

**THE ECO-BRIDE:
DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY
BRIDAL COLLECTION FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN MARKET**

by

WENDY LYNN SCHULTZ

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
MASTERS DEGREE IN TECHNOLOGY
Fashion**

**in the
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION & TEXTILES
Durban University of Technology**

**Supervisor: Mrs Farida Kadwa
Co-supervisor: Prof. Dee Pratt**

August 2013

The Eco-Bride: development of an environmentally-friendly bridal collection for a South African market

by

Wendy Lynn Schultz

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Technology: Fashion in the Faculty of Arts and Design, Durban University of Technology

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other institution.

Signed:




Date: 14 August 2013

Approved for final submission:

Supervisor: Mrs F. Kadwa

Signed:



Date: 14 August 2013

Co-Supervisor: Professor D.D. Pratt

Signed:



Date: 14 August 2013

ABSTRACT

The Eco-Bride study is a practical product development research project in the fields of fashion, textiles, and sustainability. Currently it is considered fashionable to host an “eco-friendly” wedding, both because people are becoming more environmentally conscious with the prospect of global warming and also because the fashion industry, too, is attempting to reduce its impact on the environment. However, in spite of a growing trend in “eco-weddings”, the bridal gown remains a conventional garment with a heavy carbon footprint. The intention of this study was thus to develop and produce a range of environmentally-friendly bridal gowns in order to create alignment between trendy eco-weddings and the bridal gowns worn to these functions. This was considered to fill a gap in the local market and to work toward educating both brides and industry as to a product offering which is less harmful to the environment. To this end, mixed methods action research was carried out within a constructivist worldview, firstly, to explore what might be construed as an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and secondly, to establish what would appeal to South African brides. The concepts of eco-friendly design models, sustainable fashion, celebrity and product fetish, customer behaviour and product development strategies were investigated in order to conceptualise, design and produce a collection of ten Eco-Bride-branded gowns for the South African market. It was hoped that the development of an environmentally-friendly bridal collection might assist in opening up the market to eco-fashion bridal wear. Further products of the research included instructional videos of the eco-friendly design-make process, which were intended to create awareness of the various eco-options in both the textile industry and bridal fashion market.

DECLARATION

I hereby confirm that this report is entirely my own original work, and where the work of others has been cited, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced.

I hereby certify that this report has not been submitted for a degree at any other university or institution.

This is the first publication of this report.

It would not have been possible to complete this study without the funding of the National Research Foundation of South Africa through the Prestigious and Equity Masters Block Grant Scholarship.

To the late and dearly missed,

Dorothy Elaine Smith

20 May 1924 ~ 14 January 2011



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Farida Kadwa – my Promoter, Ally, Post-it, and Ever-Smiling Supervisor – I am so grateful for the long hours of editing, reading, and critiquing you have put in to this study. To Professor Dee Pratt – my essential co-supervisor – I am truly appreciative of the patience you kept in times of chaotic confusion and contradiction which continually bubbles and boils at the base of the eco-fashion paradox. And to Mr. George Vorster – Head of Department, Fashion & Textiles at DUT – your ever-willing ability to sort problems out has been a godsend, especially in the administrative and financial departments. Your positivity during the hundredth or so signing and validating of PG4-9-a-c2 has not gone unnoticed.

I thank my family support system: Jake Larsen, Janet Hancock, Anne and Allen Schultz who put up with the late nights and long-burning lights, the see-sawing stress and elation levels, and the laborious proof-reading chores.

Thanks also to the insightful Terrence Bray, supporter and study-mate Wendy Feather, and the eloquent Nirma Madhoo-Chipps for their critique and advice. Karen Ter Morshuizen and Dion Chang, being an integral part of this study, also deserve a mention as they gave up their time freely for this research endeavour; to Philippa Kethro, who banished colloquialism from my vocabulary, and Erica De Greef, who inspired me to write exactly as the thoughts formed in my mind.

Thanks to the Editor Anne Pipe, for fine-tuning my grammar, and Charmaine Naidoo and her team at the National Research Foundation; I thank you all for your time and efforts. And as for the radiant model Samantha Chandler, talented jeweller Chey Grossberg, and hair and makeup guru Adelle Jung, the Eco-Bride collection would look only half as charming without your input.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CHAPTER 1: ECO-BRIDE EXPLAINED	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 AIMS	1
1.3 OBJECTIVES	1
1.4 RATIONALE AND VALUE	2
1.5 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS	3
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS	3
1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	4
1.8 DELIMITATION	4
1.9 DEFINITIONS	5
1.10 CHAPTER OVERVIEWS	6
CHAPTER 2: ECO-BRIDE EDUCATION	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION	8
2.2 STANDARDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATION	8
2.2.1 Materials and green labelling	9
2.2.2 Carbon offsetting	9
2.2.3 Greenwashing and false advertising	10
2.3 MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE GOWN DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE	12
2.3.1 Slow fashion versus instant fashion	12
2.3.2 Emotionally durable design theory	14
2.3.3 Cradle to Cradle theory	15
2.3.4 Garments as signifiers theory: eco-dress versus eco-fashion	16
2.3.5 Environmentally-friendly construction processes	17
2.4 CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR	18
2.4.1 Celebrity and the (green) commodity fetish theory	19

2.4.2	Convenience and variety	20
2.4.3	Cost	24
2.4.4	Brand preferences and self image theory	24
2.5	ECO-BRIDE CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	28
2.6	CONCLUSION	29
CHAPTER 3:	ECO-BRIDE ENQUIRY	31
3.1	INTRODUCTION	31
3.2	MIXED METHODS: ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH	31
3.2.1	Mixed methods research design	31
3.2.2	How a constructivist orientation facilitates the Eco-Bride enquiry	33
3.2.3	What action research is	34
3.2.4	Why action research was used	34
3.2.5	The nature of action research cycles	37
3.3	INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	37
3.4	METHODOLOGY: CYCLE ONE	39
3.4.1	Instrument design and planning	40
a.	Designing questionnaire one	41
b.	Designing questionnaire two	42
3.4.2	Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations	42
a.	Reflecting on questionnaire one	43
b.	Reflecting on questionnaire two	44
3.4.3	Cycle one improvements	44
a.	Improving questionnaire one	44
b.	Improving questionnaire two	45
3.5	METHODOLOGY: CYCLE TWO	45
3.5.1	Instrument design and planning	46
a.	Planning the Eco-Bride display	47
b.	Designing questionnaire three	47
c.	Designing interview one	50
3.5.2	Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations	50
a.	Reflecting on questionnaire three	50
b.	Reflecting on interview one	51

3.5.3	Cycle two improvements	52
a.	Improving questionnaire three	52
b.	Improving interview one	52
3.6	METHODOLOGY: CYCLE THREE	53
3.6.1	Instrument design and planning	54
a.	Designing questionnaire four	54
b.	Designing interview two	55
3.6.2	Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations	56
a.	Reflecting on questionnaire four	56
b.	Reflecting on interview two	57
3.6.3	Cycle three improvements	58
3.7	DATA ANALYSIS	58
3.7.1	Questionnaire data analysis	59
3.7.2	Interview data analysis	60
3.8	ETHICS	60
3.8.1	Questionnaire ethical issues	60
3.8.2	Interview ethical issues	61
3.9	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	61
3.10	CONCLUSION	62
CHAPTER 4: ECO-BRIDE ENLIGHTENED		64
4.1	INTRODUCTION	64
4.2	CYCLE ONE: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	64
4.2.1	Questionnaire one: findings and interpretation	64
4.2.2	Questionnaire one: sub-conclusions	74
4.2.3	Questionnaire two: findings and interpretation	77
4.2.4	Questionnaire two: sub-conclusions	79
4.2.5	Data transfer into cycle two	82
4.3	CYCLE TWO: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	83
4.3.1	Questionnaire three: findings and interpretation	83
4.3.2	Questionnaire three: sub-conclusions	87
4.3.3	Interview one: findings and interpretation	88
4.3.4	Interview one: sub-conclusions	90

4.3.5	Data transfer into cycle three	91
4.4	CYCLE THREE: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	92
4.4.1	Questionnaire four: findings and interpretation	92
4.4.2	Questionnaire four: sub-conclusions	96
4.4.3	Interview two: findings and interpretation	98
4.4.4	Interview two: sub-conclusions	100
4.5	CONCLUSION	103
	CHAPTER 5: ECO-BRIDE ENSEMBLE	104
5.1	INTRODUCTION	104
5.2	SUMMARY OF SUB-CONCLUSIONS	104
5.2.1	Assumptions	104
5.2.2	Studio operating standards for sustainable fashion	105
5.2.3	Materials	106
5.2.4	What brides want	106
5.2.5	Design models	107
	a. Zero waste pattern-cutting	108
	b. The white gown	108
	c. Slow fashion	109
	d. Emotionally durable design	110
	e. Up-cycling	110
5.3	ECO-BRIDE COLLECTION OVERVIEW	110
5.4	CONCLUSION	122
	CHAPTER 6: ECO-BRIDE ENGAGED	123
6.1	INTRODUCTION	123
6.2	CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS	124
6.2.1	Factors classifying a bridal gown as being “eco-friendly”	124
6.2.2	Factors influencing a bride’s buying decision when purchasing a bridal gown	124
6.2.3	How the defining of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and brides’ buying decisions have contributed to the development of the Eco-Bride collection	125

6.3	COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROMOTIONS	125
6.3.1	Marketing strategies	126
6.4	ECO-BRIDE PRESENTATIONS	126
6.5	CONTRIBUTIONS	126
6.6	FURTHER RESEARCH	127
6.7	CONCLUSION	128
APPENDICES		129
A	Table 2.1 Materials certification comparisons	129
B1	Questionnaire one: schedule	130
B2	Questionnaire one: letter	131
B3	Questionnaire one: responses	132
C1	Questionnaire two: consent	133
C2	Questionnaire two: schedule and response	134
D1	Questionnaire three: with brides-to-be	135
D2	Questionnaire three: compiled responses	136
E1	Questionnaire four: online	137
E2	Questionnaire four: national transcript responses	139
F1	Interview two: consent	141
F2	Interview two: schedule	142
G	DUT Fashion Show 2011	144
H	List of websites	145
LIST OF REFERENCES		146

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Mark Liu's jigsaw puzzle concept	18
Figure 2.2	Lunar Bridal Collection 2009	20
Figure 2.3	Bridal Couture	21
Figure 2.4	Couture Collection	22
Figure 2.5	Natural Bridal Collection: Carmen	23
Figure 2.6	Christabelle Red	23
Figure 2.7	Rosa Clara "Rimel" macramé gown	26
Figure 2.8	"Eco" trend interpretation	27
Figure 3.1	Basic cycle of Eco-Bride action research model	37
Figure 3.2	Phases in cycle one	40
Figure 3.3	Phases in cycle two	46
Figure 3.4	Eco-Bride display at NWJ Bridal Show 2011	47
Figure 3.5	Layout of questionnaire three	49
Figure 3.6	Phases in cycle three	53
Figure 3.7	Eco-Bride sequential data collection and concurrent data analysis	59
Figure 4.1	Questionnaire one: trend awareness	65
Figure 4.2	Questionnaire one: body conscious feelings	65
Figure 4.3	Questionnaire one: status of mother's gown	66
Figure 4.4	Questionnaire one: sentiment	66
Figure 4.5	Questionnaire one: style icons	67
Figure 4.6	Questionnaire one: local designers	67
Figure 4.7	Questionnaire one: ideal wedding venues	68
Figure 4.8	Questionnaire one: favoured gown style features	69
Figure 4.9	Questionnaire one: gown style features to avoid	69
Figure 4.10	Questionnaire one: ideal gown suppliers	70
Figure 4.11	Questionnaire one: realistic gown suppliers	70
Figure 4.12	Questionnaire one: willingness to pay extra for eco-friendly gowns	71
Figure 4.13	Questionnaire one: dream budgets	72
Figure 4.14	Questionnaire one: realistic budgets	72
Figure 4.15	Questionnaire one: time to acquiring gown	73
Figure 4.16	Questionnaire one: expected services	74
Figure 4.17	Ballerina Bride	83
Figure 4.18	Screen Siren	84

Figure 4.19	Garden Bride	84
Figure 4.20	Seamless Mermaid	84
Figure 4.21	Fairytale Princess	85
Figure 4.22	Barefoot Bride	85
Figure 4.23	Structural Charm	85
Figure 4.24	Mary Quant	86
Figure 4.25	Questionnaire three: gown style preferences	86
Figure 4.26	Questionnaire three: preferred price points	87
Figure 4.27	Questionnaire three: preferred fabric choices	87
Figure 4.28	Snapshot of online questionnaire four	92
Figure 4.29	Questionnaire four: results of question one	93
Figure 4.30	Questionnaire four: results of question two	94
Figure 4.31	Questionnaire four: preferred fabric choices	95
Figure 4.32	Questionnaire four: results of question three	95

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Eco-Bride action research (A.R.) characteristics	36
Table 3.2	Summarised research instruments	39
Table 4.1	Questionnaire two: coded data	78
Table 4.2	Questionnaire two: code significance	79
Table 4.3	Interview one: coded data	89
Table 4.4	Interview one: code interpretation	90
Table 4.5	Comparison of results between Durban, Gauteng and Cape Town	96
Table 4.6	Interview two: coded data	98
Table 4.7	Interview two: code interpretation	100
Table 5.1	Eco-Bride collection overview	111

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

ECO-BRIDE EXPLAINED

1.1 BACKGROUND

Internationally, demand for organic and sustainable products is growing (Black, S. 2008: 17). “Organic” labelled products are now more readily advertised and available, “vintage” clothing has become trendy, and families are learning to recycle. While currently the trendiest manner in which to celebrate a wedding is the environmentally-friendly way (Black, P. 2008), in my experience as a designer, I have observed that bridal gowns being worn to these events are not themselves eco-friendly.

According to Theresa Winge (2008: 511), “Green is the new Black” which suggests that the green lifestyle is now fashionable. Coupled with increasing global awareness of the fashion industry’s adverse effects on the environment, from chemical and pesticide use in textile production to the discarding of garments in landfills (Winge 2008: 513), one can assume that the bridal market is ready for an environmentally-friendly bridal collection.

1.2 AIMS

While it is possible to sew a wedding dress in organic or recycled fabrics, the concept of what an environmentally-friendly bridal range entails, and how to develop such a fashion product, needed to be established. The aim of this study was thus to investigate the concept of developing an environmentally-friendly collection of bridal gowns (branded Eco-Bride) for South African brides.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

To accomplish the aims set out, the study needed to:

- define what could be construed as an environmentally-friendly bridal gown;
- explore the various methods and materials required to create a collection of environmentally-friendly bridal gowns and which of the options identified would be most appropriate for a South African market;
- identify what the target market is currently looking for in a bridal gown, including fabrics, colours, style details and price points; and

- establish industry experts' opinions on the concept of eco-fashion in a South African context.

1.4 RATIONALE AND VALUE

I am a bridal wear designer and lecturer in Creative Fashion Design and Textiles. It is my desire to improve my practice through the use of sustainable materials, sustainable and ethical business practices and through the communication of these values to brides and students. My passion for creating once-off fashion pieces and the inspiration found in non-traditional fabric applications fuelled this study.

I also experience great frustration over the lack of eco-friendly fabric available in South Africa and the general apathy that surrounds eco-awareness at local bridal suppliers. This frustration added impetus to the need for finding new and more efficient ways of creating bridal gowns. The value of this research thus included presenting an environmentally-friendly bridal gown collection, which informed my practice as designer, as well as empowering myself with new knowledge to share with design students.

Alignment between trendy eco-weddings and the bridal gowns worn to these functions was also created. It is anticipated that publicity of the Eco-Bride collection will contribute to getting the eco-campaign message out to fashion consumers.

There was also value in adding to the body of knowledge on the study of dress by using a practical working action research methodology that could be seamlessly extended into further research. The research was worth conducting because there is very little literature on this specific topic. Where academic research in sustainability is highly focussed, it tends to cover the broad spectrum of "fashion products" only, and an even broader "sustainable product design" in some cases.

This research study assisted in increasing public awareness of the eco-campaign through an online presentation of the collection; creating awareness within the local textile industry of the demand for locally-produced environmentally-friendly textiles; and

promoting environmental values after marriage, not just on the wedding day. After all, there is no excuse for only “doing good” on special occasions.

And lastly, there was value in completing this research since not only am I providing environmentally-aware brides with a sustainable gown option, but it will give them a unique and sentimental story to tell their friends about their gown.

The outcomes of the Eco-Bride study made a contribution in two key areas. Firstly, three educational and promotional videos about the Eco-Bride concept from idea to finished product were shared online through Vimeo.com and Youtube.com. Secondly, the craftspeople involved in the creation of lace and crochet for the collection were afforded the opportunity to further their skills and be included in promotional activities.

1.5 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What factors classify a bridal gown as being “eco-friendly”?
2. What factors influence a bride’s buying decision when purchasing a bridal gown?
3. How does the defining of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and brides’ buying decisions contribute to the development of the Eco-Bride collection?

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS

This research was based on three assumptions that dealt with the production of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown. The first assumption was that there is a gap in the South African market for an eco-friendly bridal collection. Online search results of the words “eco + friendly + wedding + dress” during the course of the years 2009-2012 revealed only two companies in South Africa trading in the eco-friendly clothing market, namely *Hemporium* and *Lunar*. It was not the intention of this study to exploit the green trend but rather to provide a sincerely thoughtful option for environmentally-aware brides and show that it is possible to be “chic” and eco-friendly at the same time.

The Eco-Bride customer is a discerning and well-educated woman, therefore absolute transparency is required by any Eco-Bride communication and marketing method

utilised. This second assumption was a necessary consideration during market research, and resulted in the fulfilment of a sincere eco-fashion brand.

Lastly, there was also an underlying assumption based on the cost of an eco-friendly gown being higher than an average bridal gown due to a higher cost in organic materials from certified suppliers such as Near Sea Naturals in the USA (Near Sea Naturals 2009).

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A constructivist approach was adopted to build and validate the above-mentioned assumptions. Using the personal opinions of brides and industry players gathered through mixed methods research gave the study a realistically constructed knowledge-base, one that was well prepared to define the Eco-Bride concept. However, due to the gap in the local market for sustainable products, this study relied on international fashion concepts and “eco-experiences” to form a basis for the South African context.

This constructivist orientation was well suited to setting up a conceptual framework for my study because its aim is in the reconstructing or understanding of individuals’ realities (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 112) through “passionate participation”. The Eco-Bride study portrays brides’ preferences to identify common ideals of dream gowns; ideas that vary greatly from person to person as a result of culture and personal experiences. Obtaining “passionate participation” from the brides in my sample was the key to gathering sincere and reliable data, and was guaranteed by my dual function as researcher and bridal wear designer.

1.8 DELIMITATION

To delimit the study according to the scope of a Master’s report, the primary focus was placed on the discovery of what can be construed as an environmentally-friendly bridal gown, what customers want, and how to conceptualize and create such a product. Issues central to the eco-friendly movement such as carbon offsetting, technical textile specifications, factory running standards and eco-marketing strategies, were impossible to exclude from a research study such as this one; however, each issue is worthy of a dissertation in itself. As such, these issues were brought into the study in Chapter Two to inform the Eco-Bride concept, and were dealt with on a basic level accordingly.

It was also not my intention to present the only possible incarnation of a “green” bridal collection. Having based the collection on the factors that influence buying decisions mixed with the constraints that being sustainable imposes on a fashion collection, I do expect that the resultant collection is representative of what South African brides want.

Within these boundaries, various practical limitations were encountered. Financial and methodological limitations included the cost of organic fabrics, reliability of data from the sample brides who were not necessarily of a green mindset, and the negative connotations that a “hippy” aesthetic currently holds in the fashion milieu.

The unavailability of locally manufactured organic fabrics posed a major limitation to the study as some fabrics had to be imported. It was also not known whether the resulting gowns would be accepted by South African brides at the proposed price point. The assumption that a gap exists in the South African bridal market for the Eco-Bride collection affected my ability to conduct highly focussed research. Since South African brides are mostly unaware of the few eco-friendly bridal options currently available, there is no online group, association, or other aggregation of eco-friendly brides I could use as my sample. Therefore, the brides I interviewed or surveyed were not necessarily of an eco-friendly mind-set, resulting in data which includes concerns a bride may harbour towards a green bridal gown.

It was clear from the initial research conducted to contextualise this study that connotations conjured by the term “earth-friendly” aligned more closely with a “hippie” aesthetic than with the typical bridal looks in stock in South African boutiques. This limited the number of brides interested in participating in my study as they were not inspired by the suggestion. Brides thus need to be educated in the fashion-forward possibilities of an eco-friendly bridal gown.

1.9 DEFINITIONS

In his foreword for *Sustainable Fashion: Why Now?*, Yvon Chouinard (2008: ix-x) defines the term “sustainable” as an activity or object being practised or created without a degradation of the resources used to implement it, without causing pollution or harm. In the fashion industry, this means that the materials used to create clothing must be renewable in order to ensure we may continue to produce that item. Garments are

considered unsustainable when the resources used to create them are finite and there is no evidence of attempts to reclaim those resources for reuse (Chait 2012; Chouinard 2008: ix-x). This is the sense in which I have used the term “sustainable” throughout this report.

There is also much debate about the vague meanings and colloquial use of terms such as “green”, “eco”, and “environmentally-friendly”. For clarity and efficiency, I have used the term “eco-friendly”, which is defined as an object or process being non-polluting and harmless to the environment (Holzer 2012; Green Retail Decisions 2012).

1.10 CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Chapter Two: *Eco-Bride Education* commences with the review of the literature to direct the customer research, enquiry and development of the Eco-Bride collection. Sources that reveal the various environmental standards appropriate for a bridal product are discussed. This sets the ground rules for what processes, fabrics, and design styles can and cannot be used during the construction of an Eco-Bride gown, according to their environmentally friendly qualities (or lack thereof). Typical consumer behaviour is discussed in relation to the target market and current market status. Also included in chapter two are various print media examples of current trends in bridal wear which offer generalisations of current consumer preferences. The Eco-Bride Education chapter is concluded with a brief outline of how the above elements affect the development of the Eco-Bride collection.

Chapter Three: *Eco-Bride Enquiry* details the mixed-methods action research plan followed and how the anticipated limitations were dealt with. The methodology is described within a defined constructivist paradigm which relates all customer, business and fashion product developmental issues to the study problem. The various successes and failures of the plan are also discussed in terms of their effects on the Eco-Bride collection development.

Chapter Four: *Eco-Bride Enlightened* presents the findings derived from the accumulated data. Graphs and tables are used to depict how the data was transferred from one cycle to the next, culminating in a set of sub-conclusions that were used to direct concept development.

Chapter Five: *Eco-Bride Ensemble* presents the Eco-Bride collection exhibited at the 2011 DUT Fashion Show. Introduced with a summary of the overall look and feel of the collection, each gown is then depicted in storyboard format, complete with fashion illustrations, allocated fabric swatches, photographs of gown development and technical drawings. The procedures used and materials sourced for suitability to the Eco-Bride concepts are also listed, along with their environmental credentials. This is the visual tense of the research undertaken, allowing the reader to see the sub-conclusions that informed the development of the Eco-Bride collection.

Chapter Six: *Eco-Bride Engaged* concludes by discussing the successes of the Eco-Bride collection and offers recommendations of future promotional tools. This ensures one of the main ambitions of the study is fulfilled: opening up the market to eco-fashion bridal wear. Contributions made by my research are stated and suggestions for areas of future research that were discovered during this study are also listed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

ECO-BRIDE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Discovering the issues surrounding the development of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and whether it is a worthy fashion product for a South African market, is the focus of this chapter. The three critical questions set out in chapter one will form the underlying structure of the literature review with a view to creating a solid foundation from which to perform refined market research.

- Question one deals with the various environmental standards used to govern creation of any environmentally-friendly product. The various standards for environmental classification and certification issues will be discussed followed by a review of garment design models that are appropriate to the South African clothing industry. These sections offer various suggestions of what could be construed as an environmentally-friendly bridal gown.
- With regard to critical question two, customer behavior issues are elaborated upon. The relevant theories that exist in fashion academia which deal with consumers are explored in order to realize a basic understanding of a South African target market's behaviour.
- Finally, using the concepts and restrictions set out above, suggestions for the topics that need to be explored with potential customers and industry experts are made.

The chapter is then concluded with a summary of how the literary data constructs a foundation for the empirical research design.

2.2 STANDARDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CLASSIFICATION

Certain standards exist which must be met in order to classify a product as environmentally friendly. The three stages of the Eco-Bride collection development that need consideration are: materials used, garment design, and manufacturing processes (Global Green Agency 2009).

- Materials should be produced under factory running standards certified by environmental labels to avoid unnecessary carbon emissions and other pollution, as well as exhibit organic or recycled fibre accreditation.
- Design processes should be assessed according to product lifecycles and product longevity.
- Garment construction methods should ideally have a zero carbon footprint.

Ideally, each of the stages must themselves be accredited by some form of environmental standard or labelling system for use in the Eco-Bride collection. The awarding of such certificates will thus become a long term business goal

2.2.1 Materials and green labelling

According to Antero Hyvärinen (2001), an eco-label is an environmental accreditation stamp that proves to customers what positive impact the product has on the environment by means of specifications that a particular stamp would subscribe to. There are various organisations which offer environmental auditing services and award these labels on the fulfilment of their criteria for certain production and manufacturing activities (Hyvärinen 2001).

The various accreditation associations available which are applicable to the requirements of a bridal design studio all have websites describing their functions and benefits. Their details are compiled in table format (Table 2.1 appendix A) using the various websites as references. The resulting comparison clarifies the relationship between Eco-Bride and the label's accredited products and obviates the importance for the Eco-Bride collection to use materials certified as such.

2.2.2 Carbon offsetting

Certain material and procedure choices incur a carbon footprint. This creates a problem for a local textile business wanting to follow sustainable practices, since the greater South African industry has few locally-produced environmentally-friendly offerings. If overseas suppliers can deliver accredited materials, the product's carbon footprint increases from emissions of international transportation, which needs to be offset if

unavoidable. Thus a lack of local suppliers creates demand for carbon offsetting opportunities (Green Passport 2009).

It could be argued that continuing to follow negative practices and “neutralizing” a carbon footprint through tree-planting or donations to energy-efficiency projects is not a sustainable solution. Some environmentalists believe that carbon offsetting is an excuse used to make society feel like we are making a positive impact and undoing some of our pollution, when in fact we are simply reaffirming the planet’s fate at a slower rate. This issue is convincingly dealt with by Micheal Braungart and William McDonough (2009) in *Cradle to Cradle*. They firmly believe that “being less bad is no good” (2009: 67) and allows the harmful activities to continue, which is only slowing down the deterioration of the environment (2009: 62). As well as being extreme idealists, they instil a sense of powerlessness in terms of one’s own business’s “sustainability” plan.

However, short of creating bridal gowns out of compostable fabric that add no toxins to the environment (even if it is biodegradable, white bridal fabric is not considered environmentally friendly due to the chemical bleaching process); this idealism would require the abandonment of the traditional concept of bridal gowns altogether. When the product itself requires a currently out-of-reach paradigm shift, I believe that being less bad is far better than complacency. Yvon Chouinard, founder and owner of the international outdoor apparel company *Patagonia Inc.* is realistic about moving step-by-step towards sustainability and believes we should first learn “how to harm the planet less” (Hethorn and Ulasewicz 2008: ix-x).

2.2.3 Greenwashing and false advertising

One cannot simply trust the advertising jargon used to promote many products today, as this is often just a marketing tool used to attract the green consumer (Wilhide 2002: 9). The term “greenwashing” is applied to the intentional misleading of customers (by advertising and public relations companies) about products’ green credentials when the product is not environmentally friendly at all. According to the author of *The Green Marketing Manifesto* (2007: 48), John Grant, it is indeed a marketing tool used to sell products on the popularity of the green trend without the product actually exhibiting any eco-labels or having used environmentally-friendly processes.

A current example of misleading green advertising would be the popular bamboo towels, socks and bed linen marketed as "environmentally friendly" at most departmental stores. Although these products might display some kind of certification for being a self-regenerating natural resource and having anti-bacterial properties, the catch lies in bamboo fibre's chemical production. According to Professor Jiří Militký from the Technical University of Liberec's textiles faculty (2010), bamboo fibres are unsuitable for clothing textiles unless processed as a cellulosic fibre by a viscose method (being chemical-based and thus environmentally harmful).

Ideally, the Eco-Bride customer is a well-educated woman and therefore the importance of absolute transparency is necessary. The Futerra Greenwash Guide (Futerra Sustainability Communications 2008) describes why false claims must be avoided, highlighting that an increase in greenwashing in the market place results in customer confusion about which product is actually green. Customers start to question their environmental purchases and then, "Greenwash destroys the very market it hopes to exploit" (Futerra Sustainability Communications 2008). The guide also offers tips for a marketing campaign to be devoid of greenwashing, which is useful for the presentation of the Eco-Bride collection. Nathaniel Beard takes this a step further, insisting that ethical fashion brands must ensure that, over and above the ethical marketing campaign, the internal procedures are also ethical and that employees, suppliers, and customers should be presented with practices to prove their environmental awareness (Beard 2008).

This is where the importance of having accreditation with international and locally respected organisations lies—without these labels, environmental claims could be construed as greenwash. However, two issues arise, which are discussed below.

Firstly, for a marketing campaign using green labels as the pitch to be effective, customers need to be aware of the label and its credentials. Thus, for a business attempting to fill a market gap where no previous advertising has occurred, an educational strategy is required over and above the marketing strategy.

Secondly, within the accreditation services, there is evidence of fraud (Poldner 2010). Kim Poldner, who writes for the online resource Eco Fashion World, reported in March

2010 on the extent of fraudulent companies operating in this field and offering labels which they are not licensed to award. This creates demand for more stringent certification processes and the involvement of third parties to increase neutrality. The author illustrates how this, coupled with an increase in demand for green labels across industries, increases the difficulty and expense for small businesses to become accredited, thus slowing down transformation across the greater textile industry (Poldner 2010).

2.3 MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE GOWN DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE

Raw materials aside, the design and manufacturing stages also need to follow environmentally-friendly models to ensure that the resulting bridal gowns can eventually be certified. The various theories and models visited on slow fashion theory, emotionally-durable design theory, cradle-to-cradle theory, and garments as signifiers (eco-dress versus eco-fashion) are expanded upon, citing the respective experts, in order to find a suitable design process for the Eco-Bride collection. Environmentally-friendly construction processes, such as the zero waste model, are also described. However, actual studio operating procedures, although directly linked to the manufacturing of each gown, will only be discussed in Chapter Five: Eco-Bride Ensemble.

2.3.1 Slow fashion versus instant fashion

It is believed that the relationship between the fashion industry (change-based) and the concept of sustainability (longevity-based) is contradictory (Breds, Hjort and Krüger 2002: 27). In this regard, Sandy Black (2008: 14) agrees and describes how excessive fashion consumption is perpetuated by advertising campaigns and constantly changing fashion trends, which increases demand and puts pressure on producers to cut costs and increase output. This results in cheaper, thus more environmentally-harmful materials being used as well as harsher working conditions for labourers. So, where the fashion industry relies on increasing demand or higher product output to make profits, sustainable fashion based upon product longevity and more expensive production methods becomes unprofitable.

By casting one's mind back to the early 1900s when fashion brands first appeared, it is evident that product lifecycles are shortening. Charles Frederick Worth was the first dressmaker to create allure for his name and label (Tungate 2004: 9), and since then the

life expectancy of a gown has decreased from lasting years to lasting only one wear. Segregation between products according to their expected lifespan results in “slow” and “instant” fashion categories which need to be defined in order to unpack the industry’s operations and the negative effects that both have on the environment. Only then can an assessment be made to suitably position the Eco-Bride concept in the present-day fashion industry.

The epitome of slow fashion is a couture house that will create a gown for a celebrity to wear to a special event. These garments can take up to three months to create as most sewing is done by hand by specialised and highly qualified craftsmen. Although the actual sewing process has a relatively small carbon footprint, couture is known as excessive in fabric usage, the garment is only worn once (considered wasteful) and is not guaranteed a long cupboard life due to on-trend, seasonal design (Black, S. 2008: 79).

Negative aspects aside, couture, or slow fashion, makes use of the highest quality fabric (expense of organic fabric would not be frowned upon), expert staff is well paid, and the trophy garment more than likely will not be discarded as rubbish to clog up a landfill (Breds, Hjort and Krüger 2002: 53). “Instant fashion” is reported by Wiseman Khuzwayo (2007) as the inexpensive, mass-produced and sometimes imported clothing available at chain stores such as Mr Price. These garments are mostly machine-manufactured by underpaid seamstresses using low-quality, cheap fabrics, compounding the negative effects on the environment (Khuzwayo 2007). Beard (2008: 450) reiterates that consumers are used to this cheap availability of trend-led fashion and have little guilt for its disposability. There is less of a connection on an emotional level between user and garment since the user didn’t spend much hard-earned money on it (Black, S. 2008: 78). The product thus becomes disposable (whether it is worn-out or not) and has an even shorter cupboard lifespan than a more expensive item. Sandy Black (2008) in *Eco-Chic: the Fashion Paradox* describes the euphemism “disposable” as “use once and throw away” which denotes the wasteful nature and worthless association of such products. Due largely to low price, the unethical and unsustainable cycle of supply and demand is perpetuated.

An additional negative of instant fashion is illustrated in the book *Eco chic: The savvy shoppers guide to ethical fashion* (2007) by Matilda Lee. With a melancholic tone, the author reports on the rise of disposable fashion which is decreasing the profitability of second-hand shops and textile reclamation businesses, a result of the clothing coming into their operations being of too poor quality to be worn again (Lee 2007: 35). It is garments made twenty years ago and earlier which are able to withstand a second lifespan, when manufacturing was a slower, more considered process than today.

A parallel can now be drawn between instant fashions and imported wedding gowns which are readily available at bridal retailers in South Africa. Gowns are imported en masse (resulting in high carbon emissions) and the origins of most are unknown and dubious at best. According to Renato Palmi (2009), their low price and convenience make these items unsustainable, quick-fix gowns that the designer industry struggles to compete with and which have a negative effect on job creation locally.

2.3.2 Emotionally durable design theory

Dr Jonathan Chapman (Mooallem 2008) believes that products designed with sentimentality at heart are more sustainable than their mass-produced counterparts. In his book entitled *Emotionally Durable Design*, he bases this concept on the fact that an object we keep for sentimental reasons never reaches the bin or is replaced even when broken because of the relationship it holds with the user or emotional value it carries. Will Anderson (2006), a writer at the UK Independent newspaper, agrees, and notes that if products are designed with an emotional value built in along with environmentally-friendly processes and raw materials (which will not outlive the object's projected lifespan), then we have reached true sustainable design.

Chapman extends this idea further in his argument about current sustainable design being symptom-focussed and not dealing directly with the root cause of the problem (Chapman 2005: 9). His ultimate goal is to increase resource productivity and to reduce waste by extending product life spans (2005: 24). A designer must “target and design for the motivations underpinning it [the object]” (2005: 27).

The motivations for South African bridal design will be discussed further in Chapter Five: Eco-Bride Ensemble, where the sub-conclusions from qualitative and quantitative

research with potential Eco-Bride customers will be summarised to pin down a generalised bridal gown vernacular.

Time is at the core of most environmental debates. One of the most commonly shared views of environmentally-aware designers is that we have to plan and design for the generations that will follow on from us, not just creating objects for use in our short lifetimes (Anderson 2009: 13). Ray Anderson, founder of Interface Inc (a carpet manufacturer which has successfully installed a sustainability plan within their company's structure), is one such innovator campaigning for a shift in thinking towards longevity-based design (2009: 13).

One theoretical suggestion is for an object to carry meanings which slowly reveal themselves over time (Chapman 2005: 27) – a product which has the ability to be enjoyed over decades by the same person is an example of such emotional value. A mother-daughter relationship would thus be symbolised and immortalised by a bridal gown handed down for the next generation's use. For this to be successful the gown must display a timeless silhouette that does not fall into any fad or seasonal trend category (or be able to be re-cut), and must be made from durable fabrics able to withstand ageing and necessary adjustments to fit, over the years.

A second suggestion, and a key learning point in Chapman's inspiring writing, is that the design of an object should always be powerful enough to override the urge to upgrade (2005: 56). In the case of an Eco-Bride gown, the design must harbour details for years of enjoyment and embody the bride's ideals so that it would either be kept for the next generation or is re-assembled into a garment suitable for everyday wearing and cherishing.

2.3.3 Cradle to Cradle theory

The idea that product design should build recycling into the product's lifecycle rather than being thrown away at its obsolescence is a rather simplistic introduction to the cradle to cradle theory, envisioned and conceptualised by scientist Michael Braungart and architect William McDonough.

In their book *Cradle to Cradle: Re-making the Way We Make Things*, Braungart and McDonough (2009) make a factual and balanced argument for the paradigmatic shift required in design—that all objects must consider their raw materials and be designed so that no resource value is lost during their lifecycle or on recycling. They continually reference nature's cycles as a model to be copied by human designs: "A cherry tree makes many blossoms and fruit...They fall to the ground, decompose, feed various organisms and microorganisms, and enrich the soil...Waste equals food" (2009: 92). Braungart and McDonough (2009: 104) say that this return to the conception state (hence the name) is the only answer to the quest for sustainable design.

In no way do Braungart and McDonough (2009: 98) believe that a shift of this magnitude is an easy task. It requires a slow movement toward design without "planned obsolescence", the term coined by Vance Packard in his late 1950's book *The Waste Makers* (Chapman 2005). Packard describes consumer products that are designed with a built-in limited lifespan to ensure product replacement and continuous sales for the company. This would suggest that for established companies, change needs to initially occur at the business structure level where other money-generating elements can be introduced. As an example, product break-down procedures can be introduced for redundant products to extract raw materials for re-use.

2.3.4 Garments as signifiers theory: eco-dress versus eco-fashion

As Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (2001: 2-3) remind us in *Body Dressing*, fashion and dress can be likened to the spoken word in their mutual functions of communication. That clothing carries meaning interpretable by society is a central issue to the design of any garment, especially bridal gowns. According to celebrated bridal designer Vera Wang:

A wedding gown is about self-expression, about creating something that's true to a woman's style. The bride should choose a gown that reflects who she is above all else.

(Wang 2007 cited in Swarovski Crystallized 2007: 73)

Thus a garment can be considered a signifier of meaning. Regina Root (2008: 420) describes eco-fashion as the fashion-forward manner of dressing in an environmentally-

friendly manner, devoid of stereotypical associations and visual statements of eco-friendliness. Eco-dress on the other hand, is dressing in a manner that is purely earth-sensitive, but lacking in any aesthetic considerations (Winge 2008: 514). It is the stereotypical dress of the 1960s hippie wearing thong sandals and hemp tie-dyed t-shirts (Winge 2008: 514). Unfortunately, this stereotype exists as a constrictive assumption of green design in general (Hethorn and Ulasewicz 2008: *xiii*).

Since eco-fashion caters for all fashion-conscious women with environmental concerns at heart, and this being the larger market segment of the two categories (Winge 2008: 518), it makes good business sense that Eco-Bride assumes the position to satisfy the eco-fashion market segment rather than the restricted eco-dress market segment. After completing the research data collection process, it will be interesting to discover where South African brides prefer to position themselves within these two groups.

2.3.5 Environmentally-friendly construction processes

The various elements involved in the construction of a bridal gown are:

- sketching and idea generation;
- paper pattern construction; and
- fabric cutting and sewing operations (both hand and machine stitching).

An environmentally-friendly gown will follow a similar path, although new concepts are being explored to minimise waste and create efficiency at all levels. One example of such innovation proves the extent to which garment creation can be waste-less. Mark Liu, a women's wear designer, has created a range of garments that incur no fabric waste during their production (Liu 2010a). This has been achieved through clever pattern drafting, where the seams have been sewn inside-out using the excess (usually cut off and discarded as waste) as a decorative feature.

Figure 2.1 thus illustrates the jigsaw puzzle concept in a panelled skirt where the pattern pieces would be placed head-to-toe on the cutting table, the scalloped edges of the seams fitting into the neighbouring pattern piece like a puzzle.



Figure 2.1 Mark Liu's jigsaw puzzle concept

Source: Liu (2010b)

Limitations that arise from using this particular zero waste model include the type of fabrics used; they should be non-fraying or where fraying is abundant, extra raw-edge finishing is required. A second limitation exists in the end product; a smooth and seamless appearance (a look desirable to some brides) is unattainable using the seams-as-embellishment method illustrated above. This category of bride, if determined to wear a zero waste gown, would require a fully fashioned or integrated knitted gown—the second type of zero waste design method available. Timo Rissanen, Australian fashion designer and academic, describes this concept as knitting individual pattern shapes to be sewn together, or knitting entire garments without the need for sewing and leaving no yarn or fabric wastage (Rissanen 2008:188).

Both methods inspire clever design and deeper thought into where fabric remnants of particular shapes naturally “fit” on the female silhouette; a necessary aptitude when available fabrics such as circular doilies, lace-trimmed handkerchiefs and panels cut from old silk safari suits must be integrated into bridal gowns.

2.4 CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

Customer behaviour is defined through extensive market research with questions along the following themes: What factors influence a bride's buying behaviour? What are the most commonly-cited reasons for buying an eco-gown as opposed to an imported nylon

dress? How would one classify a bride into a specific market category? Would a bride choose an Eco-Bride gown because it helps save the earth or because it is on-trend and carries the show-off bonus of being green? Factors such as which celebrities wear and endorse the environmental trend, the convenience of and available variety of gowns, cost, personal preferences or tradition and brand preferences, are all known as having an effect on what a buyer would spend their money on. These specific factors have been noted for their relevance to the green movement and are elaborated on in this section of the literature review. The knowledge built in this section will guide the construction of a suitable data collection methodology.

2.4.1 Celebrity and the (green) commodity fetish theory

From observing media it is clear that celebrities are taking part in the “green” campaign: writing forewords for trendy eco-glamour novels, becoming muses for eco-clothing designers or designing eco-clothing themselves. Tamsin Blanchard (2007: 109), in her book *Green is the New Black*, devotes a chapter to the power these celebrities have in creating allure for an item or trend, which is one of the many factors affecting consumers’ buying decisions.

An example is actor Rachel McAdams who co-founded the website *GreenIsSexy.org* which covers sustainable alternatives in clothing and lifestyle tips (La Morte 2009). Another actor-cum-eco-campaigner is French Oscar-winner Marion Cotillard (Clarke 2009). Due to their currently elevated profiles and alleged matching lifestyles, these women are among the stars empowered to inspire style choices and make large scale change in the fashion industry an easier transition.

The celebrity endorsement frenzy also illustrates the celebrity’s role in the “green” commodity fetish. Theresa Winge (2008: 511-524), in her chapter entitled *Green is the New Black*, describes the theory in the following manner: “Such desire for the commodity (fetish) propels consumerism, which in the fashion industry creates a continuous fetishistic experience and cycles of commerce and consumption.” This desire is seen in eco-fashion too, where the consumer is now able to be both fashionable and environmentally-conscious (Winge 2008: 518). In her contribution to *Sustainable Fashion: Why Now?* (2008: 77-94), Rebecca Luke describes the means fashion designers have to market their collections—one being the use of role models to

influence customer decisions—and to market the trend towards sustainable lifestyle choices (2008: 81).

Caution is, however, advised by Fabio Mancome of the Armani Group and Tamara Mellon of Jimmy Choo who both stress the importance of not rushing to the hottest celebrity for product endorsement, but selecting the best product-personality fit and most sincere values match (Jackson 2010). Such consideration will put emphasis on product reliability and help to promote brand loyalty.

2.4.2 Convenience and variety

Buying decisions of speciality and luxury products are also based on what options are available in the market and how conveniently available they are (Nieuwenhuizen 2004: 221). Internet searches have revealed that there are many international designers, but only two South African designers, specialising in some type of "sustainable" evening attire. They are listed below, alongside corresponding imagery from their latest bridal gown collection:



Figure 2.2 Lunar Bridal Collection 2009

Source: Lunar (2009)

Karen Ter Morshuizen, owner-designer for the label Lunar (based in South Africa), offers couture and ready-to-wear in natural materials (organic where available), with value-added, socially-responsible processes (Maughan 2008). Figure 2.2 illustrates a silk satin gown but, like most images on the website, show no description of organic fabric. It is thus debateable as to whether these offerings are, in fact, truly environmentally friendly.

Elbeth Gillis, a South African bridal designer, uses “antique and vintage” (Firth 2010) elements as her environmental selling point. On reviewing the website supplied with the article cited above, a gown made from antique and vintage fabrics does not appear. Figure 2.3 below illustrates a design from the current (non-vintage) collection, simply illustrating Elbeth’s design style.



Figure 2.3 Bridal Couture

Source: Gillis (2009)

Linda Loudermilk designs fashion-forward couture (see figure 2.4) and ready-to-wear garments in ecologically-friendly fabrics (Loudermilk 2009b). Although this company is based in the United States of America, the amount of international media coverage garnered points to a growing interest in this category of bridal fashion. Linda's style is certainly not entrenched in vintage ideas, preferring instead to present a current conceptual gown in crisp (typically casual wear) fabrics.



Figure 2.4 Couture Collection

Source: Loudermilk (2009a)

Morgan Boszilkov is a designer dedicated to bridal wear that is created out of natural certified fabrics; a hemp and silk example is shown below in figure 2.5. Boszilkov is also based in the USA (Boszilkov 2008) but, in contrast to Linda Loudermilk, she caters for the traditional bride with her corseted bodice and full-skirted styles. These two American examples represent a varied and multi-faceted environmentally-concerned

bridal industry, creating an ever-increasing cycle of growth; the more options that become available conveniently, the more sales are closed. The more sales increase, demand for eco gowns also increases.



Figure 2.5 Natural Bridal Collection:
Carmen

Source: Boszilkov (2008)



Figure 2.6 Christabelle Red

Source: Halfpenny (2010)

Halfpenny London (figure 2.6) services the vintage buyers, stocking and remodelling vintage gowns (Halfpenny 2010). This company's appealing website would assist in increasing vintage interest in the bridal market, and also points to the UK industry having more variety of options to choose from, allowing businesses the freedom, without loss of profits, to specialise as such.

This supports the initial assumption that there are currently few direct competitors based in South Africa, and that an opportunity exists for the Eco-Bride collection, with its unique selling point, to harness the majority market share. With no variety to choose from, brides will choose the options they know about, are familiar with, and have access to. Thus, indirectly, it hints at a consumer base largely uninformed about the possibilities for environmentally-friendly bridal gowns, increasing the need for an educational marketing strategy that can turn unaware customers into green brides and Eco-Bride customers.

2.4.3 Cost

A review on the Worth Global Style Network pins quality, value, and resilience as the current motivational drivers for purchasing luxury niche products (Jackson 2010). This is where the cost of gowns has an effect; the higher the quality of the gown, the longer it takes to make, and the longer it is expected to last, all adding up to an increase in cost and selling price.

Glamour Magazine South Africa's March 2010 issue includes a wedding guide offering tips to a successful wedding event. Included in this article is *Do Find a Dress on a Budget* (Blackstone, Clarke, Knuppe, Levinsohn, Lustig, Ruddy and Webber 2010: 77). The four gowns represented are “off the peg” (either imported or mass produced locally and available immediately) and range from R4500.00 to R6000.00 in price, indicating what a “cheap” gown would retail for.

This is a small but meaningful example of current South African bridal gown spend which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four: Eco-Bride Enlightened and Equipped with regard to whether a bride actively seeks out the cheapest gown no matter what, or if quality (thus paying a higher price) are important. The resulting national averages need to be compared to the proposed cost of an Eco-Bride gown to identify the effect such pricing strategy would have on the Eco-Bride business and brand image.

2.4.4 Brand preferences and self image theory

Brides will always want what is best suited to their figures—within the context of the other above-mentioned factors that are meaningful to them—and will come to a designer

with additional criteria such as family traditions, or requesting conservative sleeves or a certain neckline depth.

Riza Mulyanegara and Yelena Tsarenko (2009: 358-371) in *Predicting Brand Preferences* state that customer behaviour may be determined by an individual's comparison of their own self-image with the image a brand displays. Taking into consideration the green commodity fetish previously discussed, it follows that when alignment is reached between an environmentally-aware target market and a green company's marketing strategy, customer-brand loyalty should exist. Chapman (2005: 12, 40) in *Emotionally Durable Design* believes that consumers are "magnetically" drawn to possess objects (objects being signifiers of certain qualities through association) that fit the social status which they subconsciously strive to hold.

The New Green Marketing (Allbusiness.com 2009) is an online article which deals with this issue of green niche marketing and its effect on customers. It advises that for alignment between customer and brand to exist, especially when dealing with a niche market, the brand must be able to inform their customers about the benefits of buying green as it pertains to their lifestyle. Basically, "Green marketing to a niche audience is becoming more effective than trying to teach the car buyer about the rainforests" (Allbusiness.com 2009). An environmentally-friendly design company thus needs to market their brand using tools that represent their customers' preferred lifestyle, as the green issue pertains to them and their particular gown prerequisites.

An environmentally-aware woman's personal gown preference would thus be as eco-friendly as possible, to portray (either visually or not) her environmental mindset. Her options are: to use a second-hand gown (hired, bought as vintage, or her mom's dress), or to have a new gown made from organic fabrics that would be durable enough to withstand continued use in her wardrobe or for the next generation to utilise.

The following images represent current trends in the greater fashion milieu that are emphasizing the popularity of environmental concern and the vintage-inspired lifestyle, making a visually environmentally-friendly gown acceptable. Figure 2.7 represents a re-introduction of craft into bridal design—a trend popular in the 1970s—where macramé is used in place of an English or French lace. This is proof of a trend that is relevant to

the Eco-Bride concept development since vintage crocheted textiles are readily available and local craftswomen who would be able to produce such a textile for use in the collection can add a community upliftment aspect to the project.



Figure 2.7 Rosa Clara ‘Rimel’ macramé gown

Source: Rosa Clara (2010b)

Figure 2.8 is a trend suggestion extracted from the TWO 2010 issue of *Wedding Album* magazine (SA), published as a popular and inspiring theme for a bride’s wedding day. Each issue of this magazine contains various trends and mood boards for brides to use as current inspiration for their wedding days, the “eco” trend being allocated a page in this case is a signal of the trend reaching the general population. Once again, the fact that there are no true environmentally friendly bridal gown designers to meet the demand for this trend is noted. Most importantly, however, is the actual trendiness of looking eco-friendly suggested by the use of plant motifs, as is advertised by this page.



Mimic Mother Nature with feminine floral prints or embroidered lace detail. Feature bountiful fabric blossoms and beautiful lace overlays with floral cut-outs.

- ♥ For a literal interpretation, pick a bouquet with leafy and floral elements.
- ♥ Style your hair with a garland of fresh flowers.
- ♥ Jewellery should echo nature in form.
- ♥ Layer tulle over floral prints for a more subtle effect.

Earrings by Nic Bladen R2 170 and necklace by Amanda Marais R1 370, both Africa Nova; bouquet price on request, Caroline Fine Flowers; pearl and diamanté garland to hire, Glitterati

Figure 2.8 'ECO' trend interpretation

Source: Nel (2010)

2.5 ECO-BRIDE CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Market research defines what new product offerings are necessary for a business to grow (Aneja 2010); therefore, knowing the practical limitations of what brides think and thus want is a good basis for the Eco-Bride collection criteria. Customer behaviour insight teamed with a contextual definition for an environmentally-friendly bridal gown will thus form the concept of the collection.

The materials that have been investigated for prospective use in building the Eco-Bride collection fall into the following categories:

- new fibres and textile advancements;
- organically grown natural fibres for fabrics and sewing thread;
- recycled fibres woven into new fabrics; and
- reclaimed haberdashery.

Final material choices will be based on the grounds of their suitability for bridal attire, durability (lifespan), and cost. Where fabrics are imported due to South Africa's negligible organic textile industry, carbon emissions would ideally need to be recorded and offset through programmes such as tree-planting projects or sustainable energy plant development. As a second long-term business goal, the details of each offset will be handwritten on the swing tag of each garment for the gown's story to be known and celebrated.

Education surrounding the certificates displayed by certain materials and what environmentally-friendly bridal options are available needs to take place, since customers can only act on what they know. A simultaneous positive outcome of such activity would be the distancing of the Eco-Bride brand to greenwashing.

Collection development is also aided by the assessment of various design models based on their relevance to bridal attire. The literature-based research presented throughout this chapter clearly shows the importance of a re-think of design and construction methods used since these are ways in which a designer is able to make the biggest changes and have the most positive effect towards a sustainable business practice plan.

The influential factors on customer behaviour previously dealt with, will guide the structuring of a suitable research methodology which is situated within a social constructivist paradigm. The study requires personal and traditional perceptions and ideals of brides to be defined through questionnaires and interviews, giving insight into the experiences and knowledge held by participants about bridal attire, constructing a useable answer to the age-old question of “what women [brides] want”.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Due to the current trendiness of an environmentally-aware lifestyle, there is a broad base of online and print-media literature available to address the many issues arising from the altering of societal norms. In the bridal gown industry specifically, these norms are so embedded that an innovative approach to design and gown creation is required to make a positive impact on the earth, without losing the attention of the target market. The theories discussed clarify the approach used to develop the concept, and this will be elaborated upon by the following chapter’s data collection and analysis plan.

To summarise this chapter’s position according to the critical research questions initially set out, it is now possible to theoretically define an environmentally-friendly bridal gown. The Eco-Bride collection must have a positive effect on the environment in all stages of design, construction, and lifecycle, and must adhere to the personal and traditional prerequisites of South African wedding attire. Accreditation is available in South Africa to prove such claims made by Eco-Bride and to assist in marketing the collection to the correct ‘green’ niche target market.

The Eco-Bride collection will be presented as a “slow” fashion brand, using organic and reclaimed fabrics and materials to create each gown with as little material waste and carbon footprint as possible. Gown designs will be based on timeless eco-fashion principles rather than promoting a visual signal of eco-friendliness, and, where possible, previously loved gowns will be re-worked as parts of new gowns to ensure the emotional durability of the garment. The collection needs to be promoted online and in print media to create awareness about available options (other than imports) in the bridal market place, as well as to educate the target market about the various environmental standards governing the studio.

The issues discussed in this chapter have the following effect on what needs to be researched during data collection and with whom:

- Real brides questioned about their personal dreams and opinions of bridal attire as well as gauging their responses to proposed fabrics, style details, and price points.
- Industry expert advice about whether a brand ambassador in the form of a South African celebrity should be enrolled to emphasize the image of an exclusive and high-quality sustainable brand worthy of the next generation's pleasure.
- Assumptions made at the start of this study are reviewed against the research findings to test their possible impact on the collection.

These aspects of the overall methodology will further strengthen the concept development strategy going forward.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ECO-BRIDE ENQUIRY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Eco-Bride enquiry was to identify factors affecting the development of an eco-friendly bridal collection. In this respect a flexible and responsive methodology capable of dealing with fluctuating customer and fashion industry trends was required. An action research design from a constructivist perspective characterised by responsiveness, participation, the intention to promote change, and reflection (Dick 1993), was used to identify and refine the following issues:

- personal bridal gown choices (silhouette and fabric);
- average gown price points;
- current demand for environmentally-friendly bridal gowns; and
- product development models for environmentally-friendly bridal attire.

This was achieved by using a mixed methods approach, which, according to John Creswell (2003: 19), is the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques within a single study. The chapter thus commences with a discussion of mixed methods action research and instruments as applied to this study. This is followed by the methodology section which describes and justifies the cyclical research planning and implementation, and a conclusion of summarised key learning points.

3.2 MIXED METHODS: ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH

In this section, mixed methods research design and action research from a constructivist viewpoint is explained. The appropriate justifications in utilizing these approaches are also presented.

3.2.1 Mixed methods research design

Mixed methods research is the employment of both quantitative and qualitative enquiries so that the statistical data gained through quantitative enquiry may be assigned meaning through the descriptive results of qualitative enquiry (Connelly 2009: 31). Quantitative and qualitative questionnaires and interviews with key informants were

conducted to make up the mixed methods investigation. This format allowed numerical data to suggest general ideals of potential customers (basic market research) which could then be reinforced, refined, and explained by contextual data based on experiential knowledge.

For the Eco-Bride study, there were many possible scenarios, the most viable being:

- Identifying the popularity of specific gown styles using quantitative methods. As such, the study would lack the personal aspect and sentiment afforded by speaking directly to customers about their bridal gown desires. The study could also lack the unique experiences of key industry informants which provide valuable learning points for the success of the brand within the difficult terrain of sustainability.
- A second scenario is if the study had focussed only on qualitative data. In this case, there would be little confidence in the Eco-Bride collection being accepted by brides because of an initial knowledge gap in the popularity of local trends.
- A third scenario is the one I decided to implement: a mixed methods approach whereby the strengths of one method assists the weaknesses of another and vice versa. As an example, a lack of detail within statistical quantitative data is overcome by highly descriptive qualitative data.

To further argue the case for using mixed research methods for this study, Lynne Connelly (2009) describes the various positive and negative issues associated with such research. The strengths of using mixed methods for the Eco-Bride study include:

- Narrative meaning can be used to explain numerical representations of brides' preferences and aesthetic choices, making quantitative data easier for the reader to understand.
- Not only could the study find out what the current trends are (numerical data) but the reasons behind those existing trends can be drawn out. As an example, there could be a traditional restriction on what a bride wears according to her cultural background, and this is essential information for the designer of her gown.

The weaknesses of using a mixed methods design for this study include:

- Extra time is required to carry out the numerous methods for the output of a single study. Since action research exacerbates the time issue with its multiple cycles, the study required a highly critical viewpoint to narrow down the opportunity for error.
- Connelly (2009: 32) also reports that there is criticism for the often excluded link or lack of clarity between the findings of qualitative and quantitative research. In the analysis section of this chapter, the challenge of creating a thorough transfer of data between the two methods is discussed.

3.2.2 How a constructivist orientation facilitates the Eco-Bride enquiry

Constructivism is based on the premise that individuals have their own knowledge construction as a result of their individual social context, their cultural upbringing, and their current life experiences (Ebersöhn, Eloff, and Ferreira 2010: 130; Creswell 2003: 6). These realities are local and specific to one's environment (Guba and Lincoln 1994: 110-111), but may also be shared among individuals of different cultures. Thus, brides each carry their own ideals, desires, and understandings of what their bridal gown should look like or represent. These ideals can also be moulded according to their individual experiences of family and friends' weddings and weddings in the media that they are locally exposed to. Thus, the application of this ontology to the developing of bridal gowns must then lie with the individual bride.

Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (1994: 111) further explore the constructivist epistemology and discuss how the findings are "literally created" as the research proceeds. The immediate conversion of data to results within the research process means that, at each stage, the concepts and ideas that will define an Eco-Bride gown may be refined. This means I, the designer, do not have to wait for analysis (post-investigation) to reveal any discrepancies.

Also, this study seeks to identify how to develop a product within the ever-changing fashion milieu. The resulting product thus needs to be reflexive and adaptable to both fashion trend changes and the variety of ideals requested by the brides themselves. Constructivism fits because it allows for such individualism in a social setting. I expect to find many different gown silhouettes, fabric choices, colour and texture ideas, and

inspiring role models suggested as “what brides want”; and my ontological position needs to accommodate these diverse suggestions.

The application of the constructivist worldview also extends to the key industry informants who participated in my study. They shared their own experiences of the ever-changing industry and their sustainability efforts (within their varied contexts) so that I could integrate their learning points into the collection development.

3.2.3 What action research is

Action research is the continual, practical procedure of researching an idea that requires improvement and reflecting upon the activity of carrying out the improvements (Kale, Näslund and Paulraj 2010: 331-355; McNiff 2002; Dick 1993). This infinite research process creates learning through various cycles of reflection on practice, thus bringing about incremental improvements to a problem (Somekh 2006: 2-3). The problem can exist within a community or an organisation, and such studies are usually characterised by participation of those affected by the problem or involved in the organisation (Dick 1993; Somekh 2006: 2-3). The players in this study are:

- the researcher: myself, the Eco-Bride designer;
- people affected by the issue: potential customers; and
- the organisation: Eco-Bride and the South African fashion industry.

Both the potential customers and fashion industry professionals are thus sources of data who simultaneously become engaged in the project.

3.2.4 Why action research was used

Action research fits my enquiry because it allowed the study to follow a path laid out by the data itself. A revealing process is necessary to allow the desires of customers—which cannot be assumed or pre-empted—to be discovered and explored. The constructivist viewpoint, as discussed earlier, allows for such individual desires to be exposed as important data, and have a direct effect on the immediate findings (Guba and Lincoln 1994). A company should offer products designed in accordance with what their customers need; thus, if customers’ needs are satisfied, brand loyalty is created (Meadows 2009: 71-72).

Since the ultimate reason for conducting this study was to develop a collection of environmentally-friendly bridal gowns that would be embraced by South African brides, market research was required to identify what brides wanted and needed from wedding gowns. By reflecting on this data and the methodology that followed from the first implementation phase of the first cycle, new ideas, questions, and methods were generated to improve and refine the findings. This responsive methodology thus allowed my findings to construct conclusions about gown development to produce a collection that is more likely to be accepted by the market.

Apart from the alignment it holds with a constructivist paradigm and apart from being responsive, action research is described by Liesel Ebersöhn, Irma Eloff and Ronel Ferreira (2010: 124) as being practical, change-focussed, cyclical, participatory, and an interactive form of knowledge development. In Table 3.1, I have displayed these characteristics alongside their application as a further justification for using action research for the Eco-Bride study.

Table 3.1 Eco-Bride action research (A.R.) characteristics

A.R. CHARACTERISTICS	ECO-BRIDE STUDY REQUIREMENTS OR APPLICATION
Practical	The challenge of defining a new type of bridal gown and introducing it into a market of pre-determined styles is a practical problem that required a feasible solution which culminated within the real-life locale of a bridal design studio.
Change-focussed (transformative for social change)	The collection of Eco-Bride gowns becomes a product used to promote social change within the local textile industry. Potential customers participated in the study so that their knowledge and experiences could assist in developing the Eco-Bride concept and assist in a new bridal gown vernacular eventually evolving. Over time, the current prescribed wedding gown idea within the local bridal target market would be transformed to accommodate eco-fashion.
Interactive cyclical process	Three cycles of planning, implementation, and reflection characterised the Eco-Bride activities with data becoming more refined and focussed at the culmination of each cycle.
Involves participation (partnerships between researcher and participants)	An equal power partnership between me (the designer-researcher) and the research participants (potential brides) was formed. Since I was seeking information from a customer requiring a service from me, the power within the relationship was equalled, resulting in a comfortable zone within which the transfer of data became a natural occurrence, as in casual conversation.
Interactive knowledge development (process of investigation as important as findings)	As the Eco-Bride body of knowledge was developed, potential customers interacted with the proposed concept. The researcher-bride interactions during data collection were as important as the findings: Findings highlighted business learning points and key customer qualms which have an effect on the presentation of the concept.

Source: Adapted from Ebersöhn, Eloff and Ferreira *in* Maree (2010: 124, 125).

3.2.5 The nature of action research cycles

Figure 3.1 illustrates the cyclical nature of the research design by representing the four phases of one cycle. Each cycle begins at the planning and design phase and continues clockwise through the implementation phase, reflection phase, and cycle improvements phase. The reflection and improvement phases contribute to the following cycle of research, thus refining the research questions and data received at each cycle for a rigorous outcome. This cyclical and ever-increasing refinement of method and findings results in high levels of validity since active reflection and often negative critique on outcomes allows errors, problems, and contradictory issues to be noted and re-aligned (McNiff 2002; Somekh 2006: 2-3).

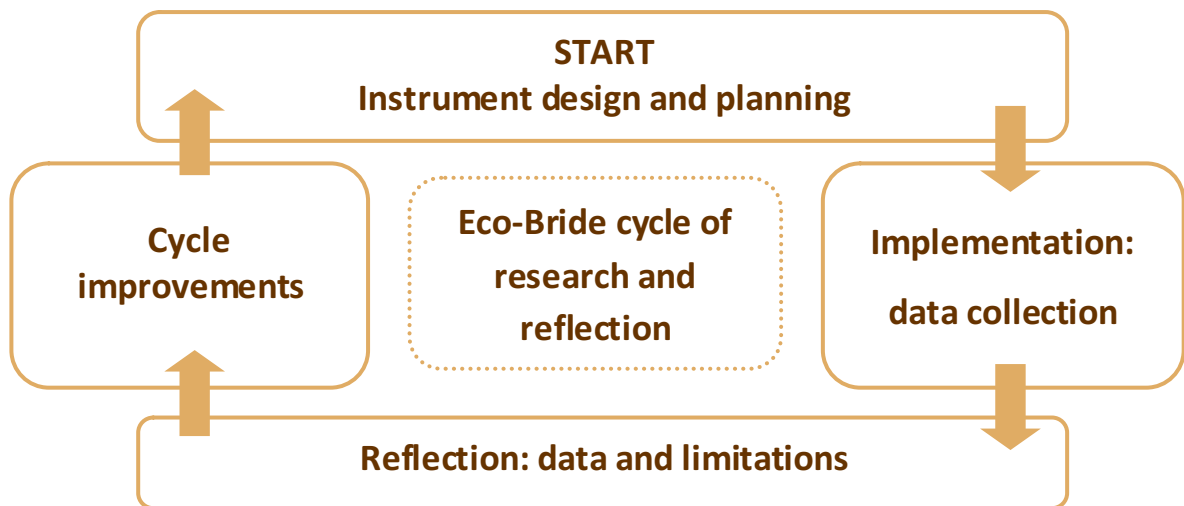


Figure 3.1 Basic cycle of Eco-Bride action research model

3.3 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Mixed methods research is most often undertaken for sequential research designs (Lieber 2009: 218), which are characterised by one research method's implementation followed by the second, as opposed to both methods running concurrently. In this case, the implementation of research instruments began with questionnaires to identify trends in bridal preferences followed by in-depth interviewing to explain certain trends appearing. To display the sequential nature of the Eco-Bride investigation, the various research instruments that were used during each cycle are listed below.

Cycle one:

- Mixed methods questionnaire: Natal Wholesale Jewellers (NWJ) Bridal Show 2010.
- Qualitative questionnaire: Lunar Clothing Brand.

Cycle two:

- Quantitative questionnaire: NWJ Bridal Show 2011.
- Qualitative conversation interviews: NWJ Bridal Show 2011.

Cycle three:

- Quantitative questionnaire: online questionnaire through social networks.
- Qualitative interview: trend analyst.

Table 3.2 is a summary of these instruments displayed according to inquiry method, implementation, and data format. Instruments are colour-coded according to quantitative or qualitative properties to make the mixed methods approach visible at every cycle.

Table 3.2 Summarised research instruments

Research Instrument	Method of Inquiry	When, Where, and with Whom?	Format of data obtained
<u>CYCLE ONE</u> Structured questionnaire	Mixed methods Self-administered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2010, Durban: NWJ Bridal Show. • Distributed to 40 visitors (brides) at entrance, on foot. 	Hardcopy text-based data and numerical data.
Structured questionnaire	Qualitative Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2010, online: emailed questions. • Lunar: eco-aware clothing brand. 	Email text response, photographic data off Lunar website.
<u>CYCLE TWO</u> Structured questionnaire	Quantitative Self-administered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2011, Durban: NWJ Bridal Show. • 75 potential customers visited Eco-Bride display; completed questionnaire within comfortable seating area. 	Hardcopy numeric data.
Unstructured Interview	Qualitative conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2011, Durban: NWJ Bridal Show. • Four potential customers who showed deeper interest in Eco-Bride display. 	Video recording, field notes.
<u>CYCLE THREE</u> Structured questionnaire	Quantitative Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2011, online: national response. • 80 women interested in Eco-Bride page on social networking site clicked link to questionnaire to complete questionnaire. 	Data delivered in statistical format by online questionnaire company.
Semi-structured interview	Qualitative Face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2011, Johannesburg, at a cafe. • Owner at Flux Trends Analysis. 	Video recording, field notes.

3.4 METHODOLOGY: CYCLE ONE

The first cycle was made up of two structured questionnaires. These instruments identified broad, generalised issues about brides' perceptions of bridal wear and current environmentally-friendly product demand based on the respondents' own experiences. The cycle is first summarised in diagram format to visually display the most important points, followed by a detailed description of each phase. Note that, although the various ethical issues are named within the cycle diagram, these are only described in full in section 3.7: Ethics.

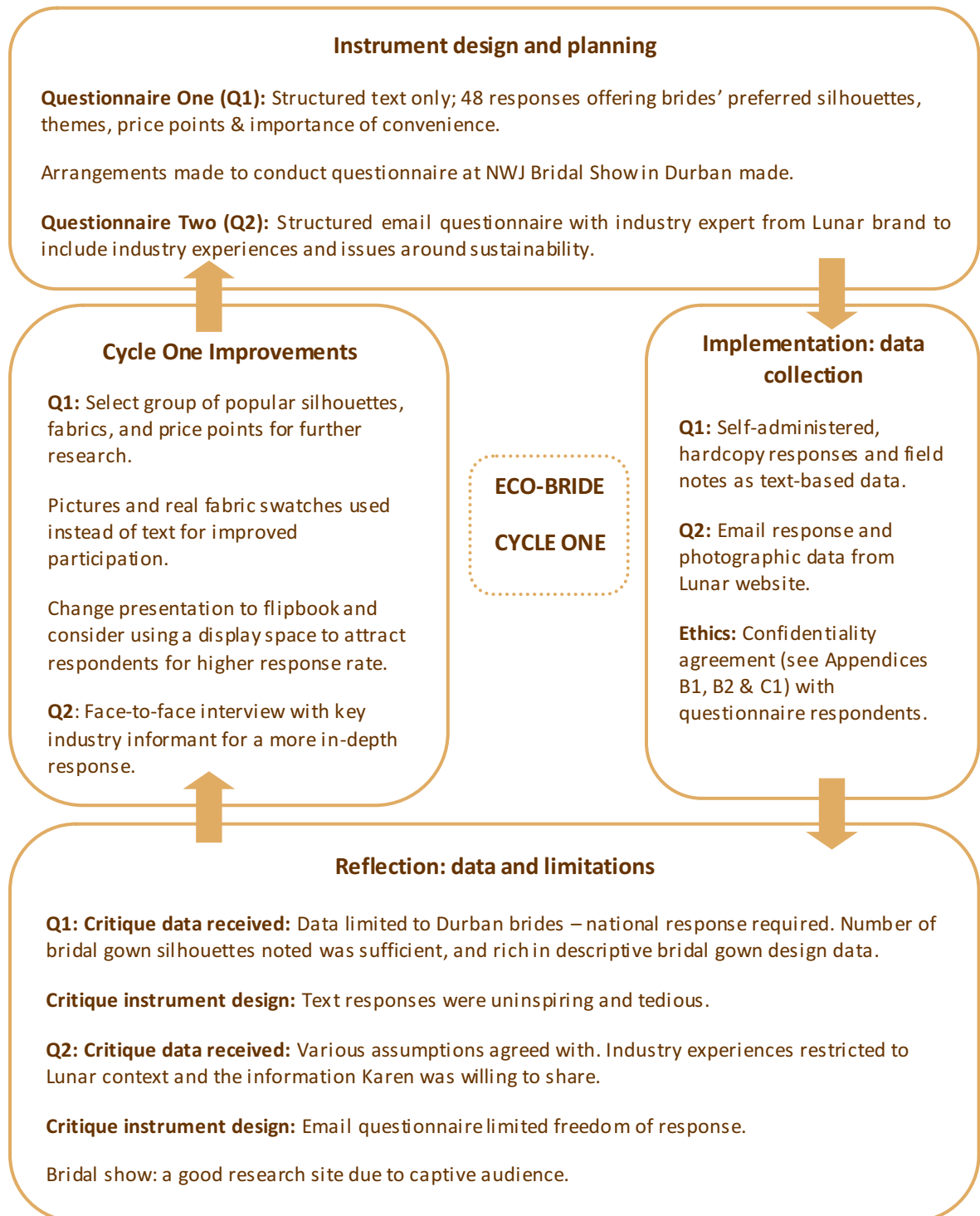


Figure 3.2 Phases in cycle one

3.4.1 Instrument design and planning

In this section, the design and structure of the first two research instruments are described. The planning that was done to implement each instrument successfully, including logistics and communication, is also discussed.

a. *Designing questionnaire one: Natal Wholesale Jewellers Bridal Show 2010*

The first instrument is designed as a mixed method structured text-based questionnaire (Appendix B1) using multiple choice questions followed by some open-ended questions. To explore critical question number two: “What factors influence a bride’s buying decision?” the questionnaire investigated the following issues:

- preferred gown silhouettes, styles, or categories;
- popular wedding venues, inspirational celebrities, and wedding themes;
- preferred price points and spending habits of brides;
- demand for environmentally- friendly bridal products; and
- the importance of convenience during the buying process and customer service.

The responses for each point above (these were expected to be extremely broad) would then be counted and recorded, and the most repeated choices and suggestions used in the second questionnaire, to refine a set of average popular bridal gown choices. The numeric data thus simply enabled me to define a set of popular styles that could be used for focussed, in-depth research.

The A4 questionnaire layout was broken into three sections: a brief description of the study, multiple choice and open-ended questions, and a section requesting demographic information from respondents. Pre-testing was done on the questionnaire by emailing copies to recently married ladies and colleagues for their opinions and critiques. The replies highlighted ambiguity in my style of questioning and questions which were not direct enough for quick and simple responses. These were adjusted accordingly.

I handed out hardcopy questionnaires on clipboards to people arriving at the NWJ Bridal Show in Durban during 2010. These participants are described as brides of all races and their mothers, and were selected through non-probability convenience sampling (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 206). This form of sampling was used because the respondents required were readily available at the bridal show, the majority of the visitors being brides themselves (a captive audience). Permission was obtained with the organisers of the Bridal Show for me to be stationed at the entrance of the show for a few hours to get

visitors to fill in my questionnaires. A sample size of 50 responses was considered an adequate number to provide sufficient data variety across responses.

b. Designing questionnaire two: Lunar clothing brand

Owner and designer of the “environmentally sensitive” (Lunar 2010) clothing brand Lunar, was questioned to establish her opinion of the viability of an environmentally-friendly bridal collection with regard to her fashion industry experiences. She was purposively selected (Maree and Pietersen 2010: 79) for her knowledge and practical experiences with a studio’s environmentally-aware conversion. Since her branding is that of a sustainable mindset it was deemed that she would have relevant consumer behaviour information at hand. This information was required to identify basic problems that the Eco-Bride collection would need to avoid, including unsustainable business operations, concept-development pitfalls and product demand issues.

A structured questionnaire was designed (Appendix C2) that allowed for Lunar’s own experiences to be shared. Also included in the qualitative instrument design were broad questions about direct competitors, target market, and brand ethos. The questions were reviewed by my two supervisors for approach and attitude checks.

Logistics for carrying out the questionnaire needed to be arranged between the Lunar studio in Johannesburg and Durban. Due to distance, the questionnaire was conducted via email for a quick response and to make participation easier (a face-to-face interview would require more time of the respondent). The confidentiality agreement and data was thus recorded via email; a digital typed transcript being the response format, along with photographic data obtained with permission from the Lunar website.

3.4.2 Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations

In this section, I critique the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the two questionnaires. Starting with the questionnaire disseminated at the NWJ Bridal Show in 2010 followed by the second questionnaire with an industry expert, the various problem areas are highlighted so that the following cycle of research may be improved.

a. Reflecting on questionnaire one

Questionnaire one was successful in the sense that it gave a broad selection of popular bridal design elements and highlighted weaknesses of questionnaire surveying as it applies to this study. The data that was obtained from the 48 responses was extremely relevant and rich in descriptive information—ideal for defining eight gown silhouettes and fabric choices. The expressions on respondents' faces when the Eco-Bride study was described to them was noted, and clearly showed an interest in eco-friendly products. This type of positive feedback is data that points towards the gap in the South African market for such a product. It thus served to build a strong foundation for further research.

The practical limitations are the weaknesses that could potentially affect the reliability or quality of data gathered. Text responses became a design limitation as they proved to be tedious and uninspiring; some participants could not think of words to use in some cases. Fatigue or consistency bias occurs when a respondent who feels rushed may not give honest, transparent answers, or may just tick any multiple choice answer for the sake of quick completion. It was thus concluded that for such a sample site a simpler, visual questionnaire would be quicker, easier and more interesting to complete. Those questions that were not successfully completed by many respondents were noted as weak questionnaire design for the second cycle of planning.

It was assumed that not everyone visiting the NWJ Bridal Show would want to answer the questionnaire. Even though surety of anonymity was guaranteed within the questionnaire to encourage brides to share their thoughts in full, out of the 50 respondents, only 48 questionnaires were completed in full. This could have been due to respondents having to write lengthy sentence responses instead of simply ticking boxes, before they could get to the exciting bridal displays they'd come to see.

Due to the study being based in Durban, the study becomes culturally narrow (Fionda & Moore 2009). The Eco-Bride customer is a discerning 22-35 year old with sustainable and sentimental values at heart; however, preferred gown choices may still vary greatly within this generalisation. The thesis statement calls for product development suitable to brides across South Africa, so Cape Town and Johannesburg needed to be included in the survey in subsequent cycles.

b. Reflecting on questionnaire two

Email correspondence with the owner of Lunar was pleasant and efficient; she put effort into giving clear, succinct answers to my questions and was generous in sharing her personal business experiences. She also offered to answer any further questions I had. Consequentially, the data gathered at this point was of high quality. It confirmed various positive and negative assumptions I had about the business aspect (such as expense of eco-materials), driving the study further towards a more defined state.

My key-informant surveys seek information and advice that pertains to developing the Eco-Bride collection. As such, limitations to the research conducted with Lunar are issues that deal with time, sensitivity, and confidentiality of the business-related information required. Lunar's responses included only the information she wanted me to use. Using email instead of a face-to-face interview removes the on-the-spot answers, allowing the respondent more time to mull over what to share, resulting in responses that could be more guarded. Awareness of this afforded me the luxury of preparing prompts and secondary questions for the following cycles' interviews.

3.4.3 Cycle one improvements

The problems highlighted above, experienced during the first cycle of research, are presented here as potential areas of improvements. The following alterations were made to the questionnaires to ensure more efficiency during the research process and so that data-refining could occur.

a. Improving questionnaire one

The text and format of this questionnaire required vast changes. Consideration was given to images instead of text as a tool for obtaining responses and using a flipbook instead of loose pages for a professional presentation. I also decided to use real fabric swatches instead of fabric names. Having a physical demarcated display space to give the study context was also thought to be helpful in increasing the return rate of questionnaires. All of these changes were made to satisfy the participation element of successful action research— that the respondents interact and become involved in the study is important to receiving relevant and reliable data (Ebersöhn, Eloff and Ferreira 2010: 124).

b. Improving questionnaire two

Although Lunar responded on time, it was clear that conducting face-to-face interviews would result in more detailed data. Probing questions could be asked immediately, rather than being emailed back after a considerable amount of time when the train of thought has passed. Making this effort to be present would also count in my favour for a more personal relationship with the respondent during cycle three, hopefully resulting in less guarded answers.

3.5 METHODOLOGY: CYCLE TWO

The methodology followed for cycle two included a quantitative questionnaire and a set of qualitative conversation-style interviews with key informants being potential customers. Who better to tell me what brides want than brides themselves (the users of this study's end product)? The aim of this cycle was to refine the basic styles and concepts gathered from cycle one, in order to move closer to a concept aesthetic and brand ethos.

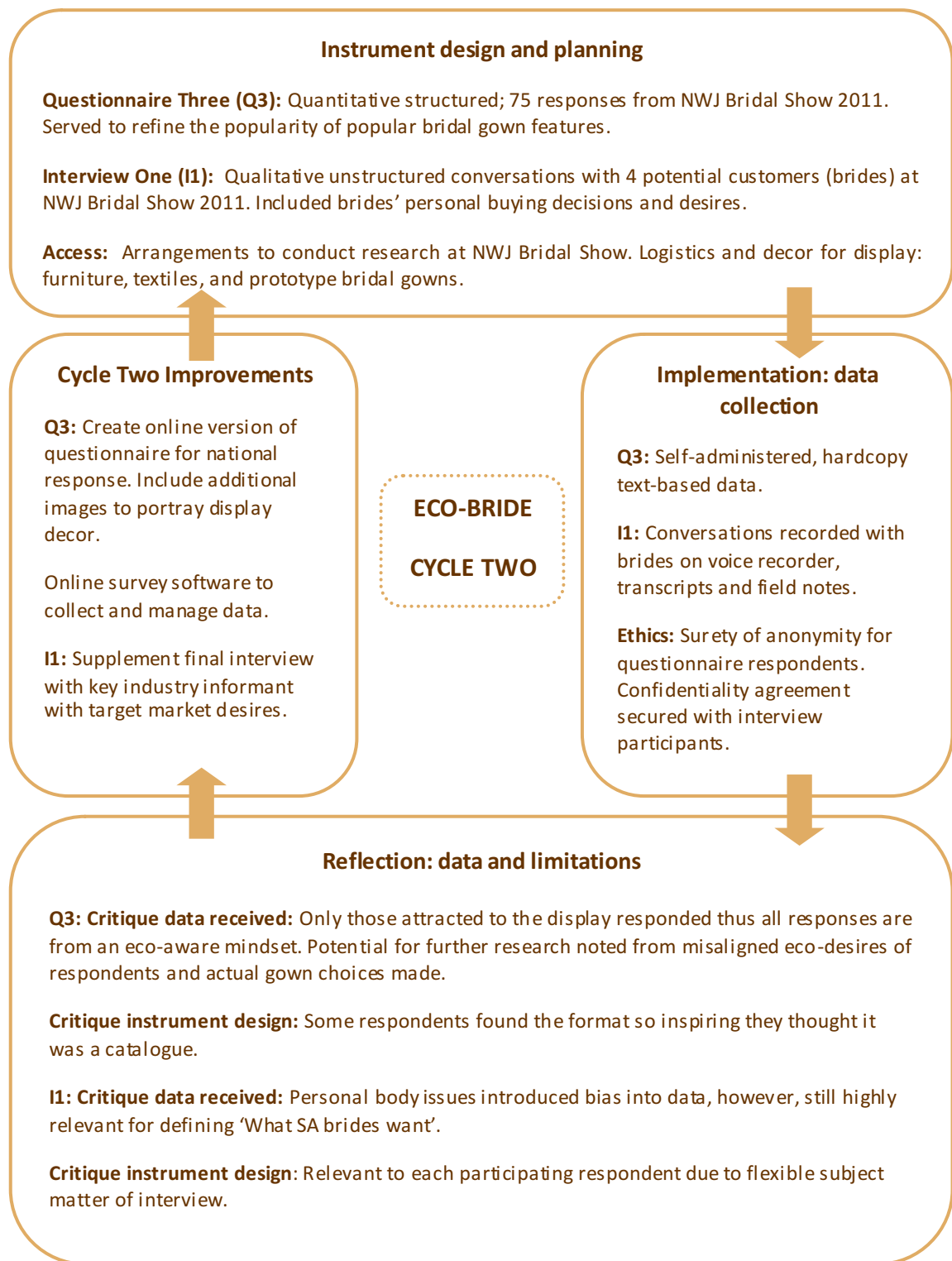


Figure 3.3 Phases in cycle two

3.5.1 Instrument design and planning

The design and planning preparations for the second cycle of research, including questionnaire three and interview one, both conducted at the NWJ Bridal Show 2011, is elaborated on.

a. Planning the Eco-Bride display: NWJ Bridal Show 2011

The need for a specific demarcated Eco-Bride space for interested brides to visit and participate, rather than the researcher pursuing respondents, was realised through the experience of cycle one. I decided to hire a display stand at the NWJ Bridal Show 2011 which was also used as visual marketing of the Eco-Bride concept. Preparation for the display and data collection involved the stand hiring and decorating, fascia board branding, furniture for display space, and prototype display. A 9m² stand was adequate in size as it allowed people to be ‘inside’ the display with enough room for a table and chairs for filling out the questionnaire. The walls of the stand were filled with imagery and garments, and a few indigenous potted plants were placed on the floor around the antique mannequins which displayed prototype bridal gowns.



Figure 3.4 Eco-Bride display at the NWJ Bridal Show 2011

Source: Photograph by Wendy Schultz, 4 March 2011, Durban Exhibition Centre.

The display was a setting to which a captive audience of brides could be drawn towards and it also became a facilitator of conversation interviews with potential clients.

b. Designing questionnaire three: NWJ Bridal Show 2011

A quantitative structured image-based hardcopy questionnaire (Appendix D1) was designed to establish the popularity ratings of specific bridal gown aesthetics. 75 Responses was set as a target sample size to reveal a wide range of opinions.

Confidentiality was offered in that the personal details of name and email address remained optional. Responses without this information are still considered useable data since the name has no effect on popularity counts.

The questionnaire was put together using images to represent the most commonly cited styles and themes of bridal attire in the first questionnaire as well as in online and print media (bridal magazines). Also included in the visual questionnaire were five swing tags, each representing a price point, and a series of five real fabric swatches.

The fact that only images are used to extract preferences in bridal attire is the most deviant aspect to a traditional questionnaire. This benefitted the success of the investigation in the following ways:

- it was visually interesting for people to look at, therefore a higher response rate obtained;
- it was quicker to answer; only a simple tick or cross required to denote preference, not a lengthy descriptive sentence on the part of the respondent; and
- it was interactive and encouraged participation; real fabric swatches gave brides something luxurious to touch and feel—important for visualising the final gown and for the actual decision-making process.

The questionnaire was tested on colleagues and local fashion designers for their input on whether the data gathered would be reliable. Changes made as a result of the testing process included adding a synthetic, non-eco friendly fabric to the real swatch selection, and using colour images rather than black and white. When I initially designed the questionnaire, I assumed that black and white images would give an unbiased view of the actual silhouettes, but I was advised to use colour to improve visual appeal.

The layout of the questionnaire was arranged so that the top third of the A4 page was an array of eight images of stereotypical bridal looks/silhouettes, along with a space for the name and email address of the respondent. The middle section contained the five price points in the form of swing tags and the real fabric swatches were attached to the lower section of the page. Each element had a corresponding selection box for the candidate to place a mark of approval. The results of this interactive data collection aimed to define

the real finishes brides are most likely to prefer in their own gowns as a driver for the range design, since product development is based on what customers want.

The categories of bridal gowns reflected in the image-based questionnaire were not labelled or described in the questionnaire as this may have caused bias where connotations may be linked with certain words. The same applies to the fabric swatches used—none were named or described, but were simply displayed for a purely visual judgement.

NAME _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Price Bracket:

R 5000 ○ R 8000 ○ R10 000 ○ R15 000 ○ R20 000 ○

Choose the fabric that appeals to you the most:

□ □ □ □ □ □

Fabric swatches: A strip of various fabric samples, including lace, tulle, and different textures of white and cream fabrics.

Figure 3.5 Layout of questionnaire three

Source: Photograph by Wendy Schultz, 4 March 2011, Durban Exhibition Centre

c. Designing interview one: conversations with potential customers

Four questionnaire respondents who showed additional interest in the concept were questioned further about the specific reasons of why they chose certain bridal gown details. Janet Hethorn (2008: 53), a designer, writer and professor at the University of Delaware, believes that if designers turn their focus to the needs of the individual (the customer), then the individual's sense of self and well-being significantly improves. Thus, using an interview technique that puts priority on the desires and opinions of the customer should produce a set of findings, well-prepared to develop a sought-after collection.

The interviews which followed on from the questionnaire were not traditional interviews; the interview schedules were unstructured and directed by the comments made by each respondent. This allowed the conversation to flow freely through the individual brides' desires and ideas without restriction. Interaction with the prototype gowns on display also formed part of the conversation; as an example, a potential customer remarked that a certain gown is her dream gown, and gave reasons why she preferred a particular trim or shaping to be adjusted for her. These comments were recorded as field notes while the conversations themselves were voice-recorded so that emotions were accurately recorded. The data obtained would be deemed to be reliable as brides discuss their preferences in style, silhouette, prices and fabric choices in detail.

3.5.2 Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations

A critique of the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the questionnaire and interviews follows. Since these instruments were designed through reflecting on cycle one, the weaknesses experienced were noticeably lessened.

a. Reflecting on questionnaire three

Since potential customers were attending this show with a view to finding their ideal bridal gown, their thoughts and ideas are readily available because they would have come to this event mentally prepared. The shared interest between a bride looking for her dream gown and myself wanting to supply that dream gown resulted in an immediate relationship that could facilitate the exchange of information (gown ideals). Additionally, all respondents were valuable respondents since they found the Eco-Bride

aesthetic appealing, having been attracted to the display in the first place. Thus respondents were targeted and results would be highly reliable and relevant.

Having supplied image references, brides were able to visualise and confidently agree with certain representations of styles, prices and fabrics. Many people are unable to visualise a gown without a tactile fabric example, allowing this form of questionnaire to elicit a high quality response rate.

Questionnaires were only filled out by potential customers with an environmentally-friendly or vintage-styling inclination, since these are the brides that were attracted to the display. The positive side of this is that the data will show what percentage of this group actually chose the attributes and price points that will later define the Eco-Bride collection. Respondents are assumed to be uneducated in fabric suitability, so their opinions on certain combinations were expected to not always be technically viable. This is a limitation of this instrument but is not a serious issue since the fabric choices would be considered as generalised preferences rather than taken literally.

Even extremely specific details, down to amount of shine a bridal fabric should have, is valuable for the development of the Eco-Bride collection. Although direct, this data is representative of the visual appearance of a socially and culturally significant product, being the object of inquiry in a constructivism-based research paradigm.

b. Reflecting on interview one

Those participants who agreed to the conversation interview were at ease and happy to discuss their inspiration for their gown. This is not to say that the instrument worked perfectly. Studying individuals' responses to aesthetics opens the study up to variables inherent in the data (Eckman and Wagner 1995). This can be seen when customers base part of their decision on personal body issues such as how a garment interacts with individual body shapes, or how colours and textures of fabrics appear against individual skin tones. This means that the data gathered will include such insights and can thus not be a literal reflection on a target market's preferences as a group. It does, however, point to a demographic deeply concerned with their presentation of self and an overall heightened sense of self. To overcome this blurring, participants are asked to select as many style and fabric swatches as appeals to them. If each participant only chose one,

they would be more careful as to which to choose, thus including more personal insecurities in their decision.

The ideas shared with me were rich in brides' dreams and with each conversation, a sense of excitement over the possibilities for her gown made the entire process a positive one. The demand for an eco-friendly option to conventional wedding gowns was also extremely evident in all interactions.

3.5.3 Cycle two improvements

The few limitations experienced during cycle two's data gathering are discussed below with regard to how these were improved upon for the third and final cycle of research.

a. Improving questionnaire three

Questionnaire two was by this stage rather well refined and proved to elicit a higher response rate through its image-based design. However, for use as an online questionnaire to garner a national response, I needed to add content that would replace the context of the NWJ Eco-Bride display: a swatch of lace, and a response space for key styling terms. In this way, I was able to receive the national popularity count, as well as more personalised ideas from the questionnaire. Using a specific survey software company meant that all data capturing, managing, and collating could be done for me, thus simplifying the process. I was also able to use social networking sites to spread the online link to Cape Town and Johannesburg respondents, and it was anticipated that these methodological improvements would subsequently increase the response rate.

b. Improving interview one

The specific customer conversation instruments were not adjusted for improvements; however, the data received from these interviews would be incorporated into cycle three's interviewing process with a view to refining the business concept and product development models. Having garnered a generalised overview of what South African brides want in a bridal gown, I was well prepared to supplement the interview with the trend analyst. The final interview needed to focus on defining a specific strategy that could permit such a prescribed outcome. Previous experiences of interviewing and discussing the issues central to eco-friendly fashion products meant that my knowledge and confidence levels for the final round of interaction would be higher.

3.6 METHODOLOGY: CYCLE THREE

Cycle three consisted of an online quantitative image-based questionnaire and a qualitative key informant interview. This final cycle of data collection builds onto the previous cycle by revealing a further refined description of trend and customer preference information. It also aims to extend the results across South Africa, to remove the restriction of a Durban-based study producing bias. This will also allow the results to show a comparison of customer preferences across various cities in South Africa.

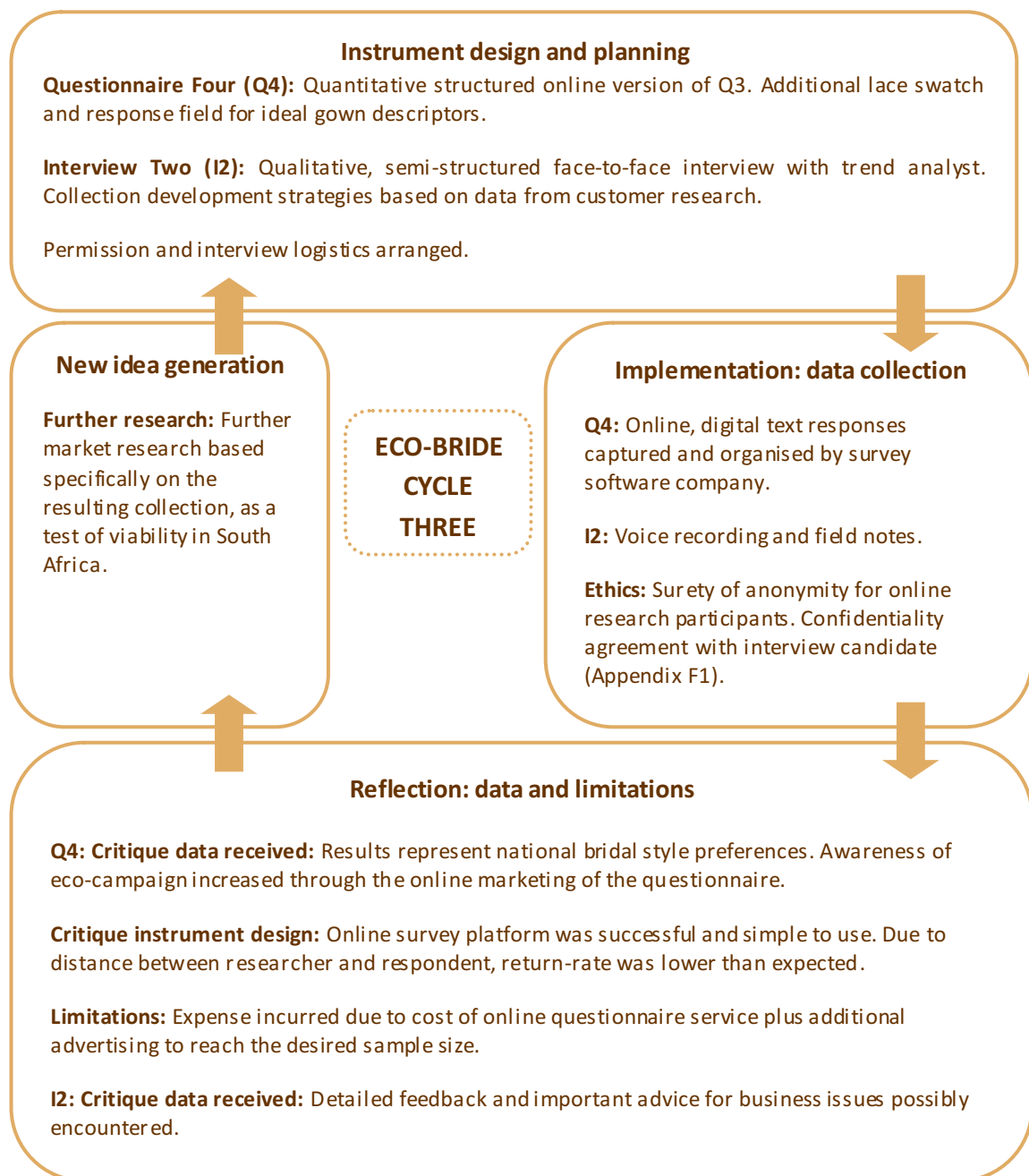


Figure 3.6 Phases in cycle three

3.6.1 Instrument design and planning

I present here a description of the learning thus far integrated into the final cycle of data collection, including the nationalisation of bridal gown preferences and an interview with a key industry informant. This was the most focussed aspect of the Eco-Bride research, in that its aim was to provide answers to critical question number three: *How does the defining of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and brides' buying decisions contribute to the development of the Eco-Bride collection?*

a. Designing questionnaire four: online

The online quantitative structured questionnaire (Appendix E1) was a version of the previous image questionnaire with two additions: a scanned image of a lace fabric swatch and an opportunity for respondents to supply key styling words. These sections were included over and above the original layout of questionnaire three to represent fabrics and finishes on display at the Eco-Bride exhibition stand and to emulate the display setting online. As such, the online questionnaire's purpose was the same as questionnaire three—to receive a popularity count of bridal gown silhouettes, price points and fabric choices. The reason for using a similar questionnaire structure was to garner a national response that was unachievable at the Durban-based bridal show. The questionnaire was digitized into the online survey company SurveyMonkey.com's template to best simulate the original questionnaire three.

Sufficient pre-testing had been done in terms of question checking for the original image questionnaire, but, the online readability, hyperlink functionality, and efficiency of completion needed to be reviewed. This was accomplished by emailing the questionnaire website address to female acquaintances.

The online survey was live for two months. The hyperlink was shared through social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and in emails to acquaintances, and friends of friends. I also called in favours with bridal industry friends to spread the hyperlink through their own online networks. Once a questionnaire had been completed it would show up in the online management page so that I could track how many (and from where) responses had been captured. Data was then downloadable in a format of my choosing to suit my data analysis plan.

b. Designing interview two: trend analyst

This in-depth semi-structured interview (Appendix F2) was conducted with a key fashion industry informant, selected through purposive sampling (Maree and Pietersen 2010: 79; Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 206) for his expertise in the field of study. The owner and trend analyst at Flux Trends Analysis has fifteen years worth of fashion media experience and uses the terms “consumer mindset” and “macro trends” to describe his current field of work (2011, pers. comm. 21 April). Through background research on Flux Trends, it was assumed that he would be the ideal respondent for this final stage of data collection. Since the respondent conducts trend presentations to corporate organisations for their business growth, his advice and opinion is considered highly valuable to the Eco-Bride concept development.

This interview was designed to extract advice for the Eco-Bride collection development in terms of what the future holds in the SA bridal industry. The specific issues covered include:

- the longevity of the sustainability trend in South Africa with regard to customers;
- the importance of environmental accreditation for local clothing products;
- slow versus instant fashion in a South African context;
- opinion regarding carbon offsetting as a worthwhile solution to a carbon footprint;
- best promotional strategies for the proposed Eco-Bride collection; and
- the importance of South African celebrity brand ambassadors.

The interview was designed as a face-to-face, interactive, semi-structured interview. This approach was used because a loose framework of issues to be discussed allowed open responses from the respondent with the option to create new points of discussion during the interview. Ideas which I had not considered or expected were then included mid-way without distracting the flow of conversation. Since the questions were designed to extract direct answers and opinions of the above-mentioned issues, it was necessary to have the questions checked for appropriateness, relevance and correct sentence structure to avoid ambiguity. This was done by the study supervisor as well as the co-supervisor, a professor of linguistics. Some questions required adjusting towards a more sensitive

approach. This procedure assisted with putting the respondent at ease as questions that may have been perceived as too forthright were re-structured.

Carrying out an interview with someone who is highly respected in their field means that their time is precious. Planning thus needed to be absolutely thorough and I had to pre-empt any possible problems. The following precautions were undertaken:

- Interview questions were checked by my second supervisor—a professor of linguistics—to ensure that all were polite and succinct.
- Finalised interview questions were emailed to the respondent a week prior to the date of interview to allow the respondent to familiarise himself with the context of subject matter.
- I learnt the interview questions as one would prepare for a speech so that my presentation and responses to answers could be natural, without losing track of the next question and holding up the interview.
- Ethics document (Appendix F1) was emailed one week prior to scheduled interview date to allow time for queries or other personal issues on behalf of the respondent to surface.

The Flux Trends offices are situated at the lifestyle development centre of 44 Stanley Avenue, Milpark in Johannesburg. As the researcher in need of a favour of information from the participant, it was for my account to travel to where the respondent would prefer to be. The Bean There cafe had a meeting room which could be sealed off from the main eatery allowing absolute privacy which allowed the respondent to share information more freely. A video tape recorder was utilized for data recording. Permission to do so was sought prior to the interview so that an exact copy of the questions, additional probes and ideas, and responses could be accurately recorded.

3.6.2 Reflection: data strengths, weaknesses and limitations

In this section, the various positive and negative elements of online questionnaire surveying and face-to-face interviewing are described.

a. Reflecting on questionnaire four

Creating the questionnaire online had many benefits:

- The voluntary questionnaire included a digital confidentiality clause; all participants were made aware of what the information was intended for, and that they could opt out at any point in the questionnaire.
- The results were gathered, sorted and presented by the questionnaire host company—SurveyMonkey.com. This made the analysis thereof much simpler as the data was pre-organised for download.
- No paper waste was incurred as everything happened online.
- Respondents in far-reaching areas of South Africa could participate.
- The questionnaire could be completed in the participants' own time without me watching or interrogating them for further information.
- Expansion of awareness for the eco-campaign and the Eco-Bride brand through social networking.
- Multiple online channels were employed to spread the link, thus minimising the narrowing of results due to a demographic that only uses one specific social networking tool.

When 80 responses for Johannesburg and Cape Town had been received, the questionnaire was closed. In total, 62 out of 80 respondents filled out their demographic information. A further set-back in the form of a low response rate was encountered: this was possibly caused by apathy or the lack of face-to-face persuasion to get a response. As a result I had to invest in a mini advertising campaign on Facebook to get more viewership to the survey page. After two months, the target was finally met.

b. Reflecting on interview two

The voice recording of data was extremely important: points which seemed less relevant at the time of interviewing could have become more important during analysis and these would have been captured in full through recording. Supplementary key notes were jotted down so that questions generated through discussion which were not planned, could be returned to at a later stage in the interview. These follow-up questions form an integral part of the findings since they represent a thought progression and are essentially there because the participant felt them necessary to include.

Elaboration probes (Nieuwenhuis 2010: 89) were also included where clarity was required on the response. This meant that a broader understanding of the issue and respondent's opinion was achieved. These probes were utilised on issues which were too broad to answer briefly, such as customer perceptions of the green trend and environmental accreditation schemes. Some issues overlapped each other, such as slow versus instant fashion and the customer's dependence on convenience, thus probes were helpful to clarify the response. The data gathered during this interview is considered reliable because of the respondent's respected opinion and the wealth of industry experience he has. The questions were designed to target the information required directly, thus reliability is dependent on the participant sharing sincerely and in sufficient depth.

3.6.3 Cycle three improvements

Being the final cycle, the new ideas generated from reflection on cycle three lie outside of the scope of the Eco-Bride study. Thus, the improvements that could be made on instruments and new questions developed, are elaborated upon in the conclusion chapter as suggestions for further research.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The interpretation of data for this study requires both quantitative and qualitative strategies since this is a mixed methods study. Quantitative data generated by the four questionnaires required numerical data processing, while abstract concept development (coding of various trends that appeared) was required to process the data gained through qualitative interviews (Creswell 2003: 238). Generally, mixed methods data collection may be concurrent or sequential, and the point of integration of the two types of data relates to a particular study's procedure (Creswell 2003: 243; Connelly 2009: 31-32). Thus, due to the sequential nature of my study, integration between quantitative and qualitative strategies was planned to occur during analysis (Creswell 2003: 243). This means that I could take the numeric data and apply it to the following cycle of qualitative research in order to contextualise the important aspects of bridal gown design gathered from brides during quantitative research.

Although the specific process of data collection was sequential due to cycles of action research, the interpretation of data has run concurrently with data collection (Somekh

2006: 6-7). As soon as one cycle had been completed, the reflection process (data analysis) allowed improvements on the research strategy to be made so that more refined data could be gathered in the following cycle. As such, the data analysis process has become embedded within the physical research methodology, rather than happening afterwards, as the diagram below illustrates. This has not just allowed conclusions to be made, but through continual reflection has facilitated a rigorous and relevant outcome.

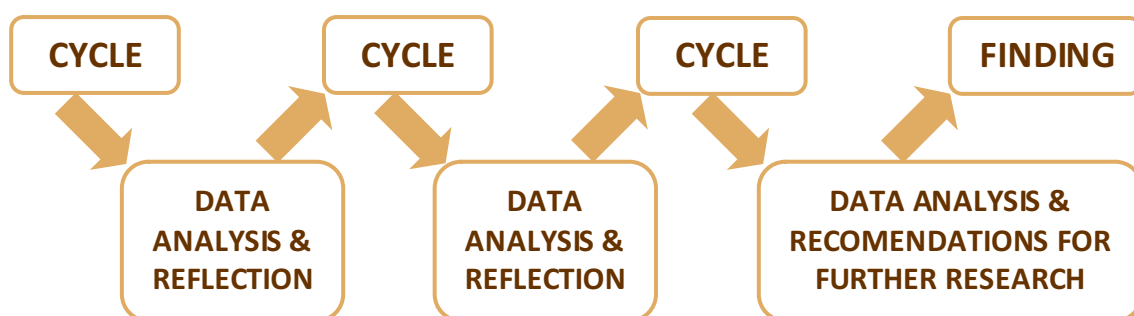


Figure 3.7 Eco-Bride sequential data collection and concurrent data analysis.

The specific analytical plan that I have utilised is discussed through intentions and the justifications thereof, for questionnaire data and interview data, respectively.

3.7.1 Questionnaire data analysis

A descriptive statistics process is employed to:

- uncover 8-10 specific themes as "styles" of bridal gowns;
- refine bridal gown "styles" down to a popularity count, such as "Which styles are most popular within that market?"
- quantify spend habits; and
- define popular fabric, texture, embellishment and finish choices for bridal gowns.

Descriptive statistics using simple tables and graphs commenced with a process of sorting the various information groups into variables (bridal styles, price points and fabric choices) and their percentage values. Graphs were produced to visually communicate the relationships between variables and their popularity scores. This process also identified which variables (bridal gown preferences) would be selected for refinement in the subsequent research cycles.

3.7.2 Interview data analysis

Inductive content analysis intends to:

- suggest reasons for data trends appearing;
- explore emotional, social, cultural, and economic factors that can affect decision-making by brides; and
- explore current South African industry experiences, issues, opinions and perspectives.

As soon as data was received, it was organised into themes or “inductive codes” (Nieuwenhuis 2010: 107) that appeared regularly as opposed to those that appeared infrequently. Transcripts and field notes from all of the interviews were read through carefully, and meaningful words and sentences were underlined with coloured highlighters. These themes were then arranged into emergent categories relating to various research questions by identifying recurring terms within the text. Tagged texts were then compared to each other to allow stories to emerge. Ultimately, this direct analysis method produced descriptive findings containing the opinions of my research participants that could direct concept-building of the Eco-Bride range.

3.8 ETHICS

Since the Eco-Bride study explores customer desires, industry restrictions, social norms, current trends and developmental issues within the sustainable fashion realm, no sensitive or private topics were dealt with that could affect human, animal or the environment’s health and wellbeing. Confidential subject matter such as business operations were the most sensitive areas of information that I needed to delve into. These efforts proved to ease relationships between the researcher and the participants and encouraged generous information sharing. In this section, these issues are described according to the instruments used.

3.8.1 Questionnaire ethical issues

Participation in all three of the questionnaires conducted at the NWJ Bridal Shows was voluntary. The decision was made by the respondent based on viewing the survey and its contents. The respondents were ensured that the voluntary field for demographic

information would remain confidential and did not affect the results if left empty. The nature of information required from both questionnaires was that of own opinions, preferences and advice on aesthetic ideas, none of which could implicate or distress the respondents if the information was erroneously made public.

Where businesses were the topic of discussion, as in Lunar's case, broad questions about Lunar's clientele were asked so as not to make the designer uncomfortable in sharing information. Although the study aims were stipulated in the letter of consent, this method of questioning confirmed the exploratory nature of the questionnaire as opposed to looking for specific company secrets. Ample opportunity was also given to query the study and allay any concerns for where and how the information was to be used.

3.8.2 Interview ethical issues

Each interview candidate was issued a letter of consent from the Durban University of Technology, which they signed in agreement to participate (See Appendix F1). These letters of consent served to authenticate the study and contained information as to why the data was required, what the data was to be used for, that audio recording would take place, and the terms of confidentiality by which I would abide.

The topics discussed during conversation interviews with brides at the NWJ Bridal Show were non-sensitive, thus ethical issues were limited to anonymity in the data presentation, which was assured. As an example, a bride discussed with me her ideal fabric choices and the feelings or look her gown should convey—subjects she could discuss quite freely with a stranger.

The interview topics and the letter of consent were emailed to the trend analyst prior to face-to-face interviewing to allow preparation on responses and comfort during the interview. Interview topics were based on the respondent's opinion of the South African 'green' trend milieu, not his own business models. This is the basis of his company's product/service, thus no ethical issues were experienced.

3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Rahul Kale, Dag Näslund, and Antony Paulraj (2010: 334) refer to action research studies as being valid when the practical approach is relevant and especially when action

research studies contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Jean McNiff (2008) suggests the validity of an action research study can be guaranteed when the account is comprehensible, authentic, truthful, and appropriate.

Applied to the Eco-Bride study's research design, it can be said that:

- The practical approach of data collection directly from the people for whom the resultant product is intended, gives relevant data. Having interviewed potential customers and asked them what their bridal gown needed to entail, results in first-hand, truthful data.
- The designs for each gown in the resultant collection were refined at various cycles of the research process. Gathering data from different groups of brides through different mediums (face-to-face interviews and online questionnaires) results in data that may be generalised across the market.
- Knowledge contributions include sustainable product development models, an educational and promotional video of the design process, and a case of skills development of local craftspeople, which is relevant and therefore valid.
- It is clear from the methodology section that authentic and truthful (sincere) responses were gathered during data collection, and that those methods employed were appropriate to the study's aims.

To obtain reliability, quality data must be provided (Hofstee 2009: 116). This is done by ensuring the instrument design is appropriate so that the right kind of data can be collected. Once again, by referring to the practical approach of this action research study, it is clear that the responses to interview and questionnaire surveys were sincere and truthful. Additionally, the fact that questionnaires conducted during different cycles with different respondents obtained similar or corresponding results, is evidence of trustworthy data.

3.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the mixed methods action research methodology used resulted in rigorous data gathering that was suitably reliable and effective in answering the critical research questions set out in chapter one. This is due to the constructivist view point asserted and

the investigative techniques used to gather data that is typified by varied opinion. From the diagrams presented it is clear that the action research cycles designed were successful in narrowing down the developmental path to be followed in order to develop the final collection. An unanticipated bonus was the overwhelmingly positive response from research participants for the proposed eco-fashion product. This response is elaborated upon in chapter four, and has boosted my confidence in the Eco-Bride collection being accepted by the South African market.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data and the findings produced according to the development of the Eco-Bride collection. This is followed by chapter five, which presents the Eco-Bride collection and corresponding market information as a summary of the sub-conclusions that I have been enabled to assert through this research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND SUB-CONCLUSIONS

ECO-BRIDE ENLIGHTENED

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Eco-Bride Enlightened presents the research findings, analysis of those findings, and sub-conclusions that can be made from the inductive data analysis strategy employed. The cyclical nature of action research as described by Liesel Ebersöhn, Irma Eloff and Ronel Ferreira (2010: 124-143) means that data analysis is continual and begins as soon as the first set of data is obtained. As such, the presentation and analysis of the data for the Eco-Bride study follows the logical order in which it was collected. This cycle-by-cycle format clearly illustrates how the data collected is integrated into subsequent research cycles and the sub-conclusions arrived at.

For each cycle, I describe the quantitative data collected and the descriptive statistics used to explore these data sets. This is followed by content analysis via manual coding and the identification of emergent categories from the qualitative data collected. It is then possible for me to assert sub-conclusions and describe how these interpretations were applied to the ensuing cycles' research instruments. Scholars such as Jean McNiff (action research) and John Creswell (mixed methods research) are also engaged to validate the interpretation of findings. This chapter is then concluded with a brief summary of the analysis process and outcomes.

4.2 CYCLE ONE: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The mixed methods data analysis that was required to process the findings from cycle one is presented in line with the data collection instruments used. A brief description of the respondent demographic information of each questionnaire precedes each data set so that the results can be contextualised.

4.2.1 Questionnaire One: findings and interpretation

The demographic of respondents at the NWJ Bridal Show 2010 can be defined as brides of all races between the ages of 17 and 57 (with an average age of 24) from the Greater Durban area. The results are calculated from 48 completed questionnaire responses (Appendix B3). Some text questions were not completed by respondents, so these forms

were withdrawn from the study. The questions left blank were noted as weak points of the questionnaire and were improved for designing cycle two of the study.

The data presented shows the number of total selections per multiple choice question and descriptive words offered by respondents to open-ended questions. A description of each data set is offered, followed by the sub-conclusions that were considered during the design of the second cycle of data collection.

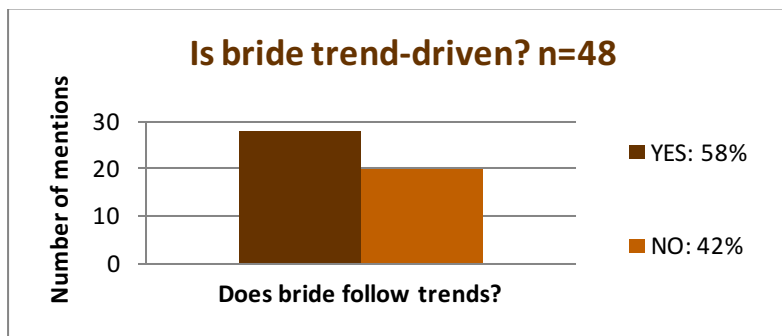


Figure 4.1 Questionnaire One: Trend awareness

Figure 4.1 suggests that:

- 58% of brides surveyed are trend driven when deciding what style of dress to buy.
- 42% of brides place importance on other buying decision factors rather than being fashion-forward.

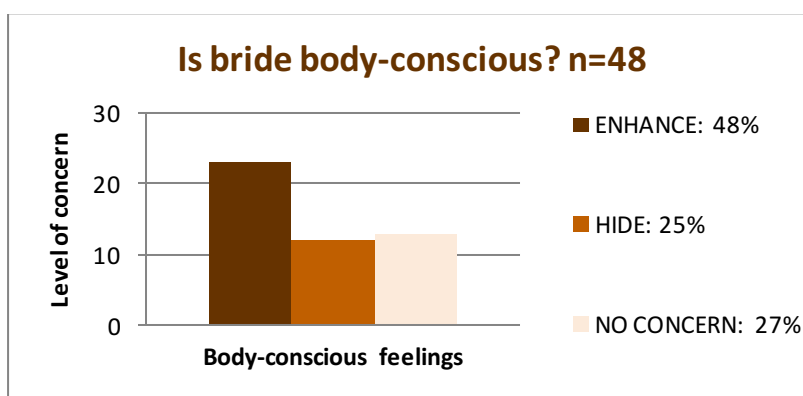


Figure 4.2 Questionnaire One: Body-conscious feelings

Figure 4.2 suggests that:

- With regards to being body-conscious, 48% of brides choose to emphasize certain aspects of their bodies.

- 25% of brides show a need to hide their body.
- A slightly higher 27% show no concern or no self-conscious body issues at all.

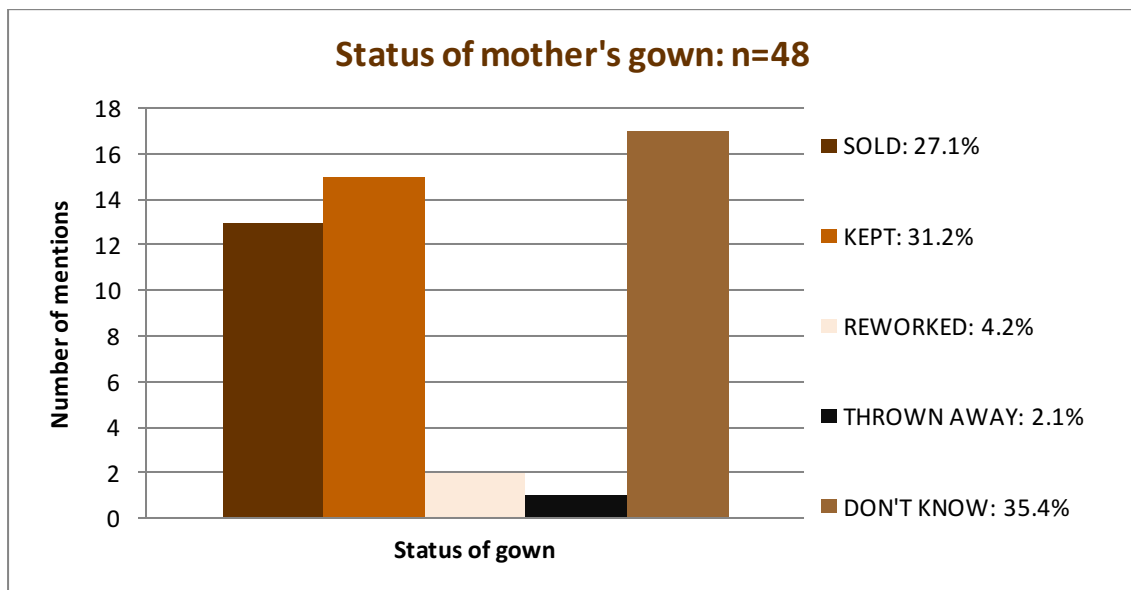


Figure 4.3 Questionnaire One: Status of mother's gown

Figure 4.3 suggests that:

- The majority (35.4%) of brides do not know what happened to their mother's gown.
- This compares closely to the 31.2% whose mothers kept their gowns and the 27.1% whose mothers later sold their gowns.
- Two mothers reworked their gowns for wearing again, while one mother threw her bridal gown away.

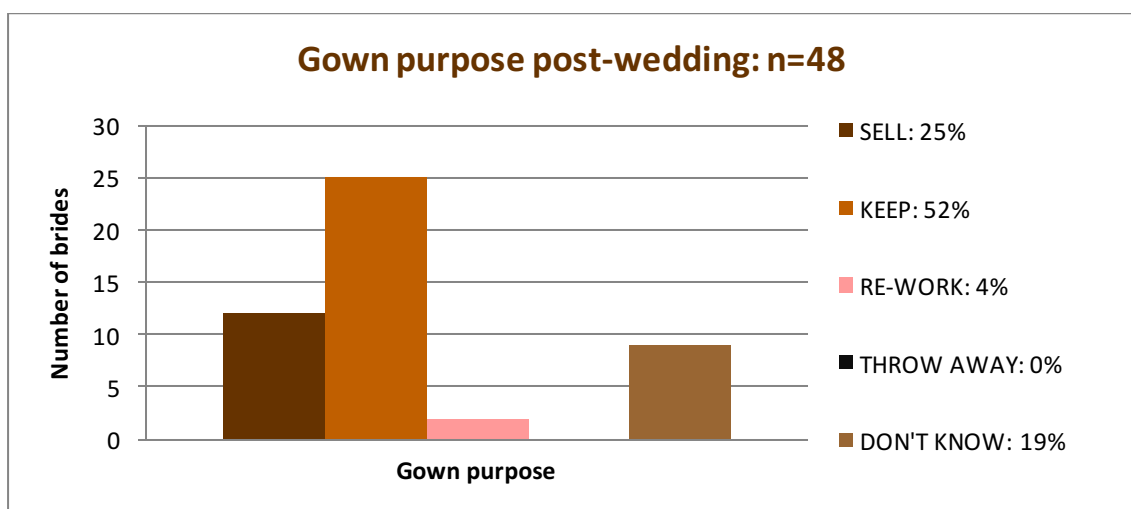


Figure 4.4 Questionnaire One: Sentiment

Figure 4.4 suggests that:

- 52% of brides will keep their gowns, while 25% will sell their gown to someone else, and 4% will rework them into something they can wear again.
- However, 19% of brides don't know what they will do with their gowns yet.
- Not one bride said she would throw her gown away.

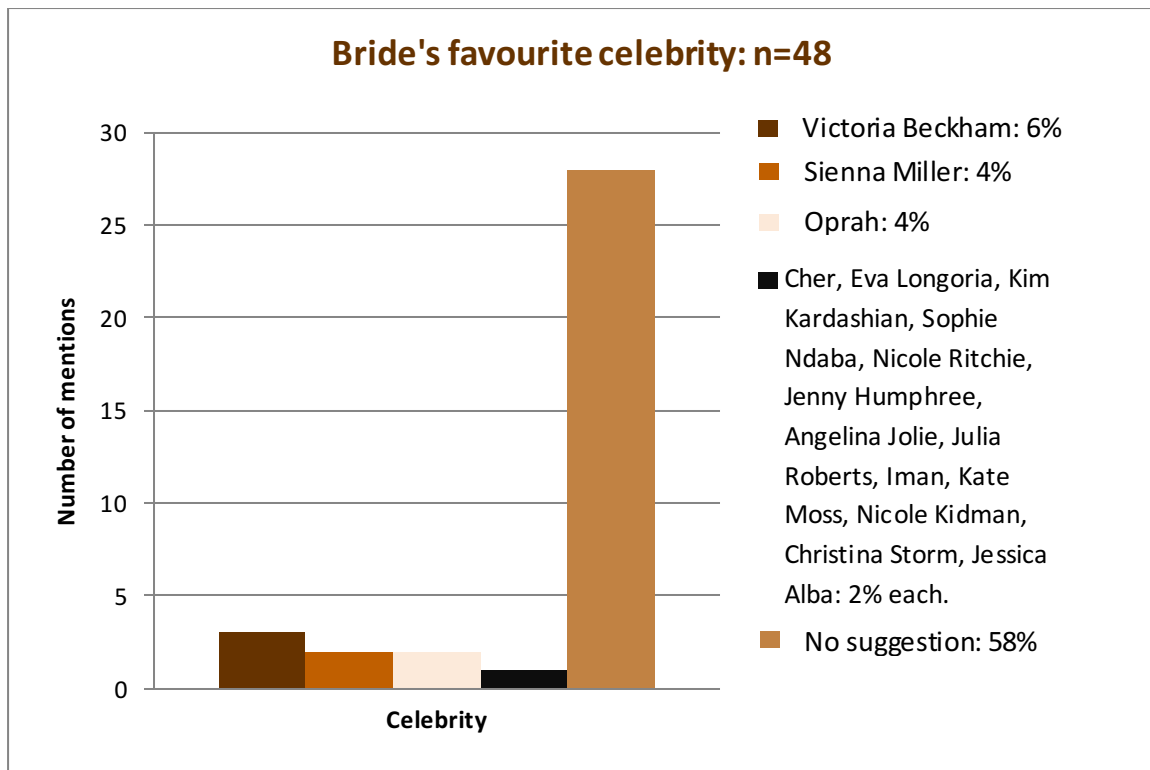


Figure 4.5 Questionnaire One: Style icons

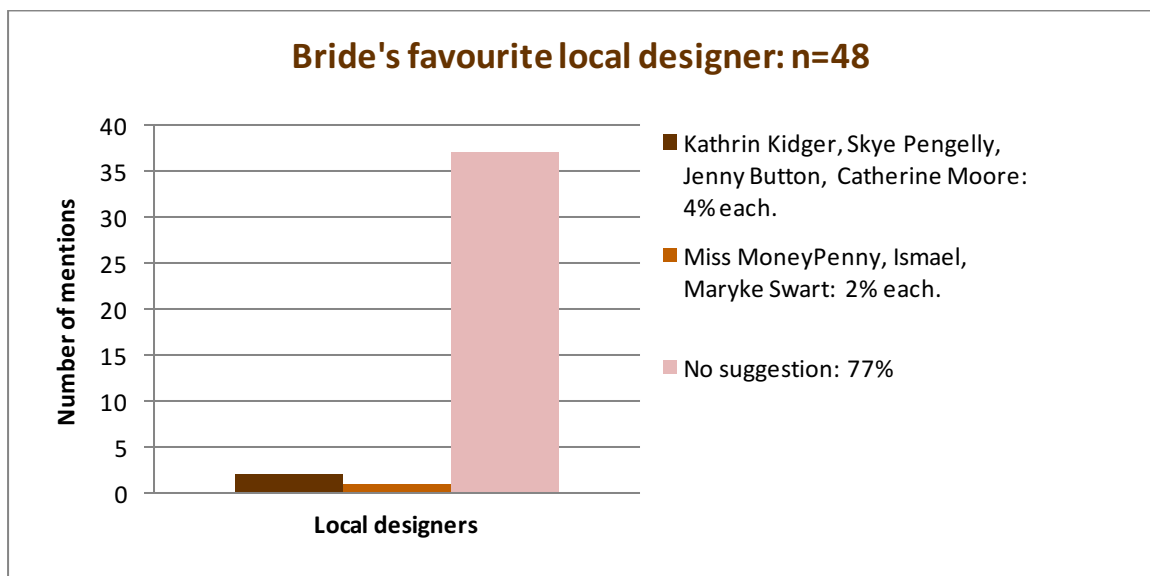


Figure 4.6 Questionnaire One: Local designers

Only 20 brides managed to note a personal style icon, and only 11 of the 48 respondents were able to name a local fashion designer whose brand they identified with. Figure 4.5 suggests through the total number of mentions that Victoria Beckham (three mentions), Sienna Miller and Oprah (two mentions each) are celebrities watched as style icons.

Figure 4.6 shows:

- Kathrin Kidger, Skye Pengelly, Catherine Moore, and Jenni Button all received two mentions each as local fashion designers or brands that brides identify with.
- Miss Money Penny, Ismael, and Maryke Swart each received one mention.

These two graphs suggest that Durban brides are not well aware of their local designer offerings and of celebrities, as few names were mentioned. This data suggests that Durban brides do not consider this factor when choosing a style of bridal gown.

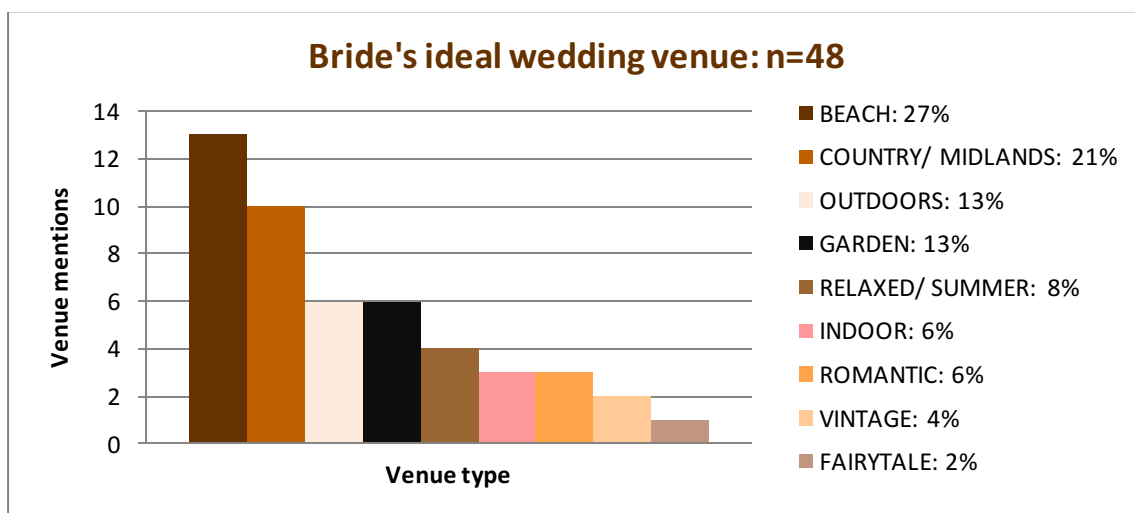


Figure 4.7 Questionnaire One: Ideal wedding venues

Figure 4.7 suggests that:

- A beach wedding venue received the most number of mentions at 27% while 21% of the respondents preferred a country or midlands setting; and “outdoors” and “garden” venues were each favoured by 13% of the respondents.
- In total, the percentage of environmental outdoor settings, as opposed to indoor venues, sits at a majority of 73%.
- “Indoor” and “romantic” settings each received 6% of mentions with the “fairytale” wedding venue receiving one mention.

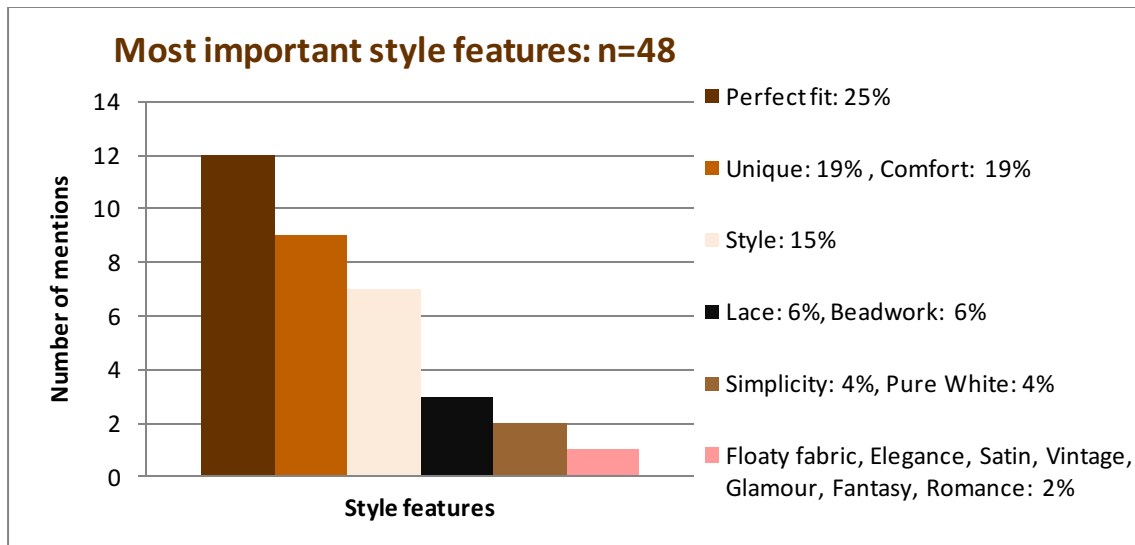


Figure 4.8 Questionnaire One: Favoured gown style features

Figure 4.8 suggests that:

- A significant finding for this study is that the most important aspect of a gown for 27% of the respondents was that the gown needed to fit their bodies and personalities perfectly.
- The terms “unique” and “comfort” were both mentioned by 19% of brides, while 15% used the term “style” as being important to include in their gown.
- Three brides mentioned the terms “lace” and three mentioned “beadwork”; while two brides mentioned “simplicity” and “pure white” as being important to them.
- The terms “floaty fabric; satin; elegance; vintage; glamour; fantasy; romance” received only one mention each, suggesting that these were the least popular options.

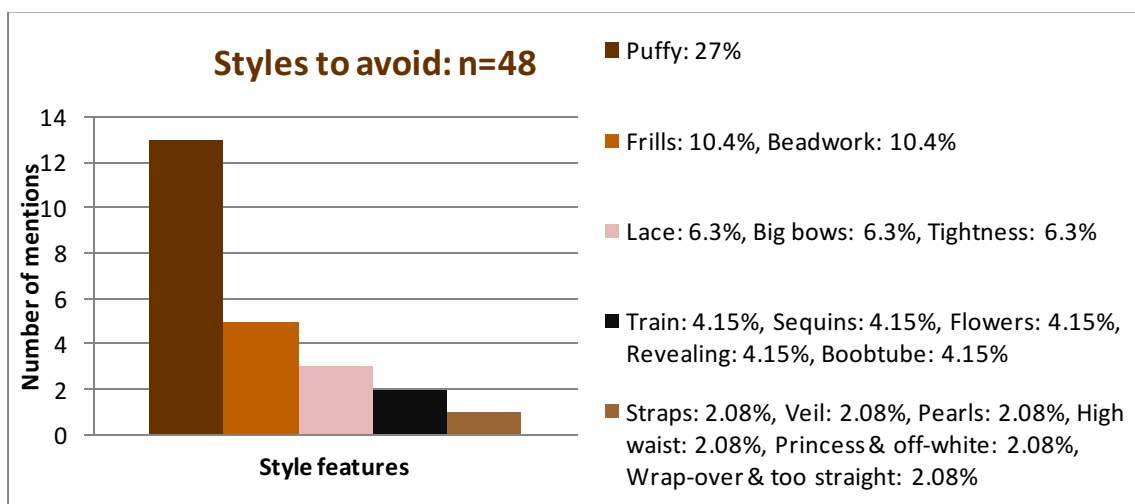


Figure 4.9 Questionnaire One: Gown style features to avoid

Figure 4.9 suggests that:

- In terms of styling details to avoid, the word “puffy” received the majority mention of 27%.
- 10.4% of brides don’t want frills or beadwork in their gowns, and 6.3% say that “lace”, “big bows” and “tightness” are the styles to avoid.
- “train”, “sequins”, “flowers”, “revealing”, and “boob-tube” were mentioned by 4.15% of brides as styles to avoid.
- “Straps”, “veil”, “pearls”, “high waist”, “princess”, “off-white”, “wrap-over”, and “too straight” were mentioned once each as styles to avoid.

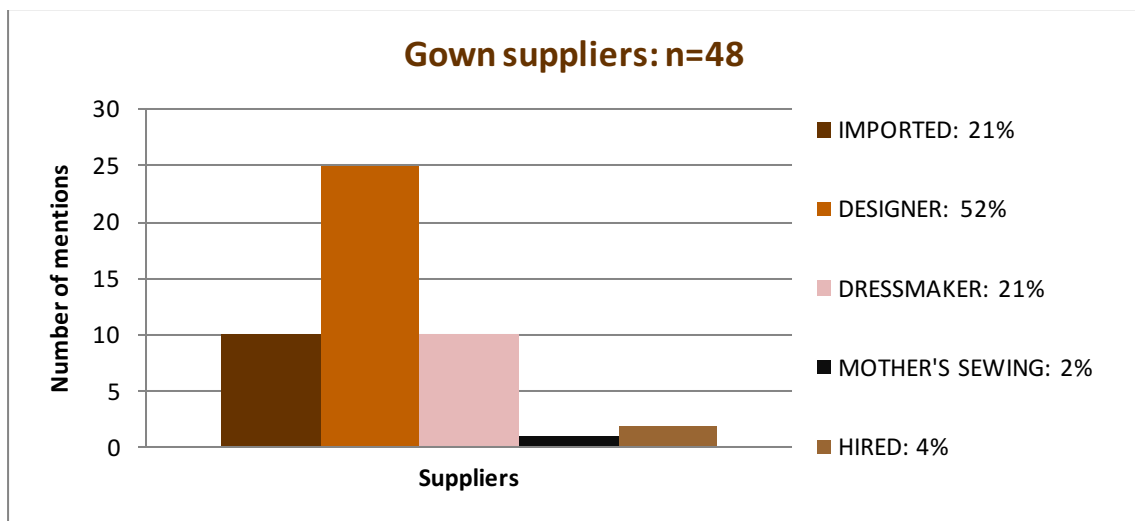


Figure 4.10 Questionnaire One: Ideal gown suppliers

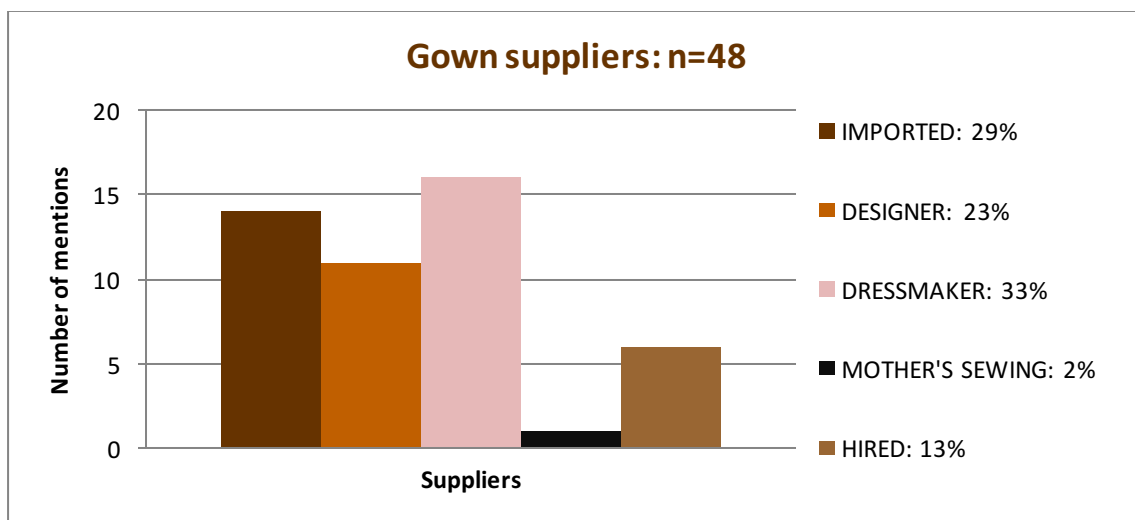


Figure 4.11 Questionnaire One: Realistic gown suppliers

- Figure 4.10 suggests that 52% of brides questioned would ideally like their gown to be designer-made but when questioned about their realistic suppliers (figure 4.11), 77% of the respondents say that this is an unrealistic option. This could be due to a perceived higher cost for designer-made gowns.
- Imported gowns and dressmakers as ideal gown suppliers received the second most popular choice of 21% each (figure 4.10), with dressmakers being the most realistic gown supplier at 33% (figure 4.11).
- Only one bride wants her mother to make her dress; 6% are dreaming of hiring their gown, but hired gowns are also the more realistic option for some brides at a 13% response rate.

Question number 12 asked whether brides would pay extra for an eco-friendly bridal gown. The response was split 50/50 between yes and no. Of the 48 respondents, 25 brides answered the next question about how much extra they would be happy to pay. The results (figure 4.12 below) show that the majority (64%) would pay R2 000 extra. One bride said she'd pay R20 000 extra for such credentials.

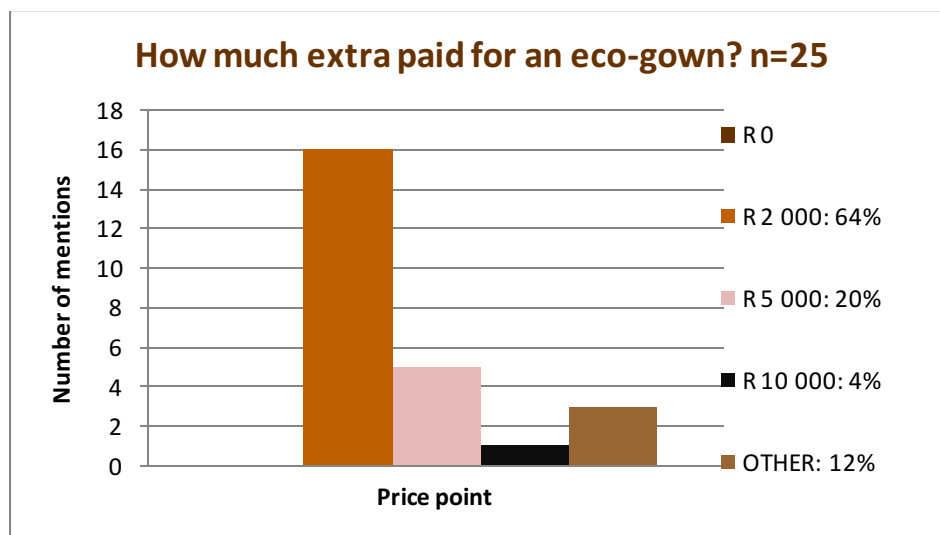


Figure 4.12 Questionnaire One: Willingness to pay extra for eco-friendly gowns

Figure 4.12 suggests that those brides willing to pay extra for an environmentally-friendly bridal gown are most likely to cap the extra cost at R2 000. Some brides mentioned other numbers (one bride said she would pay R20 000 extra), but on average

brides prefer to spend as little extra as possible, as is evident by the declining response rate against the higher costs.

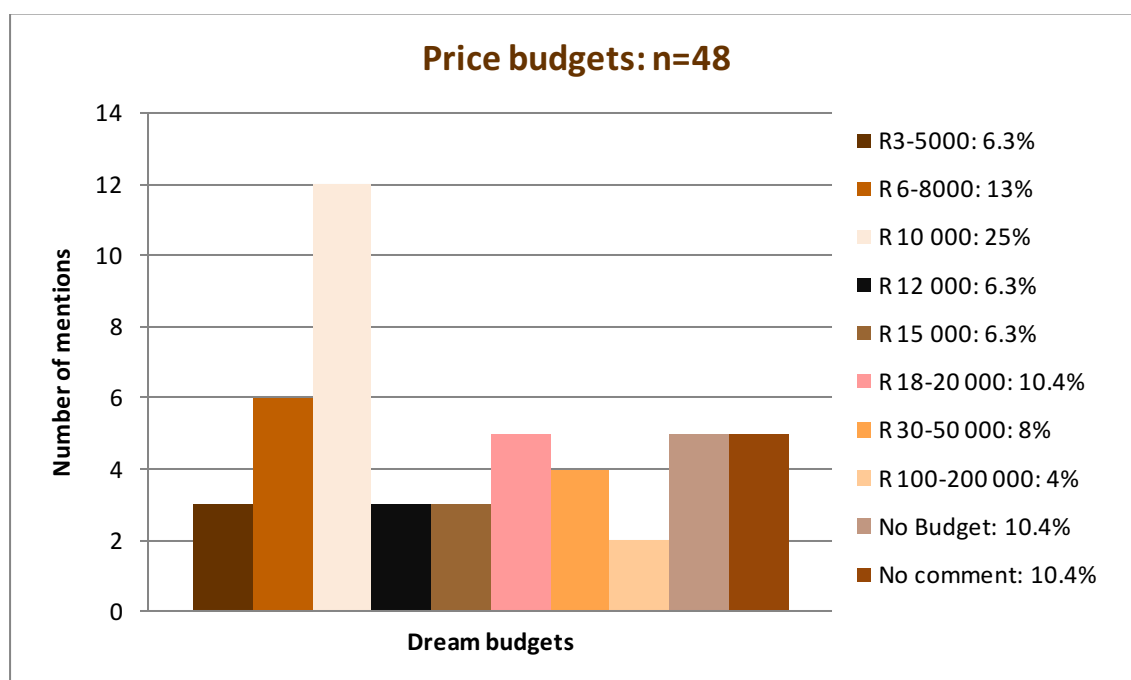


Figure 4.13 Questionnaire One: Dream budgets

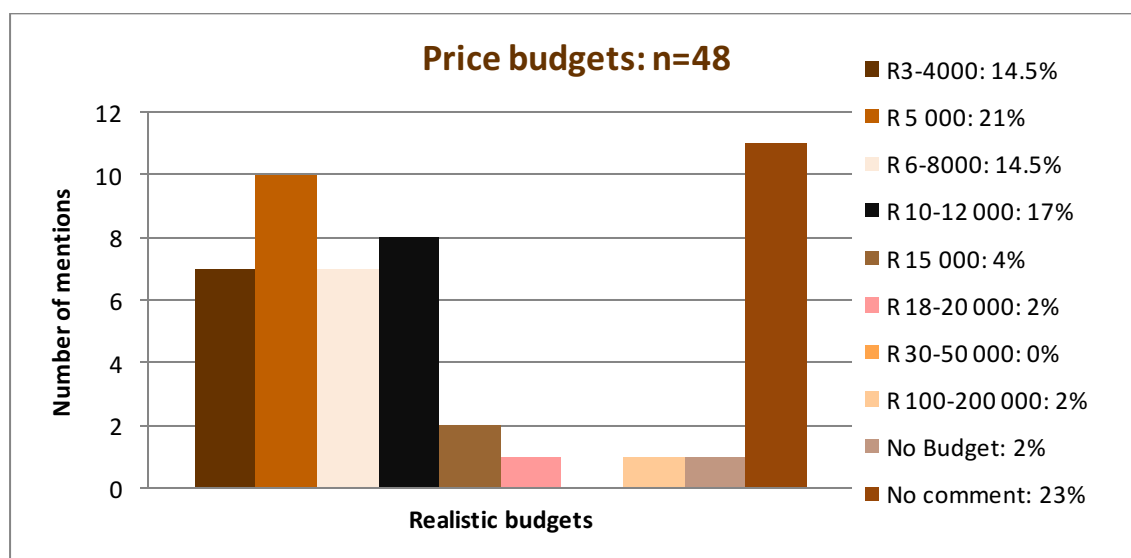


Figure 4.14 Questionnaire One: Realistic budgets

Figures 4.13 and 4.14 calculated across 48 responses suggest that:

- Ideally, brides would like to be spending R10 000 on their bridal gowns, as indicated by 25% of the sample.

- A few brides (22.4%) also stated that a dream budget of between R18 000 and R200 000 would be their ideal. This is in stark contrast to the 35.5% who said that realistically (figure 4.14) they'd be paying between R3000 - R5000 for their gown.
- Another 10.4% said that their ideal is to not have a price limit but, in reality, only one bride of those surveyed did not have a price limit for her gown.

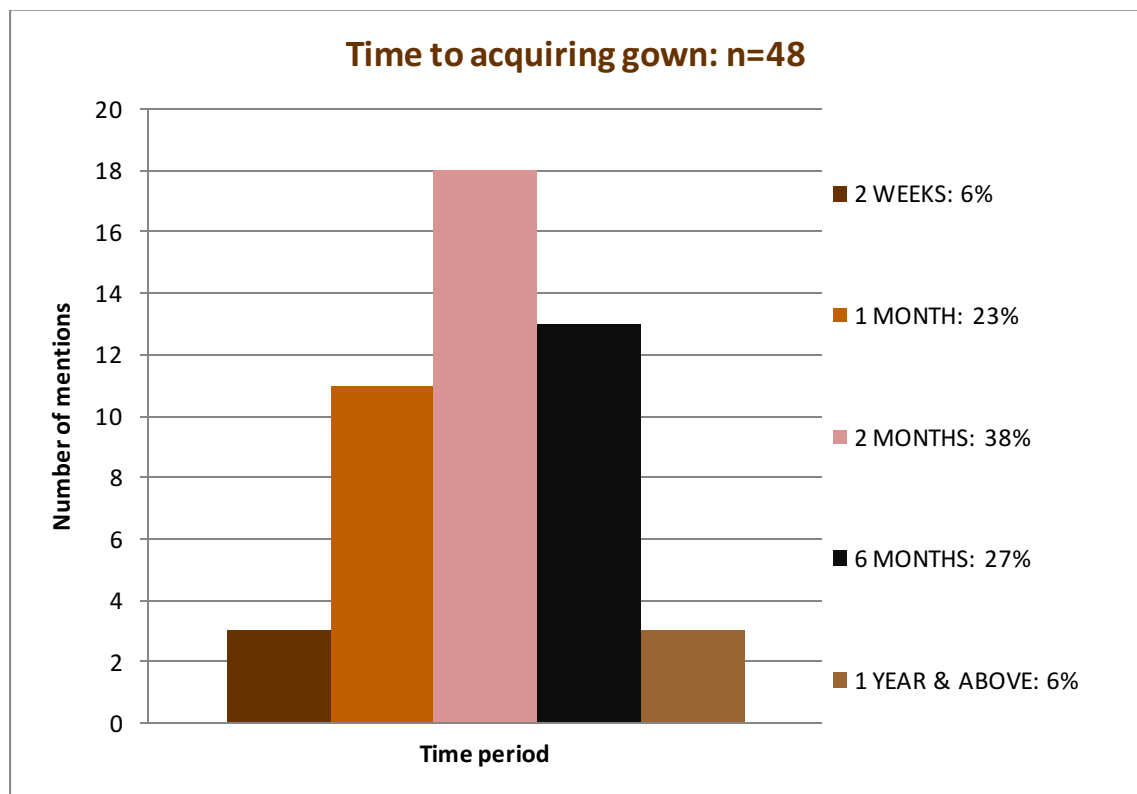


Figure 4.15 Questionnaire One: Time to acquire gown

Figure 4.15 shows that:

- 38% of brides are looking to receive their gown two months after ordering.
- While 27% are happy with a six-month wait, the rest of the brides (apart from three) want it much sooner—in one month or less.
- 6% of brides questioned will start ordering their gown a year (and more in some cases) before their wedding date.

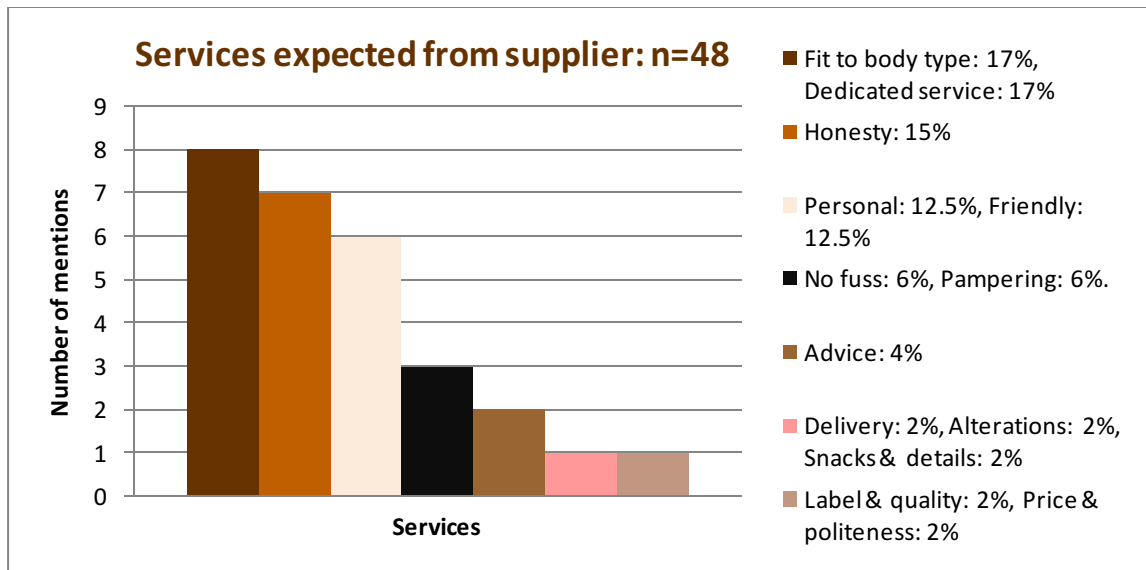


Figure 4.16 Questionnaire One: Expected services

Figure 4.16 describes the services expected from gown suppliers as:

- Along with convenience, brides have suggested dedicated service and a perfect fit to the bride's body as the most important offerings of a bridal gown service provider.
- Honesty, personal treatment, and a friendly demeanour are also high on the list of expectations. Brides also show awareness for their own comfort when visiting the service-provider: pampering, snacks, politeness, and advice are indicated.
- The "label" received a mention, which could suggest the brand or label of the gown is also an important factor when a bride chooses her supplier.

4.2.2 Questionnaire One: sub-conclusions

The findings illustrate a strong desire among South African brides to appear fashion-forward in their dress sense. Fashionable styles offered by the media will have an effect on what style a bride chooses. However, there is also evidence of other factors playing a major role in the style a bride chooses, rather than being eco-friendly alone. Since the "hippie" look associated with eco-dress will come in and out of fashion like any other trend, it can be said that eco-fashion (dressing without eco-notations) would enjoy a larger market segment than eco-dress.

Body-conscious issues have a bearing on the type of silhouette chosen, for instance, whether it is a volume silhouette or a cut-away, body-hugging style. A bride will consider her frame and hiding her least favourite body areas when finalising her gown

choice. Another element that must be considered is the fitting process: with a quarter of the brides questioned feeling conscious of their bodies, it can be said that an important part of the decision-making process is whether the styles a bride tries on initially flatters her figure or not. If the styles selected are inappropriate it could become a negative experience for the bride and she could end up using a different supplier. It is a positive finding that more brides have no concern for their figures than those who do, as this points to a target market that is confident and realistic about themselves and their bodies.

The research surrounding sentimentality in gown choice shows that while there are a large number of brides driven by sentimentality, a core aspect of Emotionally Durable Design, there are also a large number of brides who show a lack of concern for their gown after the wedding day, allowing it to become just another entity in the wardrobe. Perhaps this is evidence of the need for bridal gowns to move away from the conventional styles that inhibit use at any function other than a wedding. The majority of brides have indicated that they want their own new gown for the big day and show no interest for their mom's gown and what happened to it. Although these brides are planning on keeping their gowns, what actually happens in each case may in reality deviate from their plans. The findings also show that a small number of brides are considering re-working their gowns into something wearable after the wedding day. Those brides who don't have a plan yet are possible candidates for extending the Eco-Bride services into this after-sales offering. Their gown could also be designed in separate parts which in isolation don't resemble wedding attire and which can be worn at other functions.

Another factor shown to be a decision-maker is her favourite celebrity for their sense of style. To get an idea of how this data assists in narrowing down a look or style for the Eco-Bride collection, these celebrities mentioned in the data need to be described according to their dress sense.

- **Victoria Beckham:** city-chic, body-fitting or tailored garments, mature dress sense.
- **Sienna Miller:** affectionately known as bohemian-chic: eclectic bohemian vintage high street fashion.
- **Oprah:** mature dress-sense, for the fuller figure, not daring but always fashion-forward.

Interestingly, the top three celebrities noted by brides are either British or American. No local celebrities were mentioned in this group as having an effect on a bride's style choices. Where awareness was shown, the brides are not actively copying their style. It seems that, although interest is shown, celebrity style is a factor having a lesser effect on bridal style choices than other factors.

I noted that, as respondents arrived at the question which required them to name their favourite local designer, the majority were not aware of local designers. Many asked if they could use an international designer. This suggests a market not well educated on local fashion designers and what the available options for sourcing a wedding dress are. Of the local designers mentioned, not one have a specialised wedding gown service advertised. These findings are evidence that the assumption of a gap existing in the local market for a well-branded collection of eco-fashion bridal gowns is a valid one.

The study being Durban-based (the sunshine city), it is not surprising that the beach wedding venue and theme was mentioned most often. What is interesting to note, is that the five venues receiving the highest number of mentions were all outdoor venues (beach, country, outdoors, garden, relaxed/summer). This is positive for the Eco-Bride concept as it points to a bridal group who enjoy the outdoors and would want to be as close to nature as possible on their wedding day. The venue descriptions also help with theme-setting for possible categorisation of brides: your typical beach wedding dress could be breezy and sheer, while an indoor city wedding suits structured satin gowns that shouldn't get dirty. The "fairytale" wedding venue denoting over-the-top fantasy wedding settings only received one mention which could point to an overall realistic group of brides that responded.

It is quite clear from the two questions about specific gown details that brides' opinions of what should and should not be on their dress is varied, and in some cases, contradictory. What is also interesting is that, according to this group of brides, the most important aspect would be a gown that fits their bodies and personalities perfectly, rather than any physical detail. Specific details (lace, beadwork, textures and colours) seem to be of secondary considerations. However, when asked what to avoid, the specific detail mentioned regularly was the "puffy" gown, receiving the majority 27%

avoidance response. These findings indicate the need for a wedding gown supplier to be flexible and cater for a large variety of tastes.

Although the majority of brides questioned would ideally like their gown to be designer-made (slow fashion), this is an unrealistic option for most. This is quite an interesting statistic when many of these brides struggled to mention our local designers by name. Imported gowns are also shown to be in demand by the data obtained—maybe buying off the peg is seen as a more realistic option than designer-made, which could calculate to be a more expensive option. Hired gowns are also a more realistic option for many brides. While some brides are happy with a six-month wait to receive their gown, the rest (apart from three) want their completed gown much sooner—in one month or less. This is quite a tight time requirement for designers, dressmakers, or any supplier that deals with alterations. The findings suggest a strong favouring towards convenience and off-the-peg gowns (instant fashion).

Most brides' dream budget was from R10 000 upwards, while in reality their budget spend on a gown stood between R3000 and R5000. The results clearly show that the majority of brides are aware that being eco-friendly is expensive. There are even some brides who would rather have a conventional bridal gown than have to pay extra for the environmentally-friendly option. The brides who would pay extra are happy with an additional R2000 for any environmental credentials a gown may exhibit.

To summarise, the physical reactions noted to the Eco-Bride concept was that of interest and surprise; many brides did not know that an environmentally-friendly bridal gown was even a possibility, or that they should be considering one. It is clear from these findings that any eco-credentials a gown may display are a secondary consideration and should not necessarily be used to sell the collection.

4.2.3 Questionnaire Two: findings and interpretation

The owner of the environmentally-aware clothing brand Lunar was interviewed for her expert opinion of the Johannesburg fashion and bridal market (Appendix C2). Codes referred to in Table 4.1 were applied to the text by highlighting meaningful words and phrases to identify commonalities and unique concepts mentioned. The emergent themes

alongside were asserted afterwards as overarching topics that came out of the codes through inductive analysis.

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Two: Coded data

TERMS AND PHRASES HIGHLIGHTED FROM TRANSCRIPT	CODES
Slightly older, 30 to 40 + age group Individualistic / mature bride / independent / pays herself Realists / no frivolous spend / frivolous to survive Beautiful, not wasteful / dress for one day Timeless, ageless, longevity	Independent woman Pricing and customer Time, eco-fashion paradox Popular styles Broad appeal
Average spend: R5000 – R12 000 R15000 + are rare exceptions SA standard gown prices unknown	Pricing and customer Business focus
Simple, understated / vintage / natural twist	Popular styles
Most tastes	Broad appeal
Lunar provides earth-sensitive clothing, not fashion	Eco-fashion paradox, business focus
Polyester or silk, strapless princess line, lace and beadwork	Typical conventional gown / Avoid
Texture / texture detail Alternative fabrics / create a new fabric / lace = new fabric / reclaimed lace / Eco-fabrics: organic cotton, bamboo, hemp Certified organic suppliers / Fair-trade fabrics	Popular styles Eco-fabrics
Only two serious enquiries for 100% eco gown / Almost non-existent / Always be a conflicting notion Supply chain: quite difficult to really know	Lunar attitude Eco-fashion paradox Eco-fashion demand
Over the years / ever / eventually / at this point (mentioned twice) / to date / yet	Time Lunar attitude
Word of mouth (mentioned twice) / Media attention / Brand message	Marketing
Close competition = neighbour / Just down the road	Competition in close proximity
Lower than standard mark-ups / No extra cost for eco Can't afford overpricing / Uneducated consumers	Pricing and customer
Cater	Business focus

Following from this, table 4.2 provides the interpretation value and significance of each code for building sub-conclusions, and is elaborated upon for clarity and justification.

Table 4.2 Questionnaire Two: Code significance

CODE	INTERPRETATION
Avoid	Areas of interest as issues to avoid by a new collection
Broad appeal	Signifiers of elements accepted by a wide range of the target market
Business Focus	Various aspects of Lunar business that categorise type of business
Competition: close proximity	Locations of competition
Eco-fabrics	Fabrics that could be used for collection
Eco-fashion demand	How Lunar perceives demand for eco-fashion products
Eco-fashion paradox	Signifiers of Lunar's awareness of contradiction between sustainability and fashion products
Independent woman	Type of customer
Lunar attitude	Signifiers of the attitude the Lunar designer has to various issues
Marketing	Models for Eco-Bride marketing consideration
Popular styles	Possible descriptive terms and definitions for Eco-Bride collection
Pricing and customer	Relationship between price tags and customers
Time	Effects of time on business, fashion products, Lunar attitude, customer lifestyle changes
Typical conventional gown	Aesthetics of bridal gowns that require consideration/redesign

4.2.4 Questionnaire Two: sub-conclusions

Factors to avoid during the Eco-Bride planning and product development process include the typical conventional style of wedding dress. The negative undertone used signals an aspect of gown design that should be avoided if I am serious about changing eco-perceptions. This is the “strapless princess line”, and is usually made from polyester or silk (note: not Peace silk).

Broad appeal: “timeless, ageless . . . longevity” (Lunar 2010) are terms used to describe the Lunar customer's preferences in clothing. These are also styles of clothing that

would appeal to a broad demographic, since the styles are not entrenched in trends that pass quickly. These are words that should become pillars of eco-friendly product design. The Lunar brand caters for “most tastes” (Lunar 2010), which is a business strategy that will increase the number of potential clients one could sell to.

Business focus: the Lunar owner/designer does not seem to have knowledge of the greater South African bridal industry pricing strategy, which points to her focus not being specifically on bridal wear, but to clothing in general. Thus her price suggestions are specific to a Lunar context and not necessarily relevant to the Eco-Bride collection. This is also evidenced by the specification that Lunar sells clothing, not fashion. The term “cater” is used to describe the business function—referring to a service offered, rather than an emotionless product.

Competition in close proximity: there is no mention made of other designers or brands offering similar environmentally-aware products, but designers who are located in extremely close proximity are named. There is no sense of this being a negative issue to sales, and could even be a positive since a larger number of potential customers would be attracted to that area.

Eco-fabrics: various types are mentioned, such as bamboo, hemp and organic cotton. Lunar also specifies their suppliers as being certified organic and fair-trade. An option that could be a solution to the lack of local producers of organic fabrics is that of creating one’s own unique fabric from salvaged textiles.

Eco-fashion demand: there is evidence of a negative tone towards the demand for truly eco-friendly bridal gowns in the phrases “almost non-existent”, and “only ever had two serious enquiries”, although it is noted that this will eventually change. Maybe this has to do with the lack of knowledge customers have of what options are actually available.

Eco-fashion paradox: the owner/designer makes it clear on numerous occasions that fashion and the notion of sustainability will always be conflicting (Lunar 2010). She extends this into a definition of their product as being “clothing, not fashion”. In terms of Lunar customers, the concept of frivolity is avoided in spend and design details.

Independent woman: this classification assists in defining the type of customer the Eco-Bride collection should aspire to attract. She is typically realistic when it comes to decision-making, and responds to ideas that reflect a genuine sensitivity rather than frivolous decoration. She is also more often than not paying for her bridal gown herself which results in a deep sense of priorities.

Lunar attitude: phrases and terms coded with this emergent theme reveal a negative or realistic view the owner/designer holds of the current eco-fashion milieu. Issues such as the time it will take to convert customers into environmentally-aware brides, and the difficulties of sourcing suitable textiles are discussed with this attitude. These are issues that need consideration and solving for the Eco-Bride collection to be successful.

Marketing: the most important strategy that has helped Lunar become successful is word of mouth advertising. Also noted is the attention that the media has paid to the brand. Marketing plans can become expensive, and these are two ways of getting free exposure.

The styles indicated by the findings from the Lunar questionnaire which were included in the second cycle of research are:

- Beautiful, not wasteful
- Not frivolous
- Simple and understated
- Vintage inspired
- Natural twist
- Unconventional
- Texture
- Voile, linen, bamboo, organic cotton, hemp
- Salvaged lace
- Timeless, ageless, and longevity

Pricing and customer: at this early point in the development of eco-fashion in South Africa, pricing strategies can make or break the business. This is evident in the indication of uneducated customers and overpricing. With the aforementioned description of the typical customer, she will be very careful with where her money is

spent, especially if she is paying her own way. With an average budget of R5000 to R12 000, and extreme cases of R15 000 upwards, the pricing strategy of the Eco-Bride collection needs to be very carefully calculated.

Time: there are many instances where time is referred to in relation to shifting customer perceptions, timelessness of designs, and to progress in organic industries developing locally.

4.2.5 Data transfer into cycle two

The sub-conclusions from both questionnaires (NWJ Bridal Show and Lunar brand) in cycle one were incorporated into specific ideas and concepts for refinement in cycle two. From style signposts and suggestions of ideal shapes in both data sets collected, eight bridal gown styles were identified for questionnaire two:

- Ballerina or Dior's 1948 'New Look' style
- Glamour style reminiscent of 1930s celebrities
- Garden or floral style
- Body-contouring 'fishtail' style
- Fairytale or princess 'ball-gown' silhouette
- Beach or relaxed holiday style
- Architectural or simple tailored style
- Young, flirty, or whimsical style

The five price points used for the third questionnaire are between R5000 and R20 000 as this was the most realistic bracket noted in the previous two data sets for both a profitable design business and affordability for the customer. The eco-friendly fabrics that require further popularity measuring with potential customers are cotton and hemp fabrics, peace silks, wild silks, linen and voile. The qualities of these fabrics mimic the suggestions made in Questionnaire One, but they appear quite different from traditional bridal satin. Industry-related sub-conclusions from the questionnaire with the Lunar brand are transferred into cycle three's phases where further research in this field is undertaken.

4.3 CYCLE TWO: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Cycle two analysis of research conducted at the 2011 NWJ Bridal Show in Durban includes descriptive statistics of questionnaire responses and coding of conversation-style interview transcripts. The questionnaire result graphs are displayed followed by descriptions of each image used in the questionnaire which facilitates accurate data interpretation. To end this cycle, the coded interview transcripts are explored to reveal deeper concerns and explanations for brides' aesthetic choices.

4.3.1 Questionnaire Three: findings and interpretation: NWJ 2011

The total number of responses for each question was calculated out of 73 complete forms. Brides could make any number of choices per category, resulting in the total number of choices for "silhouette styles" numbering 158, for "price bracket" 77, and for "fabric choices" 154 responses. Alongside each image from the questionnaire is a description of style and interpretation which gives context to the data analysis.



The "Ballerina Bride" is a look back to the 1950s housewife. She is prim-and-proper in this calf-length A-line gown. Recently this period has been seen replicated on the catwalks of international fashion weeks. Dior, Oscar De La Renta, and Louis Vuitton are among the designer labels who have entertained this look of late. This was the least popular style, receiving a minority response of 4%.

Figure 4.17 Ballerina Bride

Source: Kettle (2009)



The “Screen Siren” style reflects the glamour of 1930s bias-cut gowns. They usually have a seductively low back and some element of flirty flounces in the length of the skirt. In this case, the skirt’s drape is accentuated by rows of gently gathered tulle and lace – an incredibly feminine detail that adds a ‘vintage’ feel to the style and it received a majority response of 29%.

Figure 4.18 Screen Siren

Source: Lazaro (2008)



The “Garden Bride” style caters for those women looking for the ethereal delight of a spring wedding, set at their childhood home garden or in an equally meaningful environment. Typically, this category of bride includes highly detailed floral and lace pieces hand-stitched into strategic areas of the gown. 8% of brides preferred this style.

Figure 4.19 Garden Bride

Source: MangoRed (2009)



A tailored hourglass silhouette is created in the smoothest satin available creating a style that accentuates curves. Although technically not “seamless”, the mermaid elegance of the finish is a look of moulded rather than stitched shapes. Perfect for an urban chic city wedding for the contemporary couple where polish and sheen is used to create a sense of quality. 11% brides favoured this style.

Figure 4.20 Seamless Mermaid

Source: Valenta (2009)



This is the cliché dress that little girls dream of as their perfect wedding gown. The “corset and pouf” or “meringue” is chosen for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to wear a ball gown of scale, and possibly stems from images of the various fairytale princesses. It is a show-stopping style, mostly due to the volume and excessive use of fabric, which 17% of brides prefer.

Figure 4.21 Fairytale Princess

Source: Group USA (2010)



The “Barefoot Bride” is found on the beach. She is wearing light-as-air fabrics, some of them sheer, which float on the breeze as she walks unconcerned on the sand. A slim-line silhouette is the style of choice, the fabric lending its drape to create graceful lines. This particular gown has an over layer of macramé - an example of how these brides prefer texture as interest, rather than glitz and sparkle. 14% of brides favoured this style.

Figure 4.22 Barefoot Bride

Source: Rosa Clara (2010a)



Fabric choice is integral for the “structured” look. Stiff fabrics that behave like paper such as taffeta and organdie are employed to craft folds, tucks, corsages and other stand-out forms. Architectural in style, the look may have a single bloom or stiff bow worked into the design as a contrasting statement to the overall simplicity of the gown, which 8% of brides chose.

Figure 4.23 Structural Charm

Source: Wang (2009)



For the daring (according to current social norms) and young-at-heart bride, or as the party outfit for the reception, the mini dress is acquiring popularity. It is controversial and as such is reminiscent of Biba's mini skirt of the 1960s. Details also from the 1960s period from designers such as Andre' Couregges are cut away sections and sheer blocks of pattern. This style was preferred by 9% of brides.

Figure 4.24 Mary Quant

Source: Pronovias (2010)

The following graph shows the favoured style values in comparison with each other. The 'Screen Siren' look and figure-hugging silhouette was the most popular style by a majority 29%. This significant finding is in stark contrast to the remaining seven styles which are separated by small values, showing a diverse set of preferences. Out of these seven styles, the next most popular style was that of the 'Fairytale Princess'. On the other end of the scale, the least popular style was the 'Ballerina Bride' at 4%.

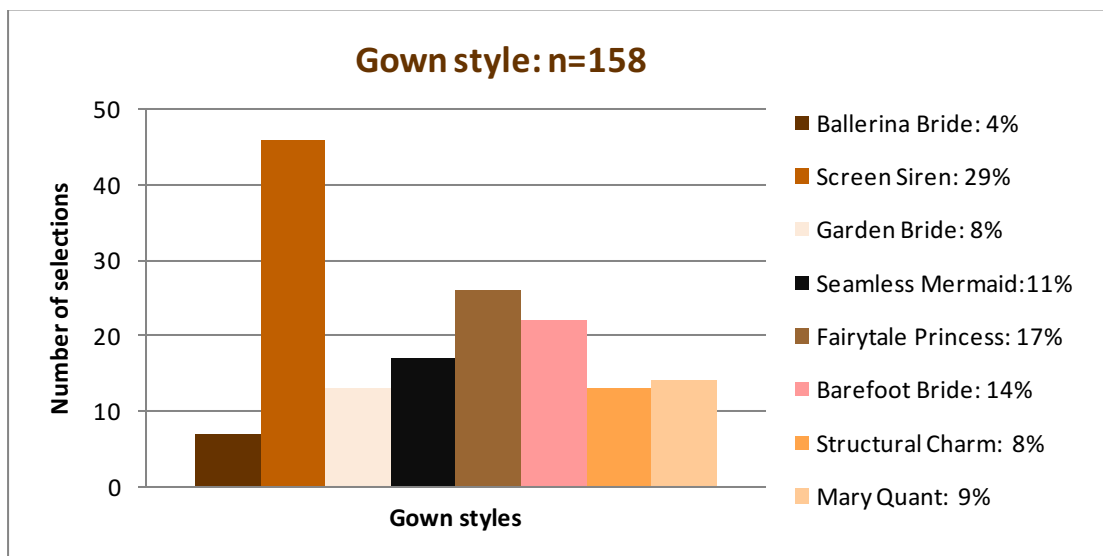


Figure 4.25 Questionnaire Three: Gown style preferences

The price point that received the majority 47% preference was that of R8000. R5000 as a gown price was selected by 29% of the brides, followed by R10 000 at 14%. The higher prices of R15 000 and R20 000 received 6% and 4% mentions respectively.

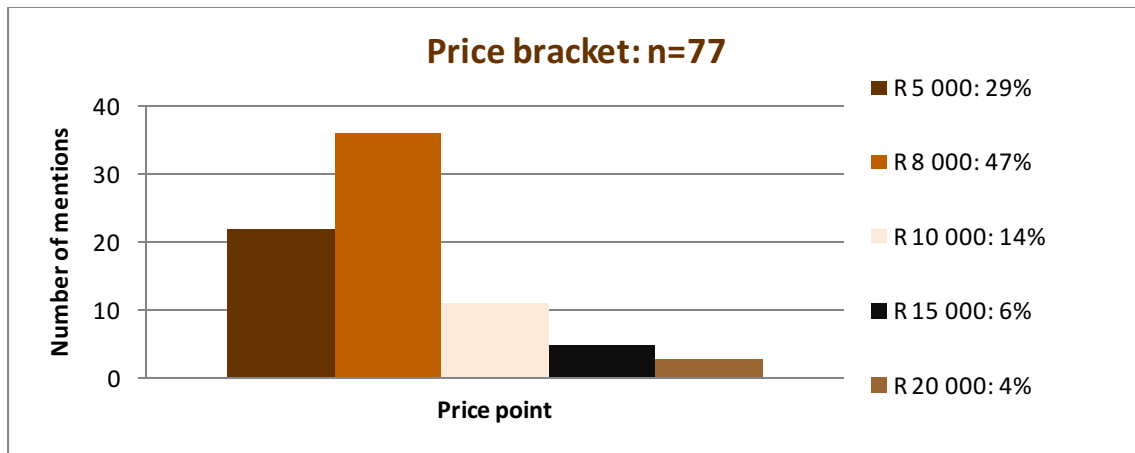


Figure 4.26 Questionnaire Three: Preferred price points

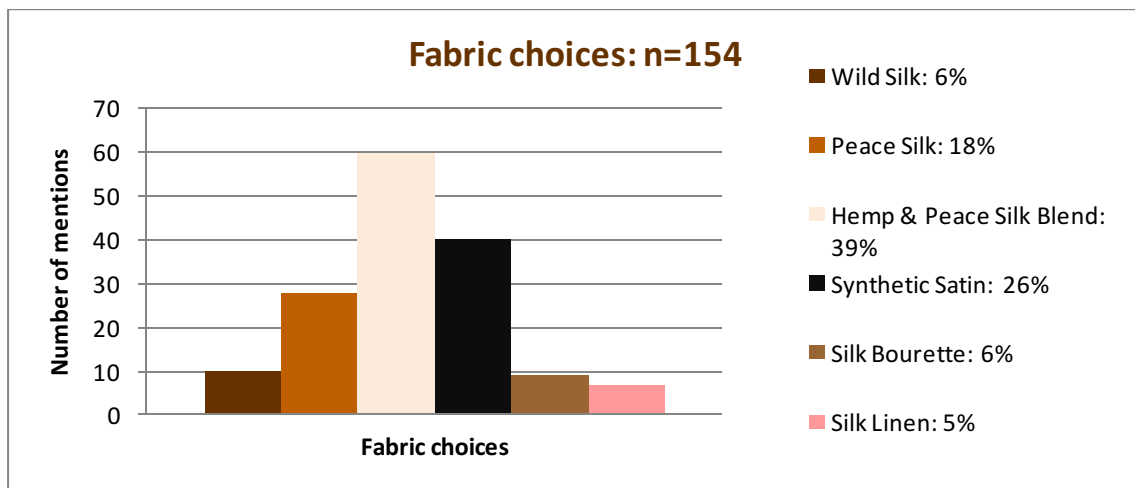


Figure 4.27 Questionnaire Three: Preferred fabric choices

The real fabric swatches attached to the third questionnaire served to give brides an idea of the look and feel of each fabric. Figure 4.27 suggests that the hemp and peace silk blend taffeta (eco-friendly) was the most popular bridal gown fabric with 39% of brides choosing it. The second most popular fabric was the synthetic bridal satin (an unsustainable fabric) which received 26% of the selections. The least popular fabrics appear to be the silk linen and wild silk (5%) and the silk bourette (6%), all of which are highly textured and the least similar to a conventional synthetic bridal satin.

4.3.2 Questionnaire Three: sub-conclusions

The findings above not only describe the details and silhouettes that are desirable in a bridal collection, but the data also shows what percentage of this sample actually chose the attributes and price points that will later define the Eco-Bride collection.

The majority of brides selected the “Screen Siren” look (Figure 4.18) as their favourite with the seven remaining styles separated by small values which show a diverse set of preferences. The second most popular style was that of the ‘Fairytale Princess’—the most fabric-wasteful style in the questionnaire. Either this sample is captivated by the dreamlike appearance of a more conventional yet extravagant silhouette, or it suggests that a luxurious amount of fabric used for a gown could be a selling point. This is an important piece of data as it also deals with one of the assumptions the Eco-Bride concept is based on—that of increased cost due to expensive raw materials. The “Ballerina Bride” look received the lowest popularity count and being one of the less conventional gowns of the eight, one could say that Durban brides still look for tradition in their silhouette choices.

The findings for the preferred price point question show that this sample is not happy with prices that exceed R10 000. The most popular price of R8000, and second most popular of R5000 indicate price-sensitivity. A factor which could introduce bias in these findings is a respondent feeling the embarrassment of appearing cheap if the lowest price option is chosen. Another reason for the amounts represented could be the lower disposable income of the Kwa-Zulu Natal population as opposed to the higher disposable incomes of Johannesburg and Cape Town.

The hemp and peace silk blend is the brightest of all fabrics with a shiny surface and smooth texture. Since this fabric quality was the most popular with brides-to-be, it suggests that shine is more important to this group of brides than a pure white fabric like the conventional bridal satin which came in at number two. The bridal satin is the whitest fabric with a soft texture, but has less shine than the taffeta. Perhaps the highly textured and non-shiny aesthetic of the least popular fabrics (the linen and bourette) is reminiscent of a hippy look and feel.

4.3.3 Interview One: findings and interpretation

As was analysis procedure for cycle one’s second questionnaire, codes were applied to the transcripts by identifying poignant words and phrases. The emergent themes alongside were then interpreted (Table 4.4) to build sub-conclusions with the ability of satisfying the study’s critical questions.

Table 4.3 Interview One: Coded data

TERMS AND PHRASES HIGHLIGHTED FROM TRANSCRIPT	CODES
<p>CLIENT 1 – In response to what she liked about the gown depicted in a poster.</p> <p>“Everything. I like the whole look. The plainness, the tiers are also nice”.</p>	<p>Broad style idea</p> <p>Unsure</p> <p>Simple style</p> <p>Tiered skirt</p>
<p>CLIENT 2 – In response to prototype gown, posters of corsets, and questionnaire.</p> <p>“I’m getting married near the beach, need something loose and easy. Soft. I [also] like the corsets.”</p> <p>“Can I choose two options [of price bracket Question] I’m not sure which [I like best].”</p> <p>“Ooh, I like the sheen on this fabric.”</p>	<p>Beach</p> <p>Loose fit</p> <p>Simple style</p> <p>Soft</p> <p>Corsets – support</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>Unsure</p> <p>Fabric</p>
<p>CLIENT 3 – In response to questionnaire. Conversation continues.</p> <p>“Can I circle parts of a dress? Is this image an Alvina Valenta dress? Is this a silk?”</p> <p>“What I like about your dresses is they don’t have sequins on all over and diamante. I don’t want a ball-gown, I want something less [voluminous].”</p> <p>“Did you study fashion design? When did you start your business?”</p>	<p>Unsure</p> <p>Broad</p> <p>Brand-aware</p> <p>Fabric</p> <p>No ball-gown</p> <p>Simple style</p> <p>Checking designer credentials</p>
<p>CLIENT 4 – In response to two prototype gowns.</p> <p>“I like the fabric sheen and look [of this gown]. [and] The softness.”</p> <p>[Lace remnants as new fabric] “Oh I love that!”</p> <p>[Wear the short lace dress with a long skirt over the top that can be removed after the ceremony to reveal a party dress] “Ah! Perfect!”</p>	<p>Soft</p> <p>Fabric</p> <p>Story</p> <p>Fabric</p> <p>Double-function dress</p> <p>Surprise/luxury of two bridal outfits</p>

These codes are tabulated along with their interpretation and are discussed below. This will show the value and context of each code within the Eco-Bride collection development process and it clarifies how this data formed part of the sub-conclusions.

Table 4.4 Interview One: Code interpretation

CODE	INTERPRETATION
Broad style idea	Bride does not have a specific style idea/is open to suggestions
Unsure	Bride can't make up her mind/nervous to make a decision
Simple style	Style signpost. Stress-free experience and dress must be easy to wear (no adjusting during wear required)
Tiered skirt	Style signpost
Beach	Venue/theme/style signpost
Budget	Undefined/depends on perceived value
Loose fit	Style signpost
Soft	Style signpost
Corsets for support	Style signpost/easy to wear – supports bodice
Brand awareness	Client is brand sensitive/will prefer a labelled gown as a status signal
Fabric	Lace remnants used up; silk; no sequins; sheen
No ball gown	Style signpost
Designer credentials	Bride cautious: designer's responsibility of creating the dream dress
Story	Bride responds well to a dress that has a story attached to it
Double function dress	Style signpost. Added value
Surprise/luxury of two bridal outfits	Added value/bride not concerned with the waste or cost of using two wedding dresses

4.3.4 Interview One: sub-conclusions

There is reference to brides being open to ideas and being unsure about the exact style they are looking for. Where they have suggested specifics, these include: simple, beach, tiered skirt, loose fit, soft, corsetry, no ball gown, and double-function dress.

Three of the four participants mentioned a stress-free experience in one way or another. One bride mentioned the venue of her wedding (beach) as part of the consideration of how her dress should be designed which validates the sub-conclusions reached in cycle one.

Brand awareness showed up with brides enquiring if a gown in the questionnaire was a particular designer's work; a bride also queried my experience—all pointing to the importance of establishing a reputation in the industry. This also has bearing on the price

that a bride expects to pay—if a designer is well-established with many gowns celebrated in the media, a bride could assume that a premium would be charged.

Fabric was discussed by most brides using the following descriptive terms: “silk”, “no sequins or diamante”, “lace remnants as new fabric”, “soft” mentioned twice, and “sheen” mentioned twice. Also fabric-related was the importance that should be placed on the gown’s story: what it was made from and where the materials were sourced. It became evident that there was an increase in desire for one of the prototype gowns displayed on a mannequin after the bride had heard the gown’s story—this particular corset was made from a silk safari suit circa 1980 and the lace peplum was salvaged from vintage tableware.

Added value is also noted as an important aspect of a wedding gown: a dress that has a second function or an adjustable silhouette results in the bride feeling like she has two dresses for the price of one. The reactions of the interview respondents on hearing of a gown’s possible dual function showed excitement.

4.3.5 Data transfer into cycle three

It was clear from the first two cycles of research that lace is desirable in bridal gown design. To create a similar setting for the online questionnaire in cycle three as the display space at the Bridal Show, it was necessary to add an image of lace to the online questionnaire swatch section. A section for brides to relate specifics of their ideal gowns without prompting was also added to the online version as an open-ended question.

The data gathered thus far represents vast differences in personal preferences of gown design. To find clarity in this variety I needed to query how much credence is placed on the completed market research by obtaining the opinion of an industry expert. I needed to assess how closely the collection should stick to the variety of ideals put forward by brides without compromising my design style.

The service elements important to a bride combined with suggestions made by the owner of Lunar also needed to be discussed with an industry expert to inform the business function and concept.

4.4 CYCLE THREE: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Cycle three analysis of online questionnaire data and the interview with a trend analyst includes descriptive statistics derived from the questionnaire responses and coding of the interview transcript. The online questionnaire data will also serve as a comparison between the preferences of respondents from the three South African cities, namely, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. The coded interview transcript is analysed to reveal consumer preferences and trend issues that could affect the success of the EcoBride collection.

4.4.1 Questionnaire Four: findings and interpretation

The online questionnaire was responded to by brides from across South Africa, nationalizing the data collected thus far. It also provided a point of comparison between the preferences of brides in various parts of South Africa. The average age of respondent brides was 29 and most of the responses came from Johannesburg, followed by Cape Town and lastly Durban. A snapshot of the appearance of the first page of the online questionnaire and the graphs which depict the responses collated by the online survey software follows. This data is then interpreted so that sub-conclusions may be drawn.

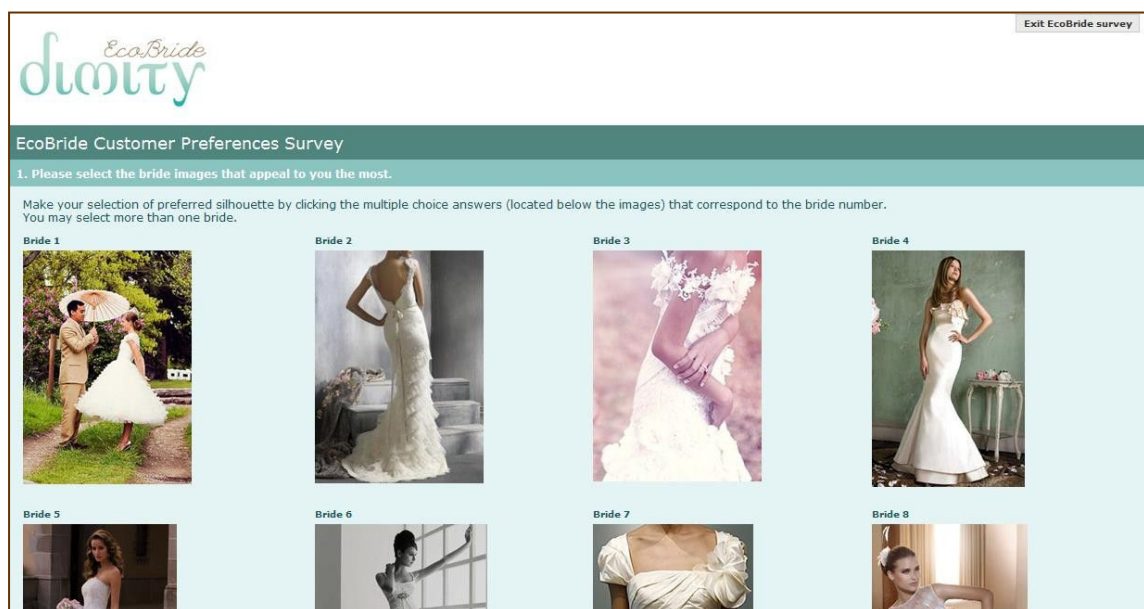


Figure 4.28 Snapshot of online Questionnaire Four

Source: Schultz (2011)

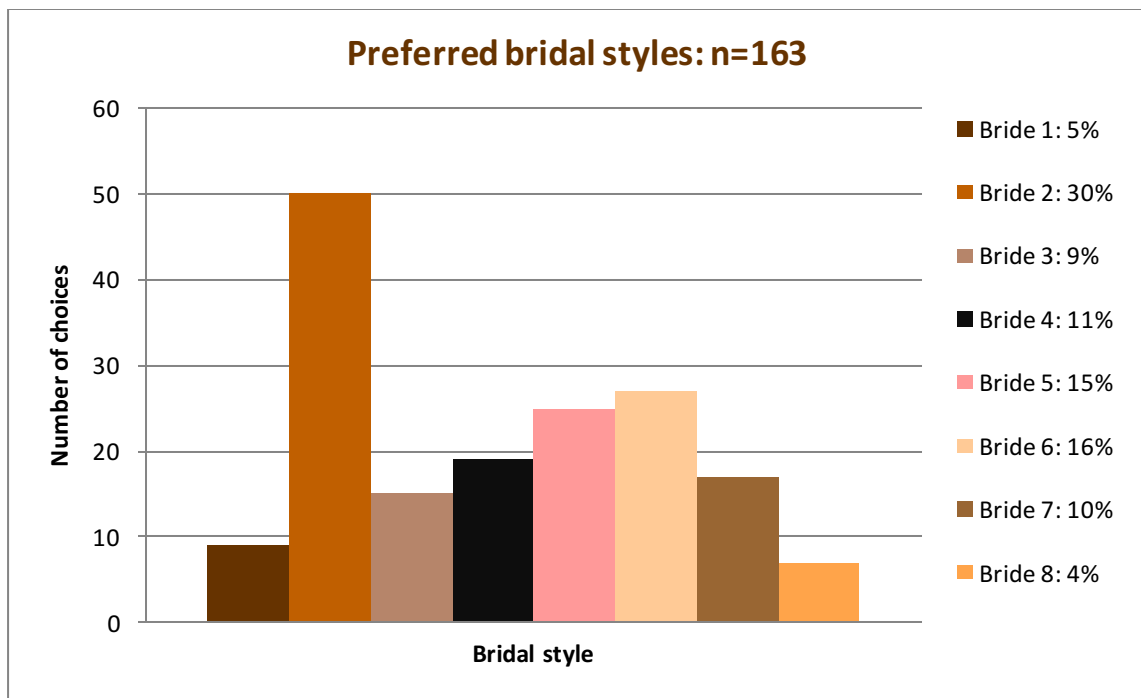


Figure 4.29 Questionnaire Four: Results of question one

Figure 4.29 shows the percentage value of the responses for each bridal style. Bride 2, the “Screen Siren” look, is the most preferred style at 30% of the total 163 selections made from 77 participants. This result matches questionnaire three’s (NWJ survey in Durban) most popular style.

- The second most favoured style is Bride 6 (“Barefoot Bride”) and a close third to Bride 5 (“Fairytale Princess”) with 16% and 15% respectively. This differs slightly to questionnaire three where the “Fairytale Princess” was the second most popular style.
- The lowest scoring was Bride 8 (“Mary Quant”) with 4% and the middle choices were separated by small values. Again, this is the same result as Questionnaire Three.

Other aspects important in the design of a bridal gown are listed in order of importance (most terms and words suggested) as:

- Design signposts: shapes, silhouette and colour (18 mentions).
- Fit, comfort, flattering silhouette for body shape (15 mentions).
- Fabric texture, soft, lace (15 mentions).

- Detailing, intricacy (14 mentions).
- Practical concerns: easy to wear, train must be pinned back for ease of movement, dance and movement, age-appropriate styling, warmth and season (10 mentions).
- Simplicity preferred, less is more (seven mentions).
- Elegant, classy, chic, feminine (seven mentions).
- Unique, one of a kind, something different (five mentions).

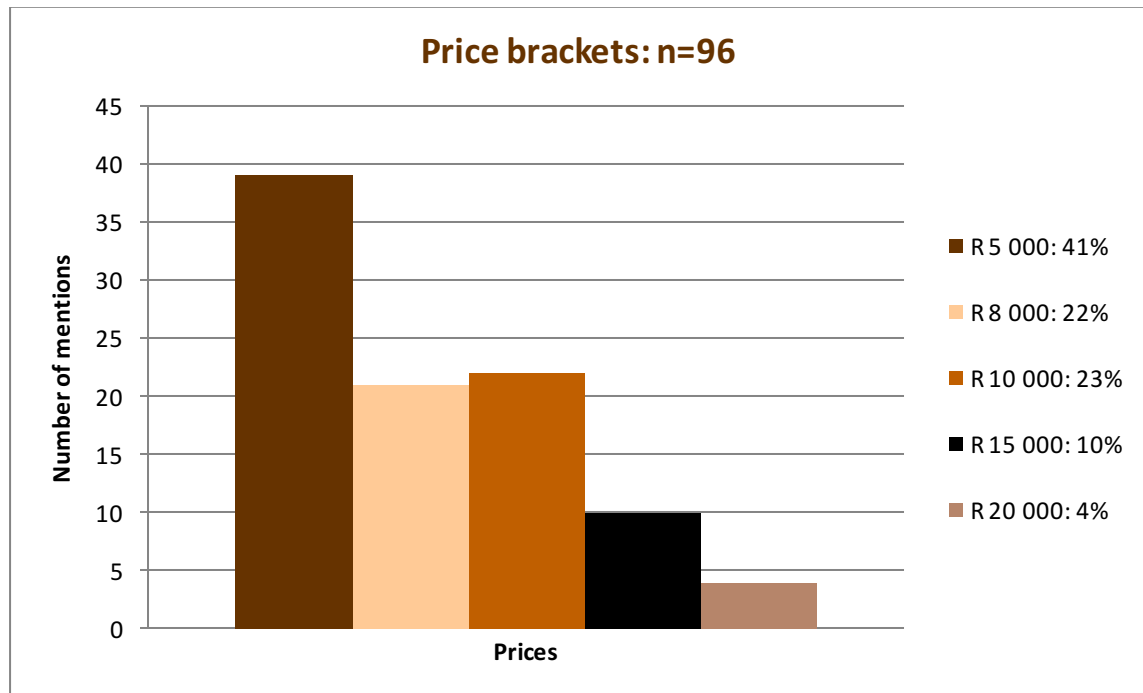


Figure 4.30 Questionnaire Four: Results of Question Two

Figure 4.30 above shows that the majority in the national sample would prefer to be paying R5000 for their bridal gowns. Interestingly, the second most favoured price point is R10 000, whereas Questionnaire Three executed at the Bridal Show during cycle two showed R8000 to be the most popular price point. 10% of brides were prepared to pay R15 000 and 4% of the respondents were happy to pay R20 000. The finding suggests that budgets range from R5000 to R10 000, and in all provinces, few brides would consider a budget of R20 000.

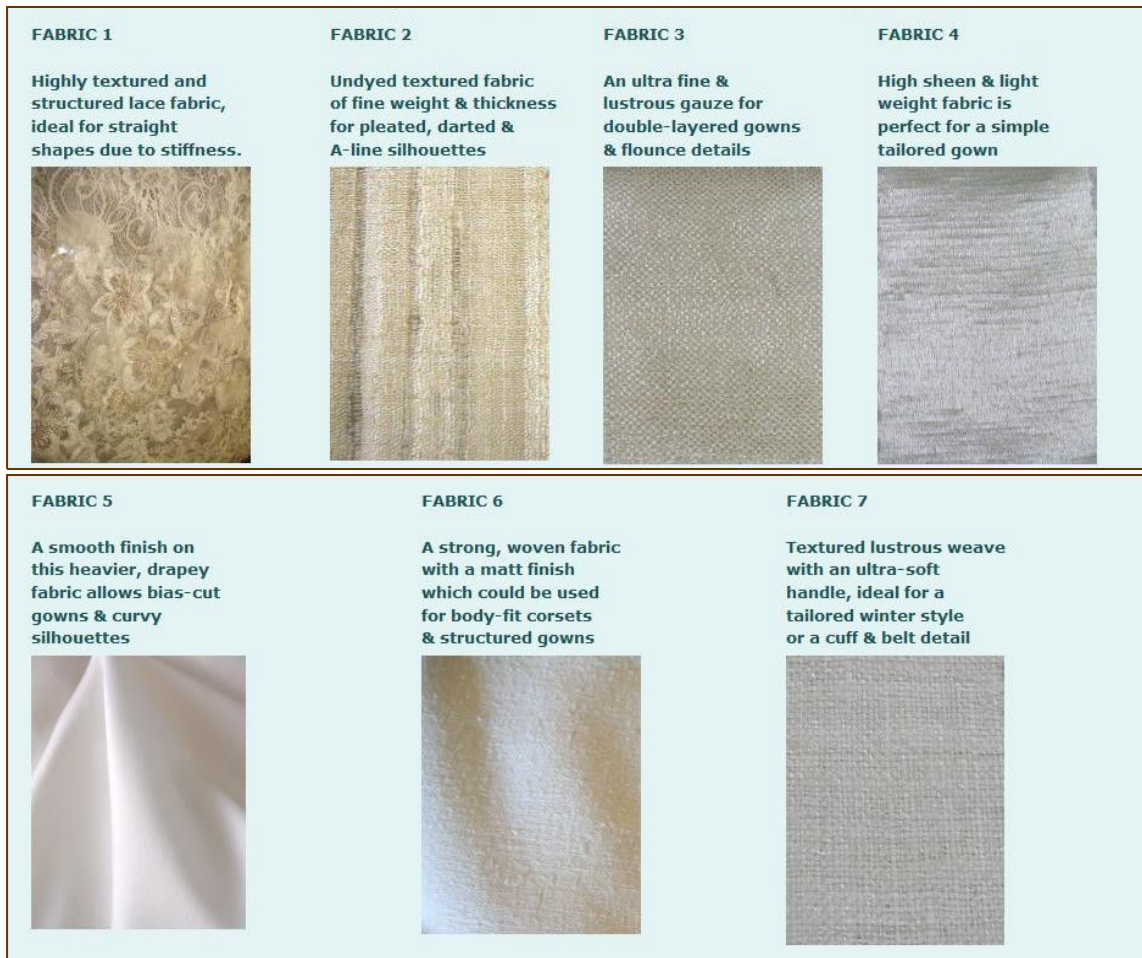


Figure 4.31 Questionnaire Four: Preferred fabric choices

Source: Schultz (2011)

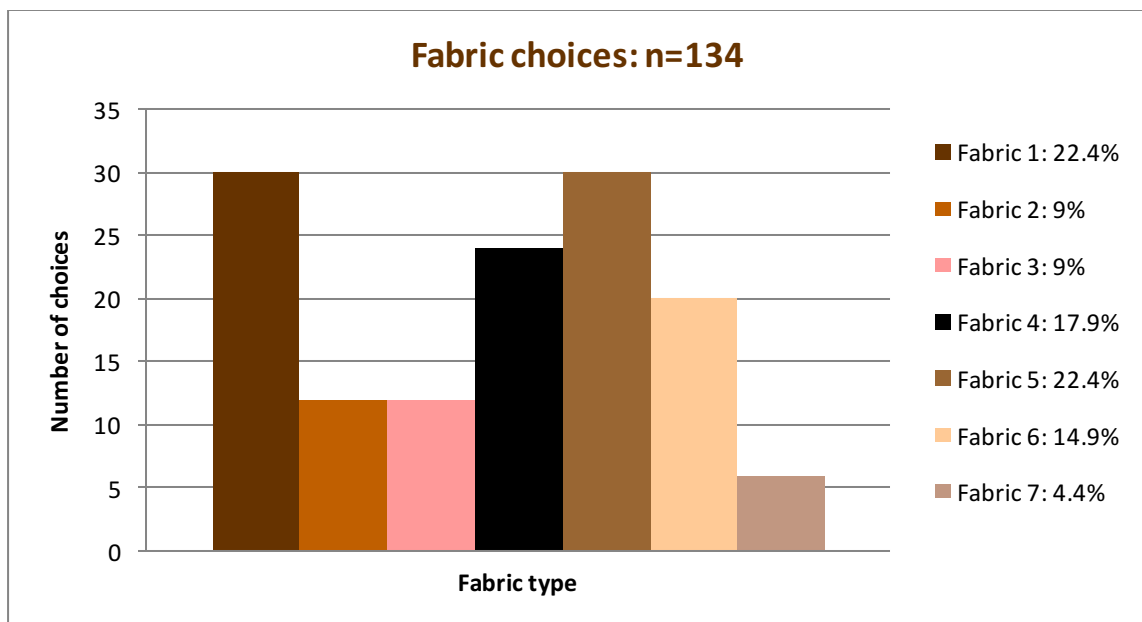


Figure 4.32 Questionnaire Four: Results of question three

The two favourite fabrics each with a 22.4% preference were Fabric 1 (lace) and Fabric 5 (polyester bridal satin). Fabric 4 (hemp and silk blend) came in second with 17.9% and fabric 6 (silk bourette) with a slightly lower 14.9%. The remaining choices were spread with a 9%% preference for Fabrics 2 (wild silk) and 3 (silk gauze), followed by Fabric 7 (silk linen) with 4.4%.

Table 4.5 clearly shows the similarities and differences between style, price, and fabric preferences across South Africa. The significance of this comparison is to demonstrate interpretive validity through triangulation (Maree and van der Westhuizen 2010: 39). Firstly, it reaffirms the overriding preference for the body-hugging silhouette of Bride 2, the similar price brackets, and similar fabric choices across a national sample. Secondly, it represents data trustworthiness in that through using similar questionnaires, the same result was achieved. It gives value to the initial research conducted in cycles 1 and 2 in Durban; the similarity of the NWJ Durban results to the national results is an indication of the validity of both questionnaire design and reliability of results. It also points to how the look and feel of the final Eco-Bride concept would be accepted or not accepted in the rest of the country.

Table 4.5 Comparison of results between Durban, Gauteng and Cape Town

QUESTION	DURBAN	GAUTENG	CAPE TOWN
Preferred bridal gown style	Bride 2 Screen Siren	Bride 2 Screen Siren	Bride 2 Screen Siren
Preferred price point	R5000 – R10 000	R5000 – R10 000	R5000 – R10 000
Preferred fabric choices	Fabric 1 Lace	Fabric 5 Polyester bridal satin	Fabric 1 & 4 Lace & Hemp/silk blend

Price points are similar between Durban and the rest of South Africa. Although “dream” budgets stretched up to R20 000 in some cases, nationally, brides are able to spend between R5000 and R10 000 on their gowns.

4.4.2 Questionnaire Four: sub-conclusions

The glamorous body-hugging silhouette of the “Screen Siren” gown received the majority response. This corresponds with the Durban-based sample which not only

cements the fact that this is currently the preferred style, but also shows the instrument to be well-designed and the findings to be valid.

The casual and textured “Barefoot Bride” was selected as the second most popular style nationally, followed by the “Fairytale Princess”. This differs slightly from the previous sample and is a positive finding for the Eco-Bride concept as it shows that the most fabric-wasteful style is not necessarily the first choice for the majority of brides. The inclusion of a craft element (macramé fabric) in “Barefoot Bride” means that vintage laces and handmade crochet (eco-friendly fabric choices) could be adopted as a trend by many brides. The “Mary Quant” style did not satisfy many brides from the Durban sample, and nationally was selected by the least number of brides—this data is evidence of the most unconventional gown being the least popular. South African brides indicate that they would like to be “unique”, yet the data shows that most prefer convention.

According to the national sample, the most important factors to consider when choosing a bridal gown are silhouette, colour, fit, the correct shape for one’s body type, and fabric texture. Detailing is also mentioned as an important factor and includes any “intricate” handwork. Secondary considerations include practical concerns of gown suitability to season and venue, “less is more” or “simple” styling, the generalised terms of “elegant”, “chic”, “classic” and “unique”. The idea of being trendy was not suggested; however, one celebrity in the form of the recently married Duchess of Cambridge was mentioned as a gown style worthy of imitation.

Although the national results differ slightly from the Durban results for the price-point question, it still shows sensitivity where most brides would prefer to pay as little as possible for their gown. The cities of Gauteng and the Western Cape are considered wealthier than Durban, and this may have an impact on the number of brides willing to pay R10 000 upwards. A realistic price bracket for a profitable bridal attire company and payable by a South African sample can thus be set between R5000 – R10 000.

Lace and conventional bridal satin (polyester, thus not eco-friendly) are the most popular bridal fabrics within the South African sample. Lace texture can be created from many smaller off-cuts or remnants (Lunar 2010), which is extremely positive for the Eco-Bride concept. Other silk fabrics (peace silk, wild silk and silk-hemp blends) are

also preferred fabric choices, but the overarching consideration is for shine, rather than dull texture.

4.4.3 Interview Two: findings and interpretation

The interview with the trend analyst was incredibly insightful. He provided sincere and thoughtful responses to the questions and was honest about not being able to answer one of the questions posed. His expertise lies in identifying and understanding current consumer mindset, social media, and understanding macro trends. As such, his opinion is highly regarded which gives validity, credibility and dependability to the resultant sub-conclusions. The data presented here in table format displays the coded statements made by the respondent, followed by the table of code interpretations.

Table 4.6 Interview Two: Coded data

TERMS AND PHRASES HIGHLIGHTED FROM TRANSCRIPT	CODES
Globally embedded. Generational thing. There is sustainability & longevity. Problem A: we lag behind in awareness; and B: a divided economy.	Green trend Longevity of green trend Time
Consumer awareness of green trend in retail space; recycling your goods. The purchasing/frontline/where the products come from. Fair-trade, natural fibres, etc. I think there's more perception about free trade and where things come from. Natural fibres comes in second because there is still a recession and it is a reality that going green is more expensive—for example, Lunar—she's done a lot of difficult learning within sourcing eco cottons and local cottons. The odds are stacked against you.	Green trend Consumer perception of provenance or origin
Very, very pertinent. Three categories: Eco Ugly – the early stages Eco Pretty – better, but hippy connotation is still there Eco Iconic – alternative designers, like Stella McCartney. Point of differentiation is what you stand for. Eco-certification is becoming a clutch-point for consumers. Your consumer isn't worried if it's eco or not (it's a great plus) but your garments must be fashion forward. Added benefit of loyalty once eco is discovered.	Eco-fashion Eco-dress Eco-dress = smaller market segment than eco-fashion Eco accreditation Brand loyalty
Definitely Slow Fashion. Up-cycled fashion. The flight to quality during the recession – is an entrenched mindset.	Slow fashion Instant fashion Flight to quality
Blog spaces. The [old] voice of authority (fashion editors) is becoming obsolete. They [bloggers] are your curators of ideas but they're not your lighthouse/guiding principles.	Self-image theory Brand alignment Brand loyalty
Slow fashion: from consumer perspective is cautious consumption or	Slow fashion

<p>considered consumption; what fabrics, provenance.</p> <p>Fast Fashion: Li Edelkoort says, “When you see a t-shirt that costs less than a croissant, then you know that there’s something seriously wrong in the fashion chain which produced that”.</p> <p>Durban is the most price-sensitive city in South Africa.</p> <p>Cape Town and Johannesburg are very different.</p> <p>The new black emerging middle class only want new, bespoke, custom-made and will spend lots.</p> <p>Ritual and status are very important.</p> <p>Considered consumer—this is where you [Eco-Bride] will fit in.</p> <p>Maturing generation see antiques for the value they hold.</p> <p>Cape Town will be more receptive.</p>	<p>Instant fashion</p> <p>Consumer mindset</p> <p>Target market</p> <p>Story / provenance</p>
<p>She wants something special.</p> <p>Cost is a major thing.</p> <p>A semi-bespoke offering.</p>	<p>Bridal design conventions</p> <p>Design & Business models</p> <p>Cost</p>
<p>[Accreditation] Still determined by price in South Africa.</p> <p>Green accreditation will be the final tick—might not be marketing strategy, but is added value: I’ve got to fall in love with it first, and then afterward it’s a nice surprise.</p>	<p>Green accreditation</p> <p>Added value</p> <p>Marketing</p>
<p>Brilliant idea!</p> <p>Album of gown’s value chain instead of green accreditation.</p>	<p>Story / Provenance</p> <p>Green accreditation</p>
<p>Fashion will lag but people will get used to it [carbon offsetting] via food [foodstuffs showing carbon offsetting are a vehicle for awareness].</p>	<p>Carbon offsetting</p>
<p>There is no answer until the SA textile industry follows suit.</p>	<p>Business models</p>
<p>COLLABORATION. My big word for the next couple of years.</p> <p>Eco issues are heightened during the recession. Collaborating with other companies with similar products for a lessened carbon footprint. Builds a package: the brides who are into this are going to be into it completely</p> <p>You’ve got to add those other services... so that it becomes a full experience. Streamline the service.</p> <p>STORIES. Brides want something to brag about. The story of where that fabric came from, to talk about. Up-cycling—emotional pull of second hand fabric. Sentimental—granny’s fabric added to the basic silhouette.</p>	<p>Promotional strategies</p> <p>USP</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Story / provenance</p> <p>Added value</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Streamlined service</p>
<p>Celebrity endorsements were important [for Eco-Bride target market].</p> <p>Brand ambassadors currently. Depends on the target market. My trend radar says it’s waning; I’m already easing away from it. If you want the black emerging market [different target market] then get a celebrity.</p>	<p>Brand ambassador</p> <p>Celebrity style</p> <p>Target market</p> <p>Marketing</p>
<p>I think, although you want to be certified, it’s not quite there yet.</p> <p>Bridal context: Push the emotional button and say you’re also helping the planet [rather than first proclaiming eco-credentials].</p>	<p>Green washing</p> <p>Green accreditation</p> <p>Marketing strategy</p>
<p>It’s just an element because you have a captive audience.</p> <p>Good way of testing but not the be-all and end-all.</p>	<p>Product development</p> <p>Design models</p> <p>Market research</p>
<p>Emotional push. Up-cycling: pretty (not hippy).</p> <p>I don’t know that many brides could resist the sentiment of having something passed down added to their gown.</p> <p>Future of 21st century business is collaboration.</p> <p>Offer a seamless experience; align like-minded wedding companies.</p>	<p>Product development</p> <p>Design models</p> <p>Up-cycling</p> <p>Pretty, not hippy</p> <p>Collaboration</p>

Table 4.7 Interview Two: Code interpretation

CODES	INTERPRETATION
Green trend / longevity of green trend	Effect of time on brides wanting an eco-friendly bridal gown due to trend
Green accreditation / green washing	The importance of being labelled for marketing and brand loyalty purposes
Eco-fashion	Any fashion item produced in a sustainable manner - signifiers of elements accepted by a wide range of the target market
Eco-dress	Garments that use signals of eco-awareness as in the “hippy” style
Flight to quality	Customers want quality over quantity during recession
Instant fashion	Signal of unsustainable fashion products
Slow fashion	Signal of sustainable fashion products
Carbon offsetting	Need to off-set carbon footprint where it is impossible to prevent
Brand loyalty / alignment	Marketing and customer awareness
Self-image theory	Customer’s perception of self to create brand alignment
Consumer mindset	Customer’s perception of green trend, eco-fashion and options available in market
Target market	Signals of the groups of customers Eco-Brides should target. Defining your target market helps define the product offering
Marketing	Strategies to employ for marketing of Eco-Bride brand include brand ambassadors and word of mouth; collaboration
Bridal design conventions	Signifiers of elements accepted by a wide range of the target market. Aesthetics of bridal gowns that require consideration or redesign
Design models / business models	Possible models to design Eco-Bride collection by
Story / provenance	Bride responds well to a dress that has a story attached to it
Added value	Desire shown by brides to get more value for the price paid Added value as a marketing strategy
Product development	Strategies to employ for the development of the Eco-Bride product
Up-cycling	Signals awareness of recycling and where up-cycling could be incorporated into the Eco-Bride model
Pretty, not hippy	Style signpost – all Eco-Bride gowns should subscribe to this
Collaboration	Networking with like-minded businesses with similar but varied product offerings for streamlined service to customer
Streamlined service	How the experience should be designed for the customer
Cost	Signals of issues that may introduce additional cost to company and customer
Brand ambassador	South African personality with similar mind-set to Eco-Bride concept who could be the face of the brand
Celebrity style	Factor of gown choice is target market dependant

4.4.4 Interview Two: sub-conclusions

Longevity of the green trend that has been evidenced lately has bearing on how much long-term success the Eco-Bride collection can expect to enjoy. In South Africa, it is

clear that we lag behind with the uptake of fashion trends globally, so it can be said that there are still a good number of years where people will be eco-aware, after which it will become an embedded value that the younger generation lives by. Currently, customer eco-awareness is focussed around retail products and products that can be recycled. This is the opportunity for up-cycling of materials to become a positive selling point. Those brides who want an eco-friendly gown that presents fashion-forward design details are part of the same market segment of brides who will not talk about the brand when the green trend passes, simply because being green is not trendy anymore. Those brides who follow an eco-aware lifestyle will remain loyal customers irrespective of the latest trends.

It is important that all environmentally-friendly products display some type of green accreditation as evidence of its transparency in the products' creation, carbon footprint, and distribution chains. However, it is not as important in the context of a bridal collection as it is in other product areas, such as food. The findings have shown that being eco-friendly is not the first thing a bride looks for in her dream gown, and the majority of the sample feel it is a wonderful added value element or story to brag about. Thus, the Eco-Bride collection need not market itself on being eco-friendly, as brand loyalty will be created through customers' sentimental emotions and this will lead to word-of-mouth publicity.

A “wedding album” is presented with each Eco-Bride gown which details the gown's provenance—its value chain and the story of the various materials used. This will fill the need for accreditation and transparency where labels are not yet awarded due to the expense of green accreditation in South Africa. It will also be the element that adds emotional value to purchasing the gown as it tells the story of her gown.

Knowing the limitations of eco-fashion and eco-dress will be the defining factors of the Eco-Bride collection. Where eco-fashion clearly holds the larger market segment (as evidenced by brides looking to aesthetics before eco-credentials), eco-dress is restricted to the category named “eco-ugly” (2011, pers. comm. 21 April) during the interview. Through the various research cycles of this study, it can now be said that the Eco-Bride collection must satisfy the eco-fashion “pretty, not hippy” (2011, pers. comm. 21 April) product category.

The flight to quality that was experienced as a result of the global recession has assisted slow fashion in attracting new customers. People are becoming dissatisfied with low quality instant fashion. The quality that an Eco-Bride gown offers, both in its production method and in the added value of getting more than one wear out of a gown, will ensure customer loyalty.

The target market that would be most receptive to the Eco-Bride concept is a mature age group; one that values antiques and vintage items for the value they hold. It is a reality that being eco-friendly is more expensive and the market research has shown consumers to be aware of this. Coupled with the flight to quality and the “considered consumer” as the Eco-Bride suggested customer, a target market of middle- to upper- income bracket is required. The new emerging middle class are noted as wanting “new, bespoke and custom-made” and that they will spend lots of money on displaying their status. However, this market does not subscribe to the up-cycle and re-use philosophies that are important to the Eco-Bride concept, as using something second-hand could be seen as demeaning to the emerging middle class.

The target market affects the type of marketing employed. In the Eco-Bride case, it was found that a word of mouth strategy would be the most effective, rather than employing a celebrity as brand ambassador. Also, including collaboration with like-minded businesses in the Eco-Bride business model will increase the numbers of potential customers through word-of-mouth marketing. Along with a larger market segment, collaboration brings with it a package deal that will appeal to the eco-aware bride: a streamlined product offering with a smaller carbon footprint and added value in a full-service experience.

It is clear from the research undertaken that Durban is the most price-sensitive city in comparison with Gauteng and Cape Town, and this explains slight differences between questionnaire results of the Durban and the national samples. Cost was identified as one of the main factors that affect a bride’s choice in bridal gown, and in this way has repercussions on the eco-friendly fabric choices, accreditation and production methods used for the Eco-Bride collection.

One of the elements initially noted as potentially having an effect on what styles brides choose is that of celebrity influence. However, the findings have clearly shown that this factor is target-market dependent and is actually less effective than assumed. The emerging middle class still respond to styles worn by celebrities, but employing a brand ambassador has been deemed unnecessary for the Eco-Bride collection.

In designing the gowns, it was also suggested that the market research conducted should not act as the be-all and end-all of product development: "...you have a captive audience. Good way of testing..." His opinion is based on the fact that I had a captive audience at the bridal exhibitions to test the prototype gowns and the general look and feel of the collection which received positive feedback. As such, the preferences displayed were acknowledged and incorporated into the collection in parts and where fabric types allowed certain details to exist. The findings from cycle three also show that a semi-bespoke offering would be the most successful model to follow. Designing each gown from a standard collection of silhouettes and adjusting according to each brides' individual desires, will result in satisfied customers.

4.5 CONCLUSION

A valid and rigorous process was used to conduct inductive analysis to arrive at the sub-conclusions presented this chapter. This is evidenced by similar findings garnered from different sample groups as well as the cyclical procedure and ever-increasing refinement of results. The abovementioned sub-conclusions are well defined to satisfy the critical research questions and to allow the Eco-Bride collection to be fabricated. The narrative and visual presentation of the ten resultant Eco-Bride gowns are presented in Chapter Five, along with a comparative table of materials and procedures used for each gown to show the eco-credentials that apply to each gown.

CHAPTER FIVE: COLLECTION

ECO-BRIDE ENSEMBLE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Eco-Bride Ensemble is the visual culmination of the bridal gown collection. Firstly, using the assumptions and critical research questions this study was based on, a summary of the sub-conclusions is explored. The overarching inspiration and design issues experienced are discussed, followed by a comprehensive collection overview table, so that each gown's construction and fabric eco-criteria may be detailed. Lastly, each of the ten gowns is presented in storyboard format, complete with fashion illustrations, allocated fabric swatches and technical drawings.

5.2 SUMMARY OF SUB-CONCLUSIONS

In this section I discuss how the findings of this study were used to build the final conclusions, based on the initial assumptions and critical research questions posed. Thus, discussion includes green studio operating standards, suitable fabric choices, the defined status of what South African brides actually want in a wedding gown, and lastly, various collection development strategies and design models.

5.2.1 Assumptions

The original assumptions that this study was based upon are explored using the sub-conclusions as evidence of their validity and effect on concept development of the Eco-Bride range of garments.

The first assumption asserted was that a gap exists in the South African market for the Eco-Bride product. It is clear from the lack of awareness of questionnaire respondents that no similar collection has been successfully marketed. This finding is strengthened by the fact that respondents were unable to name any South African designers, eco-friendly or not. Although the Lunar brand has only ever had two serious enquiries, sufficient interest was shown by brides who participated in this research endeavour, to warrant the development of an eco-friendly collection.

Assumption number two was based on the higher cost of organic certified fabrics which would result in a more expensive bridal gown. This assumption has been validated by

industry experts who have either conducted the research themselves or have personally experienced the added expense of becoming eco-friendly. Questionnaire respondents were wary of products with eco-friendly status due to their perception of it being more expensive, whereas a minority of the sample were unconcerned at the perceived additional cost.

The third assumption claimed that a collection of gowns would have a smaller market share if it carried a hippy aesthetic. The findings clearly show that South African brides are trend-driven, and this will affect any brand that sells itself on the green trend. As soon as the trend begins to wane, so too will their market share begin to decrease. The findings also show a much larger group of brides who prefer the luxurious styles which are, coincidentally, the least eco-friendly due to the amount of fabric needed to create the voluminous silhouettes. The least popular styles happen to be the least traditional, shortest in length, and the most craft-like, as in the macramé detail of “Barefoot Bride”. These particular non-traditional styles have visual cues of being eco-friendly. It can thus be said that a collection which appears to carry visual cues of a hippy lifestyle will be less popular and garner a smaller market share than a collection of on-trend, yet traditional, styles.

5.2.2 Studio operating standards for sustainable fashion

As long-term goals set for the sustainability of procedures and self-sufficiency of the studio, the following ideals should be met:

- recycling bins for various off-cuts (fabric, paper, and plastic) should be used;
- water efficiency achieved through rain-water collection;
- solar or wind energy operated machinery; and
- the premises should be situated close to suppliers and in an easily accessible area for customers within the target market.

Details of operations, such as pattern-making, are also considered:

- Patterns will be made from thrown-out architect’s plans as paper reclamation and reuse. Small paper off-cuts not useable for small patterns will be placed in a paper recycling bin destined for a recycling project.
- Sewing machine operations will be essential for the main seam construction of each gown. Hand-sewing operations will be used to finish gown hems, facings, delicate

lace seams, beadwork and draping to comply with international couture and slow fashion criteria. This is a special focus area of the Eco-Bride concept development aimed at a re-introduction of traditional couture sewing techniques that have, over the years, become mechanised and, in some cases, forgotten.

5.2.3 Materials

The over-arching concept for the Eco-Bride collection was undoubtedly always going to lean toward the vintage. This is based purely on the fact that vintage fabrics would form the basis of materials selected. A commonly found vintage fabric; lace is intrinsically linked with trousseaus and sentimentality. Handmade crochet lace also lends a specific South African vernacular of traditional craft. Thus the initial aesthetic inspiration was based on fabrics acquired at second-hand shops, vintage dealers, and hospice linen departments. The market research conducted was then combined with the initial inspiration by way of prescribing what silhouettes and basic themes are most in demand.

Organic fabrics such as organic cotton sateen and wild tussah silk are not available in South Africa and thus need to be imported. Using these fabrics is not a primary option due to the higher cost per meter and the carbon footprint incurred as a result of importation. Since an eco-friendly bridal gown is defined partly by what fabrics it is made of, a potential solution to the lack of local producers of organic fabrics is that of creating one's own unique fabric from salvaged textiles. This is also a good way to use up fabric off-cuts that couldn't be used on their own. Up-cycling vintage fabrics and making use of all fabric meterage lessens the overall carbon footprint of each gown.

5.2.4 What brides want

Critical research Question Two sought to identify what factors influence the choice of bridal gown style. As described by the findings, a bride will choose her gown first by silhouette, trend, details, fabrics and price; and then she will consider other factors such as eco-credentials, celebrity styles and her venue or theme. There is a deep sense of priorities evidenced amongst South African brides, especially with cost decisions when they are paying for the gown themselves.

In terms of specific style and silhouette choices, a diverse set of preferences was noted. The most popular style was the ruffled body-hugging fishtail silhouette "Screen Siren"

and the second most popular style was that of the voluminous “Fairytale Princess”—the most fabric-wasteful style in the questionnaire. Either this sample captivates by the dreamlike appearance of a more conventional yet extravagant silhouette, or it suggests that a luxurious amount of fabric used for a gown could be a selling point. Either way, this is a design issue which will need attention since the Eco-Bride collection should strive to be as fabric efficient as possible.

The sub-conclusions show that various personalities need to be catered for in a single collection. The suitable categories for the Eco-Bride collection are:

- Simple and understated modern style for a city wedding
- Vintage inspired gown using drapery
- Vintage gown with a flirty edge: lace scallops and bows
- Natural or garden bride gown with flower motifs
- Architectural silhouette with folds and pleats to accentuate fabric texture

5.2.5 Design models

This section details how the collection was conceptualised. By identifying the factors that make a gown eco-friendly, it was possible to make changes to the conventional strapless princess line gown which has become the staple silhouette of most South African bridal gowns. Other issues experienced are also discussed in terms of how they were overcome.

Regular critique sessions were held with my supervisor, Farida Kadwa, a respected design lecturer Nirma Madhoo-Chipps, renowned South African designer Terrence Bray, and DUT’s Fashion Design: Head of Department (2011) George Vorster. The aim of these sessions was to manage the design process, to receive critical feedback on the gowns as each fitted into the Eco-Bride collection, and to keep the collection from becoming too old-fashioned from the overwhelming use of lace and vintage fabrics. These critiques were successful and gave me the confidence to show the final collection as a well-founded result of the research undertaken.

The critique sessions also assisted in keeping a broad appeal within the collection. This is a factor which was evident in findings from both customers and industry experts and is thus integral to the success of the collection.

The various design models applied to the development of the Eco-Bride collection are listed below and elaborated upon in the following sections:

- Zero waste pattern-cutting
- The white gown
- Slow fashion
- Emotionally-durable design
- Up-cycling

a. *Zero waste pattern-cutting*

Shapes and structures (pattern seams) were developed through brainstorming ways of placing seams so that the pattern-layouts could be as fabric efficient (and in some cases, zero waste) as possible. This meant angling seams rather than using curves, as curves create concave sections of fabric that become off-cuts. Angled seams can be placed alongside each other thus eliminating fabric wastage.

Also restricting the ultimate silhouette of each gown is the amount of fabric available. Some second-hand fabrics were only 1/2m in length, or were already an odd shape; meaning that a gown using over ten metres of fabric does not have a place in the Eco-Bride collection (besides the fact that such consumption of fabric is unnecessary and wasteful). Where fabric was imported, the amount of fabric used was also restricted by cost. Imported organic cottons and imported wild peace silks are far more expensive per metre than conventional bridal satins bought from South African retailers.

b. *The white gown*

Colours of second-hand fabrics and laces, as well as the wild silks, are characterised by tonal creams, ivory, and golden beige. According to potential clients, white is an important aspect of the wedding gown, thus these hues needed to be brightened up with white laces, winter white peace silk and hemp blend taffeta. Since locally-available bridal satins are not produced in an environmentally-friendly manner (bleaching and

chemical whiteners are commonplace), it was necessary to import the above-mentioned silk and hemp blend from England. Although a carbon footprint was incurred through transportation, the fibres and processes used to create the fabric are sustainable. This fabric was used in full for only one gown “Peace Silk”, and in part for two others namely “Anglaise & Brocade” and “Tussah Silk”.

Other fabrics that had to be imported were the organic cotton sateen and muslin. The South African textile industry does not produce anything similar; the closest fabric I could source locally was a chunky, heavy, rough hemp weave, which is not appropriate for bridal gowns until the enduring ‘shiny white dress’ trend shifts. The organic cotton (certified by the Soil Association) filled the need for a light and bright fabric that could be used in full length where second-hand and vintage pieces did not meet the required length meterage.

c. Slow fashion

Most Eco-Bride gowns are hand-stitched to a certain extent. Table 5.1 clearly illustrates the construction processes used on each gown. Sewing an entire bridal gown by hand is obviously more time-consuming, and hence more costly, than using a sewing machine; this is an example of slow fashion. However, where extra strength is required on a garment (for instance the vertical panels of a corset), machine stitching is required to achieve a specific level of durability.

Where vintage laces are not strong enough due to age they are appliquéd to a sheer base fabric to create a new textured fabric (as in the Eco-Bride “Antique Appliqué” gown). Edge laces have various functions over and above the decorative, and are hand-stitched in all applications. They are inset between seams as a feature that counteracts a possibly old-fashioned look with a risqué sheer panel. Edge laces also replace the overlocker function and prevent fraying of fabric when used on exterior seam allowances, such as the “Tulle-Bi-Telli” gown.

Crochet motifs and edgings were crafted by a lady from the Hillcrest Aids Centre by the name of Winnie Nene. Using fine yarns (some second-hand and some unbleached cotton yarns) she crocheted small floral blooms that could be used as decorative textures or as space-fillers on hand-sewn lace fabrics as in the “Hemp Silk” blouse. Further

development of the Eco-Bride collection could involve creating wide lace fabrics from scratch.

d. *Emotionally durable design*

A feature of the Eco-Bride concept is sentimentality. The findings have shown that it is important to the bride that there is a story, heritage or personal sentiment designed into her gown. Jonathan Chapman's writing on the subject (2005: 27; 56) was discussed in chapter two and is reinforced by the research findings that show brides wanting a gown with a personal story attached to it, which they can talk about and which they can enjoy for years to come. Due to the personal nature of such a design feature, this would be a feature of gowns made to bespoke orders rather than of gowns in a general collection. For example, a customer may approach me with a piece of her family lace or her mom's wedding gown with the intention of including the fabric into her own gown.

e. *Up-cycling*

Up-cycling is the re-purposing of an article into a new product of greater value than it originally held. In the Eco-Bride collection, it takes the form of up-cycling old wedding dresses, fabric, trims and vintage textiles into new gowns or into parts of a new gown. The intention is to use textiles that have already been made, rather than buying new fabric from manufacturers which have produced waste and pollution in the process.

5.3 ECO-BRIDE COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Table 5.1 on the following page serves as an introduction to the collection storyboards as it details how each gown exemplifies customer preferences. The aspects of colour and style, fabric, pattern, and construction techniques are listed to summarise the descriptions and eco-credentials of each gown.

Table 5.1 Eco-Bride collection overview w

GOWN	COLOUR & STYLE	FABRIC	PATTERN	CONSTRUCTION
1 Anglaise & Brocade	Winter white & gold. 1940 corset, peplum, pencil skirt.	Hemp & silk blend taffeta. 1970 synthetic knit. Antique cotton organdie with Broderie Anglaise embroidery.	Fabric-efficient.	Corset & skirt by machine. Peplum: draped & beaded by hand.
2 Antique Appliqué	Cream base. Lace textures in all shades of white, cream, beige, & pale blue.	Organic cotton muslin (Soil Association). Remnant vintage & second hand laces.	Fabric efficient. Off-cuts utilised.	French seams by machine. Lace appliqué layer hand-stitched.
3 Chevron & Pearl Lace	Cream base. Lace textures in all shades of white, cream, & beige.	Wild silk honan. New fabric made: second hand edge laces.	Fabric efficient godets. Off-cuts utilised.	French seams by machine.
4 Peace Silk	Winter white. Cut-away bodice & high waist seam into column skirt silhouette.	Hemp & silk blend taffeta. Second hand tape lace & handmade crochet motifs.	Fabric efficient. Off-cuts utilised.	Main gown seams by machine. Lace inserts beaded & stitched by hand.
5 Tussah Silk	Gold, beige & cream. 1950 moulded blouse, waist belt & gathered skirt.	Blouse: hemp/silk blend taffeta dyed with natural dye, & second hand lace. Waist belt: wild tussah silk & edge laces. Skirt: wild silk honan.	Fabric efficient. Lace off-cuts utilised.	Main gown seams by machine. Lace applied over, stitched & beaded by hand.
6 Hemp Taffeta	Cream base. Lace textures in all shades of white, cream, & beige. Off-shoulder blouse & Waspie corsetted skirt.	Hemp taffeta. Remnant laces & handmade crochet motifs.	Zero waste. Lace off-cuts utilised.	Corset & skirt by machine. Lace bodice entirely hand-stitched.
7 Tulle-Bi-Telli	Off-white base. Lace textures in all shades of white, cream, & gold. Tiered 1930 silhouette.	Organic cotton sateen (Soil Association). Antique Tulle-Bi-Telli mesh. Vintage Chantilly lace. Remnant edge laces.	Zero waste. Lace off-cuts utilised.	Main dress seams by machine. All seam allowance edges trimmed with lace by hand.
8 Flared Filigree	Off-white base. Lace textures in all shades of white & cream. Scoop-necked stretch gown with fishtail silhouette.	Organic cotton knit (Soil Association). Remnant organic cotton knit. Second hand edge laces	Zero waste. Off-cuts (triangular) are sewn back into hem as godet flare.	No machine stitching. Entirely hand-sewn.
9 Chantilly Bloom	Off-white base, tea- stained lace. Empire corsetted gown with shoulder ties & A-line skirt.	Organic cotton muslin & organic cotton sateen (Soil Association). Vintage Chantilly lace, mesh & handmade crochet motifs.	Fabric efficient.	Main gown seams by machine. Lace, pale green empire band & crochet motifs hand- stitched in place.
10 Metallic Crochet	Cream base. Crochet textures in silver, beige, & pale pink. V-neck gown with tiered & flared skirt.	Hemp taffeta. Second hand crochet & lace. Handmade silver crochet motifs.	Fabric efficient. Off-cuts utilised.	Bodice seams by machine. Skirt panels intersected with lace stitched by hand.

Anglaise and Brocade

Hemp silk taffeta corset
with cotton organdie
broderie anglaise overlay

Mixed vintage
shell and glass
buttons at corset
centre back

Metallic brocade
waist belt

Pencil skirt with
cotton organdie
broderie
anglaise peplum



Chevron and Pearl

Wild silk honan
cocktail gown with
cut-away front and
back shaping

Vintage edge laces are hand-sewn together in a chevron pattern to create a new fabric for the back bodice

Mixed vintage shell and glass buttons at corset centre back

Godets for extra flare in hem are dovetailed from offcut pieces of honan, thus reducing wastage and increasing fabric efficiency

Tiny glass pearls are added for texture and shimmer



Antique Applique

A collection of vintage laces and crochet motifs are hand-sewn onto a base dress of organic cotton muslin to create a newly textured fabric

A belt in toile de jouy print and vintage buckle finish off the waist

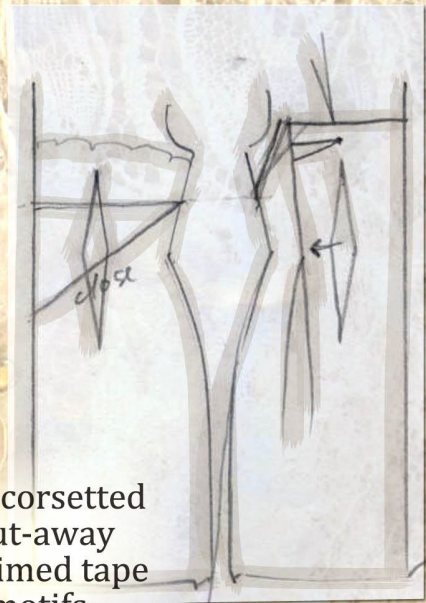
The hem is edged with various scalloped laces



Peace Silk

Waist belt of edge
laces and hand-cut
sterling silver flower

Hemp silk taffeta corsetted
gown featuring cut-away
bodice with reclaimed tape
lace and crochet motifs



Fussah Silk

The hemp silk contoured bodice is dyed with natural beetroot dye to be a soft pinky gold tone and is overlayed with reclaimed corded lace. The neck and shoulder line is edged with a pearl trim

The gown is finished off with a waistbelt in tussah silk and edge laces

Wild silk honan full skirt with edge-trimmed petticoat in organic cotton voile



Hemp & Paffeta

Hemp & silk blend tafetta 'zero waste' corsetted skirt was created through a pattern-cutting system whereby no excess fabric offcuts were created. The seam allowances are stitched on the outside of the gown and trimmed with vintage edge lace as a style detail rather than being cut off.

The sheer bodice is hand-sewn from a variety of lace and mesh fabrics placed strategically to create this draped off-the-shoulder blouse. The blouse is finished off with mixed reclaimed shell and glass buttons at the centre back



Tulle-Bi-Telli

A vintage 'Tulle-Bi-Telli' mesh fabric was the inspiration and main fabric used for this flounced gown. The pattern was cut using a 'zero waste' method, and the seam allowances trimmed on the exterior of the gown with edge laces.

The tiered hem features flounced tulle-bi-telli and reclaimed chantilly lace

The base fabric used is organic cotton sateen



Flared Filigree

An organic cotton single jersey knit fabric was efficiently used to create a figure-skimming flared gown by using strips of fabric interspersed with wide strip laces.



A waist tie in hemp silk taffeta with a sterling silver crochet buckle and little shoulder flounces in lace complete the gown.

A row of buttons covered in off-cut fabrics lies at the side seam



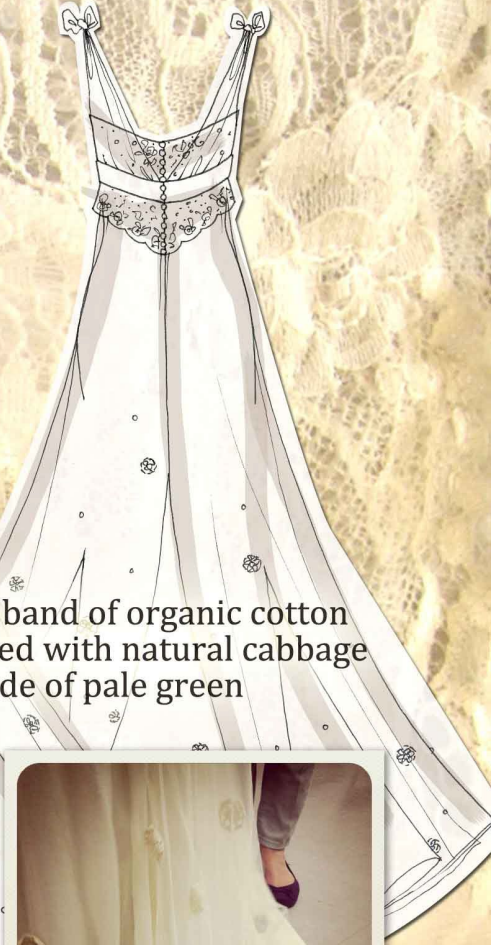
Chantilly Bloom



The shoulder ties in mesh add a whimsical feel



The empire band of organic cotton sateen is dyed with natural cabbage dye to a shade of pale green



An ethereal mesh and organic cotton voile gown with a Chantilly lace bodice is scattered with handmade crochet blooms and reclaimed glass pearls



Metallic Crochet



Sterling silver crochet blooms are scattered across the bodice to emphasize the texture



Reclaimed crochet doilies were split and hand-sewn into panelled sections of the hemp silk taffeta gown along with a layer of reclaimed metallic lace



A reclaimed beaded mesh is used on the shoulder sections and hem panels for flare



5.4 CONCLUSION

The Eco-Bride collection development processes having been completed, it is now up to further cycles of action research which lie outside of this study's scope to show improvements in the collection itself, as well as in the public's perception of eco-fashion.

It is with the themes and theories presented here in chapter five, and throughout the preceding chapters, that I conclude this study. Chapter Six: *Eco-Bride Engaged* will cover topics for further research and the culmination of this study, the DUT 2011 Fashion Show. Contributions made by my research are also stated.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

ECO-BRIDE ENGAGED

6.1 INTRODUCTION

I began this study with the aim of investigating the concept of developing an environmentally-friendly collection of bridal gowns (branded Eco-Bride) for South African brides. I wanted to offer bridal gowns that are both fashionable and sensitive to the earth and the people involved in its entire production. To fill the product gap, all aspects of bridal gown creation—from concept design and style development, to fabric choice and pattern-making, garment construction, embellishment and distribution—required research.

The study is then ultimately exploring product development of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown for a South African market. I based the three critical research questions on the main areas of concern: the technicalities of producing such a bridal gown, what customers want, and how knowledge of these two aspects assist in product development. From this point I was able to strategise my research action plan, which became cycles of mixed-methods action research from a constructivist viewpoint. The three research cycles were not without their faults, but they did generate data of the quality anticipated. On top of this, the response from research participants was overwhelmingly positive towards a collection of eco-fashion bridal gowns being available locally.

Through literary research, I explored sources that reveal the various environmental standards appropriate for a bridal product. This covered the processes, fabrics, and design styles that should be considered during the conceptualisation of the Eco-Bride collection. Typical consumer behaviour was explored in relation to the target market and current market status. These sources revealed issues which I needed to be aware of in order to include them in my research strategy. Print media examples of current trends in bridal wear were also interrogated as the precursor to market research in forming generalisations of current consumer preferences.

6.2 CRITICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that were used to guide the study are revisited here, along with their concluding remarks.

6.2.1 Factors classifying a bridal gown as being “eco-friendly”

Certification, or green accreditation, is the first factor that is considered and is a positive selling point. However, it is not vital yet for a South African fashion brand, due to the local market lagging behind in eco-awareness in comparison to the global environmental movement. Instead of a label showing a gown’s environmental credentials, it was deemed suitable for a “wedding album” to accompany each gown which includes a visual story of the gown’s provenance, green credentials and lifecycle.

Materials used for each gown will have an effect on its eco-friendly status: natural fibres that are used must be organic; synthetic fabrics must be recycled fibres or up-cycled fabric sourced from other textile items. Materials must also be sourced as locally as possible to reduce the carbon footprint incurred through transportation. Alternative fabric choices must also be explored, such as creating crochet lace for a specific garment part thus reducing off-cuts, and using vintage textiles which were not intended for bridal gowns such as embroidered table linens.

The last factor to affect a gown’s eco-friendly status is the way in which it was made. It must be created without producing any waste of energy and materials and without polluting the environment. This means that design models such as zero waste pattern-cutting, emotionally durable design, and slow fashion methods must be adopted.

6.2.2 Factors influencing a bride’s buying decision when purchasing a bridal gown

There are many considerations a bride has to make when deciding on her bridal gown, and these factors are prioritised differently with each bride. Cultural, traditional, geographical, practical, financial, and fashion-related factors all have an effect on which style she should wear. However, the study has identified that the South African sample looks first to aesthetics (style, silhouette and fabric) and then to cost before considering other factors. The overarching factor for a South African bride is that the gown fits her figure and personality perfectly. Cost is the deciding factor on where she buys her gown,

and then she will consider other elements such as trends, celebrity style, and her venue. She is also concerned with the following processes of purchasing her gown: the service levels, convenience, completion time and delivery date. Efficiency of the bridal gown fittings is also important to the bride. Collaboration with other like-minded companies (such as florists and jewellers) is a method of enhancing efficiency and service levels of the Eco-Bride brand by offering a full bridal party service in one location.

6.2.3 How the defining of an environmentally-friendly bridal gown and brides' buying decisions have contributed to the development of the Eco-Bride collection

By researching the environmental standards an Eco-Bride gown needs to adhere to, the boundaries for what would not fit into the collection were placed. I was then able to apply the design models identified for their innovation in eco-fashion to the suitable fabric choices and the preferences of the South African sample. I was advised not to take these style choices too literally as the research conducted was a good method of testing the market, but should not be the essence of the entire collection. Thus, rough designs were presented to the critique panel at the first evaluation session before selecting the final styles that would create a cohesive collection.

6.3 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROMOTION

This study has evidenced the processes involved in developing the Eco-Bride collection. However, it does not end here. Like any other good action research study, change is constant and with that comes continual improvements. To ensure longevity of an eco-sensitive lifestyle, businesses involved must continue to service their customer's needs so that current bridal perceptions can be shifted towards an environmentally-friendly philosophy. The Eco-Bride collection thus needs to be active in promoting such lifestyle choices, in the following ways:

- Being transparent in all processes and materials utilised.
- Living the model—the entire Eco-Bride experience needs to embody sustainability, down to the organic snacks served at consultations.
- Promotional activities online—social networking and website.

6.3.1 Marketing Strategies

- Word-of-mouth advertising is deemed the most appropriate channel for the type of brand and the target market identified.
- Photojournalism (the “wedding album” that accompanies each gown) for transparency of eco-friendly processes where certification is not yet a viable South African option. These albums can also be used as promotional tools for advertising sustainable living.
- The marketing strategy should not be entirely based on eco-credentials: according to the findings of this study, being eco-friendly is not one of the most important factors when South African brides make their gown decision. It should thus not overshadow the branding of the label as it may become a deterrent rather than a selling point for some brides.

6.4 ECO-BRIDE PRESENTATIONS

The DUT 2011 fashion show was the debut platform of the Eco-Bride collection (Appendix H). It was received with great applause and I even had a few fashion industry experts seek me out backstage to pass on their encouragement and congratulations. I was thrilled with the outcome, to say the least. To supplement this evening, a secondary exhibition for examination purposes was set up as the culmination of the study. The entire design and sewing process was photographed and displayed at this exhibition to visually explain the process from the cutting up of old garments to zero waste pattern-cutting to the final products. These photographs illustrate the up-cycling process as well as the eco-credentials that each gown embodies, in place of environmental labels.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS

The Eco-Bride study has made contributions to the academic and fashion worlds in the following areas:

- An example of action research working in a fashion context. This would provide other fashion scholars with a starting point for their own action research studies.
- Self-improved practice as a designer. At the same time, this will undoubtedly have a positive impact on my teaching methods.

- A collection of environmentally-friendly bridal gowns being used as promoters for the eco-fashion campaign. The vehicles for spreading this message are the three online videos about the Eco-Bride product development:

Eco-Bride: The Considered Process

<http://vimeo.com/30873371>

Eco-Bride: The Runway

<http://vimeo.com/32897672>

Eco-Bride: Backstage Pass

<http://vimeo.com/35940605>

- Adding emphasis to the cause for local crafts to be accepted as a fashion aspect, rather than a dying trade. The craftspeople involved in the creation of lace and crochet for the collection are afforded the opportunity to further their skills and be included in promotional activities.
- Helping to create demand for locally-produced textiles (reviving the South African textile industry).

6.6 FURTHER RESEARCH

For the purposes of furthering the Eco-Bride study:

- Action research exploring the success of the Eco-Bride collection within a real business situation. A viability study with a financial or entrepreneurial slant.
- The development and financial viability of hand-made lace using South African artisan skills. This study would compare mass-production to hand-made methods of lace-making within the context of sustainability.

Further research within the greater South African fashion industry on sustainable fashion:

- Bridal industry business models with the lowest carbon footprint. Comparisons of imported gowns versus off-the-peg and bespoke garment making.

- Action research as a tool for improving the teaching methods of sustainable fashion design.
- Further market research could take place based specifically on the resultant eco-fashion collection to explore what details are most successful in meeting South African brides' desires.
- An analytical study that compares South African fashion brands' eco-friendliness, with a view to creating eco-awareness amongst consumers and promoting brands to rethink their design and business models.

6.7 CONCLUSION

It is with great elation that I conclude this study after seeing the final collection to fruition and receiving re-assuring feedback from industry, colleagues and potential customers. These experiences have left me with a renewed positive energy toward a greener textile and fashion industry, and with more direction to further improve my practise as designer and lecturer.

APPENDIX A: Table 2.1 Materials certification comparisons

These comparisons were used to garner a basic understanding of what materials and studio operating procedures are considered eco-friendly and were used to contextualise various topics in chapter two: literature review.

Accreditation	Abbrev.	Countries	Eco-Bride Relationship	URL/Source
South African Bureau of Standards	ISO14001 or ISO14004	South Africa	SA textile operations must adhere to this standard governing all aspects of textile production and management.	www.sabs.co.za
EcoCert: Global Organic Textile Standard	GOTS	EU/globally recognised	A single global standard governing entire natural fibre garment pipeline (from fibre to product).	www.ecocert.com www.global-standard.org
EU ECOFLOWER	-	Europe/globally recognised	Sustainable products label (materials and end product).	www.eco-label.com
Soil Association	SA	EU/globally recognised	Organic fibre textiles for use in EcoBride gowns.	www.sacert.org
Fair Trade Foundation	-	Globally recognised	Sustainable production and social development.	www.fairtadelabel.org.za
Oeko-Tex Standard 100	Oeko-Tex	Globally recognised	Non-poisonous textile products certification.	www.oeko-tex.org
National Cleaner Production Centre	NCPC	South Africa	Partnership with SA textile industry to ensure ISO14001/4 is maintained.	www.ncpc.co.za
Forest Stewardship Council	FSC	Globally recognised	Sustainable forestry for paper products (packaging, stationery in studio).	www.fsc.org

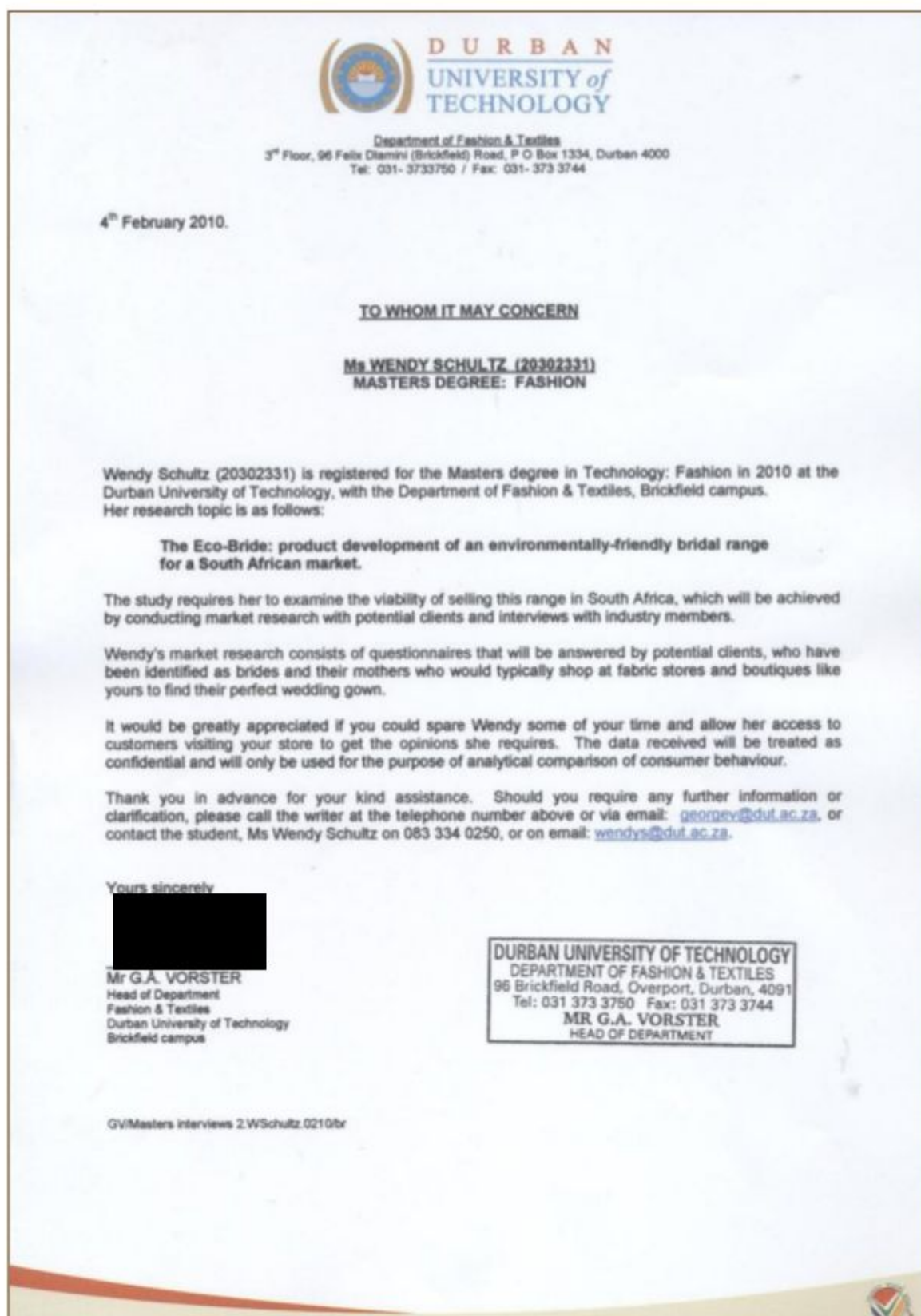
APPENDIX B1: Questionnaire One: Schedule (NWJ Bridal Show 2010: Durban)

This is the blank questionnaire format for questionnaire one which was distributed at the entrance of the Natal Wholesale Jewellers Bridal Show in 2010.

QUESTIONNAIRE – Potential clients	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Bride: answer for yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Mom: answer as you'd like to see your daughter</p>	<p>10. What is your ideal budget for gown?</p>
<p>1. Within which annual income bracket do you fall?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> < R100 000 <input type="checkbox"/> R101 000 – R250 000 <input type="checkbox"/> R251 000 – R500 000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> + R500 000 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ (other)</p>	<p>11. What is your practical/realistic budget for gown?</p>
<p>2. Are you trend-driven when buying occasion wear?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>12. Select the rand value for the maximum extra cost that you would pay to wear an eco-gown instead of a regular gown of the same style:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> R0 <input type="checkbox"/> R2000 <input type="checkbox"/> R5000 <input type="checkbox"/> R10 000 <input type="checkbox"/> R_____</p>
<p>3. How body-conscious are you?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enhance <input type="checkbox"/> Hide <input type="checkbox"/> Not concerned</p>	<p>13. Eco-friendly or not, what will you do with your wedding dress after the wedding day?</p>
<p>4. Where is your mother's wedding gown currently?</p>	<p>14. How much time do you intend to spend on choosing your gown?</p>
<p>5. Describe your ideal wedding venue/setting:</p>	<p>15. Please describe the ideal atmosphere and services you expect while buying your gown.</p>
<p>6. Who is your favourite celebrity for their fashion/style sense?</p>	<p>16. What is the key factor that your gown needs to show/include?</p>
<p>7. Describe your ideal source of wedding gown:</p>	<p>17. Describe the single style detail on a bridal gown that annoys you the most (one pet-hate):</p>
<p>8. Who is your favorite LOCAL fashion designer?</p>	<p>18.</p>
<p>9. What is your practical/realistic source of wedding gown?</p>	<p>Thank you very much for your time in answering the above questions. All personal information will remain anonymous, but is required for data-analysing purposes.</p> <p>Name: _____ Contact no: _____</p> <p>Age: _____ Occupation: _____</p> <p>Town: _____ Email: _____</p>

APPENDIX B2: Questionnaire One: Letter (NWJ Bridal Show 2010: Durban)

This letter was sent to the organisers of the NWJ Bridal Show for permission to distribute the questionnaire at the show.



APPENDIX B3: Questionnaire One: Responses (NWJ Bridal Show 2010: Durban)

This table displays the compiled responses from all completed forms distributed at the NWJ Bridal Show 2010.

DURBAN BRIDES 2010 (48 responses in total)											
1	Is bride trend driven?	yes	28	no	20						
2	Is bride body conscious?	enhance	23	hide	12	no concern	13				
3	Status of mom's gown?	sold	13	kept	15	reworked	2	thrown away	1	don't know	17
4	Bride's ideal venue	Beach (13); Country/Midlands (9); Outdoors (6); Garden (6); Relaxed/Summer (4); Indoor venue (3); Romantic (3); Vintage (2); Fairytale (1).									
5	Bride's favourite celebrity	Victoria Beckham (3); Sienna Millar (2); Oprah (2); Cher, Eva Longoria, KimKardashian, Sophie Ndaba, Nicole Ritchie, Jenny Humphree, Angelina Jolie, Julia Roberts, Iman, Kate Moss, Nicole Kidman, Christina Storm, Jessica Alba (1).									
6	Bride's favourite local designer	Kathrin Kidger (2); Skye Pengelly (2), Jenny Button (2), Catherine Moore (2); Miss MoneyPenny, Ismael, Maryke Swart (1).									
7	Bride's dream gown supplier	imported	10	designer	25	dressmaker	10	mom's sewing	1	hired	2
8	Bride's realistic gown supplier	imported	14	designer	11	dressmaker	16	mom's sewing	1	hired	6
9	Bride's dream gown budget	R3000 - 5000 (3); R6000 (3); R8000 (3); R10 000 (12); R12 000 (3); R15 000 (3); R18 000 - R20 000 (5); R30 000 (2); R50 000 (2); R200 000 (2); No budget (5).									
10	Bride's realistic gown budget	R3-4000 (7); R5000 (10); R6000 (2); R7000 (3); R8000 (2); R10 000 (7); R12 000 (1); R15 000 (2); R18 000 (1); R100 000 (2); Any (1)									
11	Would bride pay extra for eco friendly status?	yes	24	no	24						
12	How much extra paid for eco friendly status?	R 0	0	R 2 000	16	R 5 000	5	R 10 000	1	other	3
13	Gown purpose post wedding	sell	12	keep	25	reworked	2	thrown away	0	don't know	9
14	Time allocation to acquiring gown	2 weeks	3	1 month	11	2 months	18	6 months	13	1 year plus	3
15	Ideal services from gown supplier	Fit/Body Type (8); Dedicated service (8); Personal (6); Honesty (7); Friendly (6); No fuss (3); Pampering (3); Advice (2); Delivery, alterations, snacks, details, label, quality, price, polite (1).									
16	Most important style feature	Perfect fit (12); Uniqueness (9); Comfort (9); Style (7); Lace (3); Beadwork (3); Simplicity (2); Pure White (2); Floaty fabric, elegance, satin, vintage, glamour, fantasy, romance (1).									
17	Style to avoid (least favourite style detail)	Puffy (13); Frills (5); Beads (5); Lace (3); Tightness (3); Big Bows (3); Train (2); Sequins (2); Flowers (2); Revealing (2); Boottube (2); Straps, veil, pearls, high waist, princess & off white, wrap-over & too straight (1).									

APPENDIX C1: Questionnaire Two: Consent (email with Lunar brand)

This is the emailed response from Karen Ter Morshuizen (owner of Lunar brand) to conduct questionnaire two over email.



APPENDIX C2: Questionnaire Two: Schedule and response from Lunar brand

The question and answer table with highlighted codes and signposts of questionnaire two.

1. Where is your studio based?	44 Stanley Ave, East, Braamfontein Werf, Johannesburg
2. Describe your average customer in terms of age, income bracket and lifestyle:	I cater for an individual. They tend to be slightly older, early 30's for a first time marriage and 40+ for the second time around. Income varies, sometimes parents are paying for the dress but more often than not the bride pays for herself. From a lifestyle point of view my clients tend to be realists, they don't believe in frivolously spending money on a dress for one day. They want to be beautiful but not wasteful.
3. What in your opinion, is the average spend on a bridal gown in South Africa?	In the broad spectrum of SA I have no idea but I can tell you in my business people spend between R5 000 and R 12 000 on average. R 15 000 and up are rare exceptions.
4. Describe your current range of gowns:	Our dresses are always very simple and understated. Our new ready to wear collection is largely vintage inspired with a natural twist. There is something for most tastes although saying that we don't ever make a conventional strapless princess line gown with lace and beadwork. If girls come to me looking for that they are in the wrong place.
5. What characterizes your most popular styles?	Texture. All my best sellers over the years have been made in alternative fabrics like voile or linen with a textured detail where we create a new fabric so to speak.
6. To what extent are any Lunar gowns considered eco-friendly?	The only way a wedding dress is eco is if it is made in an eco fabric: bamboo, organic cotton, hemp etc. Traditional bridal fabrics are generally polyester or silk, neither of which can be produced in an eco way. We also use quite a lot of salvaged lace which I bought in bulk. We use the lace to create our own fabric and it has become a very signature look of Lunar's.
7. Have you noticed a particular demand for truly eco-friendly gowns?	No. I have only ever had two serious enquiries.
8. In your opinion, what is the scope of current eco-fashion/clothing demand in South Africa?	It is almost non-existent. People are making changes in their lives from a food and lifestyle point of view and I do believe that it will eventually filter down into clothing but fashion and eco will always be a conflicting notion. Fashion needs to be frivolous to survive and as a result is wasteful. A business like mine is more about doing than fashion: we produce quality garments that are timeless ageless and therefore have longevity. Hence the contradiction.
9. In your studio, is there a difference in costs of eco-friendly products as opposed to regular gowns?	No. My studio is set up the way I want it and that is eco as far as I can get it at this point. The costs are the same whether I work in bamboo or silk.
10. Have you calculated your company's carbon footprint and what is your studio's most unfriendly process?	Yes. Electricity consumption, but unfortunately not much I can do about that at this point.
11. How "green" is your supply chain?	It's quite difficult to really know. Our organic suppliers are certified so we know where their products come from and the processes involved in production but the others we have to take on good faith that they are being honest with their business practices.
12. Where do you advertise?	We don't really. To date the business is largely word of mouth based. We have been fortunate that we have had a great deal of attention from the media, which helps to put our brand message out there.
13. How do most of your customers know about your company?	Word of mouth
14. What other companies in the area have a similar product base as you?	Our closest competition is in the same centre as us; Tiaan Nagel. Black Coffee is just down the road in Melville and there are a host of designers in Rosebank that would be direct competition.
15. What are their prices like?	More or less the same but because I am sourcing eco and fair trade fabrics my markups are somewhat lower. I can't afford to overprice my product; consumers are not prepared to pay more for something they don't understand yet.

APPENDIX D1: Questionnaire Three: With brides-to-be (NWJ Bridal Show 2011)

This is the blank questionnaire form with real fabric swatches at the bottom which brides-to-be could select their preferred styles, price brackets, and fabric textures.

NAME _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____



Price Bracket:

☐ R 5000 ☐ R 8000 ☐ R10 000 ☐ R15 000 ☐ R20 000

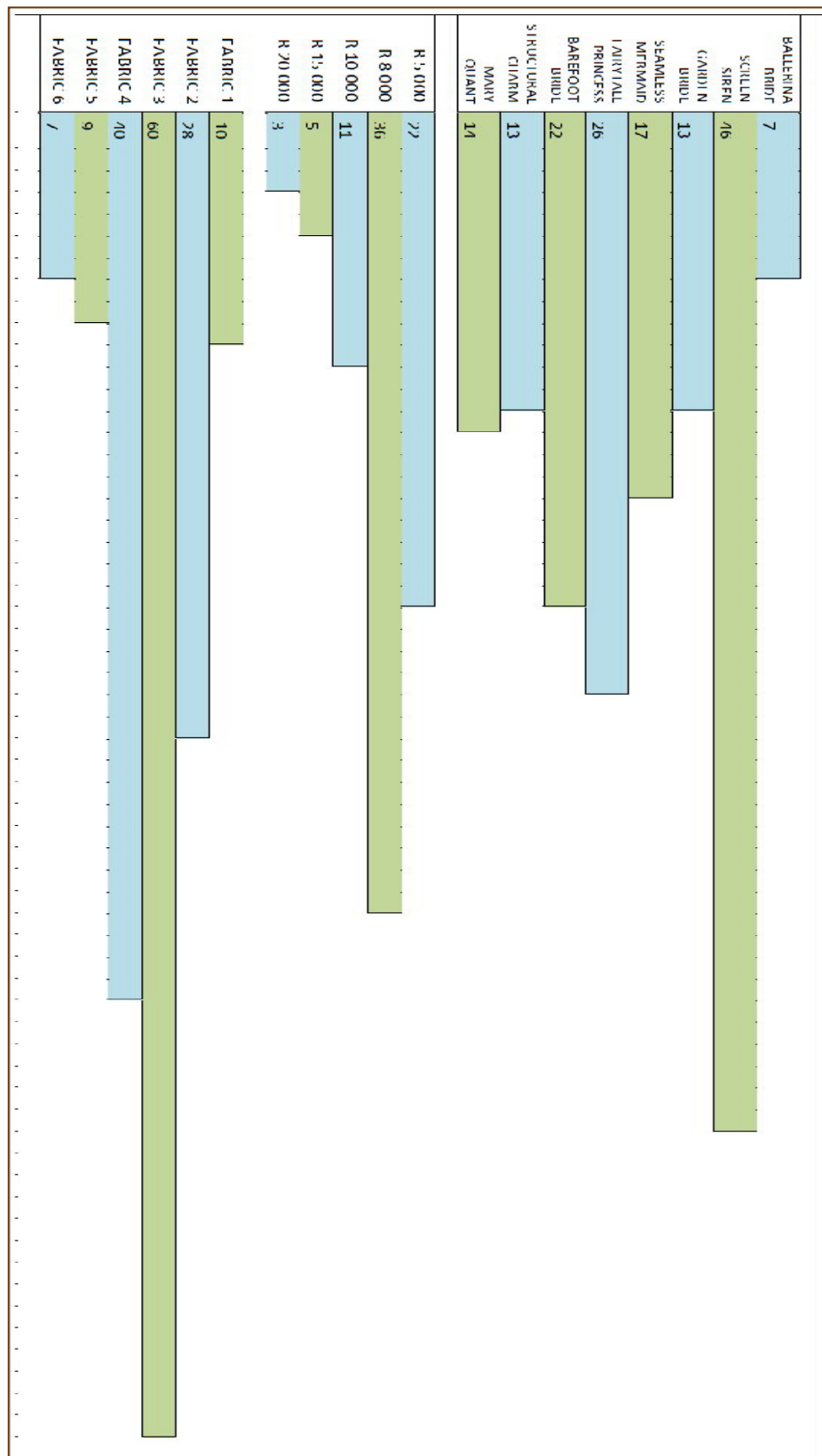
Choose the fabric that appeals to you the most:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐




APPENDIX D2: Questionnaire Three: Compiled responses (NWJ Bridal Show 2011)

This graph displays all three questions' responses.



APPENDIX E1: Questionnaire Four: Online, with brides-to-be in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town

Screenshots of the online questionnaire used to garner a national response on the same preference categories as questionnaire three.


 [Exit EcoBride survey](#)

EcoBride Customer Preferences Survey


1. Please select the bride images that appeal to you the most.

Make your selection of preferred silhouette by clicking the multiple choice answers (located below the images) that correspond to the bride number. You may select more than one bride.


Bride 1




Bride 2




Bride 3




Bride 4




Bride 5




Bride 6



Bride 7



Bride 8



1. Select your preferred bride images by clicking the buttons that correspond to the bride numbers:

☐ Bride 1 ☐ Bride 2 ☐ Bride 3 ☐ Bride 4 ☐ Bride 5 ☐ Bride 6 ☐ Bride 7 ☐ Bride 8

What other details are important for a bridal gown?

1 / 4 25%

[Next please](#)

EcoBride Customer Preferences Survey

2. Please select a budget for your bridal gown

What would you spend? Select two prices to reflect an elastic budget or a single price to reflect a set budget:

1. Select the price you would pay for a bridal gown:

☐ R5000

☐ R8000

☐ R10 000

☐ R15 000

☐ R20 000

2 / 4

50%

Previous

Next please

3. Please select the fabrics that you would most prefer your bridal gown to be made from

Fabric names have been deliberately omitted, so please refer to the fabric descriptions for ideal fabric uses:

FABRIC 1

Highly textured and structured lace fabric, ideal for straight shapes due to stiffness.



FABRIC 2

Undyed textured fabric of fine weight & thickness for pleated, darted & A-line silhouettes



FABRIC 3

An ultra fine & lustrous gauze for double-layered gowns & flounce details



FABRIC 4

High sheen & light weight fabric is perfect for a simple tailored gown



FABRIC 5

A smooth finish on this heavier, drapey fabric allows bias-cut gowns & curvy silhouettes



FABRIC 6

A strong, woven fabric with a matt finish which could be used for body-fit corsets & structured gowns



FABRIC 7

Textured lustrous weave with an ultra-soft handle, ideal for a tailored winter style or a cuff & belt detail



1. These images represent actual fabrics used for bridal gowns. Each is accompanied by a description of feel, drape, and weight.

Select the fabric number that corresponds with the images and descriptions that appeal to you the most:

☐ Fabric 1

☐ Fabric 2

☐ Fabric 3

☐ Fabric 4

☐ Fabric 5

☐ Fabric 6

☐ Fabric 7

3 / 4

75%

Previous

Next please

EcoBride Customer Preferences Survey

4. Please fill in your details

These will not be shared with anyone, but are required for defining the demographic of the survey within the report.

1. Demographic Information

Name	<input type="text"/>
Age	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>

4 / 4 100%

[Previous](#)
[I'm finished!](#)

Powered by [SurveyMonkey](#)
Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

APPENDIX E2: Questionnaire Four: National transcript responses

This transcript presents the text answers supplied alongside “preferred style” question 1.

Page 1, Q1. Select your preferred bride images by clicking the buttons that correspond to the bride numbers:		
1	dress must flatter the figure and not emphasize faults, esp age related things eg flabby arms.	Jun 1, 2011 11:13 AM
2	Classis style + open back	May 30, 2011 10:25 AM
3	Soft & Elegant with beautiful bead work	May 30, 2011 4:24 AM
4	It has to feel like a 'one of a kind'. The attention to detail is important to me. Also the textured layers rather than single dimensional	May 30, 2011 3:55 AM
5	comfort,	May 30, 2011 1:11 AM
6	colour, fabric, detailing, length, season and overall theme	May 30, 2011 12:39 AM
7	understated chic	May 30, 2011 12:34 AM
8	That the dress suit the figure	May 29, 2011 8:11 AM
9	Softness that excentuates the good features of the bride herself, being by useing lace, chiffon etc.....	May 29, 2011 6:07 AM
10	finer detail on the dress which looks so simple from far but unforgettable on photos and from near and nice to touch.	May 27, 2011 1:11 PM
11	1. Colours and type of beadwork/lace, 2. outer coats/jackets/shrugs (often the last thing that brides consider)	May 26, 2011 1:07 AM
12	Right fit for body shape (silhouette)! Comfort, colour variations (pure white, white, cream, ivory etc), good tailoring, fine detailing.	May 24, 2011 6:01 AM

13	The shoulder, neckline, length and middle detail will let the bride look slimmer. A thin material in Bride 3 gives a soft feminine look.	May 23, 2011 9:45 AM
14	It is important to be able to dance in the dress as well. So having a train is great but must be able to be pinned to the dress later as not to interfere with the dance moves or feet	May 22, 2011 11:35 PM
15	A style and silhouette that flatters the bride's figure and emphasizes her best features are very important. Beautiful fabric that suits the style of the dress is also very important for a luxurious effect. Every bride also hopes to have something different or unusual about her dress, so even small section of detailing adds value to a simple dress and creates a unique bride.	May 20, 2011 9:21 AM
16	Chantilly Lace - just like Kate Middleton's McQueen wedding dress!	May 11, 2011 6:30 AM
17	i think somethign that me as a bride to be as become alot mroe aware of is body shape. So as beautiful as a gown is- it really might not suit that particular bride. The fabrics and detail on the dress are important to me too and obviously having a piece that no one else does!	May 11, 2011 5:58 AM
18	The Bride should feel like the most beautiful woman in the world, on her special day. The majority of woman also want to feel that they look hot, but not in a slutty way.	May 11, 2011 5:53 AM
19	detail, colour, length and texture	May 11, 2011 12:44 AM
20	Flow of the materials. The fit of the dress.	May 10, 2011 6:32 AM
21	SHOES AND FLOWERS	May 4, 2011 10:22 PM
22	Easy and comfortable to wear. And, not too-large a skirt; why would you want to keep your groom as far away from you as possible?	May 4, 2011 3:13 AM
23	Attention to detail! Having a simple yet intricately detailed dress. Less is more	May 2, 2011 12:40 AM
24	the small detail in the bodice	Apr 26, 2011 2:52 AM
25	Attention to detail, intricacy of the work, quality of finishes, must create the image of a "finished product" and not look like it's still a draft work	Apr 19, 2011 6:22 AM
26	Maximum hotness.	Apr 19, 2011 2:07 AM
27	Hand made finishes	Apr 18, 2011 1:59 PM
28	Freedom of movement	Apr 15, 2011 11:30 AM
29	Lace and femininity is so crucial Flattering around the chest bum area	Apr 15, 2011 2:31 AM

APPENDIX F1: Interview Two: Consent with trend analyst

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Masters Study by Wendy Schultz (20302331)

The EcoBride: development of an environmentally friendly bridal gown collection for a South African market.

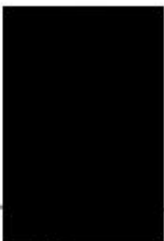
Confidentiality

- All data collected is treated as confidential.
- Data is only used for the purpose of analytical comparison and conclusion-building.
- Data recording (filming, voice recording) is done on permission of the interviewee (this consent form must be signed).
- A copy of any recordings and the resulting report are made available to the interviewee.
- The original recording of the interview is destroyed after the report is completed, to ensure the data remains confidential and is not used for any other purpose.

I agree to the audio/film recording of the interview between myself and Wendy Schultz, the above-mentioned MTech candidate.

The subject matter and questions of the interview have been discussed with me.

I hereby agree to participate on condition that the confidentiality clauses above are maintained.


Dion Chang

21/04/2011

Date

APPENDIX F2: Interview Two: Schedule with trend analyst

Question	Response
1. What is your opinion on whether the green trend has longevity or not?	Globally embedded. There is sustainability & longevity but I think that the problem is A: we lag behind in awareness; and B: divided economy. When you're living below the headline recycling is not your priority. Having said that, it's also a generational thing which will also become embedded as we go along. So even within our divided economy you're going to get a younger generation that's much more empathetic.
2. What do you sense as the average South African fashion consumer's perception of the green trend? Let's define the fashion consumer as a 22-35 year old female of middle to upper income bracket.	Awareness is more in terms of retail. Recycling your goods. The purchasing/frontline/where the products come from – those kinds of consumer goods. The second tier would be your fashion goods which you would take in 2 streams: one fair-trade, one natural fibres etc. I think there's more perception about free trade and where things come from. And I think that natural fibres comes in second because there is still a recession and it is a reality that going green is more expensive – for example Lunar – she's done a lot of difficult learning within sourcing eco cottons and local cottons. The odds are stacked against you.
3. ASSUMPTION: It is assumed that a collection of gowns would have a smaller target market if the gowns carry a visual signal of being eco-friendly, thus the collection should not look eco, but should follow sustainable production methods.	Very very pertinent. I think there are three categories: Eco Ugly – the early stages. Eco Pretty – better, but hippy connotation is still there. Eco Iconic – alternate designers like Stella McCartney (ridiculed) but now in such a crowded fashion space that it is very difficult to discern different design movements. So now the point of differentiation is what you stand for. So for me Eco-certification is becoming more of a clutch-point for consumers and it's a loyalty thing. I think it [market for eco fashion] will grow, but as the woman from said: "Your consumer isn't worried if it's eco or not (it's a great plus) but your garments must be fashion forward". Added benefit: will have follow-through for branding and status once it is discovered.
4. Would you rate slow fashion or instant fashion as the most sustainable fashion category?	Definitely Slow Fashion. Upcycled fashion. You had a whole trend of vintage fashion but at the height of the recession you're seeing very fast fashion still being used by the younger target market and that's due to budget. The flight to quality happened during the recession – is an entrenched mindset. A big bubble burst in 2009 – very ironic because if you look at H&M (the fastest, cheapest fashion cycles) their sister company is called Cos – and they represent the opposite of H&M that of flight to quality. Significant shift. I think you are going to get that sentiment; the nature of the value chain of fashion is changing so quickly.
Probe: In terms of branding and people's own self images: do you think that's going to have a big effect on this at all?	I do – you've seen more via blogspaces. The [old] voice of authority (fashion editors) is becoming very quickly obsolete. They are your curators of ideas but they're not your lighthouse/guiding principles.
5. Could you elaborate on their characteristics as such?	Slow fashion: from a consumer perspective is cautious consumption/considered consumption – what fabrics, provenance. Fast Fashion: Li Edelkoort says "when you see a T-shirt that costs less than a croissant, then you know that there's something seriously wrong in the fashion chain that produced that". Durban is the most price-sensitive city in South Africa. Cape Town and Johannesburg are very different. The new black emerging middle class will only want new, bespoke, custom-made and will spend lots. Ritual and status are very important. They want to say "This is what I spent". Considered consumer – this is where you [EcoBride] will fit in. Maturing generation with different view who will see antiques for the value it is. Cape Town will be more receptive.
6. The SA bridal design industry is noticeably entrenched in tradition, except for a handful of designers who "push the boundaries". Considering that the traditional format of a wedding gown may need to be abandoned, what would you suggest as methods through which the industry can achieve lasting change and be accepted by the market?	The people that do custom do a basic silhouette/template that can be tweaked – sort of the answer for designer but also for the bride – she wants something special. Cost is a major thing. A semi-bespoke offering.

7. In your opinion, how important is green accreditation for a South African fashion product?	[Accreditation] Still determined by price in South Africa. I think green accreditation will be the final tick – might not be marketing strategy, but is added value : I've got to fall in love with it first, and then afterward it's a nice surprise . We're not quite there yet (as the next step).
PROBE: What about offering an album of the gown's value chain/production history in place of an accreditation certifying a gown's status?	Brilliant idea!
8. What is your opinion of carbon offsetting as being a solution to having a carbon footprint?	Look I think it's a good one because the next trend coming through is carbon labelling on foodstuffs. You're already seeing it on Chinese products. Fashion will lag but people will get used to it via food.
9. DILEMMA: It has also been suggested by a colleague that a carbon emissions calculation may point towards a synthetic fabric made in Mauritius as being more sustainable than imported organic cotton certified by the Soil Association. Your thoughts?	Very confusing. There is no answer until the SA textile industry follows suit .
10. Brides on average do not show a high level of knowledge about green issues. Those brides who do, are the minority and difficult to pin down for targeted promotion. Considering this, what would you think are the best promotional strategies for the EcoBride product?	One thing – COLLABORATION . My big word for the next couple of years. Eco issues are heightened during the recession. Collaborating with other companies with similar products for a lessened carbon footprint. Builds a package : the brides who are into this are going to be into it completely. You've got to add those other services... so that it becomes a full experience . Streamline the service . STORIES . Brides want something to brag about. The story of where that fabric came from to talk about. Up-cycling – emotional pull of second hand fabric. Sentimental – granny's cupboard fabric added to the basic silhouette.
11. With regard to South African celebrities, how important do you think it is to enlist a brand ambassador for a fashion brand?	I think it WAS important . I think we're now at a tipping point . Brand ambassadors newest thing at the moment. Depends on the target market . My trend radar says it's waning ; I'm already easing away from it. If you want the black emerging market then get a celebrity.
12. How do I avoid being perceived as "greenwashing"?	mmm. I don't know . I think although you want to be certified it's not quite there yet . Yes - I think in this scenario in bridal context – there is so much emotion involved. Push the emotional button and say you're also helping the planet [rather than first proclaiming eco credentials] .
13. How much credence do you believe should be placed on market surveys that are conducted for product development purposes?	It's just an element because you have a captive audience at a bridal fair but then again it depends where you intend to source your market. Good way of testing but not the be all and end all.
14. And finally, what other concept development strategies would you suggest as important to the EcoBride gown collection development?	Emotional push . Upcycling for me has ... again make sure the end result is pretty (not hippy) . I don't know that many brides could resist the sentiment of having something passed down added to their gown – and then the other thing is trying to find those partners that don't detract from you. Future of 21st century business is collaboration and the more you can collaborate with people and offer that seamless experience . Align like-minded wedding companies.
15. Description of self.	15 years fashion media experience including Rooi Rose and Elle Magazine. Identifying and understanding consumer mindset. Social media. Understanding macro trends.

APPENDIX G: DUT Fashion Show 2011

An image from the DUT Fashion Show 2011 showing some of the Eco-Bride gowns styled and modelled on the ramp.



Source: Schultz, A (2011)

APPENDIX H: List of websites

Celebration House	www.celebrationhouse.co.za
EcoCert Global Organic Textile Standard	www.ecocert.com
Eco Fashion World	www.ecofashionworld.com
Ecouterre	www.ecouterre.com
European Union EcoFlower	www.eco-label.com
Fair Trade Foundation	www.fairtradelabel.org.za
Forest Stewardship Council	www.fsc.org
Futerra Sustainability Communications	www.futerra.co.uk
Global Green Agency	http://globalgreenagency.wordpress.com
Green Passport	www.greenpassport.co.za
Halfpenny London	www.halfpennylondon.com
iFashion	www.ifashion.co.za
Intracen	www.intracen.org
Linda Loudermilk	www.lindaloudermilk.com
Morgan Boszilkov	www.naturalbridals.com
National Cleaner Production Centre	www.ncpc.co.za
Oeko-Tex Standard 100	www.oeko-tex.org
Redress Consultancy	http://redressconsultancy.blogspot.com
Rosa Clara	www.rosaclaras.es
Soil Association	www.sacert.org
South African Bureau of Standards	www.sabs.co.za
Worth Global Style Network	www.wgsn.com

REFERENCES

- Allbusiness.com. 2009. *The new green marketing* (online). Available: <http://www.allbusiness.com/environment-natural-resources/environmentalism/11493602-1.html> (Accessed 24 August 2009).
- Anderson, R. 2009. Ray Anderson. In: Mazur, L. and Miles, L. *Conversations with green gurus: the collective wisdom of environmental movers and shakers*. United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons. 7-24.
- Anderson, W. 2006. The green house. *The Independent Newspaper* (online), July 26. Available: <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/house-and-home/property/will-anderson-the-green-house-409247.html> (Accessed 16 June 2009).
- Aneja, A. 2010. *New product development*, lecture notes distributed at the department of Textile Engineering, Technical University of Liberec, 25 August 2010.
- Beard, N.D. 2008. The branding of ethical fashion and the consumer: A luxury niche or mass-market reality? *Fashion theory: the journal of dress and culture*, 12(4):447-468.
- Black, P. 2008. *Green wedding ideas* (online). Available: http://www.celebrationhouse.co.za/articles/die_burger/green_wedding_ideas.htm (Accessed 23 October 2009).
- Black, S. 2008. *Eco-chic: the fashion paradox*. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.
- Blackstone, T., Clarke, M., Knuppe, M., Levinsohn, K., Lustig, A., Ruddy, E. and Webber, R. 2010. Do find a dress on a budget. *Glamour Magazine*, March 2010: 77.
- Blanchard, T. 2007. *Green is the new black: how to change the world with style*. Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Boszilkov, M. 2008. *Natural bridal collection: Carmen* (image). Available: <http://www.naturalbridals.com/store.html#> (Accessed 24 July 2009).
- Braungart, M. and McDonough, W. 2009. *Cradle to Cradle: remaking the way we make things*. London: Vintage.
- Breds, D., Hjort, T. and Krüger, H. 2002. *Guidelines: a handbook on the environment for the textile and fashion industry*. Denmark: The Sustainable Solution Design Association.
- Chait, J. 2012. *Sustainable* (online). Available: <http://organic.about.com/od/organicdefinitionsst/g/Sustainable.htm> (Accessed 9 September 2012).

- Chapman, J. 2005. *Emotionally durable design: objects, experiences and empathy*. London: Earthscan.
- Chouinard, Y. 2008. Our invitation to you to join the conversation now. In: Hethorn, J. and Ulasewicz, C. *Sustainable fashion: why now?* New York: Fairchild Books, Inc. ix-x.
- Clarke, C. 2009. Siren song. *Harper's Bazaar*, December 2009: 141.
- Connelly, L.M. 2009. Mixed methods studies. *MEDSURG Nursing* (online), 18(1): 31-32. Available:
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rzhandAN=2010230663&ndsite=ehost-live> (Accessed 22 March 2011).
- Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Dick, B. 1993. *You want to do an action research thesis?* (online). Available:
http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/art/arthesis.html#a_art_methchap (Accessed 8 June 2011).
- Ebersöhn, L., Eloff, I. and Ferreira, R. 2010. First steps in action research. In: Maree, K. (ed.) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 124-143.
- Eckman, M. and Wagner, J. 1995. Aesthetic aspects of the consumption of fashion design: the conceptual and empirical challenge. *Advances in consumer research* (online), 22(1): 646-649. Available:
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bthandAN=9509150133&ndsite=ehost-live> (Accessed 21 March 2011).
- Entwistle, J. and Wilson, E. 2001. *Body dressing*. Oxford: Berg.
- Fionda, A.M. and Moore, C.M. 2009. The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand. *Journal of brand management* (online), 16: 347-363. Available:
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bthandAN=39763304&site=ehost-live> (Accessed 21 March 2011).
- Firth, A. 2010. Romantic redesign. *The Property Magazine Kwa-Zulu Natal*, October: 48.
- Futerra Sustainability Communications. 2008. *Futerra greenwash guide* (online). Available: <http://www.futerra.co.uk/services/greenwash-guide> (Accessed 6 May 2010).
- Gillis, E. 2009. *Bridal couture* (image) Available:
<http://www.elbethgillis.co.za/couture.php?album=bridal> (Accessed 24 July 2009).

- Global Green Agency. 2009. *Clean smart design manifesto* (online). Available: <http://globalgreenagency.wordpress.com/2009/07/07/clean-smart-design-manifesto/> (Accessed 23 October 2009).
- Grant, J. 2007. *The green marketing manifesto*. England: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Green Passport. 2009. *Carbon offsetting: intro* (online). Available: <http://www.greenpassport.co.za/carbon-offsetting.php#> (Accessed 23 October 2009).
- Green Retail Decisions. 2012. *Eco-friendly* (online). Available: <http://www.greenretaildecisions.com/glossary/eco-friendly> (Accessed 9 September 2012).
- Group USA. 2010. *Style No. 9074W* (image). Available: http://www.brides.com/wedding-dresses-style/wedding-dresses/gallery/dresses/vendor/designer/group_usa/detail/2000000001120326?docPos=22&designer=group_usa& (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (online). Sage. 105-117. Available: http://create.alt.ed.nyu.edu/courses/3311/reading/10-guba_lincoln_94.pdf (Accessed 20 March 2011).
- Halfpenny, K. 2010. *Bridal: Halfpenny collection* (image). Available: <http://www.halfpennylondon.com/bridal/> (Accessed 8 August 2010).
- Hethorn, J. 2008. Consideration of consumer desire. In: Hethorn, J. and Ulasewicz, C. 2008. *Sustainable fashion: why now? A conversation about issues, practices, and possibilities*. New York: Fairchild Books, Inc.
- Hethorn, J. and Ulasewicz, C. 2008. *Sustainable fashion: why now? A conversation about issues, practices, and possibilities*. New York: Fairchild Books Inc.
- Hofstee, E. 2009. *Constructing a good dissertation*. Sandton: EPE.
- Holzer, D. 2012. *What does eco-friendly mean?* (online). Available: <http://greenliving.nationalgeographic.com/ecofriendly-mean-2415.html> (Accessed 9 September 2012).
- Hyvärinen, A. 2001. *Eco-labelling and environmentally friendly products and production methods affecting the international trade in textiles and clothing* (online). Available: http://www.intracen.org/textilesandclothing/atc_eco_labelling.htm (Accessed 12 May 2009).

- Jackson, T. 2010. *FT business of luxury 2010: Summit report* (online). Available: <http://www.wgsn.com> (Accessed 8 August 2010).
- Kale, R., Näslund, D. and Paulraj, A. 2010. Action research in supply chain management: a framework for relevant and rigorous research. *Journal of business logistics*, 31(2):331-355.
- Kettle, J. 2009. *Aimee & Kumu* (image). Available: http://lookthroughmylens.blogspot.com/2009_06_01_archive.html. Jessica Kettle/ (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Khuzwayo, W. 26 October 2007. Mr Price blocks Myanmar clothing imports. *iFashion* (online). Available: http://www.ifashion.co.za/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=561andItemid=96 (Accessed 23 October 2009).
- La Morte, G. (ed.) 2009. Stylish Girl: Rachel McAdams. *Boho Magazine*. Fall 2009(5):88.
- Lazaro. 2008. *Spring 2008 collection* (image). Available: <http://www.jlmcouture.com/Lazaro/Bridal/Additional/Style-3818> (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Lee, M. 2007. *Eco chic: the savvy shoppers guide to ethical fashion*. Great Britain: Octopus Publishing Group.
- Leedy, P. and Ormrod, J. 2005. *Practical research: planning and design*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Lieber, E. 2009. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: insights into design and analysis issues. *Journal of ethnographic and qualitative research* (online), 3:218-227. Available: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=trueanddb=a9handAN=41423251and site=ehost-live> (Accessed 22 March 2011).
- Liu, M. 2010a. *What is zero waste fashion and why does it matter?* (online). Available: <http://www.ecouterre.com/what-is-zero-waste-fashion-and-why-does-it-matter/mark-liu-zero-waste-2-2/> (Accessed 21 July 2010).
- Liu, M. 2010b. *Mark Liu* (image). Available: <http://www.ecouterre.com/what-is-zero-waste-fashion-and-why-does-it-matter/mark-liu-zero-waste-2-2/> (Accessed 21 July 2010).
- Loudermilk, L. 2009a. *Couture collection* (image). Available: <http://www.lindaloudermilk.com/loudermilkinc.html> (Accessed 24 July 2009).

- Loudermilk, L. 2009b. *Luxury eco* (online). Available: <http://www.lindaloudermilk.com/loudermilkinc.html> (Accessed 24 July 2009).
- Luke, R. 2008. Popular culture, marketing, and the ethical consumer. In: Hethorn, J. and Ulasewicz, C. *Sustainable fashion: why now? A conversation about issues, practices, and possibilities*. New York: Fairchild Books, Inc. 77-94.
- Lunar. 2009. *Lunar bridal collection 2009* (image). Available: <http://www.lunarlife.co.za/vision.php> (Accessed 23 November 2011).
- Lunar. 2010. *Vision* (online). Available: <http://www.lunarlife.co.za/vision.php> (Accessed 23 November 2011).
- MangoRed. 2009. *Bryan & Erika* (image). Available: <http://mangored.com/2009/?p=434> (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Maree, K. (ed.) 2010. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Maree, K. and Pietersen, J. 2010. Surveys and the use of questionnaires. In: Maree, K. (ed.) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 79, 155-170.
- Maree, K. and van der Westhuizen, C. 2010. Planning a research proposal. In: Maree, K. (ed.) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 23-45.
- Maughan, K. 2008. *Young designer on a Lunar mission* (online). Available: <http://www.tonight.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=355andfArticleId=4579835> (Accessed 24 July 2009).
- McNiff, J. 2002. *Action research for professional development: concise advice for new action researchers* (online). Available: <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp> (Accessed 23 May 2011).
- McNiff, J. 2008. The significance of 'I' in educational research and the responsibility of intellectuals. *South African journal of education*, 28:351-364.
- Meadows, T. 2009. *How to set up and run a fashion label*. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd.
- Militký, J. 2010. *Specialty fibres*, lecture notes distributed at the department of Textile Engineering, Technical University of Liberec, 25 August 2010.
- Mooallem, J. 2008. The afterlife of cell phones. *The New York Times* (online), January 13:6. Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/13/magazine/13Cellphone-t.html?_r=2andpagewanted=6andsq=13%20jan%202008andst=cseandscp=15 (Accessed 16 July 2009).
- Mulyanegara, R.C. and Tsarenko, Y. 2009. Predicting brand preferences: an examination of the predictive power of consumer personality and values in the

- Australian fashion market. *Journal of fashion marketing and management*, 13(3): 358-371.
- NearSea Naturals. 2009. *Store: fabrics: woven: silk and silk blends* (online). Available: <http://www.nearseanaturals.com/browse.php?category=28> (Accessed 03 September 2009).
- Nel, N. 2010. ECO (image). *Wedding Album*, TWO 2010:22.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2010. Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In: Maree, K. (ed.) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. 70-97, 107.
- Nieuwenhuizen, C. (ed.) 2004. *Basics of entrepreneurship*. Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Palmi, R. 26 September 2009. SA Govt to tackle imports and Lesotho workers want more. *Redress Consultancy* (online). Available: <http://redressconsultancy.blogspot.com/2009/09/sa-govt-to-tackle-imports-lesotho.html> (Accessed 23 October 2009).
- Poldner, K. 2010. Certification issues. *EcoFashionWorld* (online). Available: <http://www.ecofashionworld.com/Industry-News/CERTIFICATION-ISSUES.html> (Accessed 6 April 2010).
- Pronovias. 2010. *Pronovias 2011 city collection* (image). Available: <http://dressupforwedding.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/pronovias-short-wedding-gown.jpg> (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Rissanen, T. 2008. Creating fashion without the creation of fabric waste. In: Hethorn, J. and Ulasewicz, C. *Sustainable fashion: why now?* New York: Fairchild Books, Inc. 184-206.
- Root, R.A. 2008. Letter from the editor, *Fashion theory: the journal of dress and culture*, 12(4):419-426.
- Rosa Clara. 2010a. *Latir* (image) Available: <http://www.rosaclara.es/en/rosa-clara-2010> (Accessed 26 November 2010).
- Rosa Clara. 2010b. *Rimel* (image) Available: <http://manolobrides.com/2010/04/08/lovehate-the-macrame-edition/> (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Schultz, A. 2011. *DUT fashion show 2011* (photograph). DUT Sports Hall, Durban.
- Schultz, W. 2011. *Questionnaire four: preferred fabric choices* (photograph). Johannesburg.

- Schultz, W. 2011. *Screen grab of online questionnaire* (digital photograph).
Johannesburg.
- Somekh, B. 2006. *Action Research: A methodology for change and development*.
England: Open University Press.
- Swarovski Crystallized. 2007. *Unbridaled: the marriage of tradition and avant garde*.
Liechtenstein: Swarovski AG.
- Tungate, M. 2004. *Fashion brands: branding style from Armani to Zara*. London:
Kogan Page.
- Valenta, A. 2009. *Modern white wedding gowns* (image). Available:
<http://bridesmine.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/modern-white-wedding-gowns-Alvina-Valenta.jpg> (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Wang, V. 2009. *Spring 2009 collection* (image). Available:
http://www.superbridalgown.com/asp_us/us_hs_buy.asp?wp_bianhao=23/20080731080909 (Accessed 12 February 2010).
- Wilhide, E. 2002. *Eco: an essential sourcebook for environmentally friendly design and decoration*. London: Quadrille Publishing Ltd.
- Winge, T. 2008. "Green is the new black": celebrity chic and the "green" commodity fetish. *Fashion theory: the journal of dress and culture*, 12(4):511-524.
-