Consumers' value perceptions across retail outlets: shopping at mass merchandisers and department stores

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Abstract

Today value is considered a key hallmark of US shoppers. Although research has examined consumer perceived value (CPV) in the context of shopping in general, this study provides specifics about CPV in the context of consumers’ shopping experiences in two dominant retail outlets – mass merchandisers and department stores – where value provision and value seeking may be shifting. Using Dewey’s (1939. Theory of valuation. In International encyclopedia of Unified Science, ed.O. Neurath, R. Carnap, and C. Morris, Vol. 2, 1–67. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.) value theory as a framework and conducting both qualitative and quantitative analyses, the research identified, validated, and tested nine value dimensions sought by consumers when shopping in mass merchandisers and department stores: acquisition, transaction, efficiency, choice, exploration, esthetic, self-gratification, social interaction, and social status value. The study findings suggested that mass merchandisers may want to be careful in moving too far from their historic value proposition of low price and convenient shopping, while department stores may want to improve their provision of the exchange values currently so important to consumers, while finding new, creative ways to provide their historic value offerings of service and entertainment.

Keywords: consumer perceived value; mass merchandiser; department stores

Introduction

Value has become a key consumer hallmark in today’s time-pressured marketplace, where Americans are less interested in ‘leisure’ shopping and more interested in ‘precision’ shopping – getting what they want and getting out of the store quickly (Standard & Poor Industry Survey [S&P] 2010). This value hallmark impacts the competitive tug of war and strategic value decisions of the US retail industry, a critical industry that in most economies holds a unique position as the single largest industry and one of the few that provides goods and services to virtually every consumer (Dunne and Lusch 2005).

In considering value in the retail marketplace, two retail formats hold particular interest due to their substantial impact on retailing and their special relationship to value. Mass merchandisers, large retail discount stores offering self-service and a key value proposition of lower prices due to large quantity purchasing (Rabolt and Miller 2009) and department stores, large retail units with extensive merchandise assortments organized into separate departments that offer value propositions focused on service, entertainment, and scale (Knee 2002; Rabolt and Miller 2009), have reigned as the US’ primary large retailers and have had a special impact on the retail marketplace due their size, their longevity, their

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service to large numbers of consumers, their often national profiles, and their critical roles as anchor
stores in dominant shopping areas (Wellman 1980; Rabolt and Miler 2009).

These two retail formats, however, are also of interest as primary examples of US retailers involved in
foundational shifts in their original value propositions, the value(s) or benefit(s) offered to customers
(Kotler and Armstrong 2001). As noted above, mass merchandisers and department stores have been
defined to some extent by their value propositions (Rabolt and Miler 2009). Many consumers would
probably still say that discounter Wal-Mart, for example, is the ultimate purveyor of everyday low prices
(EDLP). Yet, Wal-Mart has introduced more upscale and higher priced goods, including organic foods
such as produce, dairy, and dry goods to appeal to customers who seek value dimensions other than, or
in addition to, price (Gogoi 2005, 2006). Likewise, many consumers would still characterize J.C. Penney
as a conservative department store, not a likely site for exploration of edgy fashion offerings. Yet, to
provide the value of fast fashion (in response to competitors such as Forever 21 and Mango), J.C.
Penney has not only significantly cut the product cycle for its own brands but has also launched Mango
shops inside its stores (Moin and Palmieri 2010). Clearly, the leadership of both of these retail store
types has felt compelled to review and reevaluate their stores’ original value propositions to identify the
best strategic opportunities for value provision that will be successful with their customers. So far, with
the ten-year growth rate of general merchandise stores (including mass merchandisers) and department
stores at 10.4% and 2.0%, respectively, mass merchandisers have been the better success story (S&P
2010).

In the academic research arena, despite the importance of gauging and responding to consumer’s
perceptions of value, research on consumer perceived value (CPV), the perceived benefits gained by
consumers as a result of satisfying their wants and needs in the consumption process, has been limited.
Much of the extant research in CPV has centered on the development of the CPV construct and its
possible dimensions, the investigation of CPV relative to specific products/services, and the testing of a
limited number of already established value dimensions (Zeithaml 1988; Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal
that the investigation of consumer value has come nowhere near the comprehensiveness needed to
address its critical issues and concerns adequately. Ponsonby and Boyle (2004, 344) concurred, pointing
out that there is ‘limited appreciation of the nature of customer/consumer value and the sources of
value creation.’ Even less research has provided information about CPV in retailing. This suggests the
need for further exploration of the dimensions of consumer perceived value, especially in the context of
today’s retail environment.

As value provision by retailers and value seeking by consumers shift, more research is needed to gain
a holistic and accurate view of today’s consumer value wants and needs in the marketplace. To address
gaps in the CPV literature and to respond to the competitive retail battle between the influential US
mass merchandisers and department stores, this study, using a framework of Dewey’s value theory,
investigated the perceived value dimensions consumers associate with shopping in these two influential
retail venues. Building on an in-depth review of the extant CPV and shopping research, the study
conducted both a preliminary exploratory qualitative study and a follow-up survey. The specific
objectives of the study were: (1) to clarify which value dimensions consumers perceived as meaningful,
or relevant, when shopping at mass merchandisers and department stores; and (2) to identify any
similarities and differences in consumers’ value perceptions when shopping at these two store types.
Theoretical perspective and conceptual model

It is generally accepted that John Dewey’s impact on value and value theory has shaped thinking in mainstream value research and has been broadly applied to many areas of social science exploration (‘Some alternative conceptions of value: A critique’ 1962). Specifically, however, Dewey’s (1939) theory of value provided an appropriate framework for this study’s conceptual model because the theory effectively: (1) elucidates the links between consumers’ motivations to enter the marketplace and the associated values they subsequently receive there; and (2) explicates the role of experience and context in forming value perceptions. Dewey (1939, 1966) defined value as what individuals hold dear and the grounds upon which they make that determination, that is, the incorporation of effects from human experience, but also the cause and context in evaluating that experience. Dewey linked the creation of value, or human perceptions of value, to the human needs and wants that motivate solution seeking (‘Some alternative conceptions of value: A critique’ 1962). Given that these motivating needs and wants shift over time and situation, in Dewey’s view the value appraisal process worked across a continuum of inquiry in which the assessment of value would never be final but must continually be appraised within the context of the problem to be solved (Ezorsky 1958). In summary, Dewey’s theoretical approach reflects the constantly changing context of retail shopping as we observe it today and provides understandable links between consumer motivations to enter the marketplace and the values received there. Dewey’s value theory, because of its roots in human experience, its focus on solutions motivated by human needs and wants, its emphasis on context, and its recognition of the changing assessment of value, provided an ideal framework for the exploration of consumer perceived value across two of today’s retail shopping venues – both important, both in a state of flux, and both eager to find paths to success.

Figure 1 presents a parsimonious and dynamic conceptual model for the study. Under Dewey’s rubric, value flows from the fulfillment (solution) of human needs and wants. In a consumer application of this theory, the needs and wants of consumers, as they actually are and as they perceived them, motivate them to enter the marketplace for experiences and acquisitions that may result in fulfillment of those needs and wants – or what Dewey viewed as a solution seeking. When that fulfillment occurs, whether actual or perceived, the consumer then develops a value perception of the experience that is associated with the needs and wants that motivated the foray into the marketplace. That value perception feeds back into the consumer’s subsequent consumption experiences.
Literature review

Consumer perceived value (CPV) dimensions

Over time scholars have transitioned in their conceptualization of CPV from a simple economic exchange perspective, to a price/quality trade-off perspective, to a more complex multi-value perspective (Monroe 1979; Zeithaml 1988; Holbrook 1994). Likewise, the objects of interest have broadened from the narrow purchase of products and services to a holistic view that includes the consumer experience – which may or may not involve purchase (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Holbrook 1994). During this conceptual transition, CPV researchers have focused significant energy on the exploration and testing of the dimensionality of the CPV construct, identifying over 20 value dimensions. Many studies have refined or explored the value dimensions first identified by Holbrook (1986), Zeithaml (1988), and Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991), for example, the works of Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991), and Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Table 1 presents the major dimensions of CPV that have been identified or investigated in formative CPV articles.

CPV and shopping experiences

Today, the great distance between the manufacture of goods and their actual consumption has made shopping – and the value consumers associate with shopping – a large part of consumers’ lives. Shopping value research has included the different stages of shopping, the in-store shopping experience (Terblanche and Boshoff 2004), the shopping process (Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon 2002), and the outcome of the shopping trip (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994). Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) explored the broad concepts of hedonic value and utilitarian value as two fundamental value dimensions associated with shopping. Rintamaki et al. (2006) argued that besides hedonic and utilitarian value, social value held importance. Other studies have identified escapism, enjoyment, sensory stimulation, visual appeal, entertainment, efficiency, convenience, economic value, product performance, and service value as important shopping values by following Holbrook’s (1986) value typology (Kim 2002; Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon 2002). Table 2 presents some major value dimensions investigated in formative CPV research in the shopping context.

Relevant value dimensions for mass merchandiser/department store shopping

Literature comparison

As step one in identifying the value dimensions relevant to this study, the shopping motivation literature and the CPV literature were reviewed. As the theory foundation and study model suggest, there should be a relationship between the categories of shopping motivation and the value identified in the CPV literature. For example, the shopping motivation literature has explored alternative product comparisons (Buttle and Coates 1984), choice optimization (Westbrook and Black 1985), value shopping (Arnold and Reynolds 2003), and bargain hunting motivations (Pooler 2003; Cox, Cox, and Anderson 2005), while the CPV literature has examined the related acquisition, transaction, efficiency, and choice values (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991; Holbrook 1994; Grewal, Monroe, and Krishnan 1998; Terblanche and Boshoff 2004). The shopping motivation literature has investigated sensory stimulation (Tauber 1972; Westbrook and Black 1985) and physical exercise motivations (Tauber 1972; Buttle and Coates 1984; Cox, Cox, and Anderson 2005), while the CPV literature has inquired into the related values of basic sensory stimulation, kinesthetic value, and esthetic value (Holbrook 1994; Kim 2002; Mathwick,
Table 1. Major value dimensions investigated in the general CPV literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Value dimensions</th>
<th>Products/Services</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kantamneni and Coulson (1996)</td>
<td>Core Personal Sensory Commercial</td>
<td>Products</td>
<td>Quantitative: factor analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasuraman and Grewal (2000)</td>
<td>Acquisition Transaction In-use Redemption Quality Emotional response Monetary price Behavioral price Reputation</td>
<td>Products/services</td>
<td>Conceptual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991)</td>
<td>Functional Conditional Social Emotional Epistemic</td>
<td>Consumer choice situation; the theory has been operationalized/ tested in more than 200 applications of goods and services. The theory application was demonstrated by cigarette smoking.</td>
<td>Quantitative: discriminant analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeney and Soutar (2001)</td>
<td>Emotional Social Quality/performance Price/value</td>
<td>Products/brands: Clothing and durable goods</td>
<td>Qualitative: focus group; quantitative: principal components and factor analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsai (2005)</td>
<td>Symbolic Affective Tradeoff</td>
<td>Products/brands: computers, coffee, and denim wear</td>
<td>Qualitative: in-depth interview and focus group; quantitative: exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeithaml (1988)</td>
<td>Intrinsic attributes Extrinsic attributes Quality Other high level abstractions Price (monetary and non-monetary)</td>
<td>Product—beverages 100% fruit-flavored children’s drink, 100% fruit juices, and tomato-based juices</td>
<td>Qualitative: company, focus group and in-depth consumer interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Value dimensions</td>
<td>Shopping environment</td>
<td>Conceptual base</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rintamaki et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Hedonic Utilitarian Social Merchandise Internal store environment Personal interaction Merchandise variety Complaint handling</td>
<td>Department store shopping</td>
<td>Hedonic consumption and CPV literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terblanche and Boshoff (2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Retail store shopping</td>
<td>Development of experiential scale for retail shopping, combining goods/services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Malhotra, and Rigdon 2002; Terblanche and Boshoff 2004). The shopping motivation literature has studied information gathering or exploration, idea shopping, browsing, and learning about new trends/fashion motivations (Tauber 1972; Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Cox, Cox, and Anderson 2005), while the CPV literature has considered the related mental stimulation value, information value, and exploration value (Sheth, Newman, and Gross 1991). Likewise, the shopping motivation literature has explored social motivations, including role playing, socialization with friends and family, and obtaining status (Tauber 1972; Buttle and Coates 1984; Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Cox, Cox, and Anderson 2005), while the CPV literature has investigated the related social obligation value, social interaction value, and social status value (Kim 2002; Terblanche and Boshoff 2004). Finally, the shopping motivation literature has focused on self-gratification as a key motive for shopping (Tauber 1972; Arnold and Reynolds 2003), while the CPV literature has examined the related concepts of self-gratification value and self-expression value (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Rintamaki et al. 2006). In summary, a comparison of the two literatures indicated a similar focus on exchange, sensory, information/exploration, social, and personal issues. Table 3 provides a comparison of the shopping motivation and CPV shopping literature.

Preliminary qualitative study

As step two in identifying relevant value dimensions, a preliminary qualitative study was conducted. The qualitative study sought: (1) to identify key shopping value dimensions relevant to the shopping contexts of interest, (2) to seek in-depth consumer views unbiased by previous research, (3) to validate the literature findings, and (4) to verify consistency with the study’s theory base.

A convenience sample of 16 consumers willing to engage in in-depth interviews about shopping in mass merchandisers and department stores was recruited in the Southeastern United States at a large university, as well as at local churches through posters and word-of-mouth. A convenience sample is defined as a sample that is both readily accessible and willing to participate in a study (Marshall 1996; Berg 2007). The interviews were structured to ensure the opportunity for all possible views and opinions to be expressed and to ensure that the results would be in accordance with the subject of investigation (Ruyter and Scholl 1998; Mariampolski 2001). Of key concern in sample selection was ensuring that participants had a high probability of routinely shopping in the two store types of interest and that participants had significant shopping responsibilities, keeping in mind demographic diversity, including age, income, ethnicity, and education. Overall, the sample was representative of the general population of interest in regards to age, ethnicity, work status, and income, but with a skew toward higher education levels. The sample was primarily female (13 participants) in anticipation of focusing on female consumers in the quantitative study. Three male participants were included in the qualitative study and provided good information about mass merchandisers, but did not contribute to increased understanding of value in department stores due to a stated avoidance of shopping in that venue.

Thirty to sixty minute in-depth interviews were conducted to explore consumer perceptions of salient value dimensions through descriptions of their own shopping experiences in mass merchandisers and department stores (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Interviews were conducted in locations that were convenient for the participants, including participants’ homes and offices, and the secluded corner of a coffee shop. The interviews helped the researchers gain insight into the meaning of consumers’ expressed views, tapping into motivations, associations, and explanations behind consumer preferences through focused open-ended and non-directive questions in which discussion followed the participants’
Table 3. A comparison of the shopping motivation and CPV shopping literatures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping motivations</th>
<th>Motivation references</th>
<th>CPV value dimensions</th>
<th>CPV value dimension definitions</th>
<th>CPV shopping value references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value shopping</td>
<td>Fooler (2003)</td>
<td>Acquisition*</td>
<td>The perceived net gains accrued when products or services are acquired.</td>
<td>Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargain hunting</td>
<td>Tauber (1972)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of alternatives</td>
<td>Uettle and Coates (1984)</td>
<td>Transaction*</td>
<td>Psychological satisfaction or pleasure gained from getting a deal or bargain.</td>
<td>Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining status</td>
<td>Tauber (1972)</td>
<td>Social status*</td>
<td>A consumer’s feeling of social acceptability and approval as a result of shopping at certain retail stores.</td>
<td>Rintamaki et al. (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-expression</td>
<td>Expression of personal values, personality, and opinions.</td>
<td>Rintamaki et al. (2006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Value dimension tested in this study.
responses and issues (Levy 1959; Ruyter and Scholl 1998; Mariampolski 2001). The interviews were recorded and later transcribed into text in preparation for interpretation.

To access the conceptual layers of meaning captured by the text data, a series of data manipulation operations were used to organize the data, draw conclusions, and to generate conceptual schemes or themes representing the reality of the data (Spiggle 1994). The interview data were coded by the unit of coherent meaning and the codes assigned to related repeated topics of discussion (Spiggle 1994). Four cycles of part-to-whole interpretive procedures were conducted: (1) an intra-text cycle gaining a holistic view of each text, as well as all texts; (2) an inter-text cycle analyzing the text across interviews and allowing for the emergence of similarities and differences; (3) a cycle of interactive movements between the intra-textual and intertextual interpretive cycles moving back and forth between previously interpreted interview text and newly developed understandings; and (4) a final overall holistic interpretation resulting in a fusion of horizons between the researcher’s frames of reference and the data (Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997).

During the systematic analysis and interpretive process, 16 topical patterns of perceived shopping value initially emerged. Of six topical patterns for mass merchandisers, ultimately four shopping value themes emerged: (1) exchange issues that included price, convenience, and product selection; (2) product information search; (3) marketplace stimulation; and (4) spending time with others. Of the 10 topical patterns for department stores, ultimately five shopping value themes emerged: (1) exchange issues that included product quality, bargain hunting, and product selection; (2) marketplace stimulation; (3) trend shopping and product information search; (4) social status and spending time with or for others (gift shopping); and (5) personal recreation. Five value themes were relevant in both shopping contexts: exchange issues, marketplace stimulation, information search, social issues, and personal recreation.

**Selection of the study value dimensions**

As the third and final step in selecting relevant and current value dimensions for the study, the results of step one and step two were reviewed and compared to identify the value dimensions to target in the study survey. A comparison of the shopping motivation and CPV literatures identified similar focuses on exchange, sensory, information/exploration, social, and personal values. The preliminary qualitative study identified five emergent value patterns: exchange issues, marketplace stimulation, information search, social issues, and personal recreation. The conceptual overlap was evident. Thus, the relevant value constructs chosen to investigate in the study were acquisition, transaction, efficiency, choice, esthetic, exploration, self-gratification, social interaction, and social status values (See Table 3 for definitions). For clarity, these value dimensions were sorted into three related groups, the exchange, personal and social value groups.

**Hypothesis development**

**Exchange value hypotheses**

Four key dimensions of exchange value identified in the CPV literature include acquisition, transaction, efficiency, and choice. Acquisition value is defined as the perceived net gains accrued when products or services are acquired (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). When consumers sacrifice money, time, and effort to acquire good products/services at a reasonable price, they seek acquisition value. In fact, mass
merchandisers have become dominant retailers based on low price offerings (Mammarella 1997). Consumers have cited low prices as one of the top reasons for shopping at mass merchandisers. Although quality has been a concern of some consumers, many consumers appear to be satisfied with the quality of products provided by mass merchandisers, given the price they pay (King and Ring 1980; Brennan and Lundsten 2000). Supporting this, Grace and O’Cass (2005) found that the effect of perceived value for money on re-patronage intentions and customer satisfaction is stronger for mass merchandiser patrons than for department store patrons.

Transaction value is defined as the perception of psychological satisfaction or pleasure gained from getting a ‘deal’ when shopping (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal 1991). When consumers seek transaction value, they are looking for a real ‘bargain’ when they shop. Although mass merchandisers offer EDLP, they do not have a monopoly on offering value. Department stores provide opportunities for consumers to find what would be considered bargains through the process of offering seasonal markdowns, end-of-year sales, or other price discounting (Diamond and Litt 2003). When consumers buy a designer brand item at a department store, but at a mass merchandiser price, many feel they have gotten a real deal, suggesting a strong level of transaction value. Supporting this, Grace and O’Cass (2005) found the effect of consumption emotions and feelings on re-patronage intentions is stronger for department store patrons than for mass merchandiser patrons. The excitement and satisfaction that consumers gain when finding bargains in department stores may contribute to this phenomenon.

Efficiency value is defined as how effectively and efficiently the shopping task is completed (Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon 2002). Today, when busy consumers want to shop quickly and with little hassle, they are seeking efficiency value (Wakefield and Baker 1998). One-stop shopping has long been cited as an important appeal for consumers (Dodge and Summer 1969), and mass merchandisers offer functional, convenient environments through the use of shopping carts, single floor buildings, and front-end central checkout. The literature also suggests that consumers with larger shopping lists prefer EDLP stores (Inman, Shankar, and Ferraro 2004). Department stores, on the other hand, create a different feel, emphasizing a slower, browsing-style shopping experience that may include greater interaction with store personnel (Dickson 2003).

In the exchange process, consumers also seek choice value, defined as a good range of products/services from which to choose when shopping (Terblanche and Boshoff 2004). Over the years, department stores have narrowed their assortments of products/services. Where at one time, ‘full-line’ department stores were the norm, offering clothing, furniture, appliances, and beauty salons, today’s norm is the ‘junior’ department store that focuses on apparel, accessories, cosmetics, as well as a very reduced home department (Poloian and Rogers 2003). Conversely, mass merchandisers have expanded their assortments to include automotive items and electronic appliances, as well as other categories such as food and gardening products. Messinger and Narasimhan (1997) argue that large assortments have become more important as time costs increase and that consumers seeking time-saving convenience have contributed to the growth in the one-stop shopping retail format. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Acquisition value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at mass merchandisers than when they shop at department stores.

H2: Transaction value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at department stores than when they shop at mass merchandisers.
H3: Efficiency value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at mass merchandisers than when they shop at department stores.

H4: Choice value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at mass merchandisers than when they shop at department stores.

**Personal value hypotheses**

Personal experiences of shoppers include sensory, exploration, and self-gratification value. Research has shown sensory value to be a multi-dimensional construct that includes basic sensory stimulation, physical activity, and esthetics. This study found that of these, esthetics value, defined as appreciating physical attractiveness of the retail setting (Terblanche and Boshoff 2004), was particularly relevant in the retail shopping experience. Department stores have been called the showplaces of retailing and fantasy palaces (Nava 1996; Poloian and Rogers 2003). Today’s department stores provide an esthetic ideal through building materials, lighting, visual displays, and the use of space. Mass merchandisers, on the other hand, typically reduce expenses for in-store decoration and promotions to drive down prices, using utilitarian lighting and building materials, and intense, even crowded, floor merchandising (Poloian and Rogers 2003). Although in recent years mass merchandisers have worked to provide a more attractive store environment, they still tend to have less in-store decoration, less interesting merchandise layout, and less exciting promotional exhibits than department stores (Kim and Chen-Yu 2005).

Today a substantial portion of consumer exploration focuses on fashion, which has become a pervasive phenomenon of today’s American culture (Eckman and Wagner 1995). Exploration value is defined as the enjoyment gained by shopping to keep up with trends and new fashions (Arnold and Reynolds 2003). Relative to fashion, department stores and mass merchandisers have adopted somewhat different approaches. Department stores have a stronger fashion orientation, carry a higher percentage of fashion merchandise, emphasize clothing and accessory trends, and exhibit higher levels of competitiveness than mass merchandisers in the apparel product category (Morganosky 1997). Department store shoppers have also been found to be more involved in fashion and to be more fashion-conscious (Crask and Reynolds 1978; Hirschman 1979; King and Ring 1980).

For some shoppers, shopping is also personally gratifying. Self-gratification value, therefore, is defined as the improvement of personal well-being; that is, stress relief, improved mood, and giving oneself a special ‘treat’ through shopping (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994). The study’s qualitative research revealed that although consumers patronized mass merchandisers for functional shopping, such as weekly grocery and household product shopping, they enjoyed department stores’ fashion-able merchandise, unique promotions, merchandise displays, as well as shopping environments that included music, lighting, scents, and esthetic store layouts. Consequently, consumers appear to be more likely to shop at department stores for fun, enjoyment, and relaxation (Yu, Dyer, and Hodges 2006). Machleit and Ergolu (2000) argued that, by design, department stores are more conducive to recreational shopping as opposed to task-oriented store settings such as supermarkets and discount stores. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Esthetic value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at department stores than when they shop at mass merchandisers.
H6: Exploration value associated with fashion-related products is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at department stores than when they shop at mass merchandisers.

H7: Self-gratification value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at department stores than when they shop at mass merchandisers.

Social value hypotheses

For some shopping serves a social purpose, including socializing with friends and family and building status. Social interaction value is defined as consumers’ interaction with friends, family, salespeople, and other consumers during shopping (Terblanche and Boshoff 2004). Research has found that department store shoppers tend to be younger, single, or if married, without dependent children, to have better education, higher income, higher levels of activities outside the home (for example, in travel and sports), and to entertain frequently (Crask and Reynolds 1978; Hirschman 1979). On the other hand, mass merchandiser shoppers are more likely to be less affluent with responsibilities to larger families (Cassill and Williamson 1994; Inman, Shankar, and Ferraro 2004). Lower- and middle-income consumers who frequent mass merchandisers may be more likely to treat shopping as a family outing because of the resource limitations that impact babysitting and participation in other social, as well as entertainment events. Consumers who frequent department stores may prefer other social and entertainment activities and may be less likely to seek social interactions while shopping.

Social status value is defined as a consumer’s feeling of social acceptability and approval as a result of shopping at certain retail stores (Rintamaki et al. 2006). Department stores emphasize fashion goods and luxury items, making the stores’ prestige a salient factor (Hirschman 1978). Studies have confirmed that department store patrons primarily come from the upper income group, while discount stores tend to attract more lower-income consumers (Rich and Jain 1968; Hirschman 1981). This pattern is more distinctive for purchases such as furniture or clothing (Schaninger 1981) which are highly visible and incorporate the extended self, leading to higher social risk (Prasad 1975). Similarly, Cassill and Williamson (1994) found that department stores shoppers were more likely to be employed in professional positions (e.g. middle management) and mass merchandiser shoppers were more likely to be either housewives or blue-collar workers. Dawson, Stern, and Gillpatrick (1990) found that upper and middle class consumers shop more frequently at department stores than working and lower income consumers. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H8: Social interaction value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at mass merchandisers than when they shop at department stores.

H9: Social status value is perceived to be higher when consumers shop at department stores than when they shop at mass merchandisers.

Methodology

Sample

The sample frame for the study’s survey research was female consumers over 18 years of age who shopped at both of the retail store types of interest, mass merchandisers, and department stores. The selection of this sample frame reflects that shopping is a gendered activity heavily skewed toward female consumers (Fram and Axelrod 1990; South and Spitze 1994; Dholakia 1999). Dholakia (1999)
found that women assume primary responsibility for household grocery shopping and even share the responsibility for shopping for men’s clothing. It is estimated that female consumers control $1 trillion in earnings and influence another $1 trillion in household spending (Keiser and Garner 2005). Furthermore, female consumers have been found to be more oriented towards shopping enjoyment and to spend more time browsing than male consumers (Cleaver 2004; Hensen and Jensen 2009), suggesting that female shoppers tend to shop when they have to and are more likely to be ‘quick shoppers’ than female consumers (Falk and Campbell 1997), suggesting that male consumers focus mainly on shopping functionality and may restrict their general shopping to functional environments. Thus, a female sample provided the greatest opportunity to meet the goals of this research study by including respondents with significant shopping responsibilities and a broader range of both value and retail shopping experiences.

A convenience sample of female consumers, representing a range of ages, incomes, ethnicity, education, and work status, was drawn from women attending churches in the Southeast of the United States. According to the US Census Bureau, Christian believers accounted for 76% of the adult population in the United States in 2008. In the Southeastern United States, 47% of the population is made up of Christian church members and regular attendees (US Census Bureau), and more than 75% of the population attends services at least once a month (US Religious Landscape Survey 2007). Therefore, Christian church attendees represent a large percentage of average US consumers, and it is feasible to recruit a large number of adult respondents with different demographic characteristics within this group. When compared across key demographic data of the local population (US Census Bureau), the study respondents were slightly older than the general population and had a higher level of education. Based on ethnicity, the percentage of Caucasian respondents was very close to that of the state population, making the minority population of the sample also close to that of the general population overall. However, the minorities were distributed differently with a lower percentage of African Americans and a higher percentage of Asians and others. Also, the sample had fewer low income respondents and more moderate income respondents than the population in general. Overall, the sample reasonably represented the local consumers. Table 4 presents a detailed description of the study respondents’ demographic statistics.

The study data were collected using a self-administered survey instrument. To ensure complete data collection and a reasonable survey length for respondents, two questionnaires were developed with precisely the same questions for the two shopping contexts. Specifically, one questionnaire measured consumer value perceptions at mass merchandisers and the other questionnaire measured the same consumer value perceptions at department stores. The surveys were administered prior to church events, such as Sunday school, small group Bible study, and other special gatherings with the permission of the church and those who were in charge of the relevant church events. At the beginning of each event, the researchers introduced the purpose of the study, described the nature of the questionnaire, provided the length of time needed to complete the survey, and ensured that respondents felt confident of answering value questions about either store type. The two surveys were then randomly distributed to avoid respondents or researchers controlling the selection of retail type, resulting in one group of respondents that evaluated only mass merchandisers and one group that evaluated only department stores. This randomization helped to control for unexpected bias and ensure the validity of statistical analyses. A designated assistant from each event and/or church meeting helped researchers to collect questionnaires for those who completed the questionnaires on site. Respondents, where
preferred, could mail the questionnaire back at their convenience using provided envelopes with postage.

Altogether eight hundred surveys were distributed. Three hundred and seventy-two usable surveys were returned, 182 assessing consumer value perceptions at mass merchandisers, a 45.5% response rate, and 190 assessing consumer value perceptions at department stores, a 47.5% response rate. The overall response rate for the survey was 46.5%. Non-response error was tested for by comparing early respondents with late respondents, with no significant differences found. Chi-square tests were conducted and no statistical differences were found between the two sample groups.
Analysis and results

Construct validation

The constructs of interest in this study were acquisition, transaction, efficiency, choice, exploration, esthetic, social interaction, social status, and self-gratification value. The responses to scale items assessing the constructs of interest were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale anchored between ‘strongly disagree’ (1) and ‘strongly agree’ (7). Scales from previous research were selected and adapted, with non-substantive modifications to fit the mass merchandiser and department store contexts. Acquisition value and efficiency value were assessed using extant scales from Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2002). Choice value and esthetic value were assessed using extant scales from Terblanche and Boshoff (2004). All the items of the above four value constructs were directly adapted by simply changing the original shopping context into either mass merchandisers or department stores. Transaction value was assessed using a scale from Grewal, Monroe, and Krishnan (1998). Social status value was assessed using an extant scale from Sweeney and Soutar (2001). The transaction value scale and social status value scale were originally developed to measure product value. Therefore, all the items from those two value constructs were modified to reflect a shopping value context. An example item from transaction value is ‘Taking advantage of a price-deal like this makes me feel good’ (Grewal, Monroe, and Krishnan 1998). The scales were modified by adding either ‘mass merchandisers’ or ‘department stores’ in each statement for each shopping context. Exploration value, social interaction value, and self-gratification value were assessed using extant scales of idea shopping, social shopping and relaxation shopping respectively from Arnold and Reynolds (2003). Each scale was modified to reflect value pursuit in different retail stores. An example item for exploration value is ‘I go shopping to keep up with the trends.’ The modified item reads ‘Shopping at XYZs makes me keep up with the trends.’ XYZ is either a mass merchandiser or a department store. An example item for self-gratification is ‘To me, shopping is a way to relieve stress.’ The modified item is ‘To me, shopping at XYZ is a way to relieve stress.’ Table 5 presents the modified scale items used in the research.

To validate the study constructs, principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and loadings of 0.50 were used as the criteria for retaining items (Hair et al. 2006). To ensure that each factor would have one dimension, any items loading on more than one factor with a loading score equal or greater than 0.40 on each factor were eliminated. The factor analysis indicated that all items measuring each shopping value construct loaded highly on only one dimension except for one item in the acquisition value scale. That item did not have high loading on any of the dimensions investigated and was eliminated from further analysis. In conclusion, the factor analysis confirmed all of the study constructs. Furthermore, each scale satisfied the Cronbach’s alpha 0.70 criterion preferred in previous research studies, with the exception of the transaction value scale which at 0.67 was considered borderline but acceptable (Peter 1979; Peterson 1994). For this study, the reliability of each measurement scale was calculated using all of the study respondents (N ¼ 372), as well as calculated by using the mass merchandisers shopping group (N ¼ 182) and the department store shopping group (N ¼ 190). Table 5 provides the study scales’ overall Cronbach’s alpha values.

Hypothesis testing

In this study, one group of respondents assessed the nine CPV constructs of interest in regards to mass merchandisers and the other group of respondents evaluated the same constructs for department
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping value construct</th>
<th>Value measurement scales with modified items</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esthetic value</td>
<td>XYZs have attractive décor.</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Terblanche and Boshoff (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs have attractive physical facilities (check-out counters, shelves, etc.).</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs have attractive product and promotional displays.</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs have attractive materials associated with their service (shopping bags, catalogs, etc.).</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs have well-spaced product displays.</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration value</td>
<td>Shopping at XYZs makes me keep up with new fashions.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>Arnold and Reynolds (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at XYZs makes me keep up with the trends.</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I shop at XYZs to see what new product is available.</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I shop at XYZs to experience new things.</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization value</td>
<td>I go shopping at an XYZ with my friends or family to socialize.</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>Arnold and Reynolds (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I enjoy socializing with others when I shop at an XYZ.</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ with others is a bonding experience.</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To me, shopping with friends or family at an XYZ is a social occasion.</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status value</td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ would help me to feel acceptable.</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Sweeney and Soutar (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ would improve the way I am perceived.</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ would make a good impression on other people.</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shopping value construct</th>
<th>Value measurement scales with modified items</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transaction value</td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ would give me social approval.</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking advantage of a price-deal at an XYZ makes me feel good.</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>Terblanche and Boshoff (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would get a lot of pleasure knowing that I had saved money at reduced sale prices at an XYZ.</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beyond the money I save, taking advantage of price deals at an XYZ gives me a sense of joy.</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency value</td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ is an efficient way to manage my time.</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>Arnold and Reynolds (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ makes my life easier.</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping at an XYZ fits with my schedule.</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice value</td>
<td>XYZs offer a choice of different product categories.</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Terblanche and Boshoff (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs offer a good selection of well-known brands.</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs offer a variety of products that are available in many different sizes.</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XYZs offer a wide variety of products.</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition value</td>
<td>XYZs’ products are a good economic value.</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>Mathwick, Malhotra, and Rigdon (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall, I am happy with XYZs’ prices.</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The prices of the product(s) I purchase from XYZs are too high, given the quality of the merchandise. (Eliminated for hypothesis testing)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-gratification value</td>
<td>When I am in a down mood, I go shopping at an XYZ to make me feel better.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Arnold and Reynolds (2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
stores. The group responses for the like nine constructs were then compared. Full factori
Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to test the study hypotheses, with all hypotheses being accepted or rejected at alpha 0.05. The MANOVA approach was appropriate because it is very conservative, controlling for the overall type I error rate for multiple comparisons (Hummel and Sligo 1971). The p-value of Wilks' lambda test was significant at p < 0.001, suggesting that the overall value that consumers perceived at mass merchandisers was different from the overall value perceived at department stores. Table 6 presents the MANOVA and ANOVA results, indicating that seven of the study's nine hypotheses were supported.

**Results for the exchange value hypotheses**

Three of the four exchange value hypotheses were supported. Consumers perceived significantly higher levels of acquisition value, or basic what-you-get-for-what-you-give value, at mass merchandisers (m = 4.837) than at department stores (m = 3.686) (H1 supported at p < 0.001). Consumers perceived significantly higher levels of transaction value, or getting a bargain, at department stores (m = 5.241) than at mass merchandisers (m = 4.938) (H2 supported at p < 0.001). For efficiency value, or quick-and-easy-shopping value, consumers perceived significantly higher levels at mass merchandisers (m = 4.716) than at department stores (m = 4.684) (H3 supported, p < 0.001). The prediction that consumers would perceive higher levels of choice value, or having a good range of products/services from which to choose, at mass merchandisers (m = 4.764) than at department stores (m = 4.821), or H4, was not supported (p = 0.319).

**Results for the personal value hypotheses**

All three of the personal value hypotheses were supported. Results indicated that, as predicted, consumers perceived significantly higher levels of esthetic value, or the personal appreciation of beauty, at department stores (m = 4.542) than at mass merchandisers (m = 3.486) (H5 supported, p < 0.001). Consumers perceived significantly higher levels of exploration value associated with fashion goods, or satisfaction of the consumer’s curiosity about fashion trends, at department stores (m = 3.817) than at mass merchandisers (m = 3.021) (H6 supported, p < 0.001). Finally, H7 was supported (p < 0.001). Consumers perceived a significantly higher level of self-gratification value, or enjoyment gained from shopping, at department stores (m = 3.246) than at mass merchandisers (m = 2.591).
Results for the social value hypotheses

Results were mixed in regards to the social value hypotheses results, with H8 not supported and H9 supported. Consumers did not perceive that social interaction value, or spending social time with friends and family, was higher at mass merchandisers than at department stores. Instead, results were significant, but reversed. Consumers perceived social interaction value to be significantly higher at department stores ($m = 3.502$) than at mass merchandisers ($m = 2.707$) (H8 not supported, $p < 0.001$). Results indicated that, as predicted, consumers perceived significantly higher levels of social status value, or the association of status with shopping, at department stores ($m = 2.259$) than at mass merchandisers ($m = 2.019$) (H9, $p < 0.043$).

Discussion

This research sought to provide current and relevant information about consumers’ value perceptions by using a framework of Dewey’s value theory, a preliminary qualitative study, and a follow-up survey to investigate shopping at mass merchandisers and department stores. Specifically, the study sought: (1) to
clarify which value dimensions consumers perceived as meaningful, or relevant, when shopping at mass merchandisers and department stores; and (2) to identify any similarities and differences in consumers’ value perceptions when shopping at these two store types. In so doing, the study has made three important contributions: (1) a needed extension of CPV research, (2) a new application of an important theory base, and (3) the provision of practical strategic implications for mass merchandisers, department stores, and their management personnel.

First, the study contributed to the CPV literature by expanding the exploration of shopping value dimensions and by tying those value dimensions to the real-life context of specific retail shopping environments. Additionally, the study’s process of identifying the correct values for investigation moved the CPV literature forward by relying not just on an in-depth literature review, but also by using a winnowing-down process of a comparative literature review and a thorough, validating qualitative study to capture current consumer views. This approach ensured appropriate grounding in previous CPV and shopping research, but also ensured thorough grounding in current consumer views and behavior in the marketplace.

The study also contributed to the literature by suggesting a new application of an important theoretical perspective for CPV – that of Dewey’s value theory. This theory base and the study model tied the study’s value constructs to the causes involved in evaluating human shopping experiences and to the context in which those value judgments actually form (Dewey 1966). The theory base and the study model further tied the study value constructs to the on-going assessment of value that Dewey viewed as a continual appraisal within the context of the problem to be solved (Ezorsky 1958). That is, the questions investigated by the study and the theoretical approach of the study reflect the reality of shifting consumer wants, needs, motivations, and behaviors, as well as the criticality of the specific context in which values are formed, in this case shopping in mass merchandisers and department stores. This new theory application can be considered beside Sheth, Newman, and Gross’s (1991) choice theory approach presented over 15 years ago.

Finally, this research contributed to the CPV literature by posing key questions that have practical implications for retailers and their management. Nine hypotheses investigating consumer perceptions of acquisition, transaction, efficiency, choice, esthetic, exploration, self-gratification, social interaction, and social status value while shopping at mass merchandisers and department stores were proposed, with seven of nine hypotheses being supported. Overall, the survey results, presaged by the qualitative study findings, suggested that the study respondents were more likely to satisfy their needs at mass merchandisers and were more likely to satisfy their wants at department stores. Specifically, consumers perceived higher levels of acquisition value and efficiency value at mass merchandisers than at department stores (H1 and H3 were supported), while they perceived higher levels of transaction value, esthetic value, exploration value, self-gratification value, and social status value at department stores (H2, H5, H6, H7, and H9 were supported). There was no evidence of a difference in perceptions of choice value between mass merchandisers and department stores (H4 was not supported,) and social interaction value was perceived to be higher in department stores than mass merchandisers, a reversal of the predicted relationship (H8 was not supported).

Findings of the study imply that both retail store types must generate a value provision that will sustain their success. The data indicated that consumers perceived mass merchandisers to provide great value in regards to acquisition, transaction, choice, and efficiency, that is, values centering around
exchange issues. Based on mass merchandisers’ amazing growth over the last decade, the price/value equation and convenience factor for their customers appear to be huge, and the study results suggested that mass merchandisers might be making a mistake if they attempt to move too far away from their original, basic value provision of low price and convenience that has historically defined them – as long as these kinds of values are critical to consumers. On the other hand, the esthetic value means for both store types in this study suggest that mass merchandisers should seriously consider how they can use esthetics within their own value proposition approach. The study findings, for example, support the recent movement of Wal-Mart stores toward wider aisles and less cluttered merchandising. Given the proportion of lower income customers that shop at mass merchandisers (Cassill and Williamson 1994), these stores and their managers may want to focus on lower income consumers’ esthetic preferences and consider how they can meet those preferences while still achieving store and customer efficiency and cost goals. Taking into account that a functional approach is what their customers appear to value most, moves to provide more upscale offerings should be considered carefully. Target, for example, has taken a more upscale approach, but has abandoned offering the lowest prices.

Department stores must devise a value proposition that will bring customers back and overcome recent modest performance. While the study results indicated that consumers perceived department stores to provide great value in regards to transaction, choice, esthetics, and exploration, excelling in value provision in these areas has not been sufficient to result in the success level department stores desire. This raises some interesting questions. First, what can department stores do to tap into the exchange value side of the equation, given its obvious importance to today’s consumers, without diluting the value propositions that they have historically offered so well? Efforts to make shopping more efficient for department store customers might pay off, for example, Web sites that offer opportunities to find coordinating garments so that time in the store is minimized when desired. Checkout could be creatively centralized without employing a grocery-store front checkout approach. Also, department stores may have wandered too far from their original fantasy palace experience and may need to consider a broader ambiance than just visual appeal. Factors such as staffing, personnel training, seating, ‘husband’ facilities, and dressing rooms also contribute to ambiance and might need some rethinking.

The study results indicated that choice value was not perceived as an important differentiator when consumers shopped at mass merchandisers and department stores. Consumers appeared to be relatively happy with the product selections offered at both types of stores, that is, the product selections appeared to be in line with consumer expectations. Consumers apparently shopped for and got the products they wanted from each retail store type. However, the study respondents perceived relatively low levels of social interaction, social status, and self-gratification value when shopping at either retail store type. This finding suggested that retail outlets have become unlikely choices for consumers seeking satisfaction of socialization, social status and personal recreation needs. While this may not trouble mass merchandisers, department stores, venues that have historically provided some of these as part of their value proposition, may want to rethink their strategy – carefully. Overall, the study results suggested that providing value for customers in today’s marketplace presents a complex and risky challenge for retailers.

As with all research, this study has its limitations. This research used convenience samples drawn from a limited geographic area and a select group of agencies. Although the samples proved in general to be representative of the state population where the research was carried out in regards to ethnicity,
income, and age, the study respondents were a more highly educated and slightly older consumer group than the state average. These factors should be taken into consideration when interpreting the study results and should also be seen as future research opportunities. One research opportunity would be broadening the demographic base with a national sample. Because the United States is an ethnically shifting and aging nation, researchers may want to investigate the association of age and ethnicity with CPV in the retail shopping context, especially the burgeoning Hispanic population. Finally, given the broad array of retail channels available to consumers, future research could and should focus on CPV in other highly relevant retail environments such as specialty and online stores. Both the study theory and the study findings strongly suggest that on-going, current research will be critical to developing value propositions that are on target for consumers.

References


