SYMBOL USAGE IN THE

APPEARANCE OF

SMALL BUSINESSES

By

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Bachelor of Science

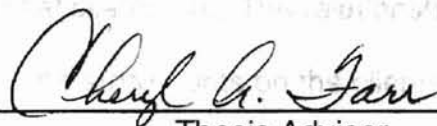Northwestern Oklahoma State University

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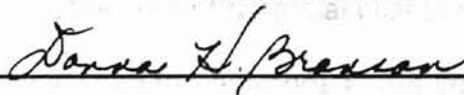MASTER OF SCIENCE
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PREFACE

This study was conducted to determine the use of symbols to decode messages in a store's appearance by potential clients of a store. The study provides store owners with information that will help them in making decisions about the appearance of their store. The objectives for the study were to determine: (a) The decoded meanings assigned to specific store fronts and store interiors by potential clients. (b) The relationship of potential clients decoding of symbols in the store fronts on the clients' willingness to patronize the businesses. (c) The relationship of potential clients decoding of symbols in the store interiors, as viewed from the entrance of the stores, on the clients' willingness to patronize the businesses. (d) The relationship of potential clients' decoding of symbols in store appearance (store front and store interior) on the clients' willingness to patronize the businesses. This research discovered that for bridal stores, there was a significant difference between subjects responses to the store fronts. This research did not reveal a significant difference for the decoding messages of store interiors for bridal stores.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Every small retail business owner must be able to contend successfully for a share of his or her target market to remain in business. Many businesses may be competing for the same target market (Bates, 1989). Small business owners can be successful in attracting their target markets by investing adequate time in planning strategies.

Duchesneau and Gartner (1990) found business managers who are successfully staying in business spent more time planning than managers of businesses that failed. According to Star and Massel (1981), 33.2% of all retail businesses fail within the first five years, indicating intensive planning in all aspects of business is essential.

Small business owners should plan strategies for all aspects of their businesses including budgets, billing policies, inventory management, sales, employee management, customer service, and appearance. All aspects, except appearance, have been extensively researched and the findings published. Research is needed to understand the importance of appearance in planning a small business.

Appearance-related strategies can be developed by store owners who understand the symbolic meanings of the features in the appearance of their

stores. According to Ditcher (1985), when a person understands the symbolic meanings of clothing, clothing can be used as a communication tool to help people understand one another. In the same manner, symbols found in the appearance of store fronts and store interiors may also convey meanings that can be understood by potential clients. Understanding the importance of symbols may enable a store owner to use appropriate symbols to communicate a desired meaning to potential clients. The symbolic messages potential clients receive from the store fronts and store interiors will influence the clients' initial and subsequent evaluations of a retail business. Business managers who understand the importance of symbols will be able to decide what resources to use to project a desired message to clients.

Knowledge of the nonverbal communication process will aid in planning the features to be used in the appearance of the store front and store interior. According to Fisher's mechanistic model of human communication developed in 1978, communication starts when a sender selects an object or sound which to the sender has a symbolic meaning. The sender uses the object or sound to convey a message, thought, feeling, or idea. The message is encoded by the sender and presented to the receiver using communication channels, such as sight, sound, or touch. The receiver will receive the message through these channels. The receiver will decode the message by applying an interpretative meaning to the symbol. This message will be positive or negative depending upon the response of the receiver to the symbol. The receiver will then become

the sender and encode a reactive message to return to the original sender, who then becomes the receiver (see Diagram 1, Appendix A).

Fisher's model can be applied to store fronts and store interiors. As a communication tool, the store owner will send nonverbal messages to consumers by the symbols in the store front and store interior. A potential client will mentally decode symbols in the store's appearance and develop a response to the messages received from the store's appearance as he or she approaches the business exterior. The message received can affect the client's response to the business. These exterior nonverbal messages will be reinforced or altered as the client enters the store. Therefore, a small business owner must select store front and interior symbols that send positive messages, such as quality merchandise and competent and knowledgeable salespeople. The potential client sends a communicative response to the store owner by his or her willingness to enter the store, look at the merchandise, and purchase products and services. The success of any business depends upon the patronage of its clients; therefore, it is important to understand the process of nonverbal communication and its impact upon patronage.

This study will test Fisher's model to determine if potential clients attach consistent decoded meanings to specific store fronts and store interior stimuli. Because there is a wide variety of stores and expectations for the different types of stores, only bridal stores were chosen for this study. Bridal stores generate over one billion dollars a year in sales (Bozzuto, Maines, & Strischek, 1991) Bridal stores provide products and services for individuals planning weddings or

other special events. The primary target market of a bridal store includes the wedding party and the parents who may contribute to the expenses of the wedding. Individuals planning special events such as proms and debutante parties may also be the target market. Services bridal stores offer clients include altering and renting clothing and accessories, renting the location for the occasion, decorating the location, providing the floral arrangements and interior decorations, catering, and photographing the event. Some of the products sold include apparel and accessories, flowers and decorations, cakes and prepared foods for receptions and dinners, keepsakes, and invitations.

The competency of a bridal store will not only be evaluated by those participating in the event, but also by relatives and friends who help make the wedding decisions for the event. An atmosphere of professionalism, created by the symbols used in the store's appearance, can influence the message the client receives. Many clients hire a bridal store to assist with events that are highlights in their lives. For these events, the clients want everything to be perfect. This desire for perfection intensifies the need for the business to appear competent and capable.

Justification

Bridal stores, a billion-dollar-a-year industry, provide products and services that may be representative of numerous other small businesses. Attracting and retaining clients is especially important in the emotionally charged atmosphere of a bridal store. From the point of first contact, a bridal store's

clients need to have confidence in the business owner's ability to deliver goods and services on time and in a professional manner. The store owner must understand the importance of symbols in communicating messages of competence to potential clients.

The nonverbal messages conveyed by the store front will be the first received by the potential client. These messages, which are decoded first, are influential and hard to change, whether they are good or bad (Livesley & Bromley, 1973). The successful store owner may choose store front features which symbolize good taste, sophistication, high or low pricing, experienced salespeople, and quality merchandise. As the potential client receives these encoded messages, the potential client decodes them and makes a judgment about the business. The potential client then encodes either a negative or positive response which is sent back to the store owner by his or her willingness or refusal to enter and patronize the store.

The same process is evident in the nonverbal messages found in the interior of the store. These messages may need to be more specific to symbolize definite services and merchandise which the potential client will accept or reject, depending upon how he or she may decode the symbols. The message the potential client returns to the store owner by a willingness to enter and patronize the store will reflect the success or failure of the symbolic messages created by the appearance features of the store interior.

Previous studies have not addressed small businesses in their use of symbols to attract and communicate to clients. This research addresses the

importance of using symbols in the appearance of bridal stores. Because bridal stores provide several services and products, business owners in related fields may apply information derived from this study in their small businesses. Although the results may vary from one small retail business to another, other small retail businesses may benefit from a study that addresses the importance of communication with potential clients by the use of nonverbal symbols in the appearance of a small business.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to test Fisher's mechanistic model of human communication to determine the importance of the symbolic meaning potential clients decode when viewing the store front and store interior of a bridal store. The study was designed to determine if the symbolic meanings communicated a message that influenced the clients' decisions to patronize the store.

Objectives

There were four objectives for this study. These objectives were:

1. To determine the decoded meaning assigned to specific store fronts and store interiors by potential clients.

2. To determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding of symbols in the store front and the clients' willingness to patronize the business.

3. To determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding of symbols in the store interior, as viewed from the entrance of the store, and the clients' willingness to patronize the business.

4. To determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding of symbols in the store appearance (store front and store interior) and the clients' willingness to patronize the business.

Hypotheses

There were four hypotheses for this study. These hypotheses were:

1. There is a significant relationship between the type of symbols presented to subjects and the decoded message assigned to that symbol.

2. There is a direct relationship between the decoded meaning given to symbols of store fronts by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store.

3. There is a direct relationship between the decoded meaning given to symbols of store interior, as viewed from the entrance of the store, by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store.

4. There is a direct relationship between the decoded meaning given to symbols of store appearance by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store.

Limitations

1. The stimuli were developed from existing bridal stores in Oklahoma and Kansas. Results may vary for stores in other areas.

2. This research is limited by the number and locations of the subjects. Results may vary using subjects from other geographical areas.

3. This study was conducted for one type of business. Results may be different for other business types.

Definitions

Bridal stores--businesses that sell products and services for weddings and other special occasions as their primary source of income.

Client--one who employs another, or a customer (Hamid, 1982).

Message--an idea, thought, or feeling transmitted from one person to another through sight, sound, or touch.

Small business--a business with one to nineteen employees (Gilmore, Dean, & Wright, 1991).

Symbol--an object that represents something else; concrete representation of moral or intellectual quality (Guralnik, 1982). Example: A chandelier might represent sophistication, refinement, and/or wealth.

Symbolic meaning-- a mental idea, thought, or feeling that has been assigned to a physically experienced entity (such as an object).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was designed to determine the importance of nonverbal communication in the responses of potential clients to the exterior and interior appearances of small retail businesses. This review of literature will discuss four theories of nonverbal communication: Fisher's mechanistic model of human communication(1978), the Brunswik lens model of perception, as explained by Shaver (1975), impression formation theory as explained by Livesley and Bromley (1973), and Richard's (1991) combination of these three theories. Fisher's model, which was chosen for this study, will be discussed in detail. A discussion of the impact of Kelly's model of attribution, first impression, attribution in nonverbal communication, and the process of impression management will be included.

Previous research indicates definite reactions to the symbols used in nonverbal communication between individuals and reactions of individuals to symbolic objects presented by other individuals. Little research has been done on the responses of potential clients to nonverbal communication in the appearance of small retail businesses. By identifying the impact of symbols in research areas of nonverbal communication, this study was able to determine the similar impact that symbols used in store exteriors and interiors had on

nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is the form of

communication most often used, although the symbols are usually understood

subconsciously. To understand the best symbols used to encode a message,

the sender must understand the process of nonverbal communication.

Communication Theories

There are three prevalent theories of communication. Fisher (1978)

developed one theory called the mechanistic model of human communication.

This theory suggests that communication starts by a sender using symbols to

encode a message, thought, feeling, or idea through encoding channels. The

receiver will receive the message through decoding channels. The receiver will

then become the sender and encode a message to return to the original sender

(see Diagram 1, Appendix A).

The second theory is explained by the Brunswik lens model of perception.

This theory, as explained by Shaver (1975), refers to objects as distal stimuli.

Objects are experienced through some form of mediation such as light waves,

sound waves, or touch. The object causes a stimulated experience referred to

as proximal stimulus, and that stimulation is sent to the brain via neural

encoding. Based on past experiences, the brain will interpret and create the

object in the mind based upon past experiences as a final precept. What the

brain interprets may not be completely accurate, but is somewhat idiosyncratic

based upon individualized past experiences (see Diagram 2, Appendix A). Store

owners may be displaying symbols to achieve a specific encoded message but potential clients may not be decoding the message as the store owners intended.

The third theory is impression formation. This theory identifies four steps to impression formation: (a) selection of cues, finding cues that are most important to the observer; (b) interpretive inferences, giving meaning to the important cues; (c) extended inferences, using the categories already established and applying all the traits in that category to the person or object being perceived; and (d) anticipatory set, using this information to prepare for interaction with the person or object (Livesley & Bromley, 1973). An observer will use those cues that are most important to him in the selection of cues.

Richards (1991) explained how the mechanistic model of human communication by Fisher (1978), the lens model of perception by Brunswik (Shaver, 1975), and the theory of impression formation by Livesley and Bromley (1973) fit together (see Diagram 3, Appendix A). Each theory is a simplified statement about the communication process. Using these theories together achieves a more complete understanding of the communication process.

An encoder will display a symbol to encode a message. The message will move through encoding channels or channels of mediation and create a proximal stimulus. The message will then move to the brain of the decoder using neural encoding. The decoder will then use selection of cues to select or notice incoming stimuli. Those observed cues will be used as an interpretive inference to allow him to decode the message. The decoder will form extended inferences to form a final precept, and thereafter anticipate how to respond.

Communication Research

In Fisher's mechanistic model of human communcation, nonverbal communication is achieved when symbols are used to transfer a thought, idea, or feeling. This transfer begins with the initial encounter between individuals or between individuals and inanimate objects. The message will be encoded by the sender through encoding channels using symbols which the receiver will decode through decoding channels, either consciously or unconsciously. The decoded message creates a definite first impact (Livesley & Bromley, 1973).

A decoder will use decoded messages from the first interaction to make an assessment of the encoder's personality through the use of individualized implicit personality theories. Implicit personality theories are systems for categorizing other people, inherent in each human. The categorization of people helps a person to effectively interact with others (Cronbach, 1955). Each category or theoretical trait combination contains a group of attributes that are believed by the individual to be associated with each other. When an encoder encodes a message, a decoder will decode the message and assign an attribute to the message. Then, related attributes the decoder associates with that attribute will also be assigned to the encoder. A decoder will use symbols to determine one attribute and assume many other attributes, then place the sender in a particular category.

By placing people into categories as explained by the implicit personality theory, a decoder of messages sent symbolically can make predictions concerning the actions of the encoder by assigning attributes consistent with the

symbols. Shaver, (1975) designated three stages of attribution. The first stage is to observe an act. The second stage is to judge the intent of the act. The third stage is to make disposition judgments based on the disposition of the person making the act (Shaver, 1975). The Kelly model of attribution (Wegner & Vallacher, 1977) is used to show the cause of an action. Every action occurs as a result of an external or internal cause that may be a stable or a variable cause. Causes that are internal and stable are attributed to ability, while causes that are internal and variable are attributed to effort. The causes that are external and stable are attributed to task difficulty and those that are external and variable are attributed to luck or chance (see Diagram 4, Appendix A).

Although the implicit personality theory and Kelly's theory of attribution concern only personal actions, the same principle may be applied to the policies of a business. A store owner will want the attributions a potential client assigns to a store to be positive, inspiring confidence in the competence of the business and its owner.

The first decoded messages that are used by the decoder to make assumptions are used to create the first impression (Livesley & Bromley, 1973). A decoder will look for symbols that will reinforce the first impression and ignore those symbols that discredit the first impression (Livesley & Bromley, 1973; Bruner, Shapiro, & Tagiuri, 1958). The first decoded messages are difficult to change, and the decoded message interpreted by the decoder during the first interaction will take time to change (Littrell & Berger, 1986).

Shaver (1975) called the effect of prior information the primacy effect. This was shown in research done by Asch (1946). Asch (1946) divided subjects into two groups. Each group was given a list of personality attributes and each subject was asked to write a short response about a person with these attributes. One group's list started with positive attributes such as intelligent and industrious, and ended with negative attributes such as critical and stubborn. The other group received the same list of personality attributes, but the negative attributes were listed first and the positive attributes were listed last. The subjects with the positive attributes listed first responded more positively than the subjects with the negative attributes listed first. Only very strong messages can overcome an unfavorable first message, indicating that store owners must be aware of the impact of a potential clients' first contact with his or her establishment.

If the symbols used in the appearance of a store encode messages about the business itself, every owner of a small business should use symbolism in the appearances of his or her store to affect the potential client positively. Schlenkler (1982) defined impression management as the conscious or unconscious attemp a person makes to project a specific image during social interaction. Goffman's (1973) theory of self-presentation states that a person will present oneself in a way that will influence the audience to send back a desired response. The responses may be obtained consciously or unconsciously. A person will prepare for interaction to receive the desired response. Goffman suggests that each person has a front stage and a back stage personality. The

front stage personality is the personality a person presents to society, and the back stage personality is the personality he or she presents when alone or when preparing for the front stage. Each time a person presents his or her front to society he or she will receive a response from his or her audience that is known as feedback. The feedback can be perceived as positive or negative. If the response is positive, the person will continue to present the attributes that were perceived to evoke the positive responses.

To apply Goffman's (1973) theory to the appearance of a business establishments, store owners use symbols in the exterior and the interior of the store. Although nonverbal communication is interpreted subconsciously, the store owner must choose symbols that will convey messages. These symbols should have definite connotations to inspire potential clients to patronize the store.

Misunderstandings occur when the symbols used for nonverbal communications have more than one meaning. The encoder intends to send one message by using nonverbal symbols and the decoder decodes the symbol as having a different message than the encoder intended (Shaver, 1975).

Problems in the interpretation of symbols will be caused by environmental components. These components are physical conditions such as hunger or cold, psychological conditions such as a need for acceptance and security, and expectations based on past experiences. These components will act as a filter and cause a person to observe and understand some nonverbal communication while ignoring or misunderstanding other nonverbal communication (Mehrabian

& Reed, 1973). An individual will select the cues that are important to him or her to pay attention to and ignore those cues that are not important to him or her. Noise, distracting factors that interfere with communication, will occur continually and cause problems in the communication process (Adler & Towne, 1981). The successful store owner must learn to overcome these problems.

Communication of Exteriors and Interiors

There has been little research conducted to assist owners in their choices of symbols to use in the appearance of their stores. However, Morrow and McElroy (1981) conducted studies on the symbols used in office space, and found that friendliness by others is promoted by the arrangement and tidiness of the office. In further work done in 1983, McElroy, Morrow, and Ackerman found that office design impacted the encoded message of the office occupant, affecting the attitudes of the visitors to the office.

Although there has been little research on store exteriors and interiors, there has been research in the area of clothing. Research has been done on the first impression of clothing and on the meanings decoded from symbols used in clothing. Gibbins and Schneider (1980) state that the symbols in clothing affect the first contact. According to Hamid (1968), people consistently stereotype others by using style of dress. Even young children learn to attach value to clothing (Hamid, 1972). This study will attempt to determine if potential clients place small retail businesses into categories by the first decoded messages they receive of the exterior and then the interior of a store.

The clothing worn by a business owner and his or her employees can
strengthen or weaken the credibility of the business (Harp, Stretch, & Harp,
1985; O'Neil & Lapitsky, 1991). The decoded message formed about a sales
person will be reflected in the decoder's opinion of the sales person, and the
quality of the products the business sells (Stuart & Fuller, 1991). O'Neil and
Lapitsky (1991) found that individuals modeling in product advertisements must
wear clothing that conveys to the audience that they have expertise about the
use of the product. It is reasonable to assume that if a person must appear to be
knowledgeable to advertise a product, a person must appear knowledgeable to
sell a product. It is also reasonable to assume that if people must dress
appropriately to look credible and sell a product, the store must have an
appearance that looks credible and as expected to sell products.

The salespeople will be received in a more positive manner by their clients
when dressed as the clients expect. Chaikin, Derlega, Yoder, and Phillips (1974)
found that people who dress in conventional clothing received more compliance
by others than people who dressed in deviant clothing. The perceived
appropriateness of the exterior and interior of a store may affect the clients'
perceptions of the store; therefore, the appearance of the small business should
be as the client expects it to be.

Dress is an important part of each person's life. Clothing is used to
determine the role and status of a person (Douty, 1963). Clothing may also
communicate the social and political standing of an individual (Buckley & Roach,
1974). A person will usually dress to present a selected image to a particular

audience (Baumeister, 1982). It is reasonable to assume that the interior and exterior of a building may also present symbols that indicate the role, status, social and political standing of the business within building. Small retail business owners will want their stores to present a positive appearance to clients.

If the first messages decoded by the decoder are important and difficult to change, then store owners will want to create an initial appearance using symbols that will encode positive messages to potential clients. And, if the symbols used in the appearance of a store encode messages about the stores owner's credibility, expertise, knowledge of products, role, status, and social and political standing, then store owners will want to use symbols to encode messages that will be perceived as the store owners intend.

This research was to determine whether store appearance affected clients' decision to enter a store. All the theories of communication were studied to determine the best theory to use for the research. By identifying each of the communication theories, a person can better understand how nonverbal communication processes work. By understanding these theories, researchers can use nonverbal communication to interpret individual responses to stimuli. After studying all the theories, Fisher's mechanistic model of human communication was chosen to be used as the theoretical framework for this study because Fisher's theory could be used to determine whether potential clients were decoding messages from the appearance of store exterior and interior.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research has indicated that symbols are used to communicate meanings. Research, also, has indicated that the meanings the encoder intends to send may not be the meanings received by the decoder. Because the meanings of symbols can be interpreted differently by an encoder and a decoder, the meanings of symbols may be interpreted differently by a store owner (the encoder of symbols in the store front and store interior) and potential clients (the decoders of symbols in the store fronts and store interiors). Store owners who understand the meanings of the symbols they are sending to the public may control the use of symbols in their store fronts and store interiors to attract potential clients. Research has not been conducted to determine the impact of decoded messages of a store's appearance on potential clients of the store. Therefore, this study used methods previously applied to human appearance to determine if the decoded messages a potential client receives when viewing a photograph of a store front or a store interior affects the client's decision to enter a store based on the decoded message.

The first objective was to determine the decoded meanings assigned to specific store fronts and interiors by potential clients. The second objective was to determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding symbols in the

store front and the clients' willingness to patronize the business. The third

objective was to determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding

symbols in the store interior, as viewed from the entrance of the store, and the

clients' willingness to patronize the business. The fourth objective was to

determine the relationship between potential clients' decoding of symbols in the

store appearance (store front and store interior) to the clients willingness and

patronize the business. Photographs were used to achieve these objectives.

Stimuli

Methods designed to study the nonverbal communication of small

business interiors and exteriors were not identified during the literature review.

Because previous research could not be used to determine the best method to

obtain the stimuli, photographs were taken and used as stimuli. Photographs

were chosen because they are the most realistic and readily available medium

and because photographs are able to capture the detail in symbols. Black and

white film was used for the pictures to eliminate the variable of color.

For convenience, the photographs for the study were taken in the three

largest cities in the area around Stillwater, Oklahoma. There were thirty-nine

bridal stores in the metropolitan areas of Wichita, Kansas (12 stores); Tulsa,

Oklahoma (13 stores); and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (14 stores). Interior and

exterior photographs were taken of each of the stores. These photographs were

sorted, using pattern matching logic (Yin, 1984), a qualitative method in which

items are grouped by similar symbols. Each group was differentiated from the

other groups and described by common symbols of features (Yin, 1984). The
store front photographs were sorted and grouped independently from the store
interiors. Characteristics common to all stores and that could not be used to
distinguish groups included front door parking, clean exteriors, direct access, and
sidewalks.

Three groups of store fronts were identified and given the designation A,
B, or C to identify the groups. From each group one photograph was selected as
representative of the features common to the store in that group. Because the
survey was administered at Oklahoma State University, only photographs taken
of Wichita stores were chosen. This selection was intended to reduce the
potential of subjects having prior knowledge of the store that would influence
their responses to the survey because subjects were from Oklahoma State
University. Store front photographs are included in Appendix D.

The photographs were labeled A, B, or C according to the group each
represented. The store fronts in the group A photographs were characterized by
dramatic focal points in the architecture. The architecture features varied from
store to store, but all were designed to achieve a modern, distinctive look. The
store fronts had floor-to-ceiling windows, giving unobstructed views of the
interiors. Covered walkways led to the entrances. The group A stores were
located in strip malls. The photograph of the building chosen for this survey
featured four large decorative columns and an attractive design above the
entrance. Because of the differences in the appearances of the stores in group
A, the primary characteristic shared was the decorative distinctive architecture.

The stores in the group B photographs were also located in strip malls. The store fronts were characterized by basic or traditional architecture. The entrances were glass doors with windows on each side. The windows extended from the ceilings to brick or metal bases approximately two feet above the sidewalks and allowed a view of the interior. Group B stores had awnings that covered walkways with the names of the stores on the awnings or displayed across the upper sections of the store fronts. Although the stores in group B were attractive, there were few unusual or distinguishing characteristics in the store fronts. For this survey, the photograph which was chosen for group B had no outstanding attributes, but was typical of the stores in the basic category.

The "cottage" stores in the group C photographs were located primarily in residential areas. The term "cottage" was once applied to articles made in homes and is now also used for small shops which have the appearances of homes. Cottage shops were characterized by fixed-pane windows, landscaping, and home style decorations. The photograph chosen from group C showed the exterior of a small shop with a picket fence, shrubs and flowers around the store, a wreath and other decorations on the store itself. Although the decor varied between the shops in group C, the general effect was much the same in each shop.

Three groups of store interiors were identified and given the designators A, B, or C to identify each group. Store interior photographs are included in Appendix D. The store interiors in group A were characterized by dressing rooms and modeling areas at the front of the stores. The garment racks in the

group A stores were placed along the walls and in open spaces toward the rear. Accessories were displayed in show cases along the walls near the cashier's desk. The store interior shown in the photograph chosen for group A had a table and chairs around a modeling area, with bridal magazines and books available in racks along the wall. The garment racks were in the rear of the store, placed at different angles to display the merchandise.

Group B stores were characterized by merchandise placed at the front of the stores. Garment racks were the focal features seen from the entrance to the store. The dressing rooms and modeling areas were toward to rear, arranged around sitting areas. Accessory showcases and cashiers' desks were along the walls. The photograph chosen as representative of group B showed the garment racks at the front of the store with a dressing and modeling area in the rear, partially screened by a table and chairs along the left of the store.

The interior of the stores in group C were characterized by foyers near the entrance. The foyers had attractive show cases displaying accessories, usually beside the cashiers' desks. The dressing, modeling, and sitting areas were located toward the rear of the stores with merchandise shown along the walls and in the center areas. The photograph of the store used in the survey was chosen because the arrangement of the store was similar to the other photographs in group C.

Research Design

There were three basic styles of store fronts and store interiors found in reviewing the photographs (see Appendix D). Therefore, a 3 X 3 factorial design was used. The variables selected were:

1.   The front of the store as viewed from the street. The three treatments

representing store fronts were:

   A.   Store Front A: A "modern" store front in a strip mall with distinctive

   architecture.

   B.   Store Front B: A "basic" store front in a strip mall with an awning

   across the front of the store and few distinctive attributes.

   C.   Store Front C: A "cottage-looking" store front of a free standing

   structure that is decorated informally.

2.   The interior of the store as viewed from the entrance. The three

   treatments representing store interiors as viewed from the entrance of the

   store were:

   A.   Store Interior A: Modeling, dressing, and sitting areas at the front

   of the store, with the merchandise in the back.

   B.   Store Interior B: The merchandise at the front of the store with the

   modeling dressing and sitting areas in the back.

   C.   Store Interior C: A foyer in the front of the store with the

   merchandise and the modeling, dressing, and sitting areas in the

   back.

Presentation of Stimuli

The survey was conducted using 3 X 3 factorial design using photographs

of three store fronts and three store interiors. Nine combinations of the

photographs were used:

1. Store Front A and Store Interior A

2. Store Front A and Store Interior B

3. Store Front A and Store Interior C

4. Store Front B and Store Interior A

5. Store Front B and Store Interior B

6. Store Front B and Store Interior C

7. Store Front C and Store Interior A

8. Store Front C and Store Interior B

9. Store Front C and Store Interior C

Each of the nine combinations was administered 20 times for a total of

180 surveys. Eighteen folders were used, allowing two complete sets of the nine

combinations of store exterior and interior photographs available for distribution.

When a folder was completed and returned by a subject, the questionnaire was

removed and stapled. The photographs remained in the folder and a new

questionnaire was inserted in the folder, then the folder was placed at the bottom

of the stack. Each questionnaire was labeled with a consecutive number, a letter

that represented which store front was used(A, B, or C), and a letter represented

which store interior was used(A, B, or C).

The questionnaires were stacked in sequence one through nine, this sequence was repeated for the second set. The questionnaires were kept in one through nine order as they were replaced at the bottom of the stack. After a person was determined to be eligible to take the survey, each subject was given a questionnaire from the top of the stack to insure random responses.

The questionnaires used nontechnical language with terms that should be understood by any woman eligible to take the survey. The researcher was present at all times to answer any questions to clarify the questionnaire. The photographs of the store fronts and interiors were taped onto pages and slipped into plastic page protectors in the folders.

The questionnaire contained a total of seven pages (see Appendix C), including two pages of photographs. Page one of the questionnaire was a title page. Page two contained a photograph of one of the three store fronts. The page facing page two, page three, were questions concerning the reactions of the subjects to the photographs. Questions one through six were developed by Thurston, Lennon, and Clayton (1990) to identify the subject's reaction to the professional attributes: professional, business-like, efficient, successful, responsible, and prominent. Questions seven and eight were aesthetic attributes: inviting and attractive. Question nine was the perceived expense of the merchandise in the store and question ten was the perceived quality of the merchandise. Question eleven addressed the subject's willingness enter the store and reasons for the decision. Subjects were asked to turn to the next page and not return to pages two and three.

Pages four and five of the instrument were similar to pages two and three except the photograph was of one of the three store interiors. The attributes were the same, however, each statement or question solicited information related to the store interior photograph. Subjects were asked to complete page four and five, then turn to the next page and not return to the first five pages. This was requested to determine the impact of the first decoded message of the stores upon the subjects.

Page six questions concerned the overall appearance of the store. Subjects were asked to use the combined information from both photographs to record their overall impression of the stores image. The questions were similar to the store front portion of the instrument. The first six questions were the professional attributes developed by Thurston, Lennon, and Clayton (1990). Questions seven through eleven were personality attributes developed by Workman and Johnson (1991): adaptable, cheerful, friendly, likable, and loyal. Questions twelve through sixteen were personality temperament attributes (Workman & Johnson, 1991): competent, fair, innovative, skilled, cooperative (good with people). Question seventeen addressed the subject's willingness to enter the store and reasons for the decision.

The seventh page of the survey asked general demographic questions: age, income, place of residence, stage of relationship, if the subject had ever been married and if she had ever been in a bridal shop. This information was used to determine whether the demographics of the subjects affected their responses.

A pretest was given to three females that fit the criteria for taking the test (single, and between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five) to determine if subjects would encounter any problems in taking the survey. All three females answered the survey as asked and informed the researcher the survey was easy to understand, follow, and answer.

Sample

Bridal stores are patronized primarily by women who are planning to be married. Therefore, subjects for the sample were selected from single women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five who were not engaged and who had not been in a bridal store in the previous six months. These qualifications were chosen because every single woman has the potential of getting married and eighteen to twenty-five is the age when most women marry. Women who were engaged, as well as those who had recently been shopping in a bridal store were not included in the sample to eliminate the affect of prior decoded messages on the responses to stimuli in the appearance of the buildings in the photographs.

Data Collection

The data collection was taken during the fall semester of 1995 in women's dormitories at Oklahoma State University. The sites were chosen because most women living in the dormitories fit the criteria for the sample. Tables were set up in the lobbies of the dormitories with signs asking women to take ten minutes to

answer a questionnaire. Two weekends with home football games were chosen. The questionnaires were distributed Friday evenings from 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. in the morning to 10:00 p.m. in the evening. An intercept technique (Medhi, 1992) was used to obtain subjects. Women who volunteered were screened by the researcher.

Data Analysis

All the subjects responses were collected. Data were coded and entered on PC File software. The quantitative responses of the attributes on a Likert-type scale and the yes or no responses were analysis using SAS software. A chi-square analysis was used for each of the attributes tested for the store front, store interior and the store appearance to determine if there were any significant differences between the subjects responses to the photographs of the store fronts, store interiors, and the overall store appearances. The χ^2 value and the p were used to determine the significance of this research and the probability that if this research was repeated the results would be the same. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to define the differences between the photographs of the stores and to determine which type of store exterior and store interior would be the best for bridal store. Qualitative responses were coded using content analysis with generic responses. The coded responses were tabulated to determine if there were any consistencies between the reasons subjects gave for their responses.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The sample consisted of one hundred and eighty female college students who were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, who were not married or engaged, and who had not been to a bridal store in the past six months. Sixty-four percent of the subjects were eighteen years of age and fifty-nine percent were first year college students (see Table 1). Two of the subjects were twenty-five and five had already completed a bachelor's degree. Household income, which was fairly evenly distributed across ten categories, ranged from below twenty thousand to over one hundred thousand. A total of one hundred and forty-eight had intentions of marrying at some point in the future. Thirty-two subjects had no intention of marrying (see Table 2).

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

The attributes of the store front, store interior and store appearance were analyzed to identify the influence of respondents' age, income, and education on the findings. The results of the analysis did not identify a statistically significant influence due to subjects age (store front $p=.736$, store interior, $p=.654$, and store appearance $p=.612$), income (store front $p=.396$, store interior $p=.549$, and

store appearance p=325), or education (store front p=.724, store interior p=.388, store appearance p=.728). The attributes were also compared by subjects' dating status and intention to marry. The dating status and intent to marry were not statistically significant in relation to the perceived attributes assigned to the store fronts, store interiors, or a combined interior and exterior, store appearance (see Table 3). Subjects were asked if they had ever been married and if they had ever been in a bridal store. None of the subjects had ever been married and all the subjects had been in a bridal store. As shown in Table 3, there were no significant differences in the data due to demographics.

Insert Table 3 about here

The chi-square analyses of the responses to attributes identified eight significant differences with regards to the store front, three for the store interior, and two for the overall store appearance. Content analysis of the subjects' responses to open-ended questions was used to identify positive, neutral, and negative statements related to appearance, cost of product, merchandise quality, store layout, professionalism and personal preference as listed in Table 11. The chi-square analysis and content analysis supported the first hypothesis, "there is a significant relationship between the types of symbols presented to subjects and the decoded messages assigned to those symbols." The details of these findings are presented for each of the variables studied.

Store Front

Several of the subjects' responses to the attributes of store front photographs, identified significant differences between specific attributes of the store fronts. Eight of the ten attributes were found to be significant: *professional* (x^2=115.662,p=.000), *business-like* (x^2=115.371, p=.000), *efficient* (x^2=54.039, p=.000) *successful* (x^2=41.455, p=.000), *prominent* (x^2=54.039, p=.000), *attractive* (x^2=38.609, p=.000), *expensive* (x^2=89.449, p=.000), and *high quality* (x^2=72.283, p=.000) (see Table 4). The attributes *responsible* (x^2=18.074, p=.113), and *inviting* (x^2=14.577, p=.265) were not significant.

Insert Table 4 about here

On a Likert-type scale in which one is the most positive and seven is the most negative, the mean scores for the attributes for Store Front A were consistently the lowest of the three store fronts and the mean scores for the attributes for Store Front C were consistently the highest (see Table 5). These findings indicate the subjects' perceptions were influenced by the store front and Store Front A was percieved more positively and Store Front C was perceived more negatively than the other store fronts. The standard deviations for each of the scores were between 1.05 and 1.62, thus the responses were consistent.

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Insert Table 5 about here

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After viewing the photographs of the store fronts, subjects determined if they would enter the business. There was a significant difference (χ^2=30.789, p=.000) between the subjects' willingness to enter the three stores. The two store fronts that most subjects indicated a willingness to enter were characterized by Store Front A, a modern store front with picture windows (58 out of 60, 96.7%), or Store Front B, a basic store front with awnings above the door and picture windows (56 out of 60, 93.6%). A cottage-like store front was not perceived as well as the other two stores, according to this research (38 out of 60, 63.3%). Because there was statistical significance and the mean score indicated a definite preference for Store Front A the second hypothesis, "there is a direct relationship between the decoded meanings given to symbols of store fronts by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store," was supported, and was accepted.

Store Interior

Subjects viewed one of three photographs of store interiors as seen from the entrance and rated several attributes on a Likert-type scale. Subjects indicated the willingness to enter the store in the photograph and stated the reasons why they would or would not enter the business. Six attributes were not found to be significant: *business-like* (χ^2=13.230, p=.353), *successful*

$(\chi^2=12.193, \underline{p}=.430)$, *responsible* $(\chi^2=10.947, \underline{p}=.533)$, *prominent* $(\chi^2=11.658,$

$\underline{p}=.474)$, *expensive* $(\chi^2=11.261, \underline{p}=.507)$, and *high quality* $(\chi^2=10.840, \underline{p}=.543)$

(see Table 6). Three attributes were found to be statistically significant: *efficient*

$(\chi^2=26.734, \underline{p}=.008)$, *inviting* $(\chi^2=28.573, \underline{p}=.005)$, and *attractive* $(\chi^2=24.295,$

$\underline{p}=.019)$. The characteristic *professional* was not statistically significant at the

$\underline{p}=.05$ level, however, when compared to the other non-significant attributes, a

$\chi^2=16.720$ and a $\underline{p}=.081$ indicated some impact may exist. These findings

indicate that aesthetics have a greater impact on the perceptions of store

interiors than professional or personal attributes.

Insert Table 6 about here

Although there were only three attributes that were significant for the store

interiors, there is still a definite pattern of the mean scores of store interiors. In

this pattern, the mean scores for Store Interior B were consistently highest for

each attribute. The mean scores for every attribute for Store Interior A were

lowest except for expense and high quality (see Table 7). These findings

indicate a preference for the Store Interior A with a sitting area and a dressing

area in the front, and the merchandise in the back of the store. The findings also

indicate that Store Interior B with the merchandise at the front of the store, and

the modeling and sitting area in the back was the least favorite. The standard

deviations were between 1.05 and 1.62, thus the responses to the store interiors

were consistent.

Insert Table 7 about here

The store interiors seemed to have little effect on whether or not a subject would enter a store. Only eight (2.25%) said they would not enter the store after viewing the photograph of the interior of the store as seen from the door. A chi-square analysis of the "yes, I would enter this store" or "no, I would not enter this store" showed no significance (χ^2=2.9, p=.235). Of the ten attributes used to analyze store interior, only three were found to be significant. These significant factors were efficient, inviting, and attractive. Seven attributes were found to have no significance at all. Because seven attributes were not found to be significant and there was no significance in a subject's willingness to enter a store based on store interior, the hypothesis, "there is a direct relationship between the decoded meaning given to symbols of store interior, as viewed from the entrance of the store, by a potential client on a Likert-type scale, and the client's willingness to patronize the store," was not supported. The hypothesis was rejected.

Shaver (1975) introduced the idea of primacy effect. Information received first may influence other information. To determine whether the store front photographs affected the subjects' responses to the store interiors, chi-square analysis of the store interior responses were analyzed in relation to the store front. The analysis indicated that there may have been prior effect caused by the store fronts. In Table 8, three attributes were found to be significant or

approaching significance. All three of the significant attributes were found in Store Front B (*efficient* (χ^2=15.845, p=.045), *inviting* (χ^2=27.203, p=.007), and *attractive* (χ^2=18.047, p=.054). There were no significant attributes found in the store interiors combined with Store Front A or Store Front C. The three store interior attributes that were significant or approaching significance for Store Front B were the same attributes that were significant for store interiors in Table 6.

Insert Table 8 about here

Store Appearance

After a subject had viewed a photograph of a store front and a photograph of a store interior and had answered questions about each, the subject rated sixteen attributes according to the decoded message from both photographs together. The subject also rated her willingness to enter the store based on both photographs. There were only two attributes that were found to have significant differences in the total store appearance. These attributes were *business-like* (χ^2=75.196, p=.001), and *responsible* (χ^2=69.556, p=.003) (see Table 9). *Professional* (χ^2=54.965, p=.058), *efficient* (χ^2=64.453, p=.057), and *prominent* (χ^2=64.213, p=.059) were approaching significance at p=.05. The five statistically significant or nearly significant attributes were all listed in the six professional attributes of Workman and Johnson (1991): professional, business-like, efficient, successful, responsible, and prominent.

Insert Table 9 about here

Although not statistically significant, when comparing the mean score of
the store appearance attributes, a pattern was observed for the professional
attributes (see Table 10). The pattern indicates that Store Front A is the most
professional and Store Front C is the least professional. Mean scores for the
professional attributes indicate Store Interior B is perceived as having the least
professional store appearance and Store Interior A as have the most
professional appearance. These findings indicate that the subjects perceived
the most professional appearance for a bridal store to be a combination of Store
Front A (a modern store front with picture windows) with Store Interior A (a sitting
area and a dressing area in the foreground), and the least professional
perceptions were formed from the appearance created by the combination of
Store Front C (cottage-like) with Store Interior B (the merchandise in the
foreground). Because only two attributes were found to be significant the
hypothesis, "There is a direct relationship between the decoded meanings given
to symbols of store appearance by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and
the client's willingness to patronize the store," was not supported.

Insert Table 10 about here

Qualitative Findings

The last question of each part of the questionnaire was a qualitative

question. Content analysis of the qualitative question was used to identify the

reasons why a subject would or would not enter a store. One hundred thirty-six

(25.2%) of the qualitative responses indicated that the subjects would go into a

bridal store regardless of the decoded messages they receive from the store

exterior and interior. Sixty-two of the one hundred and sixty-four (37.8%) that

responded to the store front qualitative responses indicated a willingness to enter

regardless of the store front because they would want to enter all bridal stores to

check prices or to browse. Thirty-eight of the one hundred and fifty-eight (24%)

store interior qualitative responses indicated that would enter the store

regardless of what the interior looked like because they would look at all bridal

stores or because once they had come as far as the store's entrance they should

stay to browse.

Subjects gave many reasons for their decision to enter or not enter the

store. Using content analysis the reasons were separated by similar responses.

The responses the subjects identified as influencing their decision to enter the

store were the appearance, the expected cost of the merchandise, the expected

quality and variety of the merchandise, the store layout, the expected

professionalism, and personal preference (see Table 11). Appearance was a

consideration for the store fronts (35 responses or 21.4%) , store interiors (30

responses or 19%) , and store appearances (30 responses or29%). Typical

positive descriptors stated for appearance were the store looks "nice," "neat" or

"awesome." The expected cost of the merchandise was identified seventeen times in the survey. Fifteen of the expected cost responses were negative responses indicating that the merchandise would not be in their price range, either too cheap or too expensive. The subjects used descriptors such as "affordable," "not affordable," "too expensive," or "not expensive because of quality merchandise."

Most of the responses were negative to merchandise quality and variety (59 out of 66 responses), store layout and display (33 out of 35 responses), and professionalism and ambiance (51 out of 68 responses). The typical negative responses to merchandise quality and variety were: " the store is too small to have what I need," and "all the merchandise looks the same." The typical responses about the store layout and display included: "crowded," "messy," and "unorganized." The typical negative responses to the store's professionalism and ambiance were: "The store looks to be run by unprofessional people," and "the store has a bad atmosphere." The typical positive responses to professionalism and ambiance were: "the store looks professional," and " great atmosphere."

Nineteen of the responses indicated the subjects believed that the store did or did not have merchandise that matched their taste. Typical responses were: "the store has my taste of dresses," or " the store does what I would like."

Insert Table 11 about here

Findings Summary

Two of the hypotheses were supported by the research. The first hypothesis, "There is a significant relationship between the types of symbols presented to subjects and the decoded messages assigned to those symbols" indicates that potential clients do decode messages from the symbols used in a stores' appearance. The second hypothesis, "There is a direct relationship between the decoded meanings given to symbols of store fronts by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store" indicates that the exterior of a store does influence a potential clients' decision to enter a store.

Two hypothesis were not supported. The third hypothesis "There is a direct relationship between the decoded meanings given to symbols of store interior , as viewed from the entrance of the store, by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store," and the fourth hypothesis "There is a direct relationship between the decoded meanings given to symbols of store appearance by a potential client (on a Likert-type scale) and the client's willingness to patronize the store," were not supported in this research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

This study explores the decoded messages of objects used in the exteriors and interiors of stores in the bridal businesses and the importance of the messages. Nonverbal communication occurs every time a potential client views the exterior and interior of a store building. Fisher theorized that a sender will use a symbolic object to encode a message pertaining to a thought, feeling, or idea and the receiver will decode a message by applying a meaning to that symbolic object. The receiver will then become a sender and encode a return message to the original sender, which that person will then decode. This study indicates that store owners encode messages, thoughts, feelings, or ideas, by the symbolic features used in the appearances of both the exteriors and interiors of their stores. In turn, potential clients decode and react to the nonverbal communication and encode return messages to the store owners by their willingness to enter a store, examine the merchandise, and purchase.

Subjects in this study looked at photographs of store fronts and store interiors and decoded symbolic messages about the stores that enabled them to make judgments about the businesses. There was a significant difference in the

response to the different photographs of store fronts. Because there were only three attributes that were significant, the differences in the responses to the different photographs of the store interiors were not significant.

Fisher's mechanistic model of human communication states that symbols communicate messages, thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Comments made about the store fronts indicate that decoders did use store symbols to receive messages concerning thoughts, feelings, and ideas about the store. Comments made by the subjects regarding the stores' abilities to meet the needs of potential clients indicate that they were able to interpret messages from features in the appearance of the store exterior. Comments regarding store atmosphere suggest that store symbols portrayed a feeling to people, and comments that the store would appeal to potential clients' tastes suggest that symbols communicated definite ideas.

Subjects had more difficulty clearly stating the reasons for their responses to the store interior photographs. The subjects' inability to give reason for their responses may be one of the reasons that the store interior responses were not significant. Another reason may be that the symbols in the store interiors photographs might not have included enough diversity.

Subjects may have been trying to use the prior information they received when looking at the store front to answer the store interior question. Shaver (1975) suggested that individuals will use prior information to influence information that is received later. Subjects may have used the information they had already received when viewing the photograph of the store front to make

inferences about the store interior. When the store interiors were analyzed for primacy effect only the store interior photographs shown with Store Front B had any significant attributes. The reason that subjects' responses to the interiors that were shown with Store Front B were significant or approaching significance for three attributes may have been because Store Front B was the average store front. Subjects who had already made strong positive opinions about Store Front A or strong negative opinions about Store Front C may not have needed to rely on the store interior to help make a decision about using the store. Subjects who viewed Store Front B and determined the store to be average may have needed more information from the store interior to determine professionalism and ability to meet their needs. Therefore, the subjects viewing Store Front B may have put more importance on the store interior than subjects viewing Store Front A or Store Front C.

Subjects in this research gave different reactions to the store fronts and store interiors. As Shaver (1975) suggested, symbols may have more than one meaning because individuals' tastes and life styles vary. This research indicates that although some symbols elicit a more positive response to the exterior appearance of a store, there may not be one exterior or interior appearance that will send an ideal message to all decoders.

Encoded symbolic messages are not decoded in the same manner by all clients. The interpretation of the symbols may vary because of the environmental factors of the clients, such as the physical or psychological needs of the potential clients or expectations of the clients based on past experiences

(Mehrabian & Reed, 1973). The potential clients also may be distracted by noise factors discussed by Adler and Towne (1981), such as bad weather, crowded parking lots, or distractions from other stores. The store owners must attempt to make their encoded message so clear that it will penetrate distractions that potential clients might experience.

The first symbolic messages decoded by potential clients from the exterior of the store often affects all future attitudes toward the store. Littrell and Berger (1986) found that messages received during initial encounters are lasting and will take time to change. Therefore, a store will want to send a strong initial message that reflects a store atmosphere that is desired by potential clients.

These findings indicate that people decoded symbols to form messages about the professionalism of the store and the store's ability to meet their needs. This study also indicates that people interpret messages about merchandise quality, variety, and cost based on the symbolic cues they observe when entering a store. Each person has specific tastes and preferences and will use symbols to decode messages to determine if the store will meet his or her expectations.

This research helps to establish that potential clients use store appearance to decode messages about a store when approaching or entering a store, therefore, ensuring that the appearance of a store is sending a favorable message is important. This research also indicates that symbolic components of store fronts send significantly different messages and that potential clients prefer stores which have an appearances that signify the availability of the services and merchandise desired.

Implications

The findings of this research indicate that there is a significant difference between the potential clients' reaction to the decoded messages received from the symbols of different store fronts for bridal stores. Future research can determine whether the differences in this research are true for other types of businesses. Future research also can help to determine which type of store front would be best for a specific store. Small business owners can use this study to help determine which types of store fronts would be best for their stores.

The findings also indicate that there were no significant differences in the potential clients' reactions to the store interiors. One possible reason there was no significant difference may be that the photographs of the store interiors were too much alike for the subjects to determine which would be best. Another possible reason may be that a potential client who enters a store may have spent some time in locating and approaching the store and will, therefore, use that effort as a justification to stay and browse. Future research may determine if more specific symbolic features in store interiors would make a difference in the significance of potential clients' reactions to the stores. And, future research may seek to have greater differentiation between stimuli. Future research also may determine the importance of symbolic features in store interiors on the initial decoding process.

When analyzed for possible prior effect, data indicated there may be an influence of the store front on the perception and the importance of the perception of the store interiors. Further research may determine the primacy

effect store fronts have on perceptions of store interiors, the extent store fronts effect store interiors, and the symbols that contribute to the store front's effect on store interiors. store market. Future research will establish a

The findings also indicated of the attributes that were significant for the store interior photographs, only the store interiors that were shown with Store Front A was significant. The store interior photographs shown with Store Front A and Store Front C were not significant. Future research may determine why there was only significance for photographs shown with store front B, which was the average store front.

The subjects were all female single college students, age eighteen to twenty-five. Age and education had little effect on the results; this may be because of the homogeneity of the sample. Future research may include a sample that is more diverse in age and education. The sample could also include men.

Littrell and Berger (1986) found that in clothing, initial messages will be difficult to change. Future research will be able to determine whether this is true for the initial decoding process formed when viewing a store exterior. Research is also needed to help store owners understand how to communicate the desired messages by their stores' appearances and to understand the importance of the symbols in these messages. According to Star and Massel (1981), 33.2% of all businesses fail in the first five years. Research can determine what percent of stores, if any, would have been able to survive if the store owner had planned and selected the symbols used in the appearance of the store more effectively.

Further research will determine what appearance is expected for specific types of stores. Store owners using symbolic features will be able to design the store to fulfill the expectations of the target market. Future research will establish a body of information to help small businesses to determine the best appearance for their business.

A store owner can use this method to determine which type of store front is best for his or her business and what reactions the business will receive by using a specific store front. Other researchers will be able to use this information to build a body of literature that identifies the importance of symbolic features on store fronts for other types of businesses. Researchers can also use this method as an example for future studies to understand the importance of symbolic features for store exteriors and interiors. Colleges can incorporate the use of symbolism in merchandising and interior design courses.

In the future, this method can be repeated in other locations to see if this research is applicable to all areas or just to Oklahoma and Kansas. The instrument can be used with other types of stores to determine if there are differences in potential clients' reactions to store front and store interiors for other types of store. The method could be used for other types of building (professional, state, school, public, and private) to determine reactions of potential clients and participants to the interior and exterior of other buildings. Now that this research has established a difference in the decoded messages received by potential clients' to store fronts, a new instrument can be developed to determine the symbols that are most commonly being used by potential

clients' to decode messages and what meaning are being decoded by these symbols and why.

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Table 1

Demographic description of subjects

Variable	n	%
Age (in years) [a]		
18	116	64.4
19	35	19.5
20	12	6.7
21	8	4.4
22	4	2.2
23	3	1.7
24	0	0.0
25	2	1.1
Household income [b]		
less than 20,000	24	13.8
20,001-30,000	17	9.7
30,001-40,000	24	13.8
40,001-50,000	25	14.4
50,001-60,000	20	11.5
60,001-70,000	13	7.5
70,001-80,000	20	11.5
80,001-90,000	9	5.2
90,001-100,000	6	3.4
more than 100,000	16	9.2
Education completed [c]		
High school	106	58.8
1st year of college	41	22.8
2nd year of college	12	6.7
3rd year of college	12	6.7
4th year of college	4	2.2
Bachelors	5	2.8

[a] n=180
[b] n=174
[c] n=180

note: Describes the demographics of the subjects.

Table 2

Subjects current dating relationship and intention to marry

| | Intention to Marry | | | | | |
| | Do not intend | | Not at this time | | Intend to | |
Situation	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not dating	7	3.9	43	23.9	9	5.0
Dating	6	3.3	19	10.6	29	16.0
Stable relationship	19	10.6	27	15.0	21	11.7

N=180, percentage is calculated from total participants of 180.

note: Describes the current dating relationship status of the subjects.

Table 3

Chi-square statistics for the demographic of the subjects

Variable	Store Front			Store Interior			Store Appearance		
	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p
Age	4	2.000	.736	4	2.449	.654	16	13.828	.612
Income	14	14.741	.396	14	12.713	.549	14	60.227	.325
Education	4	0.670	.955	4	3.293	.510	16	13.385	.644
Situation									
Intent to marry	4	2.066	.724	4	4.136	.388	16	12.234	.728
Dating situation	4	2.125	.713	4	1.843	.765	16	8.624	.928

note: Describes the chi-square statistics for the affect of demographic on the subjects responses.

Table 4

Store front chi-square statistics of attributes

Attributes	df	χ^2	p
Professional	12	115.662	.000**
Business-like	12	115.371	.000**
Efficient	10	54.039	.000**
Successful	12	41.455	.000**
Responsible	12	18.074	.113
Prominent	12	56.969	.000**
Inviting	12	14.577	.265
Attractive	12	38.690	.000**
Expensive	12	89.449	.000**
High quality	12	72.283	.000**

* significant at p≤.05
** significant at p≤.005

note: Describes the chi-square statistics for the attributes of each
          response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the
          store front.

Table 5

Store front mean and standard deviation of attributes

| | Store Front | | | | | |
| | A | | B | | C | |
Attributes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Professional	1.90	1.05	2.48	1.34	5.12	1.15
Business-like	1.93	1.12	2.53	1.32	5.22	1.20
Efficient	2.40	1.21	2.65	1.54	3.98	1.18
Successful	2.77	1.22	2.92	1.38	4.22	1.33
Responsible	2.33	1.21	2.65	1.31	3.25	1.29
Prominent	2.88	1.37	3.02	1.47	4.92	1.23
Inviting	2.47	1.24	2.47	1.59	2.80	1.58
Attractive	1.92	1.28	2.62	1.54	3.48	1.62
Expensive	2.72	1.51	3.15	1.52	5.40	1.38
High quality	2.22	1.35	2.77	1.42	4.65	1.33

note: Describes the mean and the standard deviation for the attributes of each response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the store front. The range for the Likert-type scale was one to seven, one being the most positive, seven the most negative.

Table 6

Store interior chi-square statistics of attributes

Attributes	df	χ^2	p
Professional	10	16.720	.081
Business-like	12	13.230	.353
Efficient	12	26.734	.008*
Successful	12	12.193	.430
Responsible	12	10.947	.533
Prominent	12	11.658	.474
Inviting	12	28.573	.005**
Attractive	12	24.295	.019*
Expensive	12	11.261	.507
High quality	12	10.840	.543

* significant at $p \le .05$
** significant at $p \le .005$

note: Describes the chi-square statistics for the attributes of each response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the store interior.

Table 7

Store interior mean and standard deviation of attributes

| Attributes | Store Interior | | | | | |
| | A | | B | | C | |
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Professional	2.13	1.05	2.92	1.34	2.37	1.15
Business-like	2.22	1.12	2.75	1.32	2.42	1.20
Efficient	2.22	1.21	3.10	1.54	2.65	1.18
Successful	2.25	1.22	2.97	1.38	2.72	1.33
Responsible	2.30	1.21	2.85	1.31	2.60	1.29
Prominent	2.70	1.37	3.20	1.47	2.80	1.23
Inviting	2.05	1.24	3.15	1.59	2.62	1.58
Attractive	1.97	1.28	3.02	1.55	2.53	1.62
Expensive	2.88	1.51	3.35	1.52	2.70	1.38
High quality	2.48	1.35	2.83	1.42	2.30	1.33

note: Describes the mean and the standard deviation for the attributes of each response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the store interior. The range for the Likert-type scale was one to seven, one being the most positive, seven the most negative.

Table 8

Store interior chi-square statistics of attributes for prior effect of Store Fronts

Attributes	df	χ^2	p
Store Front A			
Professional	8	7.700	.463
Business-like	8	4.086	.849
Efficient	10	14.015	.172
Successful	10	9.932	.446
Responsible	8	8.392	.396
Prominent	10	12.434	.257
Inviting	10	14.902	.136
Attractive	10	15.639	.110
Expensive	8	14.045	.081
High quality	10	6.511	.771
Store Front B			
Professional	8	11.700	.165
Business-like	8	10.669	.221
Efficient	8	15.845	.045*
Successful	10	10.875	.367
Responsible	10	9.598	.476
Prominent	10	4.493	.922
Inviting	12	27.203	.007*
Attractive	10	18.047	.054
Expensive	10	10.857	.369
High quality	10	6.635	.759

continued

Table 8 (continued)

Store interior chi-square statistics of attributes for prior effect of Store Fronts

Attributes	df	χ^2	p
Store Front C			
Professional	10	12.563	.249
Business-like	12	8.887	.713
Efficient	12	16.576	.166
Successful	10	11.700	.306
Responsible	10	9.375	.497
Prominent	12	12.400	.414
Inviting	12	17.071	.147
Attractive	12	13.150	.358
Expensive	12	7.921	.791
High quality	12	13.221	.353

* significant at $p \leq .05$
** significant at $p \leq .005$

note: Describes the chi-square statistics for the attributes of each
          response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the
          store interior.

Table 9

Store appearance chi-square statistics of attributes

Attributes	$\underline{df}$	χ^2	$\underline{p}$
Professional	40	54.965	.058
Business-like	40	75.196	.001**
Efficient	48	64.453	.057
Successful	48	49.954	.396
Responsible	40	69.556	.003**
Prominent	48	64.213	.059
Adaptable	48	58.274	.147
Cheerful	48	39.504	.804
Friendly	48	52.661	.299
Likable	40	46.116	.234
Loyal	48	52.490	.304
Competent	48	54.815	.232
Fair	48	50.038	.392
Innovative	48	45.841	.562
Skilled	48	41.549	.733
Cooperative	48	45.368	.581

* significant at $\underline{p} \leq .05$
** significant at $\underline{p} \leq .005$

note: Describes the chi-square statistics for the attributes of each
         response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the
         combined store interior and exterior or store appearance.

Table 10

Store appearance mean and standard deviation of attributes

Attributes	Store Front	Store Interior					
		A		B		C	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Professional	A	2.05	0.95	2.45	0.95	2.35	1.31
	B	2.30	1.13	3.15	1.31	2.80	1.47
	C	3.35	1.04	3.70	1.38	3.25	1.29
Business-like	A	2.05	0.95	2.30	0.80	2.25	1.29
	B	2.35	1.14	3.10	1.17	2.60	1.19
	C	3.30	1.03	3.55	1.32	3.25	1.16
Efficient	A	2.10	0.97	2.40	1.05	2.45	1.10
	B	2.50	1.43	3.35	1.31	2.55	1.23
	C	2.45	1.10	3.45	1.47	3.10	1.37
Successful	A	2.20	1.06	2.45	0.89	2.55	1.28
	B	2.75	1.48	3.10	1.45	2.75	1.12
	C	2.95	1.28	3.45	1.23	2.95	1.32
Responsible	A	2.25	1.12	2.35	0.81	2.40	1.23
	B	2.30	1.26	3.15	1.35	2.55	1.00
	C	2.55	1.10	3.40	1.31	2.80	1.44
Prominent	A	2.50	1.24	2.85	1.04	2.60	1.14
	B	2.85	1.30	3.35	1.31	2.65	1.23
	C	3.55	1.15	3.85	1.81	3.30	1.63
Adaptable	A	2.75	1.16	2.30	0.98	2.80	1.06
	B	2.85	1.46	3.60	1.31	3.20	1.24
	C	2.65	1.18	2.80	1.54	2.90	1.07
Cheerful	A	2.90	1.29	2.65	0.93	2.25	1.12
	B	2.50	1.24	3.00	1.49	2.75	1.21
	C	2.25	1.20	2.95	1.39	2.55	1.23

continued

Table 10 (continued)

Attributes	Store Front	Store Interior					
		A		B		C	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Friendly	A	2.65	0.99	2.35	0.99	2.35	1.26
	B	2.80	1.40	3.00	1.52	2.65	0.93
	C	2.15	1.37	3.25	1.52	2.05	1.10
Likable	A	2.60	1.00	2.10	0.72	2.25	1.16
	B	2.50	1.50	3.65	1.50	2.90	1.29
	C	2.05	1.10	3.00	1.56	2.45	1.19
Loyal	A	3.25	0.91	2.30	0.98	3.15	1.42
	B	2.75	1.29	3.10	1.17	3.30	1.26
	C	2.00	0.93	3.20	1.36	2.65	1.27
Competent	A	2.15	0.99	2.40	0.83	2.40	1.14
	B	2.30	1.22	2.90	1.07	3.10	1.45
	C	2.70	0.98	3.10	1.41	2.60	1.31
Fair	A	2.75	1.07	2.45	1.00	2.95	1.31
	B	2.60	1.31	2.95	1.15	3.00	1.45
	C	2.65	1.09	2.75	1.33	2.45	1.32
Innovative	A	3.15	1.57	3.25	1.12	2.95	1.23
	B	3.10	1.52	2.90	1.37	3.35	1.63
	C	3.50	1.28	4.45	1.73	3.15	1.66
Skilled	A	2.50	1.40	2.65	1.09	2.50	1.15
	B	2.45	1.54	3.10	1.41	30.5	1.43
	C	2.75	1.45	3.60	1.60	2.70	1.26
Cooperative	A	2.55	1.10	2.65	0.99	2.80	1.28
	B	2.65	1.42	3.00	1.21	3.10	1.33
	C	1.95	0.89	3.20	1.70	2.35	1.09

note: Describes the mean and the standard deviations for the attributes of each response of the decoded messages on the Likert-type scale for the combined store interior and exterior or store appearance.

Table 11

Responses to qualitative questions

Response	Store Front		Store Interior		Store Appearance	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Willingness to enter any store						
Positive	62	37.8	38	24.0	36	27.7
Negative	1	0.7	3	1.9	2	1.3
Appearance						
Appealing	28	17.1	29	18.3	28	27.8
Neutral	0	0.0	1	0.7	1	0.7
Not Appealing	7	4.3	0	0.0	1	0.7
Cost of products						
Expensive						
Positive	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7
Negative	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.7
Less expensive						
Positive	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Negative	8	4.6	2	1.3	3	2.5
Merchandise quality and variety						
Positive	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.0
Negative	9	5.5	19	12.0	5	3.8
Store layout and display						
Positive	4	2.4	1	0.7	2	1.3
Negative	13	7.9	30	19.0	16	12.3
Professionalism and ambiance						
Positive	3	1.8	11	7.0	3	2.5
Negative	13	7.9	13	19.0	25	19.2

continued

Table 11 continued

Responses to qualitative questions

Response	Store Front		Store Interior		Store Appearance	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Personal preference and taste						
Positive	5	3.0	8	5.1	6	4.6
Negative	8	4.9	3	1.9	0	0.0

note: Describes the positive or negative qualitative responses of the subjects to the store front, store interior and combined interior and exterior or store appearance.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

DIAGRAMS

1. FISHER'S MECHANISTIC MODEL OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION
2. THE BRUNSWIK LENS MODEL OF PERCEPTION
3. A COMPARISON OF THEORETICAL MODELS PERTAINING TO THE IMPRESSION FORMATION, ILLUSTRATING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIOUS COMPONENTS
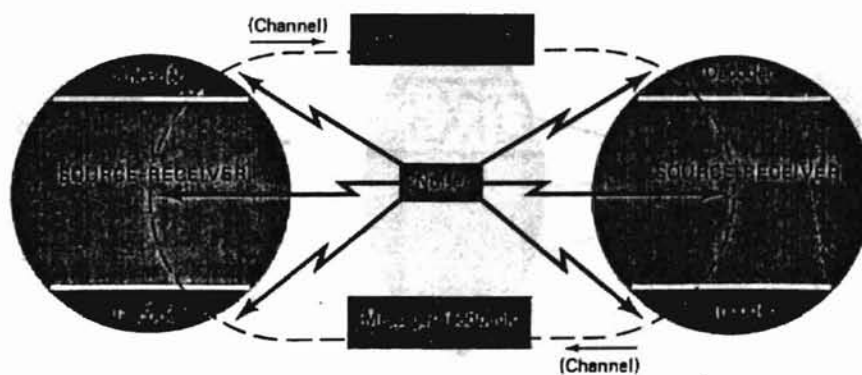4. KELLY'S MODEL OF ATTRIBUTION

(Channel)

(Channel)

DIAGRAM 1. FISHER'S MECHANISTIC MODEL OF HUMAN
COMMUNICATION.[1]

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[1] Fisher, A. (1978). Perspective on human communication. New York:
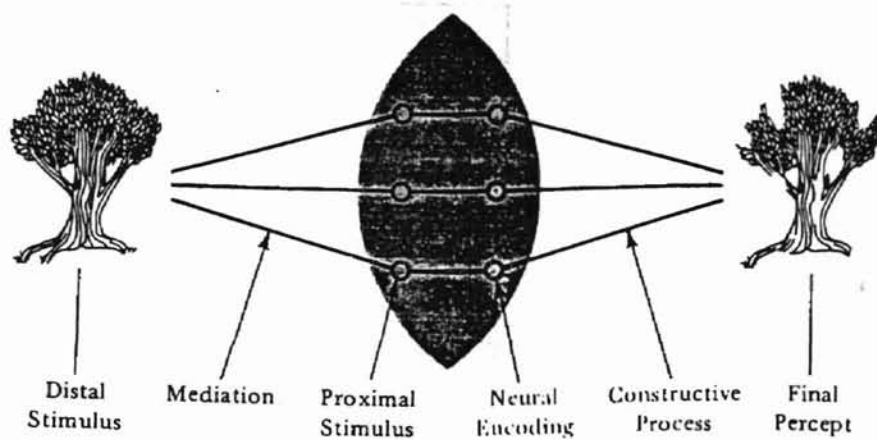Macmillan.

DIAGRAM 2. THE BRUNSWIK LENS MODEL OF PERCEPTION.[2]

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[2] Shaver, K. (1975). An introduction to attribution processes. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.
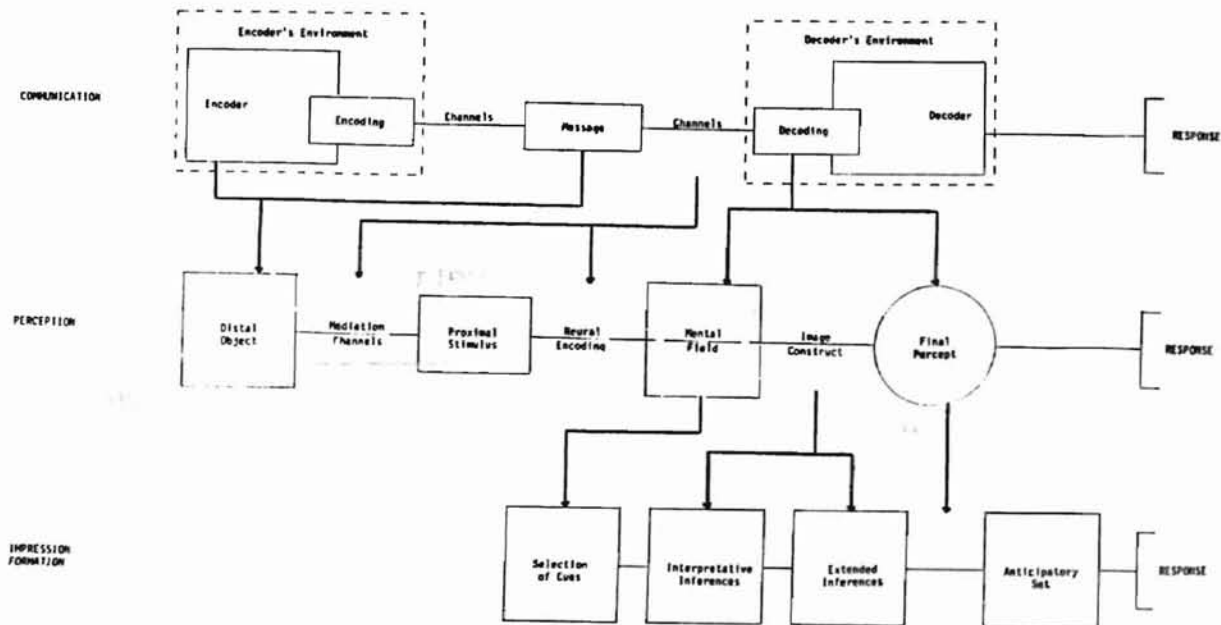
DIAGRAM 3. A COMPARISON OF THEORETICAL MODELS PERTAINING TO THE PROCESSES OF COMMUNICATION, PERCEPTION, AND IMPRESSION FORMATION, ILLUSTRATING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMOUNG VARIOUS COMPONENTS.[3]

[3] Richards, L. (1991). A theoretical analysis of nonverbal communication and victim selection for sexual assault. Clothing and Textile Research Journal, 9(4), 55-64.

	Internal Causes	External Causes
Stable Causes	Ability	Task Difficulty
Variable Causes	Effort	Luck or Chance

DIAGRAM 4. KELLY'S MODEL OF ATTRIBUTION.[4]

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[4] Wegner, D. M., & Vallacher, R. R (1977). Implicit psychology: An introduction to social cognition. New York: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS FORM APPROVAL

IRB #_____

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH
(PURSUANT TO 45 CFR 46)
OKLAHOMA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Title of project: Impression Management for First Impressions in Small Retail Businesses

Please attach copy of project proposal

I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are properly protected. Additions to or changes in procedure affecting the subjects after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR   Kimberly Jenlink *Kimberly Jenlink*
                          Type Name   Signature
                          Cheryl A. Farr, Faculty Advisor

Design, Housing, & Merchandising   Human Environment Science
       Department   **College**

TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED: (Choices are Exempt, Expedited or Full Board)
EXEMPT

1.   Briefly describe the background and purpose of the research.

     Previous research has determined that first impression are important and lasting. Therefore, a good first impression is essential for a small business. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the client's first impression of a bridal shop is positive or negative, and what influences the first impression clients have of the business' store front, store interior and clothing of the salespeople The study will identify

5. Will the subjects encounter the possibility of stress or psychological social, physical, or legal risks which are greater, in probability or magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical examination or tests.

There will be no risks to the subjects.

6. Will medical clearance be necessary before subjects can participate due to tissue or blood sampling, or administration of substances such as food or drugs, or physical exercise conditioning?   No.
   If so, please describe.

   NOTE: Refer to the OSU IRB Information Packet for information on the handling of blood and tissue sampling.

7. Will the subjects be deceived or mislead in any way?   No.
   If yes, please describe and include an outline or script of the debriefing.

8. Will there be a request for information which subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive?   No.
   If yes, please describe.

9. Will the subjects be presented with material which might be considered to be offensive, threatening, or degrading?   No.
   If yes, please describe.

10. Will any inducement be offered to the subjects for their participation?   No.
    If yes, please describe. If extra course credits are offered, are alternative means of attaining additional credits available?

11. Will a written consent form be used?   Yes.
    If yes, please indicate why not and how voluntary participation will be secured.

    A written consent will be found in the front of the questionnaire

NOTE: The OSU IRB Information Packet illustrates elements which must be considered in preparing a written consent form. Conditions under which the IRB may waive the requirement for informed consent are to be found in 45 CFR 46.117 (C), (1) and (2).

12. Will any aspect of the data be made a part of any record that can be identified with the subject?   No.
    If yes, please explain.

    The data will be presented in the aggregate form.

13. What steps will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data?

    The data obtained by the subjects will be kept confidential. Names of the subjects will not be asked for and after the subjects hand back the questionnaires, the questionnaires will be referred to by number only.

14. Will the fact that a subject did or did not participate in a specific experiment or study be made a part of any record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer? No.
    If yes, please explain.

15. Describe any benefit that might accrue to either the subject or society. (See 45 CFR 46, section 46.111 (a) (2)).

    Small retail businesses will be able to use this information to plan the image of their store.

_____   _____
Signature of Head   Date

___Department of Design, Housing, and Merchandising___
Department or Administrative Unit

_____   _____
College/Division Research Director   Date

Checklist for Application Submission

_____Proposal
_____Informed Consent Form/Assent (if appropriate) --not required
      for this study
_____Instrument(s) (questionnaire, survey, testing, field)
_____Curriculum Vita (not necessary for Exempt for review) --not
      required
      for this review
      study, exempt requested
_____Department/College/Division Signatures
Number of copies to be submitted:
      Exempt Review: 2 copies
      Expedited Review: 3 copies
      Full Board Review: 7 copies

THE FOLLOWING TO BE COMPLETED BY IRB REVIEWER

Date:_____   IRB #_____

IRB ACTION

_____Approved
_____Approved with Provisions
_____Deferred for Revision
_____Disapproved

_____

Comments:

Signature:_____   Date:_____
    IRB REVIEWER

Script

The following is an example of the anticipated conversation that would occur when a subject is approached for participation in the study.

Good morning, I am doing research on the impressions of bridal shops for the completion of my masters at Oklahoma State University, and I would like to give you the opportunity to participate in the survey. Would you be interested in taking a few minutes to fill out a questionnaire?

If they answer is no then I will say: **"Thank you for listening."**

If they answer is yes then I will say: **"For this survey we are looking for individuals that meet certain criteria. Are you single and between the age of 18 and 25?"**

If the answer is no then I will say: **"Thank you for your time."**

If the answer is yes then I will say: **"Are you engaged?"**

If the answer is yes then I will say: **" Thank you for your time."**

If the answer is no then I will say: **"Have you been to a bridal store in the past six months?"**

If the answer is yes then I will say: **"Thank you for your time."**

If the answer is no then I will say: **"Please have a seat and I will give you a questionnaire to fill out.**

APPENDIX C

SUBJECT CONSENT FORM

QUESTIONNAIRE
1. STORE FRONT QUESTIONS
2. STORE INTERIOR QUESTIONS
3. STORE APPEARANCE QUESTIONS
4. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Date:_____

The purpose of this research is to understand the impressions made by store fronts as viewed from the street and store interiors as viewed from the entrance of the store. Specific store fronts and interior views will be provided with photographs. The impressions you form while viewing these photographs are important in understanding why customers have positive or negative reactions as they approach and enter stores. Your honesty in reacting to your set of photographs will help small business owners understand those factors that have an impression on customers.

I, (please print name)_____ understand that participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that my response will be confidential and that the identification number assigned to this questionnaire is for data analysis only.

Data will be summarized and used in the aggregate form. The aggregate findings from this study will be available for use by businesses and universities seeking to understand consumer preferences related to store image.

_____
Student signature

QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT FOR FIRST IMPRESSIONS IN SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

(insert store front photograph)

STORE FRONT AS VIEWED FROM THE STREET

STORE FRONT QUESTIONS

For each of the paired characteristics, select the number that best represents the picture on the facing page. Complete answering all questions on this page before going to nest page.

What influenced your choice for each response?

1. Professional   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not professional   _____

2. Business like   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not business like   _____

3. Efficient   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not efficient   _____

4. Successful   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not successful   _____

5. Responsible   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not responsible   _____

6. Prominent   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not prominent   _____

7. Inviting   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not inviting   _____

8. Attractive   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not attractive   _____

9. Expensive   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Not expensive   _____

10. High quality   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Low quality   _____

11. If your were planning a wedding, would you enter this business?   yes___   no___

    Why?_____

Proceed to the next page. Do not return to this page.

(insert store interior photograph)

STORE INTERIOR AS VIEWED FROM THE FRONT ENTRANCE

STORE INTERIOR QUESTIONS

For each of the paired characteristics, select the number that best represents the picture on the facing page. Complete answering all questions on this page before going to nest page.

What influenced your choice for each response?

1.	Professional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not professional	_____
2.	Business like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not business like	_____
3.	Efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not efficient	_____
4.	Successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not successful	_____
5.	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not responsible	_____
6.	Prominent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not prominent	_____
7.	Inviting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not inviting	_____
8.	Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not attractive	_____
9.	Expensive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not expensive	_____
10.	High quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Low quality	_____

11. If your were planning a wedding, would you continue to shop in this business?   yes___   no___

      Why?_____

Proceed to the next page. Do not return to this page.

STORE IMAGE QUESTIONS

For each of the paired characteristics, select the number that best represents the overall impression your have from both photograph.

What influenced your choice for each response?

1.	Professional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not professional	_____
2.	Business like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not business like	_____
3.	Efficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not efficient	_____
4.	Successful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not successful	_____
5.	Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not responsible	_____
6.	Prominent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not prominent	_____
7.	Adaptable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not adaptable	_____
8.	Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not cheerful	_____
9.	Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not friendly	_____
10.	Likable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not likable	_____
11.	Loyal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not loyal	_____
12.	Competent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not competent	_____
13.	Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not fair	_____
14.	Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not innovative	_____
15.	Skilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not skilled	_____
16.	Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not cooperative	_____

17. If you were planning a wedding, would you consider going to this store? yes___ no___
    Why?_____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1.   What is your age?____

2.   Please estimate the income level of the household that would pay the "bride" related wedding expenses.

____a. less than $20,000 ____c. $30,001-40,000 ___e. $50,001-60,000 ___g. $70,001-80,000 ___i. $90,001-100,000

____b. $20,001-30,000 ___d. $40,001-50,000 ___f. $60,001-70,000 ___h. $80,001-90,000 ___j. more than 100,001

3.   Check the level of education you have completed?

____a. High school   ___c. 2nd year of college   ___e. 4th year of college

____b. 1st year of college   ___d. 3rd year of college   ___f. Bachelors   ___g. Masters

4.   Where you live? _____

5.   Check the statement that best describes your current situation?

___a. I am not dating and do not plan to marry.

___b. I am not dating but would like to find a individual to marry.

___c. I am not dating because I do not want to marry at this time.

___d. I am dating several individuals but do not plan to marry.

___e. I am dating several individuals and would like to find one to marry.

___f. I am dating several individuals but do not plan to marry at this time.

___g. I have a stable relationship but do not have any plans to marry.

___h. I have a stable relationship and I would like to marry.

___i. I have a stable relationship but do not plan to marry at this time.

8.   Have you ever been married?   yes___   no___

9.   Have you ever been to a bridal shop? yes___   no___

APPENDIX D

1.   PHOTOGRAPHS OF STORE FRONTS

      A.   STORE FRONT A
      B.   STORE FRONT B
      C.   STORE FRONT C

2.   PHOTOGRAPHS OF STORE INTERIORS

      A.   STORE INTERIOR A
      B.   STORE INTERIOR B
      C.   STORE INTERIOR C
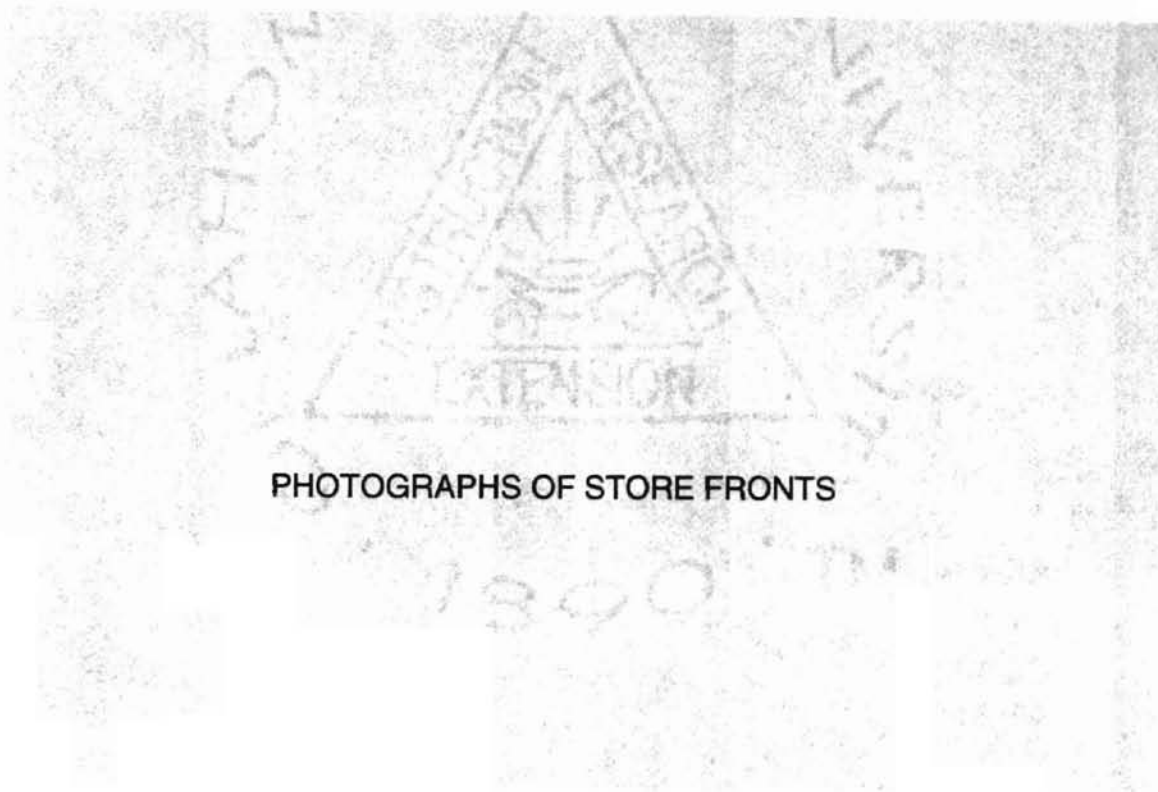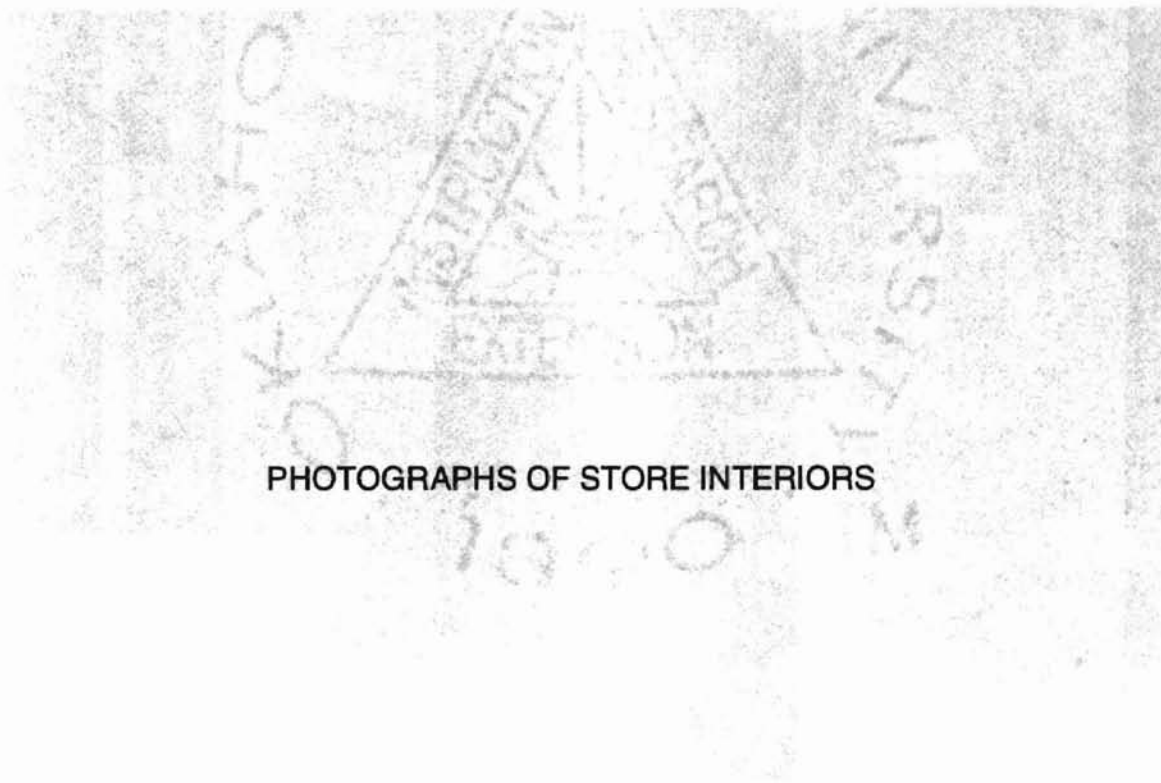
PHOTOGRAPHS OF STORE FRONTS

A. STORE FRONT A

B. STORE FRONT B

C. STORE FRONT C

PHOTOGRAPHS OF STORE INTERIORS

A. STORE INTERIOR A

B. STORE INTERIOR B

C. STORE INTERIOR C

VITA

Kimberly Rennea Wessels Jenlink

Master of Science

Thesis: **SYMBOL USAGE IN THE APPEARANCE OF SMALL BUSINESSES**

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Kiowa, Kansas, On April 13,1968, the daughter of Dwight and Kathie Wessels.

Education: Graduated from Cherokee High School, Cherokee Oklahoma, in May 1986; received Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma, in May 1990. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Design, Housing, and Merchandising at Oklahoma State University in December, 1997.

Experience: Employed by the Department of Design, Housing, and Merchandising, Oklahoma State University, as a graduate research assistant; Assisted in the departments research projects, 1991 to 1992; employed by RPO Fabric Construction as a designer; designed the fabric shading for lighting systems, 1993 to 1995; employed by American Canvas as a designer; designed airplane engine covers 1995; self employed making wedding dresses, 1993 to 1996; employed by Lerners as a comanager, 1997 to present.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 07-27-95   IRB#: HE-96-005

Proposal Title: IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT FOR FIRST IMPRESSIONS IN SMALL RETAIL BUSINESSES

Principal Investigator(s): Cheryl Farr, Kimberly Jenlink

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature: _John H. Wychoff_   Date: July 31, 1995

Chair of Institutional Review Board