively strong relationship between two variables.
  - b. According to the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention, typeface ( $r = -.38, p < .001$ ) had a moderately strong relationship with the quality mean and page balance ( $r = -.28, p < .001$ ) was very close to the .30 lower limit for a relationship of moderate magnitude.
  - c. The strength order of these correlations strongly suggested that white space would have the strongest impact on inferences of retail store quality with page balance having the least.
3. The independent variables were also very strongly correlated (Table 15). This multicollinearity rendered any regression analyses problematic—i.e., the estimated

**Table 15**  
**Independent Variable Correlations**

	White Space	Balance	Typeface
White Space			
Page Balance	.66 $p < .001$		
Typeface	.77 $p < .001$	.66 $p < .001$	

regression coefficients would be biased and unstable—so that it would be difficult to sort out the individual effects of the independent variables. Unfortunately, the remedial measures for multicollinearity were not feasible in this research. First, dropping the collinear variables would have resulted in the elimination of all independent variables. Second, selecting only one independent variable to drop would have raised the dual problems of which independent variable to drop and—assuming that a choice could be made—omitted variable bias, a more serious problem than multicollinearity. Third, factor analysis was not an option because the data collection for this research was not designed with factor analysis in mind. Thus, the regression analyses were run as planned.

4. Aad was also strongly correlated with all three quality measures and the quality mean (Table 16). This supported the commonly held belief that “liking” an ad, as measured by Aad, may have a positive impact on the advertised product and the ad’s sponsor.

**Table 16**  
**Aad and Quality Measure Correlations**

	Overall Store Quality	Merchandise Quality	SalesAssistance Quality	Quality Mean
Aad	.74 p < .001	.76 p < .001	.72 p < .001	.76 p < .001

3. Aad had moderately strong correlations with white space ( $r = -.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and typeface ( $r = -.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Page balance was very close ( $r = -.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) to the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention of .30 for satisfactory relationships

between two variables. This suggested that a positive Aad was most strongly linked to the amount of white space in the ads.

4. Involvement was very weakly correlated with Aad, the three quality measures, the quality mean, and the design cues. All correlations fell well below the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention of .30 for satisfactory relationships between two variables. Thus, these correlations were of little practical value.

### **Regression Analysis**

Hypothesis testing began with the running of three linear regressions (Table 17) and one multiple regression (Table 18). A cautionary note, however: The multicollinearity between the independent variables made it difficult to interpret the regression statistics with complete confidence.

### **White Space and Quality Inferences**

*Hypothesis 1.* Greater amounts of white space in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

The adjusted R-squared for white space and the quality mean was .217 ( $F = 52.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that white space accounted for approximately 22% of the variation in the quality mean (Table 17). The large effect size ( $r = .47$ ) indicated a strong relationship between white space and inferences of retail store quality.

Hypothesis 1 was supported. Thus, consumers may tend to infer a higher quality store from an ad with a high percentage of white space.

**Table 17**  
**Linear Regression Analyses**

\*\*\*\*\*

**White Space and the Quality Mean (N = 628)**

	Coefficient	t	Probability	
C	1.02	61.46	< .001	
White space	-.23	-13.21	< .001	
<b>Model 1 error</b>	R	.47	SE	.91
	R-squared	.218	F	174.41
	Adjusted R-squared	.217	Probability	< .001
			Effect size	.47

**Typeface and the Quality Mean (N = 628)**

	Coefficient	t	Probability	
C	2.90	56.98	< .001	
Typeface	-.77	-10.12	< .001	
<b>Model 1 error</b>	R	.38	SE	.95
	R-squared	.141	F	102.48
	Adjusted R-squared	.139	Probability	< .001
			Effect size	.38

**Page Balance and the Quality Mean (N = 628)**

	Coefficient	t	Probability	
C	2.78	55.21	< .001	
Page balance	-.58	-7.16	< .001	
<b>Model 1 error</b>	R	.28	SE	.99
	R-squared	.076	F	51.32
	Adjusted R-squared	.074	Probability	< .001
			Effect size	.28

constant. This further emphasized the power of high quality white space on consumer

### **Typeface and Quality Inferences**

***Hypothesis 2.*** The use of “high quality” typeface in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

The adjusted R-squared for typeface and the quality mean was .139 ( $F = 103.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that typeface accounted for approximately 14% of the variation in the quality mean (Table 17). The effect size ( $r = .38$ ) fell in between the Cohen (1988) convention of  $r = .30$  for a medium effect size and  $r = .50$  for a large effect size.

Hypothesis 2 was supported, although not as strongly as Hypothesis 1. Thus, it would seem that consumer inferences of retail store quality are affected by the typeface in an ad.

### **Page Balance and Quality Inferences**

***Hypothesis 3.*** The use of formal balance in a retail store newspaper ad will have a positive effect upon perceived retail store quality as measured by the quality mean.

The adjusted R-squared for page balance and the quality mean was .074 ( $F = 175.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that page balance accounted for only 8% of the variation in the quality mean (Table 17). The effect size ( $r = .28$ ) fell just below the Cohen (1988) convention of  $r = .30$  for a medium effect size.

Hypothesis 3 received some support. Thus, consumer inferences of retail store quality may be affected to some extent by page balance.

**White Space, Typeface, Page Balance, and Quality Inferences**

*Hypothesis 4.* The greater the number of “high quality” design cues in a retail store newspaper ad, the more positive will be the perceived quality evaluation of the store as measured by the quality mean.

The adjusted R-squared for this regression (Table 18) was .219 (F = 59.73,  $p < .001$ ), very close to the adjusted R-squared for white space alone (.217, F = 52.07,  $p < .001$ ). The stepwise regression (also in Table 18)—set at  $p < .05$ —resulted in: (1) the removal of all variables except white space; and (2) an adjusted R-squared of .218 (F = 175.63,  $p < .001$ ), a number that was almost identical to the results of the linear

**Table 18  
Multiple Regression and Stepwise Regression Results**

White Space, Typeface, and Page Balance *				Stepwise Regression *			
N = 629				N = 629			
	Coeff.	t	Prob.		Coeff.	t	Prob.
C	2.99	59.28	< .001	C	2.99	61.47	< .001
W. S.	- .96	- 8.01	< .001	W. S.	-.97	-13.25	< .001
T	- .15	- 1.25	< .001	T	Elim-	inated	*****
B	.17	1.63	< .001	B	Elim-	inated	*****
* W. S. = White Space T = Typeface B = Page Balance *****				* W. S. = White Space T = Typeface B = Page Balance *****			
<b>Model 1 error</b> R .47 R-squared .223 Adjusted R-squared .219 SE .91 F 59.73 Probability < .001				<b>Model 1 error</b> R .47 R-squared .219 Adjusted R-squared .218 SE .91 F 175.63 Probability < .001			

regression that tested the effect of white space alone.

On the basis of this test, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. It was concluded that when typeface and page balance are combined with white space, white space overwhelms the effects of the other two variables.

### **Multiple Regression Analyses Holding White Space Constant**

In order to further explore what seemed to be the dominant effect of white space on the inferences of retail store quality, two additional multiple regression analyses were run: one holding high quality white space constant (4 ads) and one holding non-high-quality white space constant (4 ads). The results of these analyses are presented in Table 19.

#### **Quality Mean: High Quality White Space Held Constant**

The adjusted R-squared was only .007 ( $F = 2.037$ ,  $p = .13$ ), indicating typeface and page balance were not statistically significant when high quality white space was held constant. This further emphasized the power of high quality white space on consumer inferences of retail store quality.

#### **Quality Mean: Non-High-Quality White Space Held Constant**

The adjusted R-squared was only .01 ( $F = 3.21$ ,  $p = .04$ ), indicating that typeface and font together *were* statistically significant in the presence of non-high-quality white space. It was concluded, therefore, that typeface and page balance took on more importance when the amount of white space in the ads was reduced.

**Table 19**  
**Quality Mean: Effect of White Space Held Constant**

<b>High Quality White Space Held Constant</b> N = 314				<b>Non-High-Quality White Space</b> <b>Held Constant</b> N = 314			
	Coeff.	t	Prob.		Coeff.	t	Prob.
C	2.22	23.26	< .001	C	3.03	48.18	< .001
T *	-.07	-.93	.66	T *	-.20	- 1.14	.25
B **	-.14	-.44	.36	B **	.37	2.10	.04
* T = Typeface ** B = Page Balance *****				* T = Typeface ** B = Page Balance *****			
<b>Model 1 error</b>				<b>Model 1 error</b>			
R	.11			R	.14		
R-squared	.013			R-squared	.02		
Adjusted R-squared	.007			Adjusted R-squared	.01		
SE	.80			SE	.98		
F	2.04			F	3.21		
Probability	.13			Probability	.04		
Effect Size	.11			Effect size	.14		

**Conclusion: Holding White Space Constant**

Based on the described analyses, it was concluded that the presence of high quality white space overwhelmed the impact of typeface and page balance on the inferences of retail store quality. In the presence of non-high-quality white space, however, typeface and page balance took on somewhat more importance in the inferences of retail store quality.

**Discussion of Analysis Results**

The descriptive statistics revealed that the subjects seemed to have difficulty in

distinguishing between the quality measures (Table 10). This was reinforced by the correlation analysis (Table 13) in which all three quality measures were highly correlated ( $p < .001$ ) at levels that far exceeded the Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) convention of .50 for relatively strong relationships. As a result, it was decided to collapse the three individual quality measures into a single dependent variable: quality mean. The four original hypotheses for testing were thus revised to reflect the quality mean as the measure for perceived retail store quality.

There was a general pattern, although not linear (see Figure 6 and Table 11), of lower quality evaluations as the subjects moved from Ad1 (all three high quality cues) to Ad8 (all three non-high-quality cues), with Ad8 evoking more consistent evaluations than Ad1. Interestingly, Ad7 (two non-high-quality cues) elicited lower quality ratings than did Ad8 on all quality measures and with a much greater consistency of lower quality inferences than Ad8. Ad7 also had the highest consistency of responses across all eight ads while Ad1 had the lowest.

With the exception of Ad7 where no one gave a quality rating of less than 2 (for above-average quality), all ads evoked quality ratings that ran the gamut from 1 (high quality) to 5 (low quality). This was probably reflective of differing tastes and the subtlety of cue effects. Although none of the "lower quality" ads elicited mean values between 4 (below-average quality) and 5 (low quality), the general pattern of *increasing* median values as the subjects moved from Ad1 to Ad8 indicated, overall, that the subjects were detecting the cue manipulations.

The correlation analyses (Table 13) revealed that, in addition to the quality

measures being highly correlated, the independent variables were also very strongly correlated. This multicollinearity rendered any regression analyses problematic. However, because none of the remedial measures for multicollinearity were feasible in this research due to the data collection design, linear and multiple regressions were used to test the hypotheses. It was believed that even though the regression results would have to be considered *with caution*, they would be helpful as general indicators of design cue effects on perceived retail store quality.

As a result of the three linear regressions, Hypothesis 1 (white space) was supported, Hypothesis 2 was supported although not as strongly, and Hypothesis 3 (page balance) received only some support. It was concluded, therefore, that consumer inferences of retail store quality were influenced most by white space and least by page balance.

On the basis of the multiple and stepwise regressions, Hypothesis 4 (white space, typeface, and page balance) was not supported. It was concluded that when typeface and page balance are combined with white space, white space overwhelms the effects of the other two variables.

In order to further explore what seemed to be the dominant effect of white space on the inferences of retail store quality, two additional multiple regressions were run holding white space constant. The results confirmed the power of white space. When high quality white space was held constant, the effects of typeface and page balance were both negligible and not statistically significant. When non-high-quality white space was held constant, typeface and page balanced took on somewhat more, and statistically

significant, importance.

### Other Analyses

It was believed at the outset of this research that attitude toward the ad and/or product involvement might have an impact on the subjects' inferences of retail store quality since both constructs have been linked to the processing of advertising (Edell and Burke 1986; Celsi and Olson 1988; Lutz 1985; MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch; Mitchell 1986, 1979; Petty and Cacioppo 1979b; Zaichowsky 1994, 1986). Attitude toward the ad was measured during the main experiment by the mean of three seven-point scales anchored by the adjectives "good-bad," "like very much-dislike very much," and "pleasant-unpleasant" (Mitchell 1986). Product involvement was measured using the mean of the Zaichowsky (1994) scale of ten 7-point semantic differential scales.

#### Attitude Toward the Ad (Aad)

Based on the statistics for Aad (Table 20), there was an overall pattern of liking the ads *less* as the subjects moved from Ad1 to Ad8. An interesting twist, however, was that the subjects liked Ad2 (two high quality cues) better than Ad1. The only difference between the two ads was page balance, with Ad2 having informal (off-center) balance. The subjects also liked Ad7 (two non-high-quality cues) *less than* Ad8.

Table 20 presents a summary of the subject responses to the three semantic differential scales for Aad. Ad1 (all three high quality cues) and Ad8 (all three non-high-quality cues) were each seen by all 210 subjects. Ad1 was rated much higher than Ad8 on "Good" (66.7%), "Like very much" (59.5%), and "Ad is pleasant" (64.3%), while Ad8

rated much higher than Ad1 on “Bad” (50.5%), “Dislike very much” (55.3%), and “Ad is unpleasant” (54.8%). Similarly, the attitude mean (i.e., the average of the three individual Aad measures) for Ad1 was 3.04 as compared with the mean of 4.63 for Ad8.

The correlation coefficients (Table 16) showed that Aad was highly correlated with overall store quality ( $r = .74$ ), merchandise quality ( $r = .76$ ), sales assistance quality

**Table 20**  
**Summary of Attitude-Toward-the-Ad Measures**

Ad Number	Semantic Differential Adjective Pairs: Percentage of Subject Responses **						Attitude Mean
	Ad is Good (Codes 1,2,3)	Ad is Bad (Codes 5,6,7)	Like Ad Very Much (Codes 1,2,3)	Dislike Ad Very Much (Codes 5,6,7)	Ad is Pleasant (Codes 1,2,3)	Ad is Unpleasant (Codes 5,6,7)	
Ad #1	66.7%	13.8%	59.5%	13.3%	64.3%	12.8%	3.04
Ad #2	72.7%	5.8%	60.6%	11.8%	69.7%	2.0%	2.95
Ad #3	77.8%	22.3%	50.0%	5.6%	63.9%	8.4%	3.05
Ad #4	57.1%	20.1%	45.7%	20.0%	54.3%	20.1%	3.41
Ad #5	26.5%	49.9%	20.6%	53.0%	26.5%	47.0%	4.50
Ad #6	38.9%	33.3%	25.0%	38.9%	38.9%	33.4%	4.08
Ad #7	14.3%	68.6%	5.7%	65.7%	14.3%	68.5%	5.08
Ad #8	23.3%	50.5%	18.6%	55.3%	21.9%	54.8%	4.63

\*\* Code #4 , the neutral point on the scale, is not included in the table.

\*\*\*\*\*

( $r = .72$ ), and the quality mean ( $r = .76$ ). All correlations were highly statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). This supported the commonly held belief that “liking” an ad may have a positive impact on the advertised product and the ad’s sponsor. Aad was also most strongly correlated with white space, providing further confirmation of the power of white space in a retail store newspaper ad.

Interestingly, Ad2 (two high quality cues, seen by only 35 subjects) was rated *higher* than Ad1 on all three Aad scales. The only quality cue that was different was page balance. Ad7 (two non-high-quality cues, seen by only 35 subjects) received *lower* ratings than Ad8 on all three Aad scales. The differences between the two ads were page balance and the ways in which non-high-quality white space had to be configured.

One linear regression analyses was also conducted between quality mean and Aad (operationalized as the mean of the three component attitude scales for each of the eight ads). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 21.

**Table 21**  
**Linear Regression Analysis**  
**Attitude Toward the Ad (Aad) and the Quality Mean**  
**N = 628**

	Coefficient	t	Probability
C	.60	8.33	< .001
Aad	.51	29.48	< .001
<b>Model 1 error</b>		SE	.67
R	.76	F	869.33
R-squared	.58	Probability	< .001
Adjusted R-squared	.58	Effect size	.76

The adjusted R-squared was .58 ( $F = 869.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating a very strong and statistically significant relationship between Aad and perceptions of retail store quality. This provided strong support for the belief that Aad would impact the inferences of retail store quality, i.e., the more positive the Aad, the higher the quality evaluations.

### **Product Involvement**

Surprisingly, the correlation coefficients (Table 13) showed that product

involvement was very weakly correlated with perceptions of overall store quality ( $r = -0.13$ ), merchandise quality ( $r = -0.11$ ), sales assistance quality ( $r = -0.09$ ), and the quality mean ( $r = -.12$ ). Additionally, none of the correlations proved to be statistically significant although the  $p = .06$  for overall store quality and the  $p = .07$  for the quality mean did approach significance.

It was concluded, therefore, that the inferences of retail store quality in this research were not impacted in any significant way by the extent of the subjects' involvement with the product category, dresses.

## CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY

When consumers enter the marketplace, they usually do not possess complete information about product or service quality. Judgments and choices, therefore, are based on multiple sources of information, e.g., friends, family, coworkers, and the product and service quality cues which are available to them (Amirani and Baker 1995). When purchasing goods, the consumer has a number of available cues upon which to judge quality: tangible cues such as size, style, feel, and taste. These are intrinsic quality cues, related to the physical composition of the product (Olson 1972). When purchasing services, however, fewer tangible or intrinsic quality cues are available--limited in most cases to the service provider's physical facilities, equipment, and personnel (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). When selecting or patronizing retail stores, therefore, the selection of quality cues would seem to be some combination of the intrinsic quality cues for service and merchandise.

Consumers also look to extrinsic cues that are related to the product but are not part of the product or service itself. Although extrinsic cues can be used either in the presence or absence of tangible or intrinsic cues, the absence of intrinsic cues upon which to make perceived quality judgments increases the importance of extrinsic cues. It is the linkage of one of these extrinsic cues to perceived department store quality, newspaper advertising, that was the focus of this exploratory research.

In the case of all retail stores, advertising is an important extrinsic cue for perceived quality judgments since such advertising can develop consumer impressions or images of stores, even for consumers who are unfamiliar with the store, and these images affect both

store choice decisions and perceptions of merchandise carried. Since quality-related issues are key elements in retailing and advertising strategies (Jacoby and Olson 1985), and since advertising is an important extrinsic cue for perceived quality judgments of retail stores, an important research question thus becomes: What is it about retail advertising in newspapers, the dominant advertising medium for retailers, that serves as “information” or cues about the quality of the store?

A review of the quality, perceived quality, and retailing literatures revealed three important knowledge gaps: (1) the cues, intrinsic or extrinsic, that consumers use to formulate perceptions of *overall* retail store quality; (2) the specific newspaper advertising cues that consumers use to determine or categorize overall retail store quality; and (3) the role that newspaper advertising cues play in overall perceived quality judgments. As a result, two research questions were proposed for study: (1) Which design cues in newspaper ads are used by consumers to make inferences about retail store quality? and (2) How do design cues in newspaper ads impact perceived retail store quality? It was anticipated that answers to these questions could contribute positively to the consumer-retailer relationship.

A review of the advertising design literature and depth interviews with advertising and graphic design professionals resulted in the selection of three design cues for study: white space, typeface, and page balance. It was these three advertising design elements that emerged as having the strongest linkage to images of quality in a retail newspaper advertisement.

Eight original advertisements were created using these three design elements with

each element presented in high quality and non-high-quality versions (Appendices B-1). Both the dress and typefaces used in the ads were selected on the basis of pretests, and a thought-listing pretest was conducted on the eight ads to see if they were communicating the high quality and non-high-quality messages needed for the main experiment. As a result of the thought-listing pretest, no revisions to the ads were necessary for the main experiment.

The main experiment was based on a convenience sample of 210 women, with each woman seeing Ad1 (three high quality cues), Ad8 (three non-high-quality cues), and one of the remaining six ads selected at random. Descriptive statistics and correlations were generated, linear and multiple regression (to include one stepwise regression) were run, and two additional regressions were run holding white space constant. Analysis of the data resulted in the following:

1. The subjects seemed to have difficulty distinguishing between the three quality measures. This was indicated by the strong correlation of the dependent variables. As a result, the three measures were collapsed into a single quality measure: quality mean. The four original hypotheses for testing were revised to reflect the fact that perceptions of quality would be measured in terms of the quality mean.
2. There was a general pattern, although not linear, of lower quality evaluations as the subjects moved from Ad1 (all three high quality cues) to Ad8 (all three non-high-quality cues), with Ad8 evoking more consistent evaluations. Interestingly, Ad7 (two non-high-quality cues) elicited lower

quality ratings than did Ad8 on all quality measures and with a much greater consistency of lower quality inferences than Ad8. Ad7 also had the highest consistency of responses across all eight ads while Ad1 had the lowest. It was concluded overall that the subjects were detecting the cue manipulations—albeit in patterns that were not entirely expected.

3. The independent variables were also strongly correlated. This rendered the regression analyses problematic. However, since none of the remedial measures available for multicollinearity were available for this research, the regressions were run because it was believed that they could still be useful as general indicators of the effects that white space, typeface, and page balance would have on quality inferences.
4. As a result of the regression analyses:
  - a. Hypothesis 1 (white space) was supported.
  - b. Hypothesis 2 (typeface) was supported, although not as strongly as Hypothesis 1.
  - c. Hypothesis 3 (page balance) received only some support.
  - d. Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

It was, therefore, concluded that white space had the strongest individual impact on the perceptions of retail store quality *and* that when typeface and page balance are combined with white space, white space overwhelms the effects of the other two variables. The stepwise regression, set at  $p < .05$ , threw out both typeface and page balance.

5. The two regressions that held white space constant confirmed the power of white space. In the presence of high-quality white space, the effect of typeface and page balance was both negligible and not statistically significant. Holding non-high-quality white space constant slightly improved the importance of white space—and at a statistically significant level ( $p < .04$ ).

Attitude toward the ad (Aad) was also measured. Aad was highly correlated ( $p < .001$ ) with overall store quality, merchandise quality, sales assistance quality, and the quality mean (Table 16). These findings were reinforced by the linear regression analysis, which found a very strong and statistically significant relationship between Aad and the quality mean. Therefore, the belief that Aad would impact the inferences of department store quality was supported.

Involvement was measured but the correlations with Aad, the three quality measures, the quality mean, and the independent variables were very weak and not statistically significant. Only the correlations with overall quality ( $p < .06$ ) and the quality mean ( $p < .07$ ) approached significance. These results did not support the thought that level of involvement with the product would impact the inferences of retail store quality.

### **Implications of the Research**

With the exception of the Jacobs and Poillon (1992) study of white space in newspaper grocery advertising, no empirical research has been published to date that examines how the form of retail newspaper advertising contributes to consumers ascribing

quality images to retail stores. Part of the reason may be that advertising form research tends to be tactical rather than theoretical. However, it is known from categorization theory that cues are used to categorize a stimulus object (Sweeney, Johnson, and Armstrong 1992) and that consumers make inferences about product attributes from advertising even when these attributes are not explicitly mentioned in the advertising (Sujan and Deklava 1987). It is also known that the form of an advertisement may affect brand attitudes (Mitchell 1986) so that consumer quality beliefs are affected by both advertising content and advertising form and DeLozier (1976) observes that the general style and tone of a store's advertisement is perhaps more important than the content of the ad.

Although some research has indicated that advertisers' use of certain ad elements may have significant influences on reader/viewers' attitudes toward the ad and brand—e.g., humorous appeals (Belch and Belch 1984; Chattopadhyay and Basu 1990; Madden, Allen, and Twible 1988), use of celebrities (Kamins 1990); communicator attractiveness (Petroshius and Crocker 1989), and impact of pictures in print ads (Edell and Staelin 1983)—there is, overall, a paucity of research that focuses on types of executional appeals. Percy and Lautman (1986, p. 55) posit that such a focus is necessary for two reasons.

First, without some understanding of the appropriateness of an execution in meeting the communication objectives of the advertiser, one has no criterion against which to judge the effectiveness of the advertising. Second, attitudes must have as a focus the nature of the stimuli; and in the case of advertising, the execution itself, as a stimulus, can play a significant role in affecting those attitudes.

This exploratory research studied white space, typeface, and page balance (three advertising executional elements) in newspaper retail advertising and determined that they are used as cues—to varying extents—to make inferences about retail store quality. These

findings make a potentially important contribution to what is known about advertising tactical issues. However, further research needs to be done in order to develop a more complete picture of how advertising design elements contribute to specific advertising effects. Such research could use structural equation modeling to assess the extent of the relationships.

Additional support is also provided in this research for the linkage between product involvement and attitude toward the ad ( $r = -.22, p < .001$ ). These results argue in favor of further research. Specifically, structural equation modeling could be used here as well to better ascertain the validity of the relationships amongst product involvement, executional ad elements, attitude toward the ad, and motivation to buy.

### **Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research**

#### **Advertising Form**

Ads are complex messages that combine verbal content (e.g., headlines and copy) with executional elements such as humor, music, storytelling, pictures, and form or design. The executional elements are important contributors to advertising effectiveness because it has been found that an individual's affective reactions to the executional elements of an advertisement affect persuasion (Mitchell and Olson 1981; Rossiter and Percey 1978, 1983). Indeed, it has been noted that the emotional impact of a layout design occurs in the reader of a print ad even before s/he considers what the words say (Jewler 1995).

Advertising form as an executional element encompasses white space, typeface, page balance, significant images and symbols, color, ad and picture sizes, and the item

being advertised itself—to include its role and function in society (Berger 1982; Gelb, Hong and Zinkham 1985). The research herein studied three of these components: white space, typeface, and page balance. The experimental manipulation was very narrow, however, with each of the three components presented in only two versions: high quality and non-high quality. While this was necessary in order to maintain the integrity of the experimental manipulations, the result was eight ads that—for the most part—could not be dramatically different from each other. This may have resulted in participants having difficulty in distinguishing between the versions of the ads to which they were exposed, thus making it difficult to draw a generalizable conclusion regarding the linkage of white space, typeface, and page balance to inferences of retail store quality. Future research should consider ways in which ads could be created that are different enough from each other to facilitate meaningful distinctions while at the same time preserving the integrity of the manipulations.

The limited copy in each ad may have also been an issue. Although limiting the amount of copy was necessary in order to create the high-quality-white-space versions of the ads, this automatically limited the magnitude of typeface style impact. Ultimately, however, it may be that advertising form elements that are combined in particular ways to achieve particular effects cannot be unbundled, e.g., a high percentage of white space in an ad can only be accompanied by limited copy. This emphasizes the importance of Gestalt, and the associated interaction effects, in any ad evaluation process. Future research should explore ways in which to measure these interaction effects, best achieved perhaps through a totally within-subjects design.

Additionally, while several advertising form studies have been conducted (e.g.,

Percy and Rossiter 1983; Reid, Rotfeld, and Barnes 1984; Soley and Reid 1983; Stewart and Furse 1984), none of the research has linked advertising form or design elements to consumer inferences of retail store quality. Therefore, rather than limiting the research to the linkage between quality inferences and the manipulation of white space, typeface, and page balance, future research could expand the envelope to include alternative combinations. For example, Percy and Rossiter (1983) manipulated two major visual variables in print advertising—picture size and color vs. black and white—to determine the effect of consumer attitude toward a fictitious brand of mineral water. The results indicated significantly more favorable attitudes generated by larger pictures and color ads. Future research in quality perceptions, therefore, could explore the linkage between quality inferences and picture size and color vs. black and white ads. Other quality linkages to explore could include various combinations of: copy-heavy vs. copy-light ads; small vs. large size ads; use of specific cultural symbols and imagery; and, of course, white space, typeface, and page balance.

### **Other Media**

This research was limited to newspaper advertising because retailers spend most of their advertising dollars on newspaper ads. However, retailers do advertise in other media so future research could be extended to these media—e.g., magazines, television, direct mail, and the Internet—to determine the advertising form issues that are relevant to retail store quality perceptions. What are the differences? What are the similarities, if any? Each medium has its own unique implications for advertising design and these implications, in turn, may impact the ways in which consumers attribute quality images to retail stores as

well as to other products and/or services.

For example, given the explosive growth in the use of the Internet, research into retail quality inferences elicited by banner advertising design offers much opportunity. Tamimi, Rajan, and Sebastianelli (2000) identified 13 factors believed to be critical to the quality of corporate web sites. Some of these factors, e.g., speed of loading, links, spelling, and translation to multiple languages—along with other design elements such as size of ad, use of color, readability, and use of animation—could be explored to determine the linkage to retail quality inferences.

### **Quality Cue Presentation**

The three design cues were presented in only two versions in the ads: high quality or non-high quality. Because of the absence of graduated versions of each cue, each ad had to be binary-coded (i.e., a “1” for the high quality version and “0” for the non-high-quality version). This presented analysis and interpretation problems and challenges. Although difficult to implement, the use of graduated versions of the cues would be preferable.

### **Sample and Cell Sizes**

This research was also limited by sample sizes and cell sizes. The dress and typeface pretest samples, both convenience samples, were small and this may have resulted in results that were not representative. A larger sample would be desirable.

The sample (N = 31) for the thought-listing pretest, also a convenience sample, resulted in cells that ranged from 10-31 subjects. This occurred because not every subject saw each of the eight ads (Appendices B-I). In order to maintain the integrity of the

advertising form manipulations, the eight ads could not be dramatically different from each other. Therefore, it was necessary to limit each subject to four ads for evaluation: the ad with all three high quality cues, the ad with all three non-high-quality cues, and two ads selected at random from the remaining six ads. This resulted in a between-groups research design instead of the more powerful within-subject factorial design in which all subjects are exposed to all levels of a factor (Monroe and Krishnan 1985). Because six of the ads were evaluated by only fifteen people or less, it is possible that the results were artificially skewed, and this could help to explain why the "lower quality" ads received more high quality and above-average quality evaluations than were expected. The stronger design, although difficult to implement, would be the totally within-subject design with a larger sample.

It would also be desirable to use probability sampling instead of the nonprobability sampling technique (i.e., convenience sample) used in this research. In this way, the results would be more generalizable. A simple random sample or stratified sample would be good choices, with explicit consideration of age, income, and education. Frieden (1984), for example, suggested that audience age may play a role in influencing attitude toward the ad (Aad), finding that college-aged students tended to evaluate ads more positively than did older, more mature adults. Macklin, Bruvold, and Shea (1985) observed that individuals with more education uniformly evaluated ads less positively. Given the high correlation between Aad and the quality mean in this research ( $r = .76, p < .001$ ), it would seem appropriate to explicitly consider the impact of such demographic variables on retail store quality inferences

## Dress and Model

One surprising result from the thought-listing pretest was the large number of negative comments about the dress and the model in the ads. Overall, a total of 26% of the thoughts listed by the subjects referred to the dress and the model; over half of these thoughts were negative. Examples of the negative thoughts are included in Table 22. The implication for future research is that, in the case where modeled clothing is the product in an ad, both the clothing *and* the model must be selected carefully since it is clear that the model in an ad is an important source of communication (see, for example, Baker and Churchill 1977).

This research may have underestimated the importance and communication power of the dress and model (the picture) in the advertisements. It has been observed that

**Table 22**  
**Examples of Negative Thoughts About the Dress and Model in the Ads**

Negative Thoughts About the Dress	Negative Thoughts About the Model
Still not exciting in terms of fashion This dress is too long More I see this dress the less I like it Dress looks too large for model Dress style unflattering on model Dress is an awkward length Dress not particularly appealing Needs accessorizing Dress design is boring Dress ugly Unflattering dress Dress too plain--for night Looks like a ladies dress in a juniors store	Model's weight seems accentuated Model could smile Not very flattering to her figure Need some jewelry on this woman She doesn't have feet Cut her hair Boring design on dress Legs are cut off on page Model too young Looks broad for a model Model looks bored Model has big hands and knobby knees Woman has a smug smile Model ugly

beliefs about product attributes are affected by *both* pictures and words (Mitchell and

Olson 1981) and that advertisements containing a positively evaluated photograph created the most favorable attitudes (Mitchell 1986). Thus, if the visual element in an ad is positively or negatively evaluated, it may have an effect on brand attitudes that operates through Aad (Mitchell 1986). The specific implications for this research are that a negative evaluation of the dress and model (the picture) may have evoked a lower quality inference than if the dress and model had been evaluated more positively.

Also relevant to the subjects' evaluation and inference processes were the dress cues themselves. For a woman, dress is a continual manifestation of ultimate thoughts, a language, a symbol (Lurie 1983). In the symbolic realm of dress and appearance, however, "meanings" in a certain sense tend to be simultaneously both more ambiguous and more differentiated than in other expressive realms (Davis 1992). Meanings are more ambiguous in that it is hard to get people in general to interpret clothing symbols in the same way. Yet the meanings are more differentiated inasmuch as, to the extent that identifiable thoughts, images, and associations crystallize around clothing symbols, these will vary markedly, most certainly at first, between different social strata and taste subcultures (Gans 1974). This instability of dress cue meanings may help to explain the negative comments about the dress and model in the thought-listing pretest. The ambivalence of communication by the dress itself must also be assumed to have impacted the subjects' quality inference process—unfortunately, in unknown ways—since the dress would have evoked differing symbolic meanings. Future research could try to capture these meanings and their impact on inference processes by measuring symbolic meanings more explicitly and then using structural equation modeling to ascertain the nature and extent of the relationships between

clothing meanings and inference results.

Second, even though the experimental sample's involvement mean was 4.79 out of 7 where 7 was "high involvement," this does not seem very high for a product category that was expected to be a high involvement product for women. Therefore, the advertising message may have been largely irrelevant to many of the subjects. As a result, rather than process all of the information in the advertisement, this group may have used the attractiveness of the model and/or their affective reactions to the ad in evaluating the quality of the retail store (Mitchell and Olson 1981; Petty and Cacioppo 1981).

Third, the selection of a dress as the consumer product for this research probably triggered the aesthetic responses that are associated with fashion. An aesthetic response involves an appreciation of a product more for the symbolic gratification it provides than for any utilitarian function it may perform.; thus, fashion items such as clothing are usually appraised for their visual impact and not so much for the service they perform in keeping the body warm (Holbrook and Moore 1980). Because of this aesthetic response, the dress in the ads would have evoked a gestalt-like cognitive evaluation process—in which the use of cues, rather than being merely additive, is configural, i.e., the judgmental effect of one cue is often felt to depend on the value of another (Slovic and Lichtenstein 1971, p. 659)—rather than a linear process in which cues are combined additively. Since the dress and model could not be unbundled from the executional elements of the advertisements, this may have negated the "neutrality" of the dress. Despite the results of the dress pretest, therefore, it may not be possible to find a neutral dress.

The reproduction quality of the ads may also have affected the quality evaluations.

Because xerox copies were made in order to assemble individual ad packets, the dress/model pictures were of uneven resolution. As a result, the fuzziness of the images—even given the black and white nature of newspaper ads—may have adversely affected the subjects' perceptions of ad credibility and attitude toward the advertiser (Lutz 1985). These negative perceptions may have negatively affected Aad which, in turn, may have negatively affected the quality inference measurements.

### **Interactive Testing Effect**

Consideration must be given to the experimental limitation posed by an interactive testing effect. In this research, each subject filled out a ten-item involvement instrument (Appendix S). The instrument specifically indicated its purpose: to measure involvement or interest in dresses. While this involvement measurement information was an important part of the experiment, the measurement process may have heightened the "dress" awareness of the subjects. This heightened awareness may have interfered with the subjects' responses to the advertising cues (the independent variables), the result being too much focus on the dress itself. This increased focus on the dress, in turn, may have artificially skewed the quality measurement results.

Assuming that measuring involvement is deemed appropriate and desirable, future research might be able to offset this interactive testing effect by developing a disguised measurement instrument—e.g., by including multiple products in the instrument—so that subjects will not be prematurely alerted to the chosen experimental product. This may increase the chances for the measured effects to be generalizable to the population of interest.

## **Instrumentation**

The reliability of the oral instructions given to the subjects may have changed during the course of the research. Because it was necessary to conduct the thought-listing pretest and the research experiment in multiple sessions in different locations, the researcher probably varied the instructions, albeit intentionally, as a result of voice intonation differences, fatigue, and time of day. These differences may have impacted the subjects' responses in ways that could not be known to the researcher. This research used oral instructions because it was believed that such an approach would be more efficient and effective: people tend not to read directions very carefully. However, future research efforts should consider carefully the tradeoffs between oral and written instructions and, if oral instructions are chosen, particular care needs to be taken to minimize the impact of instruction variability.

## **Implications for Marketing Practitioners**

First and foremost, an ad must communicate quickly and effectively. A good, thoughtful design will make the message easier to understand—conveying to the intended audience what is clear, understandable, and useful to them. Good design will also emphasize the most compelling information; where you place information in the ad, how large you make that information, and how you display it in relation to other elements in the ad can strengthen or diminish its importance (Jewler and Drewniany 1998).

Flowing from and working closely with an ad's design is the ad's layout, i.e., an overall orderly arrangement or blueprint of all the format elements of an ad: visual(s), headline, subheads, body copy, slogan, seal, logo, and signature (Arens 1999). But in

addition to giving an ad its look and feel, the layout helps the creative team develop the ad's psychological elements: the nonverbal and symbolic components (Arens 1999).

. . . Sophisticated advertisers want their advertising to do more than just bring in store traffic. They want their ads to create personality for the product [and/or service]—image, if you will—and to build the brand's (and the company's) equity with the consumer. To do this, the “look” of the ad needs to elicit an image or mood that reflects and enhances both the advertiser and the product . . . [Thus], the creative team must be very sensitive to the desired image of the product or business . . . (Arens, 1999, p. 372).

One image that department store retailers may wish to convey in their newspaper advertising is an image of quality. Unfortunately, a knowledge gap exists due to the lack of empirical research on how the form of retail newspaper advertising contributes to consumers ascribing quality images to retailers. This knowledge gap may have severely hampered the ability of retailers to effectively and efficiently communicate a message of quality to consumers. Advertising effectiveness is an important concern in any marketing campaign, often being a critical factor in marketing success.

. . . A slight change in an advertising campaign brought about through some form of evaluation can lead to significant increases in sales and profits. In an aggressively competitive market, an insightful evaluation can provide a company with an edge over its rivals. . . (Parente, Bergh, Barban, and Marra 1996, p. 267).

And yet, it has also been said that the search for a good measure of advertising effectiveness is like the search for the Holy Grail—it goes on and on and on (Parente, Bergh, Barban, and Marra 1996, p. 267).

This endless search notwithstanding, one measure of advertising effectiveness must surely be whether an advertisement is communicating the message it is intended to

communicate to its intended target, e.g., if a quality image is intended, is that the image being communicated by the ad? Dichter (1949) sees the effectiveness of an ad dependent on the psychological results it produces in the mind of the reader, further noting that the only real test of an ad's effectiveness is a knowledge of the thoughts, associations and mental images produced in a reader. This necessarily implies a greater importance being given by marketing practitioners to how words, images, grammatical style, and rhetorical structure, tone, and other elements of advertising form help to give an ad its meaning. Advertising form does more than contain the poetic stuff: it organizes it, it shapes it; it defines its meaning (Stern 1988, p. 4). Advertising form thus plays a major role in the success of advertising communication.

A lack of understanding of how advertising form impacts advertising effectiveness may have reduced the value of department store newspaper advertising to the consumer, the ultimate result perhaps being reduced retailer profitability due to reduced sales. The research herein studied the role that white space, typeface, and page balance play in quality images being attributed to department store fashion retailers. It was demonstrated that the retailer who wishes to convey an image of high quality may use an ad with a high percentage of white space and a typeface style that can be characterized as classic or formal rather than informal or fun. What is less clear is the role that page balance plays in the creation of quality images. While formal balance is traditionally associated with images of quality and prestige, it also seems that informal page balance can convey quality images as well when combined with a high percentage of white space and a classic typeface. This may be because formal balance can sometimes be seen as static, something advertisers

usually wish to avoid, and informal balance may be the preferred choice for advertisers—and consumers—who are striving for a more dynamic look (Jewler and Drewniany 1998).

### **Importance of Attitude Toward the Ad (Aad)**

Marketing practitioners should also consider the importance of consumers “liking” the ad. The idea seems to persist among many practitioners and researchers that the more positive someone’s initial affective reactions to the advertising are, the more positive will be her reactions to the advertised product (Percy and Lautman 1986; Shimp 1981).

Several studies have found evidence to support the idea that individuals’ attitudes toward an ad (Aad) may have a direct effect on behavioral/purchase intentions, i.e., positive Aad tends to produce a stronger motivation to buy the advertised product (Muehling and McCann 1993: p. 47-48). Indeed, Shimp (1981) and Mitchell and Olson (1981) considered the transference of affect, or “liking,” from ad to brand to be the likely result of a positive ad/brand association, consistent with classical conditioning principles. The ad may, in fact, be considered another salient attribute of the brand (Mitchell and Olson 1981), with the consumer consciously associating the ad with the brand (Edell and Burke 1984).

It is clear that the marketing practitioner should be mindful of the role that Aad plays in consumer reactions to advertising and the advertised brand (or, in the case of this research, the retail store). “Liking the ad” is important because it would appear to be predictive of a stronger motivation to buy. Thus, using advertising design elements that communicate a message of high quality may positively affect Aad which, in turn, may contribute directly to increased sales.

### **Importance of Involvement**

Defined as a person's perceived relevance of the object [or product] based on inherent needs, values, and interests (Zaichkowsky 1985, p. 342), product involvement also has important strategic implications for advertising design. As involvement increases, consumers increasingly focus their comprehension processes on interpreting the product-related information in the advertisements, thus producing more inferences about the advertised products (Celsi and Olson 1988) and, in the case of this research, the retail store doing the advertising. What can be concluded in general is that when people are involved, they pay attention, perceive importance and behave in a different manner than when they are not involved (Zaichkowsky 1986).

It is important to note, however, that the level of involvement with product categories varies greatly over individuals, i.e., for any product category, there seems to be individuals who have low involvement with the product and individuals who have high involvement with the product (Zaichkowsky 1985). Therefore, the importance of understanding the involvement concept for marketers and advertisers (retail and others) lies in their ability to understand: (1) why and when an ad might be effective for those individuals who have *low involvement* with the product they are promoting; (2) how to best advertise to consumers who have *high involvement* with their product class; and (3) how to tailor their advertising message for different product categories (Zaichkowsky 1986). In all cases the selection of executional elements—such as the amount of white space, typeface, and font used in this research—will play a critical role in advertising message construction and, ultimately, in advertising effectiveness. The executional elements are, after all, an

integral part of the message.

A practitioner understanding and appreciation of involvement is important for another reason. Although the results of this research are mixed, some evidence has been found that involvement may have a direct effect on attitude toward the ad (Kardes 1988). This research found such an effect ( $r = -.22, p < .001$ ). Although Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 99) suggest that correlations below .30 are of little practical value even if they are statistically significant, the findings of this research do provide some support for other similar findings. Since it is commonly accepted that Aad has a direct impact on attitude toward the product and the resulting motivation to buy, then an understanding of the linkage between involvement and Aad (Figure 7) should prove helpful in advertising design decisions.

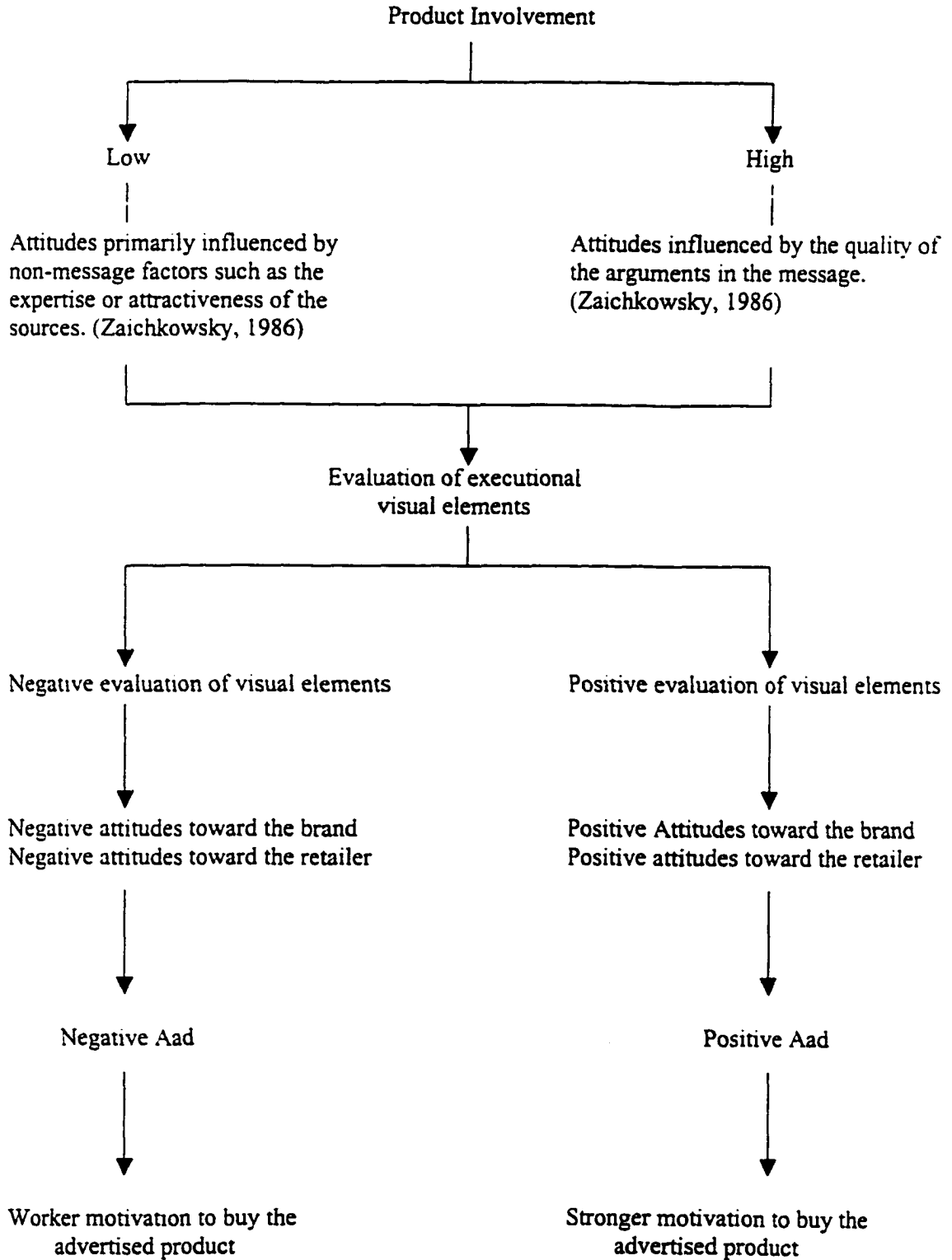
#### **Visual Ad Elements and Consumer Inferences**

Consumers may form inferences about an advertised brand and/or a retail store based on the visual information presented in an ad—e.g., pictures, color selection, color vs. black and white, amount of white space, typeface style and size, page balance, and size of the ad. These inferences may, in turn, result in the formation or change of beliefs about the advertised brand and/or the retail store. If the visual element is positively or negatively evaluated, it may have an effect on brand [and/or retailer] attitude that operates through Aad (Mitchell 1986).

Since most advertisements contain visual elements and many advertisements provide little product attribute information, the latter perhaps designed to either trigger an emotional reaction or portray visually the typical users of the brand (Mitchell 1986).

marketing practitioners need to understand that advertising design elements will play a role in consumer inferences (Rossiter and Percy 1978). While this research focused on the relationship of white space, typeface, and page balance to consumer inferences of retail store quality, other cue combinations can lead to other inferences. Therefore, a knowledge and appreciation of inferences is important not only in getting information from, but also in giving information to, the ultimate consumer (Mitchell 1986). If the objective of an ad is to create or change attitudes, then a practitioner understanding of the visual cue inference process may simplify or facilitate a marketing communications program.

**The Importance of Product Involvement: A Proposed Schematic \***



(\* Note: Developed by the author)

## Appendix A Participant Release Agreement (Depth Interview)

I agree to participate in a depth interview to discuss how design elements are used to convey messages of quality. A depth interview is an unstructured one-on-one interview in which the direction of the interview is guided by the responses of the interviewee; the interviewer probes each answer and uses the replies as a basis for further questioning in order to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings on a topic. Additionally, the depth interview will be used to help understand design vocabulary and how creative designers think about designing for quality.

I understand the purpose and nature of the study, and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that there should be no attendant discomfort or risk expected but I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. I understand that no alternative procedures are available for my participation since the depth interview is the data collection method of choice for the researcher.

I grant permission for the depth interview data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a dissertation, and any other future publications.

I understand that a brief synopsis of each participant, including myself, may be used and may include the following information: first name; age; title; years of creative design experience; and any other pertinent information that will help the reader come to know and recall each participant. I grant permission for the above personal information to be used. I understand that the data are confidential and that I will not be identified in any way other than by first name.

I agree to participate in a depth interview of no longer than 1-1 ½ hours. I grant permission to tape record the interview. I understand that you will answer any inquiries concerning procedures and that you will provide a summary of results if I request it.

---

Research Participant

---

Date

---

Sandra L. Lueder

---

Date

---

Location

**Appendix B**  
**Ad #1**

High quality typeface  
Formal balance  
High quality white space

For day or night



**FOLEY'S**  
*Madeline Montgomery. Short-sleeved crepe sheath dress.*  
Misses' sizes. Black or plum.

**Appendix C**  
**Ad #2**

High quality typeface  
Informal balance  
High quality white space

For day or night



**FOLEY'S**

*Madeline Montgomery. Short-sleeved crepe sheath dress.*  
Misses' sizes. Black or plum.

**Appendix D**  
**Ad #3**

High quality white space  
Formal balance  
Non-high-quality typeface

For day or night




FOLEY'S

*Modeline Montgomery* Short-sleeved crepe sheath dress  
Misses sizes Black or plum

**Appendix E**  
**Ad #4**

Non-high-quality typeface  
Informal balance  
High quality white space

For day or night



**FOLEY'S**  
*Madeleine Montgomery* short-sleeved crepe sheath dress  
Misses sizes Black or plum

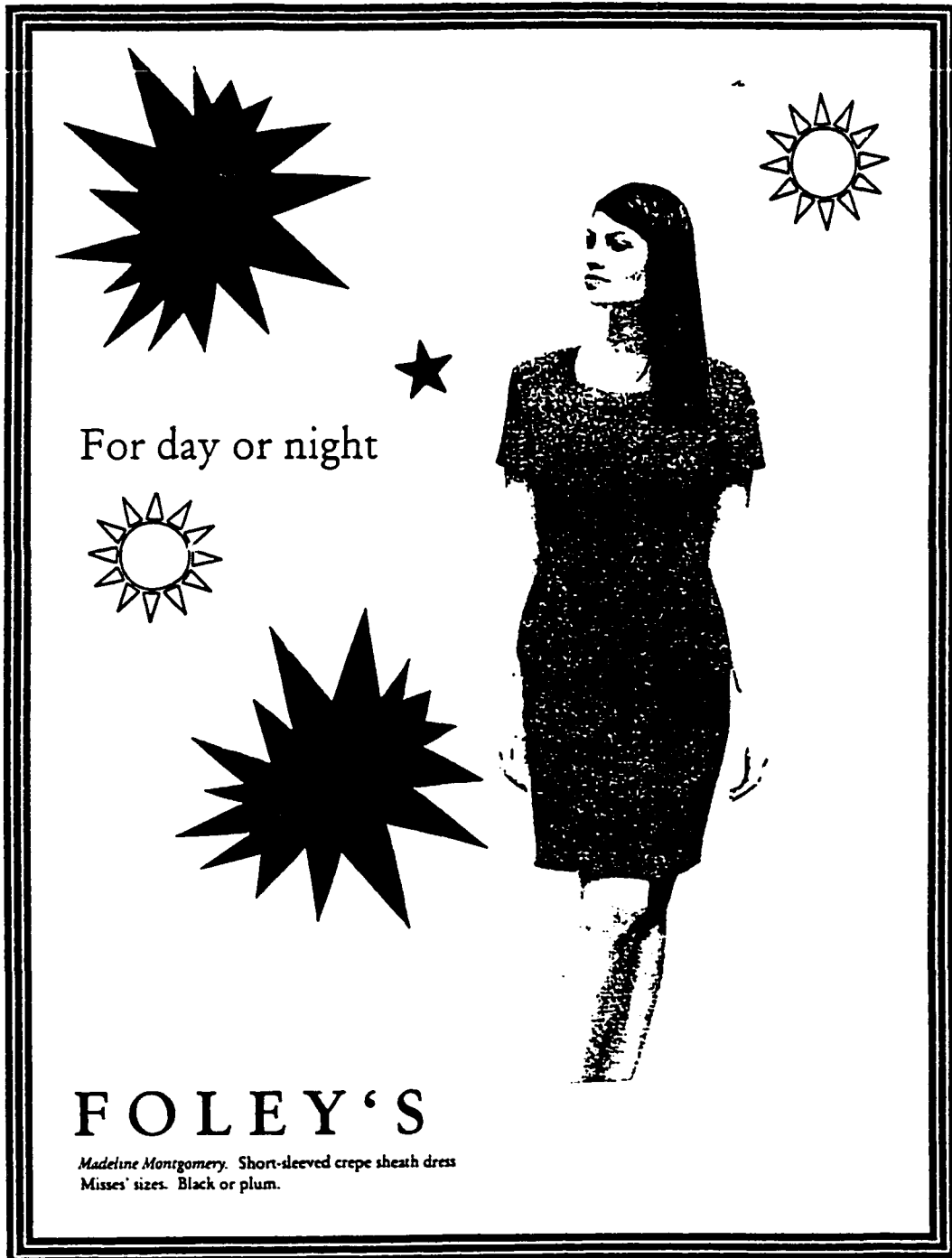
**Appendix F**  
**Ad #5**

High quality typeface  
Formal balance  
Non-high-quality white space



Appendix G  
Ad #6

High quality typeface  
Informal balance  
Non-high-quality white space



For day or night

**FOLEY'S**

*Madelene Montgomery. Short-sleeved crepe sheath dress  
Misses' sizes. Black or plum.*

Appendix H  
Ad #7

Non-high-quality typeface  
Formal balance  
Non-high-quality white space



Appendix I  
Ad #8

Non-high-quality typeface  
Informal balance  
Non-high-quality white space



## Appendix J

### Participant Consent Form--Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1

I agree to participate in a survey designed to measure my reactions to photographs of dresses and samples of type styles. The results of the survey will be used as part of a process designed to analyze communication in retail advertisements. I grant participation for the data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a dissertation, and any other future publications.

I will be given a survey packet consisting of five photographs of dresses and four samples of typestyles. On each page will appear a short survey that I will fill out *before* moving on to the next page. The packet will also include two short activities between the two surveys.

I understand the purpose and nature of the survey, and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that there should be no attendant discomfort or risk expected (except maybe for an uncomfortable chair), but I understand that I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. I also understand that no alternative procedures are available for my participation.

I understand that a summary of the participants, including myself, will be used and will include age and household income. I grant permission for the above personal information to be used. I also understand that *the data are confidential* and that I will be identified *only* by subject number in writing and orally. *There will, however, be no linkage between my name and my age and household income information.*

It is estimated that my participation will require no more than 30 minutes. I agree to participate. I understand that you will answer any inquiries concerning procedures and that you will provide me with a summary of results if I request it.

Research Participant	Date
Sandra L. Lueder	Date
Location	

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 1 of 20)**

**Dress and Typeface Style**  
**Questionnaire**

**Sandra Lueder**  
**June 1998**

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 2 of 20)**

**Please read all  
directions  
carefully!**

**If you are sitting next to someone else, *do not* be concerned if her packet looks a bit different from yours. This is a necessary part of the research design.**



**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 4 of 20)**

# The Dresses

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. ***Be sure*** that you check every scale. **Do not omit any!**
2. **Never** put more than one checkmark on a single scale.

Make each item a separate and independent judgment. Work at fairly high speed through this questionnaire. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your *first impressions*, the immediate feelings about the items, that I want. On the other hand, please do not be careless because I want your true impressions.

Thanks.

**Appendix K  
Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1  
(Page 5 of 20)**



**This dress is:**

Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Charming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not charming
Expensive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Cheap
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Ordinary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not ordinary
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not rich
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Old	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Young
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Boring

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 6 of 20)**

**This dress is:**

Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Charming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not charming
Expensive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Cheap
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Ordinary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not ordinary
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not rich
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Old	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Young
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Boring

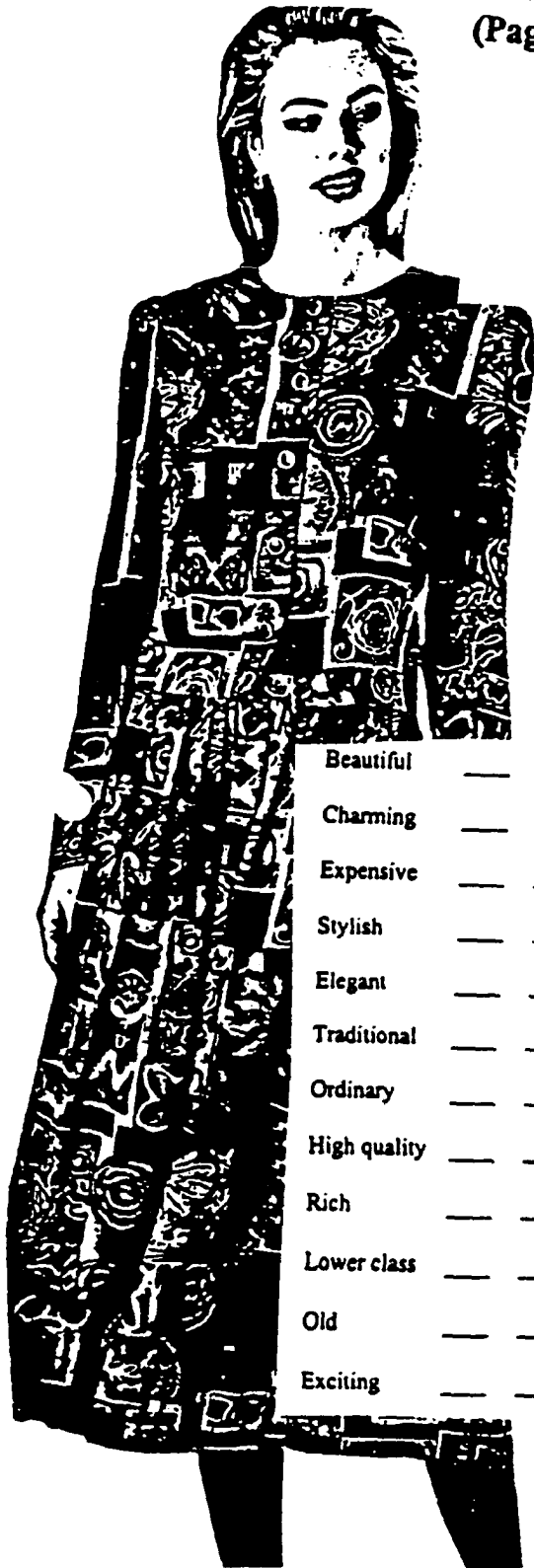


**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 7 of 20)**



	This dress is:							
Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Charming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not charming
Expensive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Cheap
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Ordinary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not ordinary
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not rich
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Old	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Young
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Boring

Appendix K  
 Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1  
 (Page 8 of 20)



This dress is:

Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Charming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not charming
Expensive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Cheap
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Ordinary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not ordinary
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not rich
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Old	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Young
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Boring

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 9 of 20)**



This dress is:

Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Charming	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not charming
Expensive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Cheap
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Ordinary	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not ordinary
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not rich
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Old	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Young
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Boring

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 10 of 20)**

**You have now completed the dress portion of the survey.**

**Before moving on to the typefaces, please complete the following two activities. They have been included as a way to give you a break--kind of like the sorbet that fine restaurants serve between courses to refresh the palate.**

**I hope you enjoy them. They might even make you giggle a bit!**

Appendix K  
Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1  
(Page 11 of 20)

This is an excerpt from the June 1998  
*Reader's Digest*, p. 29-30.

## Words to Live By

Tips from a speech never given

By MARY SCHMICH

*From Chicago Tribune*

**T**HE FOLLOWING newspaper column written by Mary Schmich was published in the *Chicago Tribune* last June, then made the rounds on the Internet. Along the way this mock commencement speech was attributed to novelist Kurt Vonnegut. "I would have been proud had the words been mine," an amused Vonnegut said.

For those who are graduating—or just need a friendly reminder about what's important in life—here are Schmich's words of wisdom.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they've faded. But trust me, in 20 years you'll look back at photos of yourself and recall how fabulous you really looked at the time. You are not as fat as you imagine.

Don't worry about the future. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing gum. Real troubles are apt to blind-side you at 4 p.m. on an idle Tuesday.

Do one thing daily that scares you. Sing.

Don't be reckless with other people's

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Wear sunscreen.

If I could offer only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering experience. I will dispense this advice now.

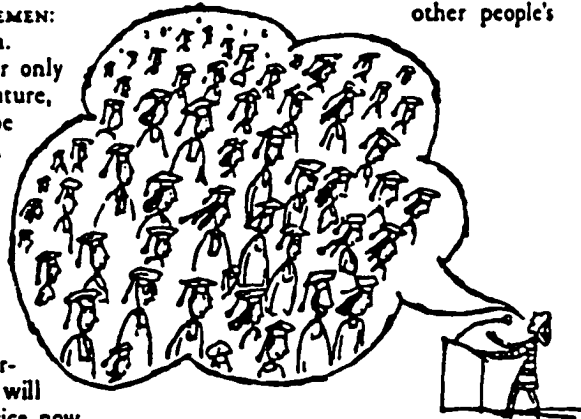


ILLUSTRATION: © DANIEL BOSTER

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(continued - next page)

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 12 of 20)**

**Words to Live By**

hearts. Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours.

**Floss.**

Remember compliments, forget insults.

Keep old love letters. Throw away old bank statements.

**Stretch.**

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't know what they want to do with theirs.

Be kind to your knees. You'll miss them when they're gone.

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the funky chicken on your 75th wedding anniversary. Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself or berate yourself too much. Your choices are half chance, like everybody else's.

**Dance.**

Read the directions, even if you don't follow them.

Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

Get to know your parents. You never know when they'll be gone.

Be nice to your siblings. They're

the best link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you.

Understand that friends come and go, but with a precious few you should hold on. The older you get, the more you need the people who knew you when you were young.

**Travel.**

Accept these certain truths:

*Accept these  
certain truths:  
Prices will rise.  
Politicians will  
philander. You,  
too, will get old.*

Prices will rise. Politicians will philander. You, too, will get old. And then you'll fantasize that when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians were noble and children respected their elders.

Respect your elders.

Don't expect anyone else to support you. Maybe you have a trust fund. Maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse. But you never know when either one might run out.

Don't mess too much with your hair, or by the time you're 40, it will look 85.

Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off and recycling it for more than it's worth.

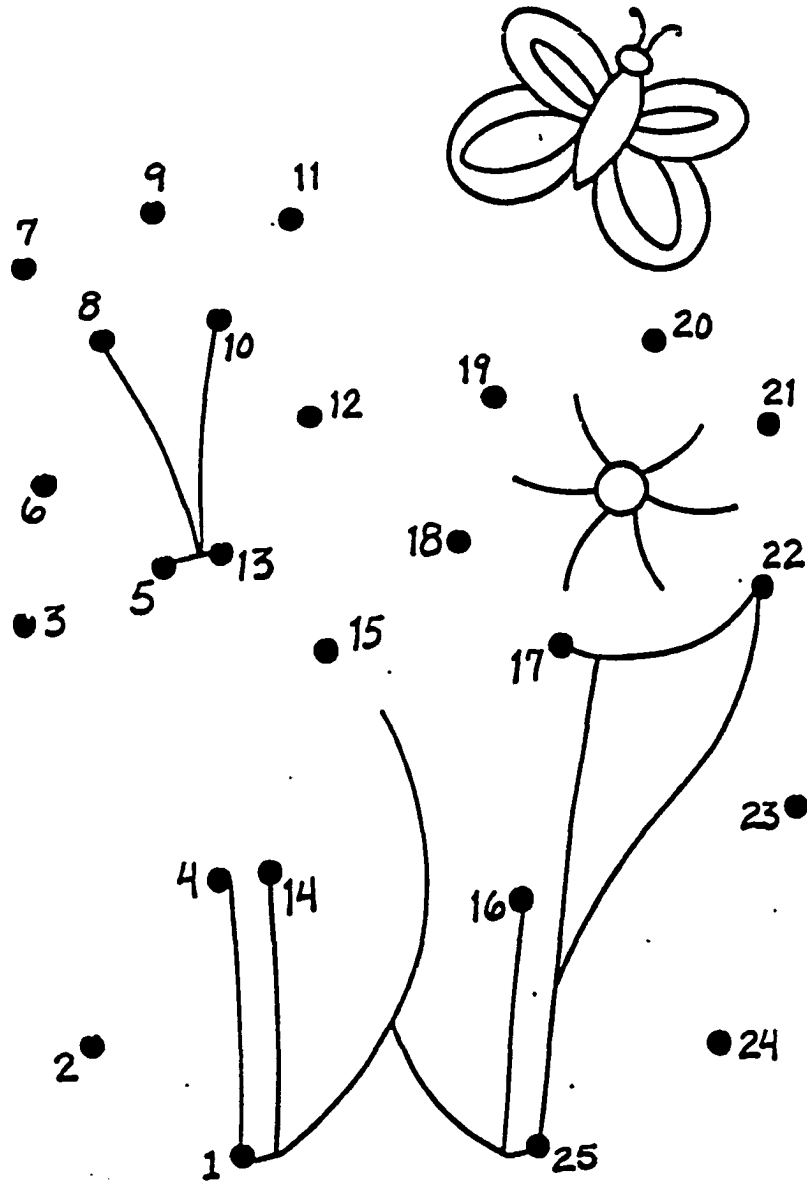
But trust me on the sunscreen.

FOR REPRINTS SEE PAGE 263.

Overheard at a bar: "If a man speaks in the forest, and there's no woman around to hear him, is he still wrong?" — *Contributed by EABLE NITCHNER*

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 13 of 20)**

**Take a look at this connect-the-dot picture before completing it. What do you think it is? \_\_\_\_\_**



**Were you right? \_\_\_\_\_ Even close? \_\_\_\_\_**  
**(Either way, it doesn't matter. This is just for fun.)**

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 14 of 20)**

**Now please move on to the  
Typeface Style survey.**

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest i**  
**(Page 15 of 20)**

# The Typeface Styles

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Again, *be sure* that you check every scale. Do not omit any!
2. Never put more than one checkmark on a single scale.
3. Please note that the word "Handgloves" has been chosen because it contains each angle and shape of the alphabet.

Make each item a separate and independent judgment. Work at a fairly high speed through this questionnaire. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your *first impressions*, the immediate feelings about the items, that I want. On the other hand, please do not be careless because I want your true impressions.

Thanks.

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 16 of 20)**

# Handgloves

Formal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Casual
Exciting	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not exciting
Stylish	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not stylish
Traditional	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not traditional
Young	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Old
Beautiful	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ugly
Gentle	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Rough
High quality	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Low quality
Legible	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not legible
Rich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Poor
Downscale	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upscale
Elegant	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not elegant
Humorous	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not humorous
Lower class	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Upper class
Loud	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Quiet
Cheap	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Expensive
Neutral	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Not neutral

Garamond/s/us

Appendix K  
Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1  
(Page 17 of 20)

# HANDGLOVES

<b>FORMAL</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>CASUAL</b>
<b>EXCITING</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT EXCITING</b>
<b>STYLISH</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT STYLISH</b>
<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT TRADITIONAL</b>
<b>YOUNG</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>OLD</b>
<b>BEAUTIFUL</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>UGLY</b>
<b>GENTLE</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>ROUGH</b>
<b>HIGH QUALITY</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>LOW QUALITY</b>
<b>LEGIBLE</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT LEGIBLE</b>
<b>RICH</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>POOR</b>
<b>DOWNSCALE</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>UPSCALE</b>
<b>ELEGANT</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT ELEGANT</b>
<b>HUMOROUS</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT HUMOROUS</b>
<b>LOWER CLASS</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>UPPER CLASS</b>
<b>LOUD</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>QUIET</b>
<b>CHEAP</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>EXPENSIVE</b>
<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>NOT NEUTRAL</b>

**STENCIL/S/DS**

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 18 of 20)**

# Handgloves

<b>Formal</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Casual</b>
<b>Exciting</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not exciting</b>
<b>Stylish</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not stylish</b>
<b>Traditional</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not traditional</b>
<b>Young</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Old</b>
<b>Beautiful</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Ugly</b>
<b>Gentle</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Rough</b>
<b>High quality</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Low quality</b>
<b>Legible</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not legible</b>
<b>Rich</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Downscale</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Upscale</b>
<b>Elegant</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not elegant</b>
<b>Humorous</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not humorous</b>
<b>Lower class</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Upper class</b>
<b>Loud</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Quiet</b>
<b>Cheap</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Expensive</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<b>Not neutral</b>

Courier/ss/ds  
 Pretest1.dis/sll#10

Appendix K  
Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1  
(Page 19 of 20)

# Handgloves

<b>Formal</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Casual</b>
<b>Exciting</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not exciting</b>
<b>Stylish</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not Stylish</b>
<b>Traditional</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not traditional</b>
<b>Young</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Old</b>
<b>Beautiful</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ugly</b>
<b>Gentle</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rough</b>
<b>High quality</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Low quality</b>
<b>Legible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not legible</b>
<b>Rich</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Downscale</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Upscale</b>
<b>Elegant</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not elegant</b>
<b>Humorous</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not humorous</b>
<b>Lower class</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Upper class</b>
<b>Loud</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Quiet</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not neutral</b>
<b>Cheap</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Expensive</b>

Bauhaus93/12/02

**Appendix K**  
**Participant Packet for Dress Pretest and Typeface Pretest 1**  
**(Page 20 of 20)**

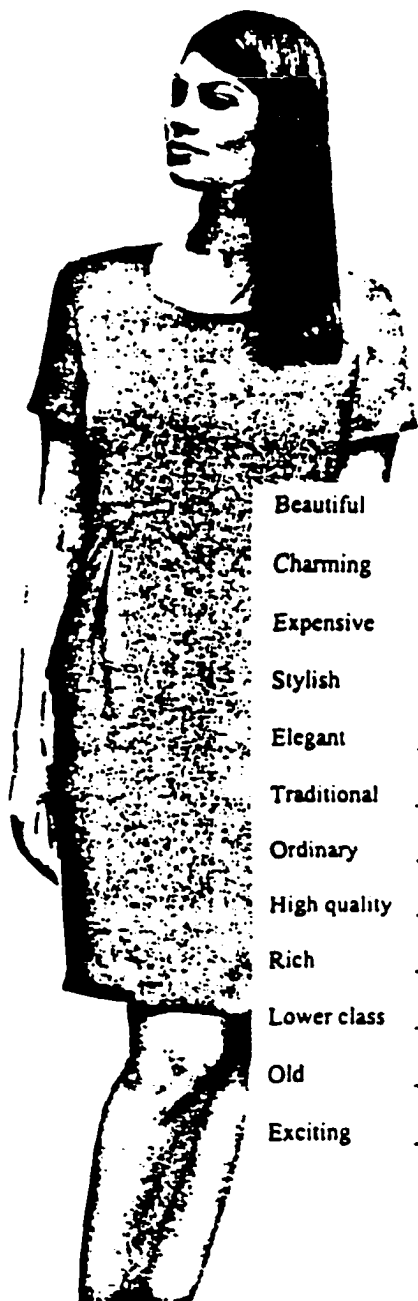
**You have now finished the survey.  
Thanks for taking the time to help me  
with my dissertation research.**

**Please give your complete survey  
packet to the survey administrator.**

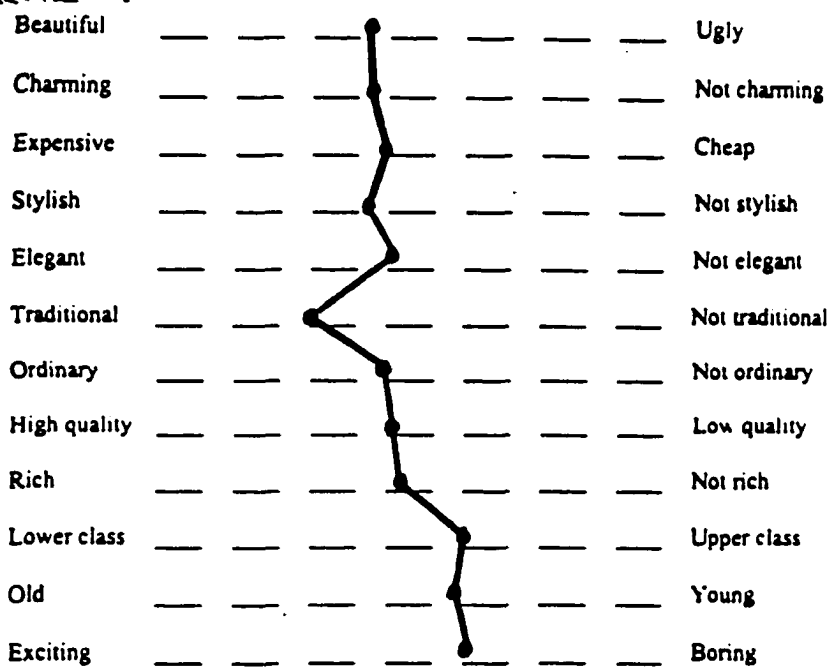
**Have a nice day (or evening)!**

*Sandy*

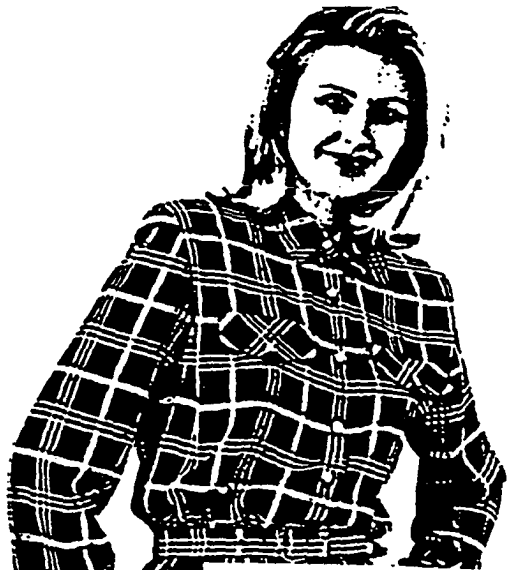
### Appendix L Image Profile Maps for Dress Pretest (Page 1 of 5)



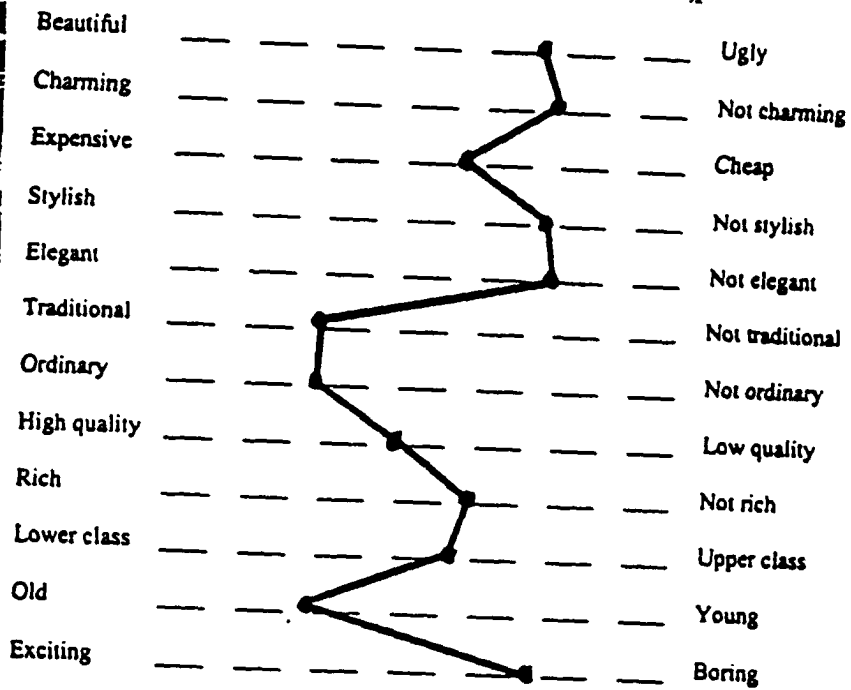
This dress is:



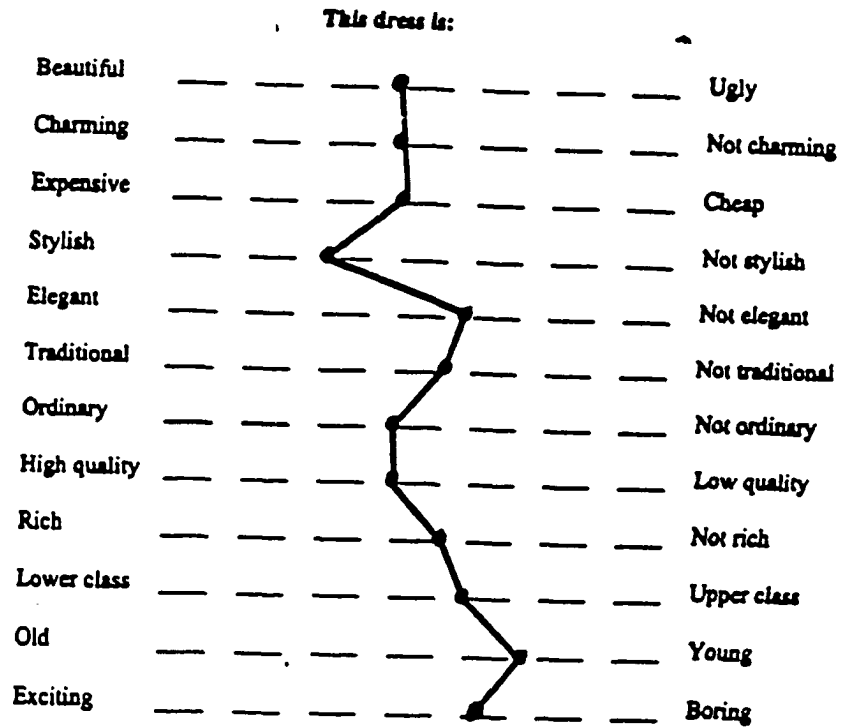
### Appendix L Image Profile Maps for Dress Pretest (Page 2 of 5)



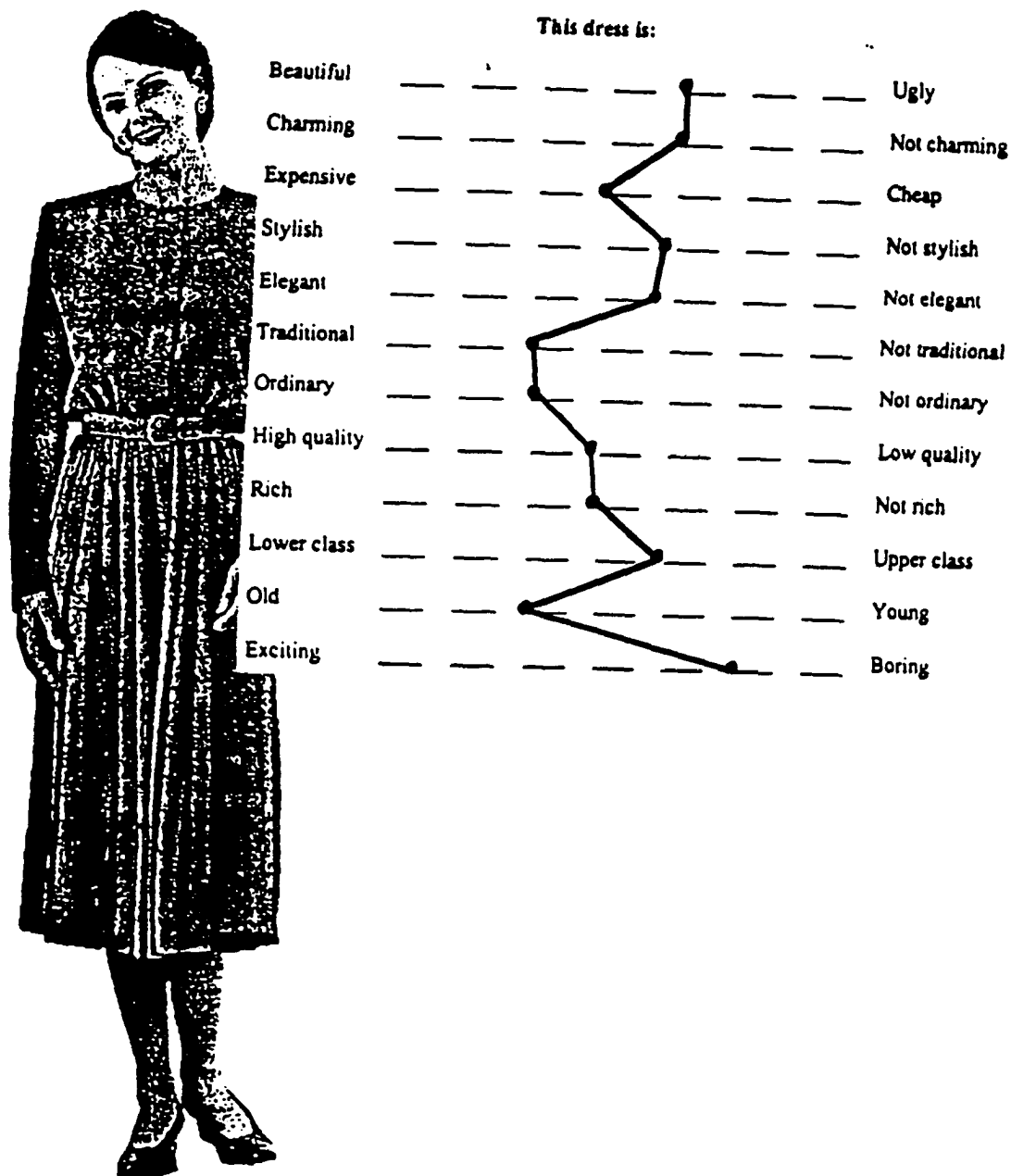
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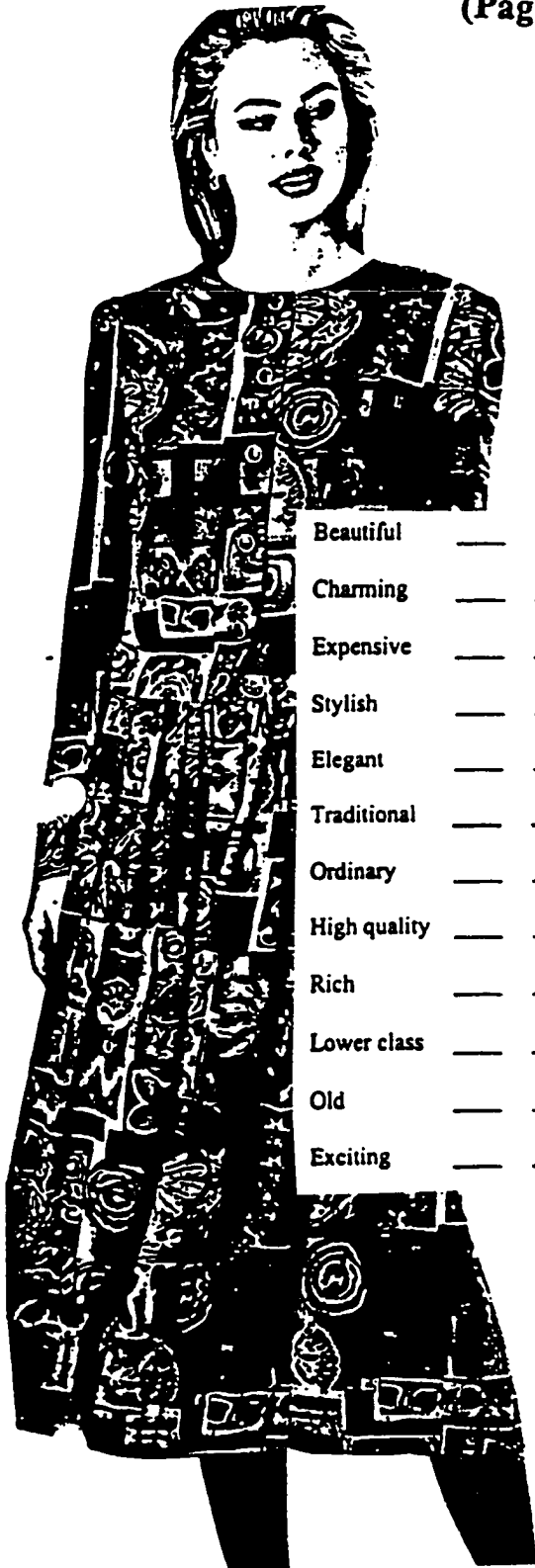
### Appendix L Image Profile Maps for Dress Pretest (Page 3 of 5)



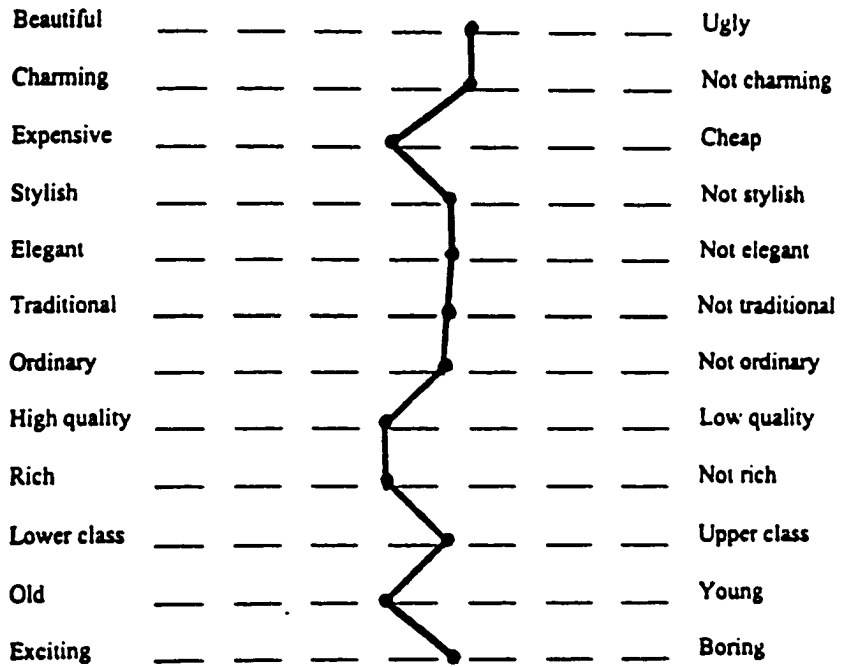
### Appendix L Image Profile Maps for Dress Pretest (Page 4 of 5)



### Appendix L Image Profile Maps for Dress Pretest (Page 5 of 5)

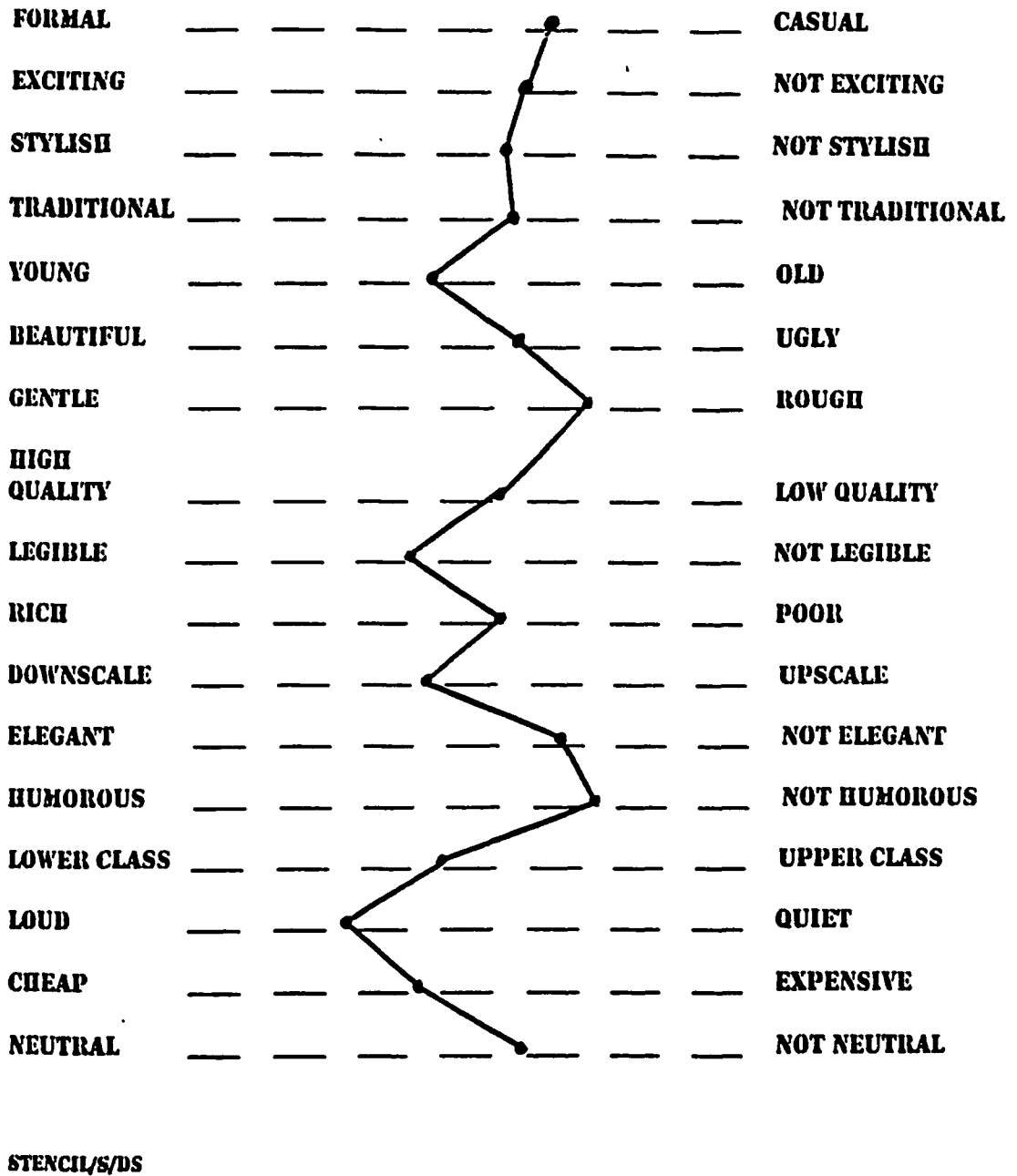


This dress is:



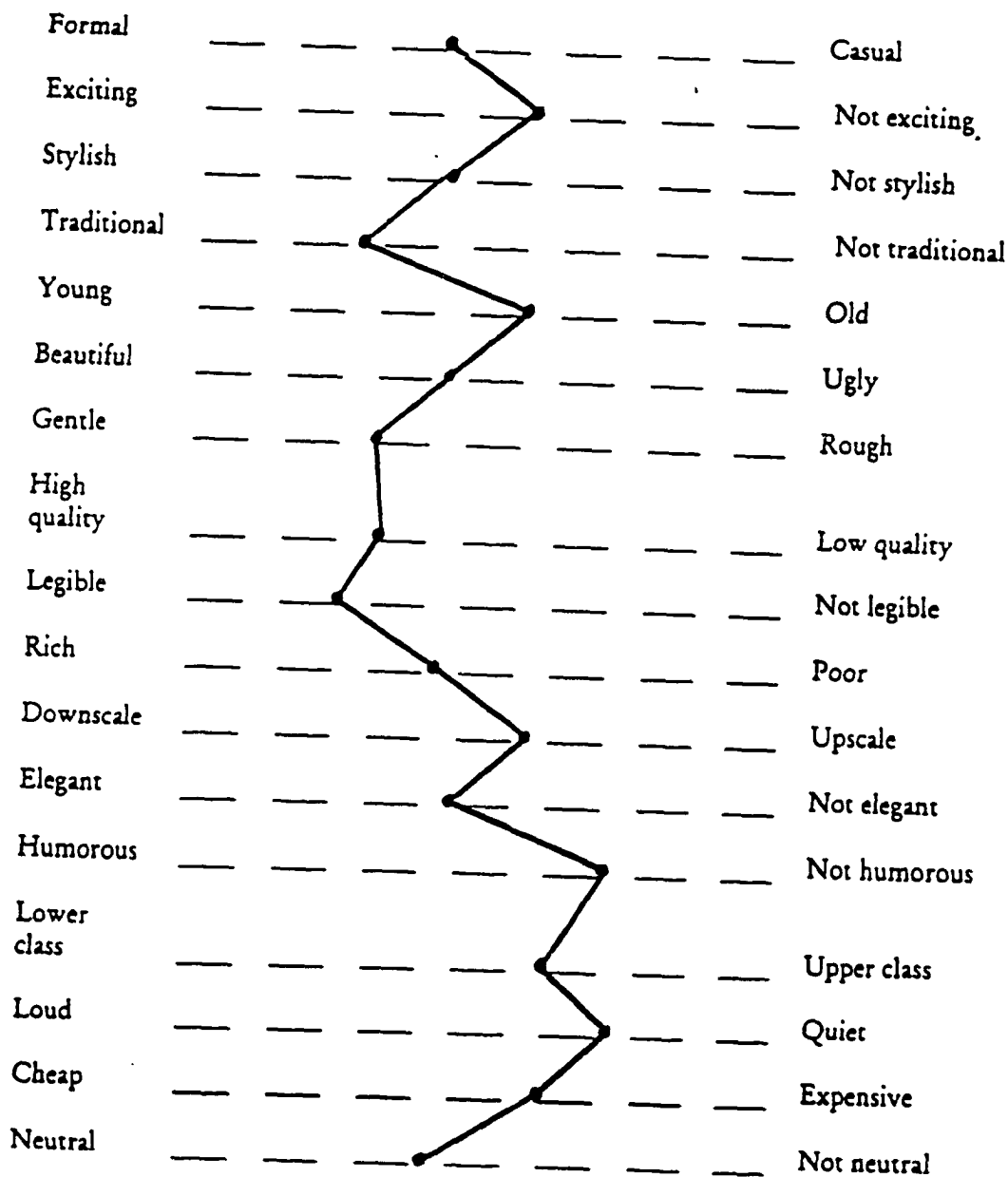
Appendix M  
 Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests  
 (Page 1 of 6)

# HANDGLOVES



Appendix M  
 Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests  
 (Page 2 of 6)

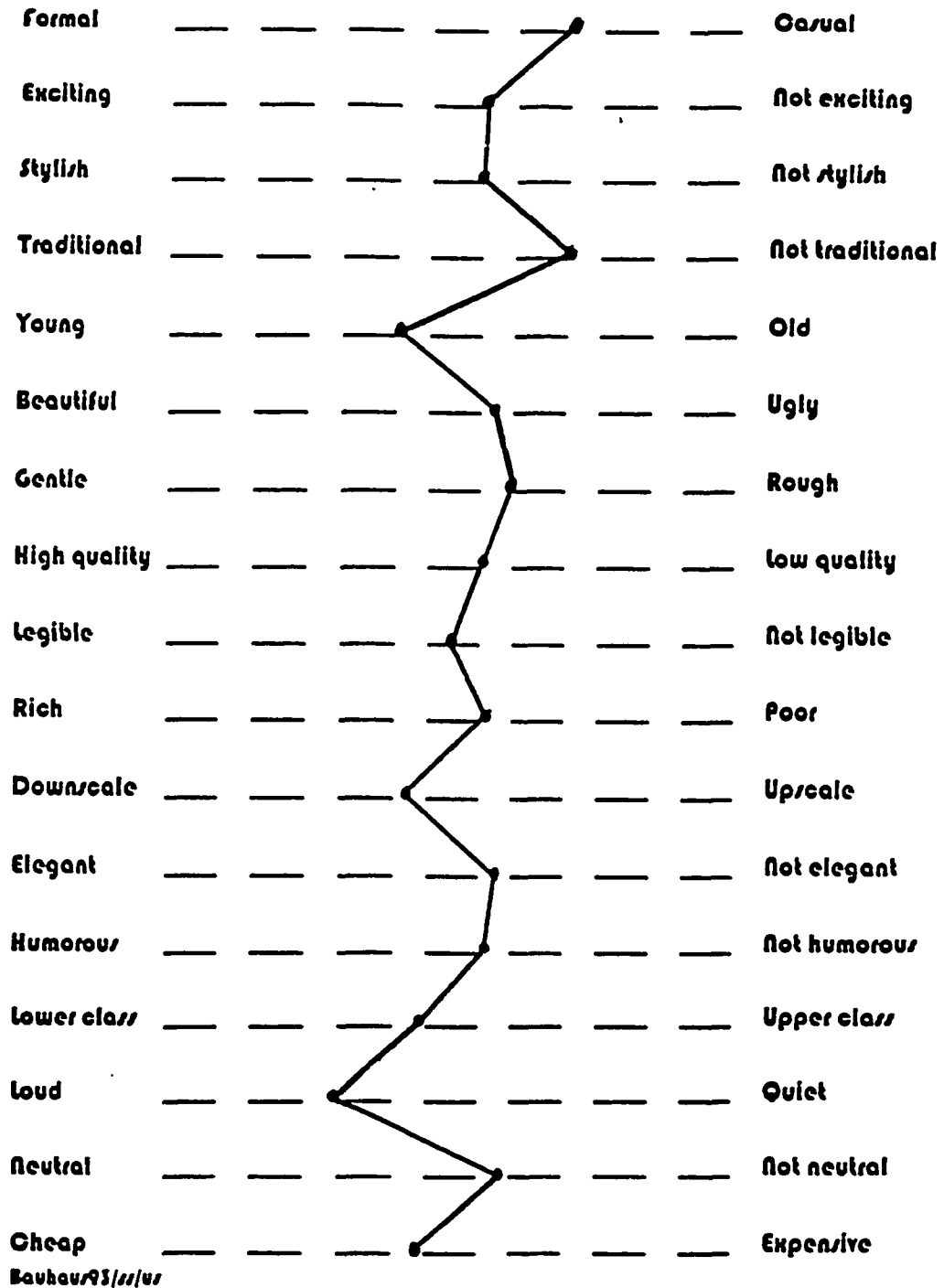
# Handgloves



*Garamond/s/us*

Appendix M  
 Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests  
 (Page 3 of 6)

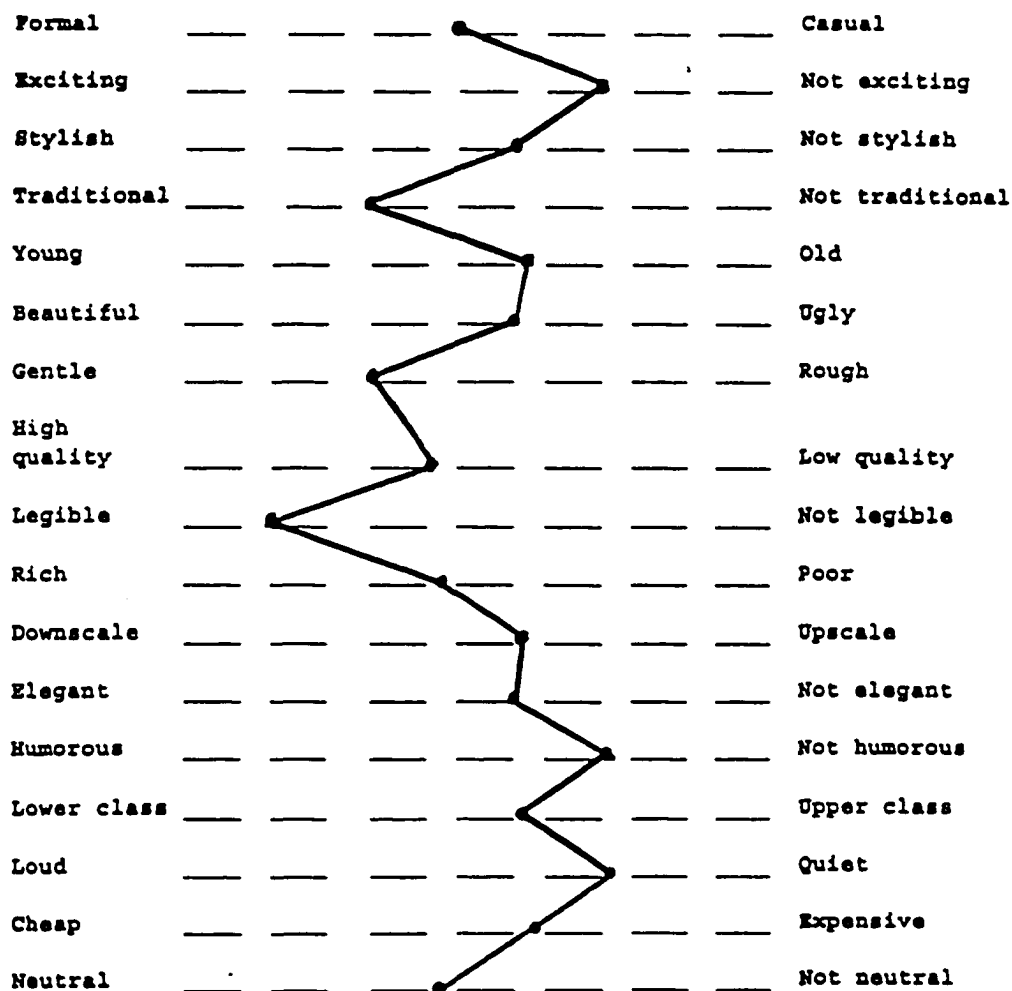
# Handgloves



Bauhaus93/01/02

**Appendix M**  
**Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests**  
 (Page 4 of 6)

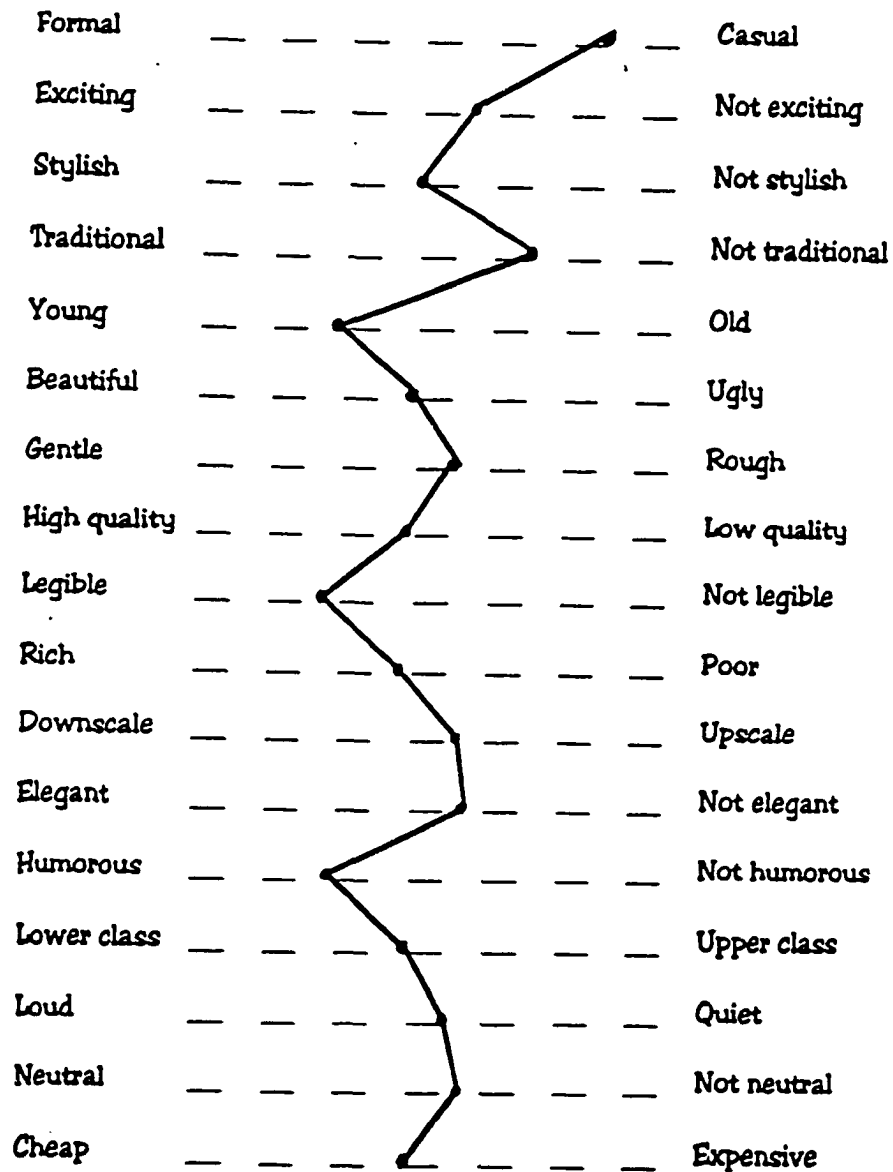
# Handgloves



Courier/ss/ds

**Appendix M**  
**Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests**  
**(Page 5 of 6)**

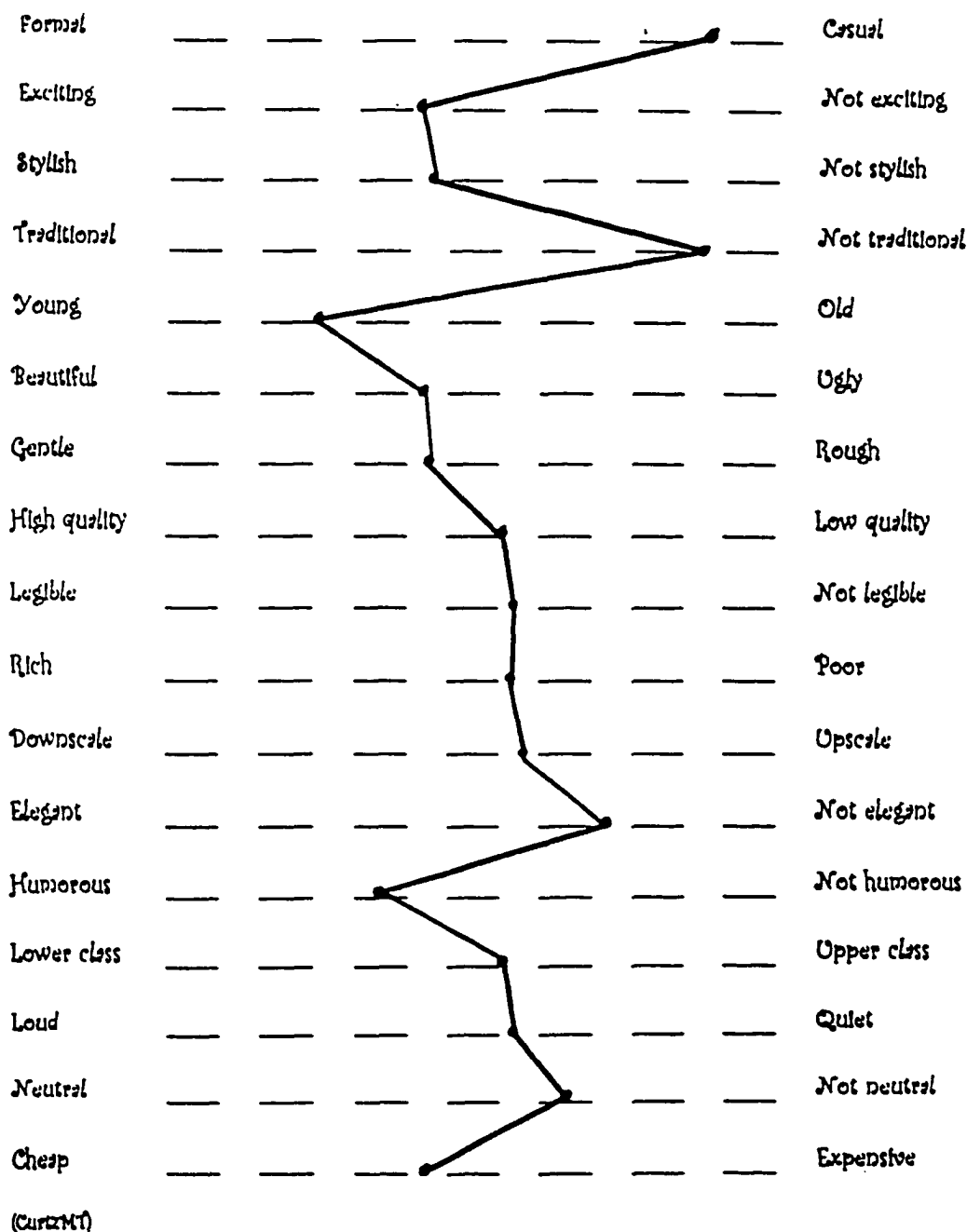
Tell me what you think of this typeface style. I have used it for this entire page.



(Jester)

**Appendix M**  
**Image Profile Maps for Typeface Pretests**  
**(Page 6 of 6)**

Tell me what you think of this typeface style. I have used it for this entire page.



**Appendix N**  
**Subject Packet for Second Typeface Pretest**  
**(Page 1 of 5)**

Subject No. \_\_\_\_

# Typeface Styles: Pretest #2

## **DIRECTIONS:**

1. You have done this before so it should be a piece of cake this time around. I am doing this again because my first pretest did not give me all of the results that I need for my dissertation experiment. Not to worry. That is what pretests are for--to iron out things in advance.
2. You will be looking at three different typeface styles.
3. Judge each typeface style against the series of descriptive scales that has been provided. Again, I am interested in how *you* perceive the typeface style.
4. ***Be sure*** that you check every scale. **Do not omit any!**
5. Never put more than one checkmark on a single scale.

*Thanks for helping me out--again!*

**Appendix N**  
**Subject Packet for Second Typeface Pretest**  
**(Page 2 of 5)**

Tell me what you think of this typeface style. I have used it for this entire page.

Formal	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Casual
Exciting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not exciting
Stylish	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not stylish
Traditional	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not traditional
Young	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Old
Beautiful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Ugly
Gentle	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Rough
High quality	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Low quality
Legible	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not legible
Rich	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Poor
Downscale	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Upscale
Elegant	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not elegant
Humorous	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not humorous
Lower class	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Upper class
Loud	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Quiet
Neutral	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Not neutral
Cheap	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Expensive

**Appendix N**  
**Subject Packet for Second Typeface Pretest**  
**(Page 3 of 5)**

Tell me what you think of this typeface style. I have used it for this entire page.

Formal	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Casual
Exciting	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not exciting
Stylish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not stylish
Traditional	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not traditional
Young	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Old
Beautiful	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Ugly
Gentle	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Rough
High quality	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Low quality
Legible	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not legible
Rich	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Poor
Downscale	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Upscale
Elegant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not elegant
Humorous	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not humorous
Lower class	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Upper class
Loud	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Quiet
Neutral	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Not neutral
Cheap	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Expensive

(Garamond)

**Appendix N**  
**Subject Packet for Second Typeface Pretest**  
**(Page 4 of 5)**

Tell me what you think of this typeface style. I have used it for this entire page.

Formal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Casual
Exciting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not exciting
Stylish	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not stylish
Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not traditional
Young	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Old
Beautiful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ugly
Gentle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rough
High quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low quality
Legible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not legible
Rich	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor
Downscale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Upscale
Elegant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not elegant
Humorous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not humorous
Lower class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Upper class
Loud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiet
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not neutral
Cheap	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expensive

(Jester)

**Appendix N**  
**Subject Packet for Second Typeface Pretest**  
**(Page 5 of 5)**

All done. Please put your completed survey in the provided envelope and seal it.

Thanks!

*Sandy Leader*  
7-21-98

**Appendix O**  
**Participant Release Agreement**  
**(Thought-Listing Procedure)**

I agree to participate in a thought-listing session to analyze advertisements. Thought-listing is a research technique in which subjects like myself are asked to record their thoughts relevant to some stimulus situation such as an advertisement. For this research, thought-listing will be used to assess how I think as I process a retail newspaper ad and whether the selected design elements affect my categorization of a retail store as high, medium, or low quality. I will be shown a series of ads, one at a time, projected on a screen. After viewing each ad, I will be asked to record my thoughts and to answer questions about store quality and my attitude toward the ad. I will also be asked a general question about the price I would pay for the product in the ads. I will be given three minutes to complete all activities for each ad.

I understand the purpose and nature of the study, and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that there should be no attendant discomfort or risk expected (except maybe for uncomfortable chairs) but I understand that I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. I also understand that no alternative procedures are available for my participation since this thought-listing procedure is the only data collection method of choice for the researcher.

I grant permission for the thought-listing data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a dissertation, and any other future publications.

I understand that a summary of the participants, including myself, will be used and will include age and any other pertinent information that will help the reader come to know the participants. I grant permission for the above personal information to be used. I understand that the data are confidential and that I will be identified only by subject number in writing or orally.

I agree to participate in a session of no longer than one hour. I understand that you will answer any inquiries concerning procedures and that you will provide me with a summary of results if I request it.

Research Participant	Date
Sandra L. Lueder	Date
Location	

**Appendix P**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Directions and Sample of Subject Response Sheet**  
**(Page 1 of 4)**

**Subject No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:**

I am interested in your thoughts during the presentation of *each* of four retail newspaper ads, particularly the thoughts you have about **the ad and the quality of the retail store** that is doing the advertising. You might have thoughts that are all favorable, some thoughts that are not favorable, some thoughts that are irrelevant or neutral, or a mixture of the three. Any of these is fine. Simply list what you are thinking when you look at each ad.

Two pages are provided for each ad. The *first page* is provided for your thoughts. Please use this page to record your thoughts and ideas about the ad or store. Simply write down the first thought or idea you have in one of the boxes provided. *If the thought is a favorable thought, put it in the “positive” box (box #1). If the thought is an unfavorable thought, put it in the “negative” box (the middle box). If the thought is a neutral or irrelevant thought, put it in the “neutral or irrelevant” box (box #3).* Please put *only one idea or thought in each box*. You should try to record only what you are thinking while looking at each ad.

Please state your thoughts and ideas as concisely as possible. **A phrase is sufficient. Ignore spelling, grammar, and punctuation.** You will have 2 ½ minutes to write down your thoughts and ideas.

I have deliberately provided more space than I think most people will need to insure that everyone will have plenty of room to write down their thoughts for each ad. Don't worry if you don't fill every space. Just write down whatever your thoughts are for each ad. Please be completely honest, and list all of the thoughts you have.

**When you have finished writing down your thoughts, please turn to the *second page* and fill out the rest of the questionnaire.** You will have three minutes total to write down your thoughts and respond to the additional questionnaire.

**Appendix P**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Directions and Sample of Subject Response Sheet**  
**(Page 2 of 4)**

**AD #1**

**Appendix P**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Directions and Sample of Subject Response Sheet**

**Thought-Listing Response Sheet (Page 3 of 4) Ad Number:   1   (Page 1 of 2)**

<b>POSITIVE Thoughts</b>	<b>NEGATIVE Thoughts</b>	<b>NEUTRAL/IRRELEVANT Thoughts</b>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neutral or Irrelevant</i>

**Appendix P**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Directions and Sample of Subject Response Sheet**  
**(Page 4 of 4)**

**Subject Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Ad Number:** 1 (Page 2 of 2)

**Thought-Listing Response Sheet**

\*\*\*\*\*

**QUALITY EVALUATION**

**Directions:** Please make an X in the box that best represents your feelings about quality.

Evaluation Categories	High Quality	Above-Average Quality	Average Quality	Below-Average Quality	Low Quality	Don't Know
1. What kind of overall quality would you expect in the store that is running this ad?						
2. What kind of merchandise would you expect in the store that is running this ad?						
3. What kind of sales assistance would you expect in the store that is running this ad?						

**STOP! Do not proceed further until told to do so.**

ThotList.shu/s/1#10

**Appendix Q**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Coding Instructions and Coding Scheme for Listed Thoughts**  
**(Page 1 of 3)**

**Coding Instructions**

1. Read all of the listed thoughts before deciding on any code assignments.
2. Review the attached coding system.
3. Go back and read all of the thoughts again so that you can orient yourself.
4. After completing 1-3, go back to the beginning of the listed thoughts. Assign *one* code number to each thought. Put the code *at the end* of each thought. Please use a pencil so that you can go back and make changes if you want to.
5. When coding each of the thoughts, it will be necessary for you to make judgments about “positive” and “negative”. To a great extent you can follow the self-report designations of positive and negative. However, there will be those instances where you will have to make a judgment about this—especially with respect to thoughts that the subjects considered “neutral”.

When you have questions about any of the thoughts, pay attention to the meaning of the words.

6. Any interpretation problems can be discussed with me later.

***Thanks!***

**Appendix Q**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Coding Instructions and Coding Scheme for Listed Thoughts**  
**(Page 2 of 3)**

Category	Examples of Listed Thoughts	Code
Good service	Positive comments about store personnel. Things like personnel who are: helpful; caring; courteous; prompt; ready, willing, and eager to serve, etc. The people who work in the store don't bother you.	1
Poor service	Negative comments about the store's service. Would include things like: personnel who are rude, slow, not very interested in the customers; incompetence; the personnel in the store hang around you while you're shopping; you can never find someone to help you, etc.	2
High price	Expensive; too expensive; ritzy; upscale; exclusive store; probably too expensive; probably over my budget; snobbish; snooty; etc.	3
Low price	Inexpensive; cheap; bargain basement; discount; looks cheesy; etc.	4
High quality merchandise	Carry all the name brands; merchandise is well-made; will last a long time; good selection; etc.	5
Low quality merchandise	No name brands; falls apart when you get home; not much to choose from; etc.	6
Dress-- Positive	Classy; likes the dress material (crepe); stylish; great styling; good colors; sophisticated; dress is well made; likes the color "plum"; good size selection; upscale; like Ann Taylor; exciting; etc.	7
Dress-- Negative	Ugly; dislikes or hates the material (crepe) of the dress; not very stylish; not my style; limited styles and colors; not many sizes to choose from; unaware of sizes; not exciting in terms of fashion; boring; not flattering to her figure; wouldn't look at twice; wouldn't wear to a funeral; etc.	8
Model-- Positive	Positive comments about the model. Would include things like: pretty model; strong, working woman; model is not pencil thin; model looks elegant; thin; pretty; young; etc.	9
Model-- Negative	Negative comments about the model. Would include things like: model too young; looks fat; model could smile; legs are cut off; model is ugly; etc.	10
Good store facilities	Easy to find things; easy to shop; personnel are well-dressed; neat; tidy; good music in the background; clean and bright; feel good when I shop there; convenience; etc.	11
Poor store facilities	Hard to find things; messy; music is annoying; music gets on my nerves; salesclerks dress like slob; equipment/fixtures look old; dirty; etc.	12
Overall ad design or layout-- positive	Overall positive feelings about the ad. Things looking okay; eye catching; gets my attention; like the ad; few words are better; like the border; etc.	13

**Appendix Q**  
**Thought-Listing Pretest**  
**Coding Instructions and Coding Scheme for Listed Thoughts**  
**(Page 3 of 3)**

Category	Examples of Listed Thoughts	Code
Overall ad design or layout--Negative	Overall negative feelings about the ad. Would include things like: not eye catching; doesn't get my attention; no price mentioned; no address mentioned; ad is too plain; etc.	14
Font/typeface/writing style/print--Positive	Likes the font; describes the font in a positive way; readable; nice, simple printing--not fancy; the less fancy lettering is more appealing; etc.	15
Font/typeface/writing style/print--Negative	Dislikes the font; describes font in a negative way; comments about the backward apostrophe or the use of small 's'; etc.	16
White space--Positive	Likes the white space; not too busy; simple and concise; etc.	17
White space--Negative	Too much white space; feelings of "blankness" or emptiness; needing something in the background; too plain; negative comments about the suns, graphics; graphics make the ad look cheap; needs something in the background; distracting visuals; don't like the border; etc.	18
Balance--Positive	Well-balanced; positive comments about the placement of the model on the page; centered layout is easier to follow; etc.	19
Balance--Negative	Out of balance; references to being off-center; positive comments about the placement of the model/dress on the page; etc.	20
Miscellaneous Quality Thoughts--Positive	Seems to be a positive quality thought but does not fit into the specific positive quality codes.	21
Miscellaneous Quality Thoughts--Negative	Seems to be a negative quality thought but does not fit into the specific negative quality codes.	22
Non-Quality Thoughts	This category includes all thoughts not related to quality that do not fit into any other category-- <i>except for</i> interpretation problems which have been given a separate category. These thoughts will most likely be found predominantly in the "Neutral" thought category. Examples: I wish ad would go away; mind is wandering; don't like Foley name; etc.	23
Interpretation Problems	Coder is unable to interpret the thought. This may be because the thought is unclear, doesn't make any sense to you, or does not seem to fit into any of the other categories. This is where the coder would put a thought she doesn't know what to do with otherwise.	24

## Appendix R

### Main Experiment: Participant Release Agreement

I agree to participate in an experiment involving the analysis of retail advertisements as a means for evaluating the quality of retail stores. I will see a series of three ads, one at a time, provided in a packet. After viewing each ad, I will fill out a questionnaire that asks me questions about retail store quality and my attitude toward the ad. Before seeing the first ad, I will fill out a questionnaire that asks me questions about my interest in the product that is in the ads I will see.

I understand the purpose and nature of the experiment, and I am participating voluntarily. I understand that there should be no attendant discomfort or risk expected (except maybe for uncomfortable chairs) but I understand that I am free to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. I also understand that no alternative procedures are available for my participation.

I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D degree, including a dissertation, and any other future publications.

I understand that a summary of the participants, including myself, may be used and may include age, household income, and any other pertinent information that will help the reader come to know the participants. I grant permission for the above personal information to be used. I also understand that the data are confidential, and that I will be identified by subject number only in writing and orally.

I agree to participate in a session no longer than one hour. I understand that you will answer any inquiries concerning procedures and that you will provide me with a summary of results if I request it.

Research Participant	Date
----------------------	------

Sandra L. Lueder	Date
------------------	------

Location
----------

**Appendix S**  
**Product Involvement Measurement Instrument**  
 (Page 1 of 2)

(Zaichowsky 1985, 1994)

Subject Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

The purpose of this form is to measure your involvement or interest in dresses. To take this measure, I need you to judge dresses against a series of descriptive scales according to how YOU perceive dresses.

If you feel that shoes (or dresses) are *very closely related* to one end of the scale, you should place your check mark as follows:

Unimportant   X   : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ Important

OR

Unimportant \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ :   X   Important

If you feel that shoes (or dresses) is *quite closely related* to one or the other end of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your check mark as follows:

Appealing \_\_\_ :   X   : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ Unappealing

OR

Appealing \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ :   X   : \_\_\_ Important

If you feel that shoes (or dresses) seem *only slightly related* (but not really neutral) to one end of the scale, you should place your check mark as follows:

Uninterested \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ :   X   : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ Interested

OR

Uninterested \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ :   X   : \_\_\_ : \_\_\_ Interested

**Appendix S**  
**Product Involvement Measurement Instrument**  
**(Page 2 of 2)**

\*\*\*\*\*

***Important!***

1. Be sure that you check every scale. Do not omit any.
2. Never put more than one check mark on a single scale.

Make each item a separate and independent judgment. Work at fairly high speed through this questionnaire. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impressions, the immediate feelings about the items, that I want. On the other hand, please do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.

Any questions?

\*\*\*\*\*

**EVALUATION SCALE FOR DRESSES**

important	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	unimportant *
boring	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	interesting
relevant	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	irrelevant*
exciting	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	unexciting*
means nothing	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	means a lot to me
appealing	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	unappealing*
fascinating	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	mundane*
worthless	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	valuable
involving	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	uninvolving*
not needed	___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___	needed

\* indicates item is reverse scored.

## Appendix T

### Subject Response Sheet for Main Experiment

Subject Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

### QUALITY EVALUATION

Directions: Please make an X in the box that *best* represents your feelings about quality.

Evaluation Categories	High Quality	Above Average Quality	Average Quality	Below-Average Quality	Low Quality	Don't Know
1. What kind of overall quality would you expect in this store?						
2. What kind of merchandise would you expect in this store?						
3. What kind of sales assistance would you expect in this store?						

\*\*\*\*\*

### THE ADVERTISEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Please tell me how you feel about the ad you have just seen by circling the number that best describes your feelings toward the ad. Example: Circling "1" is the strongest *positive* feeling you can have about the ad. Circling "7" is the strongest *negative* feeling you can have. Circling "4" means that you have no strong feelings one way or the other.

<b>Adjective 1</b>									<b>Adjective 2</b>
Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad	
Like very much	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dislike very much	
Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unpleasant	

**Appendix U**  
**Demographic Information Sheet**

\*\*\*\*\*

One last thing:

I would appreciate your giving me the following demographic data. This data will be anonymous and will only be associated with you as a subject number, not by name.

Your age \_\_\_\_\_

This information will help me to describe the sample when I write up my results.

Thank you so much for taking the time to help me out!

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