AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE MARKET FOR CUSTOMISED CLOTHING FOR IRISH FEMALES

By

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Abstract

Most women purchase their clothing in a retail outlet however many consumers seem to have difficulty finding the proper fit to certain garments, whether it be with their upper or lower body. Therefore, consumers who are not the average straight-cut shape experience difficulty when shopping for clothes. Many apparel manufacturers still focus on one specific shape however they are four different shapes women can be. Apparel manufacturers are still living in the past in relation to body shapes. Body shapes have change drastically since the 1970's due to women's lifestyle now a days.

Some department stores carry petite, sixteen plus and tall sections however there is only a limited variety for respondents to choose from within these sections. A prompt reasonable customised service could solve many women's problems in relation to their clothing fit. As the present economic climate is looking dismal, the non standard sizes are being punished the most as department stores are closing their petite, sixteen plus and tall sections. This can have both a physical and mental effect on women. The lack of availability of properly fitted clothing can affect women's confidence and self esteem.

Recent research indicates that women are becoming bigger in size. Satisfaction levels are quite poor in relation to ready to wear clothing. Many women have to get alterations made to their apparel after purchasing it. With these both in mind a change is needed within the women's clothing sector.

The purpose of this study is to investigate: (1) if there is a market for customised clothing for Irish women, (2) to discover what garment of clothing women have most difficulty finding the proper fit for, (3) the percentage of women in Ireland who already avail of customised clothing services. (4) what method Irish women would prefer to buy their customised clothing, if the service was available, (5) if Irish women would buy customised clothing if the service were available online.

Questionnaires were distributed to 60 women in the quayside shopping centre in Sligo town. The final database was 60 respondents. Data were analysed using frequency distributions to describe the characteristics of the sample.

The results indicated that: (1) there is a market for a customised service in Ireland via a retail outlet, (2) the garment women have most difficulty finding proper fit to is Jeans and (3) over half of the respondents would purchase use this customised clothing service via the internet and (4) not many women are getting their clothing customised at present, unless it is for a once off occasion.

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****

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

A Customised clothing service is mostly offered through private dressmakers at present in Ireland. This type of service may be sufficient for some however trying to locate these dressmakers can be difficult and as their main marketing strategy is word of mouth normally many close up business and end up being a short term business. There is no well known company providing this customised service to women in Ireland at present either online or in person.

Customised clothing is garments made to measure an individual's exact body measurements. It has being noted body shapes have being changing and women are getting bigger in all dimensions over the past few decades, (kennedy, 2009), (www.business2000.ie) due to reasons such as Irish people being overweight and obese, compared to back in the 1970's, (www.business2000.ie). The nation of women also seems to have bigger waist-hip ratio and narrower shoulder (Posrel, 1993). Women are taller, heavier and have bigger bust than women back in the 1920's, (Women's proportions larger, 1999).

Changes in body shapes have occurred due to changes in lifestyle, diet and ethnic mixes. Social and cultural values have also affected how individuals interpret and perceive body shape. The purpose of sizing at present is to fit the majority of the population whose body proportions fall within the predetermined standard dimensions Alexander, (2005).

Women like when the fit ease accommodates body functions by allowing body movements and it prevents from binding. Style ease adds fullness garments to create visual effect. The designations of women's clothing sizes with numbers which have no direct relationship with any part of the female body has lead to the present confusion among clothing companies and even more so among consumers.

It seems "dissatisfaction with fit" is one of the most frequently stated problems with garment purchases. When a garment does not fit, consumers often blame their own body instead of the garment, which in turn causes a negative body image. A study carried out revealed female participants were dissatisfied with the lower body fit of ready-to-wear and were relatively satisfied with the fit of apparel in the upper body. The dissatisfaction with the lower part of the body is due to the fact that women are becoming broader hipped and has more difficulty wearing garments designed for the smaller hipped, hour-glass shaped women. (Alexander, 2005)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The majority of the people did not have the figure which is assumed by most apparel manufacturers Honey's (2007). Fit in a garment is one important factor that contributes to the confidence and comfort of the wearer. Well fitted clothes are considered vital to an individual's psychological and social well being, (Alexander 2005). Although body shapes have change over the years women are still trying to fit into clothes based on measurements from decades ago.

Cosmetic surgery is changing the shape of women also to a more inverted triangular shape. With these changes in mind and the fact that most clothing at present are designed to suit the hourglass figure even though this only represents a mere eight percent, the majority of women should be satisfied and not the minority, (Cormack, 2005).

As women's bodies has increased in the bust, waist and hips since the 1970's, Kennedy (2005) this indicates that these body shapes are not being catered for by apparel manufacturers.

Research carried out revealed that sixty four percent of a two hundred and twenty three sample had to get some form of alteration made to their ready to wear clothing. Fifty four percent of the sample reported being somewhat happy to mostly dissatisfied with ready to wear clothing, Alexander (2005).

In a study carried out over twenty percent of the respondents were unhappy with ready to wear clothing, only six percent were extremely happy and thirty three percent altered twenty five percent of their ready to wear garments. The most common complaint for poor fit was tightness, followed by length. Nearly half of the respondents reported fit problems at the waist, hip and bust. Length was also a major fit problem for other garments areas.

As Body shapes and sizes are changing, the current size templates are no longer an accurate representation of our current population and does not account for changing body shapes resulting from modern undergarments, ethnic diversity and our ageing population, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

The fit preference of two consumers having the same body measurements, height and weight can be very different and may vary greatly, Alexander, (2005). Feedback from women who were asked why they shop for clothing differred between the 16 plus sizes, and the women under size 16. The 16 plus women did not look forward to the shopping experience and they found it a chore, where as the size 16 and under found it to be a form of therapy, (Rose Otieno, 2005).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Although some consumers are being satisfied in relation to their clothing fit many consumers are not been satisfied. Women blame their bodies rather than the size or fitting of the actual clothing they are trying on. Another reason for varying sizing standards is that there is a psychological need to feel slim among consumers in the western culture. This need has motivated many manufacturers to mark down sizes. Measurements used for a size 10 ten years ago are now for a size 8 today. (Alexander, 2005) (Honey, 2007). This is called vanity sizing.

Because the fit of women's clothing is inconsistent and does not conform to an acceptable size standard, it generates much confusion and frustration for women when determining clothing size. When women are unable to find their fit, the stresses during shopping can lead to shoppers questioning the accuracy of their body perception and can lead to some people grossly overestimating the size of certain body sites when compared to objective measurements, (Kennedy, 2009).

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 Primary objectives

To evaluate and determine whether there is a market for customised clothing for Irish women.

1.4.2 Secondary Objectives

A. To discover what garment of clothing women have most difficulty finding the proper fit for.

B. To identify the percentage of women in Ireland who already avail of customised clothing services.

C. To find out what method Irish women would prefer to buy customised clothing, if the service was available.

D. To find out if Irish women would buy customised clothing if the service were available online.

1.5 Justification of the Study

This research will present findings that can only assist in finding ways to deal with the shopping scenario presented to people who are of all shapes and sizes. As these women represent a substantial segment of the market it is important to try and serve their needs.

These women who do not enjoy the shopping experience constantly have to face this chore any time they want to buy an item of clothing to wear. No research has been found on whether there is a market for customised clothing in Ireland. As study reveals that there is a general dissatisfaction among women in relation to clothing sizes and poor-fitting garments, Honey (2007).

Once one has collected data from the field studies and questionnaires, same can be utilised to conclusively set out whether there is a demand for a customised service or a customised web based service to provide the women of Ireland with customised clothing.

1.6 Target Population

I will research the trends which the women of Ireland can be identified with when purchasing ready to wear clothing. And also research whether they would consider purchasing customised clothing. This will include;-

- Identifying if these women would prefer to purchase their customised garments online or in a retail outlet.
- Identifying what garment women have the most difficulty finding the proper fit to.
- I am targeting both the women who find it difficult to find clothing to fit and the women who like the prestige of having clothing that fits perfectly and want a unique item of clothing.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Customised clothing: Made to measure clothing
2. Satisfaction: exceeding expectations
3. Apparel: Clothing
4. Ready to wear: off the shop rail clothing

1.8 Assumptions

- All respondents have different satisfaction levels in relation to their clothing.
- Women have different perceptions in relation to what clothing means to them.

- Only two different reasons why women may consider purchasing customised clothing.
- The term Women refers to any female over 16 years of age.

1.9 Limitations

There are several difficulties or limitations I perceive:

- The sample size for this questionnaire is only representing a very small percentage of the female population in Ireland and may not give an adequate representation of women in general buy their clothing.
- The demographic characteristics of the subjects might differ in some degree. I am only using women that are at the quayside shopping centre in Sligo on that given day.
- I may be not reaching the women who only shop online for their clothing.
- A certain age category may not be represented as well as another.

1.10 Summary

This research question indicates whether there is a market for a customised service in Ireland and in Ireland. What is the preferred method the respondent would use to purchase their customised clothing and the garment the respondents would be most inclined to get customised.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2 Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents previous studies that assist in answering the research questions submitted in Chapter I. A variety of perceptions on customised clothing were identified. The lack of availability of this service was recognised. Clothing satisfaction amongst these women was reviewed.

2.2 Defining Customised Clothing

Customised clothing is measured to fit clothing. It is a once off item that fit only one person perfectly because no one person is the same physically. A study carried out by Honey, (2007) which revealed that mass customisation has been frequently talked about in relation to 3D scanning and clothing production. Mass customisation is the production of the perfect fitting garments. Posrel (1993) identified that this customised service would be feasible if the latest invention, "the 3D scanner" which was launched in 2002/2003 into the US was to be introduced into stores. It seems this should be a way of the future for the clothing industry. Honey's study showed that the majority of the people did not have an hourglass figure, which is assumed by most apparel manufacturers. This scanner highlights the exact measurements, much richer data than the measuring tape can ever gauge. This is not an efficient means for manufactures as it is more expensive than manufacturing standard clothing. This study also revealed that customisation could be also carried out using the L-statistic and in close association with the 3D scanners.

2.3 Why Customised Clothing

When women were asked why they shop, the feedback between the 16 plus sizes and the women below size 16 was very different. Women plus 16 did not look forward to the shopping experience and they found it a chore where as the size 16 and under found it to be a form of therapy,(Rose Otieno, 2005). 64% of a 223 sample had to get some form of alteration made to their ready to wear clothing. 54% of the sample reported being somewhat happy to mostly dissatisfied with ready to wear clothing. The area that the sample found the most difficult to fit were the Bust and the leg lenght. The sample that were happy with their weight preferred a fitted top and dress. The inverted triangular shape were very unsatisfied with ready to wear clothing. Those who liked to emphaise a different part of their body preferred a fitted jacket, dress or skirt. (Alexander, 2005)

Reasons women enjoy shopping Women under size 16	Reasons women do not enjoy shopping Women size 16+
▪ Fashion trends ▪ Price ▪ It's fun ▪ For browsing ▪ They felt special ▪ They thought they looked good ▪ Claimed to be shopaholic ▪ Bored of old clothes ▪ Variety ▪ Socialised with friends ▪ Enjoy spending (it's a girl thing) ▪ Retail therapy ▪ Forget other problems ▪ Create individuality ▪ Search for my size ▪ Love of clothes	▪ Resources (cost, hassle with children, time) ▪ Emotive (hated crowds, hates shopping, felt fat, poor body shape) ▪ Environment (communal or no changing rooms, gets too hot) ▪ Product (poor fit, no choice, size)

Table 2-1: Reasons why women enjoy and do not enjoy shopping, (Rose Otieno, 2005)

2.3.1 Non-Standard Sizes and Plus Sizes

Research carried out illustrated that standard sized clothing attempts to fit the majority of consumers. A survey carried out in UK on 250 women found that 37.2% wore a size 16 plus. 22.3% wore a size 16-18. It's common to see label sizes range up to 14 as standard or regular. Those who were not catering for the size 16-18 segment were actually losing out on an important market. (Rose Otieno, 2005)

The purpose of sizing has been to fit the majority of the population whose body proportions fall within the predetermined standard dimensions. Fit in a garment is one important factor that contributes to the confidence and comfort of the wearer. Well fitted clothes are considered vital to an individual's psychological and social well being. Studies reveal women like when the fit ease accommodates body functions by allowing body movements and it prevents from binding. Style ease adds fullness garments to create visual effect.

The fit preference of two consumers having the same body measurements, height and weight can be very different and may vary greatly. The designations of women's clothing sizes with numbers which have no direct relationship with any part of the female body has lead to the present confusion among clothing companies and even more so among consumers. A fit model is a stationary three –dimensional form that represents the figure type of the target customer. Very few consumers are built like the perfect body form, and this helps explain the difficulty experienced by consumers in finding well-fitted clothing, (Alexander, 2005).

A study carried out revealed that the fit of women's clothing sold in Australia is inconsistent and does not conform to an acceptable size standard. The standard that defines the size and shape of women's clothing and underwear is voluntary code and is considered to be based on body measurements that are not representative of the Australian population, (kennedy, 2009).

Plus size shoppers options are getting fewer by the day with the recession and this size category are not been satisfied, (Pasquarelli, 2009).

2.3.2 How the Non Standard Sized People Shop

Very few of these women shop in designer outlets as most only stock up to size 14. It was not until a decade ago that the larger size was catered for by Tommy Hilfiger and Donna Karan. However, not all chose to embrace the bigger is better movement, e.g. Vogue. Non standard sizes seem to prefer shopping online as they dislike the shopping (Pasquarelli, 2009) (Rose Otieno, 2005). More often these clothes did not fit perfectly, however, Many women are happy to shop in a retail outlet if the shop assistant is helpful and if the shop assistant is not too thin. If the shop assistant is thin, this can makes the customer feel intimidated. A survey carried out on a sample of women sized 16 and plus stated that 55.9% of this segment had shopped in department stores and 73.1% in high street stores.

Home shopping seems to be more prevalent for this segment. Few of the size 16 plus shop in sportswear stores however 59.4% of this market who do shop in sports store feels that there is a good choice. The reason for this is maybe because they have no need for the clothing and that they do not want to come into contact with slimmer figures.

When compared to the overall sample of this study, a higher percentage of size 16 plus shop in supermarkets, but this maybe to purchase necessities such as underwear and tights. It might also be as these women are not as conscientious as when in an eclectic mix environment. However this study revealed that 64.5% of these women cannot find fashionable clothing there. Many size 16 plus use discount store when purchasing their clothing, this is a reflection of their self image. These shoppers view stores as either a shopping channel for more affluent consumer or as an outlet for bargain hunters. 55.6% of these women considered shopping in Elvi's, 52.9% in Rogers & Rogers, 51.4% in Bhs and 50.7% in Evans, (Rose Otieno, 2005).

2.3.3 Studies in relation to changes of body sizes within the last number of decades

Research carried out revealed that 42% of Irish people are overweight and 13% are obese, compared to back in the 1970's (www.business2000.ie). Posrel, (1993) identified that the nation of women seems to have bigger a waist-hip ratio and narrower shoulder. a study carried out in 1999 that women are 3cm taller, 4kg heavier and have an average

6cm bigger bust than women in the 1920's, however this may have to do the contraceptive pill. Women are still trying to fit into clothes based on measurements form decades ago. The waist-hip ratio has not changed significantly over the years, (Women's proportions larger, 1999).

Women's waistlines have expanded 6 inches since the 1950's. These studies were carried out both in the U.S and the U.K but as the Irish have a similar lifestyle and eating habits, they mirror each other. Cosmetic surgery is changing the shape of women also to a more inverted triangular shape. With these changes in mind and the fact that most clothing at present is designed to suit the hourglass figure even though this only represents a mere 8%, the majority of women should be satisfied and not the minority, (Cormack, 2005).

An Australia study revealed that women are getting bigger in all dimensions and body shape has increased substantially over the past few decades. A health survey revealed that adults are somewhat taller and heavier. A size ten in women's clothing has increased 15 centimetres in the bust, waist and hips since the 1970's. This study also revealed that as the Australians age they gain weight, (kennedy, 2009).

The changes in body shapes have occurred due to changes in lifestyle and diet, ethnic mixes, social and cultural values have also affected how individuals interpret and perceive body shape. In a study carried out, over 20% of the respondents were unsatisfied with ready to wear clothing, only 5.9% were extremely happy and 33.3% altered 25% of their garments. The most common complaint for poor fit was tightness, followed by length. Nearly half of the respondents reported fit problems at the waist, hip and bust. Length was also a major fit problem for other garments areas.

Almost half of the respondents had issues with both sleeve length and dress length. Tightness at the bust, waist, hip, thigh, upper arm and back width were some of the issues for a lot of the respondents. The hip thigh had a highest unsatisfactory rating. Other strong fit problem associations included dress-pant length, upper arm-arm hole, abdomen-hip, waist-abdomen, sleeve-pant length, and waist-hip.

This study also looked at how customers like there garments to fit. Respondent were given three options: fitted, semi-fitted or loosely fitted option. Nearly half of the respondents preferred semi fitted garments across the garment categories especially in blouses and pants. Over 60% of the respondents chose 3 or more semi fitted garments. This was the next most common fit preference in all categories, except jackets. Over half of the respondents did not choose any fitted garments. The strongest preference fit was between jeans and trousers, with blouse and jacket associations next. To condense and simplify findings, loosely fitted garments which reflected the reverse findings of fitted garments were not included in individual fit preference cross tabulations, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

Secular trend in height and weight are another reason that there is a mismatch between clothing sizes and Australian women. There has been a steady increase in the height and weight of adults since at least the mid-nineteenth century. There has been an average increase of Europeans in height of 20cm. Increases in height occur mainly in the first two years of life and are due to increase in leg length. The large changes in leg length show that our relative proportions are changing.

There is also an increase in weight of 3.4kg in cook islanders over a ten year period. The increase of both height and weight has not been occurring at the same pace. Weight is increasing much faster pace than height. Waist-hip ratio and waist circumference measures have increased over time. Body shapes and body sizes are changing. The current size templates are no longer an accurate representation of our current population and does not account for changing body shapes resulting from modern undergarments, ethnic diversity and our ageing population, (Honey, 2007).

2.4 The Sizes Available within the Ready to Wear Clothing Market

2.4.1 Background of Standard Sizes

Standard sizes only came about as it was efficient and scientific. In 1983, the U.S. got rid of the size specifying business that had previously being implemented in the 1940's and then revised again in the 1970's and this left the sewing patterns the only ones adhering to it. Most manufacturers however use this standard sizing system as a guide to develop size labelling and grading for all sizes, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

Posrels, (1993) study revealed that this customised service is available in Selfridges, however a pair of jeans cost up to £450. It would give apparel manufacturers some sort of competitive marketing tool if sold at a competitive affordable price. This is a promising approach to match a customer's shape with a store's stock. Expert vision that this 3D scanner devise will be available on your mobile phone or a thumb drive. This will be a costly affair to install but technology is moving rapidly.

Studies indicate women have difficulty finding the right fit, and what manufacturers need to realise is that sizes maybe standardised but bodies are not. Clothing sizes reflect a classic modern dilemma, a conflict between human heterogeneity and mass production. Many American companies are already offering several different proportions in each size, for example, Lane Bryant, Joes Jeans and Zafu.

A study carried out by Alexander, (2005) which revealed that when designing clothing for women, one of the primary reasons clothing companies do not want to follow a standard sizing system is because different firms have different target populations of women whose lifestyles, incomes and body shapes differ. They can target more women this way so to increase their market.

2.4.2 How well are the plus and petite sizes catered for

The non standard sizes seem to be ignored when it comes to the plus sizes as the clothing available does not allow for any lumps or bumps, which would be unusual for a size 22 person unless she is 7 foot tall. They produce their clothing to suit a slim figure which is highly uncommon for a person of this size. Apparel companies must incorporate the body changes that take place with weight gain and age, (Alexander, 2005).

Rose Otieno, (2005) identifies from her studies that department stores seem to think that larger ladies have no shape. The more a garment is tailored the more difficult it is to fit into. Men do not seem to have this issue as they wear their clothing loose, whereas women wear figure hugging garments. Jeans are garments that seem to cause a lot of problems in relation to fit and sizes, (Posrel, 1993).

Pasquarelli's, (2009) Study revealed that in the U.S., many department stores have eliminated or down sized their plus size sections and are making these sizes only available online, For example, Bloomingdales and Ann Taylor. These department stores are not accommodating the average American women sports a size 14 and weighs 164 pounds. The reason for this it seems is that it costs more to make larger garments as more material is needed and special models and patterns.

It seems that the plus size women have cut back on spending more than the regular sized women. Plus sized women appear to be more economical and bargain hunters when it comes to clothes. There is only a slight decline in the petite sales and these seem to be catered for better.

More than half of the female population in the U.S. cannot find clothing to fit and that it is the third most frequent reason for not making an apparel purchase. Women sometimes have to try on up to 20 pairs of jeans before they get a good fit. Rectangular, pear and hourglass body shapes were more likely to report fit problems at the bust than the inverted triangular body type. An inverted triangle was more happy with her weight and her lower body more so than the other shapes.

Fit problems at the bust are a problem for the inverted triangular body type. Fit problems at the waist, hip, thigh, dress length, and pant length were more likely to be reported by pear and hourglass body types than the regular and inverted triangle body types were satisfied with the fit of ready to wear. Those who reported fit problems at the bust preferred a fitted top. Those with big hips and arm hole did not prefer a fitted jacket and dress. Problems with the crotch preferred fitted jeans and those who had fit problems at the neck preferred a loose dress and respondents reporting fit problems at the waist preferred a more fitted pant. Those satisfied with there weight preffered a fit top and dress. (Alexander, 2005)

Plus sized women have difficulty purchasing: lingerie, swimwear and evening wear as they require a greater degree of fit, whereas casual wear has a loose and less restrictive fit. These three types of garments are usually body contour and emphasise the appearance of one's body, shape or size. 55.1% of the sample could not find clothes that fitted. 65.9% of size 16 plus could not find clothes to fit. Larger women still find it difficult to find fashionable clothes that fit well.

49.6% of the sample was able to find fashionable clothing often. 47.1% were able to find fashionable clothing sometimes. But only 24.4% of the size 16 plus were able to find fashionable clothing often and 45.6% were able to find fashionable clothing sometimes. This survey showed disparity between overall sample and plus sizes. 34.4%

said that the availability of fashion was poor. 50% of the size 16 and plus said availability of fashion was poor. 77.8% of the 16 plus women felt that the availability of fashion in designer outlets was poor. 51.1% of the sample thought that the availability of fashion in designer stores was satisfactory. 65.9% of the 16 and plus felt the clothing is not a good fit. And 54.7% of the normal sample felt their clothes did not fit well.

When asked how they felt when they could not fit into clothes, 60.7% of the size 16 plus said they felt frustrated, and the overall sample did show emotive feelings towards not being able to find clothing which fits, however it was more significant among the 16 plus sizes. They displayed resentfulness, blame on the retailer, de-motivation, frustration, anger, disappointment, sadness, embarrassment because of their size, depression and they felt less feminine. (Rose Otieno, 2005)

2.4.3 Consumer Satisfaction

50% of women experience fit problems with ready to wear clothing. It is crucial for manufacturers to understand the complexity of consumers fit preferences in order to achieve consumer satisfaction and reduce high markdowns, lost sales and turnover for their companies. However sometimes women blame their bodies rather than the size or fitting of the actual clothing they are trying on. In a study carried out, it finds that hourglass women were dissatisfied with their height and weight and had fit problems at the hips and thighs. Pear shaped women were unhappy with their upper or lower bodies, height, or weight and reported tightness in fit occurring at the hips, thighs and abdomen. Looseness was a problem at the neck, waist and armholes.

Nearly half reported fit problems at the hips, waist and bust. Half of the sample had issues with the sleeve length and the dress length. Of those reporting fit problems, tightness was the predominant fit problem at the bust, waist, hip, thigh, upper arm and back width. The hip-thigh had the highest chi-square association. Other strong fit problem associatons included dress pant lenght, and waist-hip. There was a strong association between fit prefernece of jeans and trousers. Over half the respondents preferred a semi fitted garment, except in a jacket, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

Alexander and Connell, (2005) state that pear, rectangular and hourglass shaped respondents prefer more fitted garments. The inverted triangular shaped prefer looser clothing as they are more comfortable with their shape.

If women experience many occasions where their clothing does not fit then this cause them to feel unsatisfied, and it is most likely that they will not return to that shop and that it will affect both their self esteem and self perceived physical attractiveness. Women appear to more unsatisfied with their lower body and satisfied with their upper body fit. A large percentage of women are unhappy with their abdomen, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

Another reason for varying sizing standards is that there is a psychological need to feel slim among consumers in the western culture. This need has motivated many manufacturers to mark down sizes. Measurements used for a size 10 ten years ago are now for a size 8 today(Alexander, 2005).

There is a general dissatisfaction among women in relation to clothing sizes and poor-fitting garments, (Honey, 2007).

Few of the size 16 and plus shop in sportswear stores as this maybe cause they have no need for the clothing and that they do not want to come into contact with slimmer figures. When these women were asked if they enjoy shopping, 52% chose not to answer the question. The other 48% did not give a reason why they enjoyed shopping. This may be as they not actually enjoy the experience. Some of the responses to this question were it was retailer related, consumer related, matters related to size. 62.4% of the whole sample of women chose not to say whether they liked shopping or not.

Women do not like shopping because of the: merchandise choice, very high level of dissatisfaction and the size, style, fashion, fit of the garments and the environment they are sold in. When asked why plus 16 sizes did not shop in the stores they liked. 64.5% said they were too expensive, 32.3% said they could not get their size. 3.2% said they were too fashionable, (Rose Otieno, 2005).

The dissatisfaction with fit is one of the most frequently stated problems with garment purchases. When a garment does not fit, consumers often blame their own body instead of the garment, which in turn causes a negative body image. A study carried out revealed female participants were dissatisfied with the lower body fit of ready-to-wear and were relatively satisfied with the fit of apparel in the upper body. The dissatisfaction with the lower part of the body is due to the fact that women are becoming broader hipped and has more difficulty wearing garments designed for the smaller hipped, hour-glass shaped women, (Alexander, 2005). Because the fit of women's clothing is inconsistent and does not conform to an acceptable size standard, it generates much confusion and frustration for women when determining clothing size. When women are unable to find their fit, the stresses during shopping can lead to shoppers questioning the accuracy of their body perception and can lead to some people grossly overestimating the size of certain body sites when compared to objective measurements, (kennedy, 2009).

2.4.4 Visual Merchandising and what the larger women wants

39.8% of size 16 plus clothing were displayed at the back of the store. 31.2% of the size 16 and plus would like to see sizes dispersed amongst others and not singled out. It seems the normal or "standard" sizes are more attractive and this makes the size 16 and plus feel disenfranchised. 52.2% felt there was a different feel to larger sizes stores. Respondents felt they were: boring, dull colours, frumpy styling, limited fashions, ranges and sizes, makes you feel larger, poor choice, selection very old fashioned, unattractive and there were very thin assistants working in them. Respondents felt a positive feel when the assistant was helpful and pleasant or providing an extra ordinary service.

There are still a lack of size ranges in desirable styles and colours available in retail outlets. Retailers don't seem to create an attractive environment for these shoppers. Shop assistants who are thin can be off putting to size 16 and plus and sales people can impact majorly on the retail experience, (Rose Otieno, 2005).

64% of the respondents had to alter their ready to wear garments on a regular basis to achieve the desired fit. 54% were satisfied to mostly unsatisfied with the fit of ready to wear garments. This shows that substantial problems exist in the ready to wear market and are consistent with the Goldsberry study, (Alexander, 2005).

2.4.5 Various measurements worldwide and vanity sizing

As the nation has got heavier, many apparel manufacturers are using this as a major marketing stint, (Posrel, 1993). Intyre, (2009) carried out a study which found that measurements varied as much as 10cm on the same garment. A study carried out in Australia which examined how a codified size identification system contributes to size distortion. This irrational focus on women's size is inextricably linked to dialogues on obesity, eating disorders, and other less attractive aspects of the aging population, "the demographic bulge". Retailers and designers ahave been accused of the practice of vanity sizing by inflating sizes and making more generous in a bid to deceive customers into believing they are smaller than they really are. It could be argued that size inflation is simply an ill-informed attempt to adjust the average size, referenced by the obesity debate and an aging population, (kennedy, 2009).

Clothing is an extension of the bodily self and has important symbolic meanings in social interactions. The reason companies prefer not to use the voluntary sizing standards is that sizing is seen as a way to create and maintain brand identities. Sizing has become a selling tool distinguishing one clothing manufacturer from another and the building customer loyalty. Vanity sizing or offering garments with smalller size numbers but larger measurements alloes firms to influence the psychological needs of consumers to fit into a smaller size. Consumers believe they are wearing, what they consider a more socially acceptable size, (Alexander, 2005).

Women's wear is not labelled to body measurements and is voluntary and this seems to be causing this issue within the clothing sector. Vanity sizing is where manufacturer deliberately alter the sizes to make the consumer fit into a smaller sizes, and this further complicates this complex issue of fit, (Gina Pisut, 2007).

A large difference exists and provides evidence for promotion of the development of a new sizing system. A study carried out states in Australia states that the sizing standards do not correspond with real size/shape combinations found in the population. In a study carried out, on a range of sizes from 8-24, you would expect the average size to be 16 however the average dress size was 11.1, and the average best fit was 15.6, (Honey, 2007).

2.5 Different Types of Body Shapes

There are four different types of shapes women can have. These are listed below in Table 2-2.

Rectangular	This is where the waist is less than 9 inches smaller than the hips or bust.
Pear	This is where the hips are 2 inches larger than busts or more. The above two are when women get older they tend to develop this shape.
Inverted Triangle	This is when busts are 3 or more inches bigger than the hips.
Hourglass	This is when the hips and bust are of equal measurement. Many young women's clothing is of this shape.

Table 2-2: The different types of body shapes of women (Cormack, 2005)

Manufacturers insist on making hourglass figured clothing, when studies reveal that only 8% of women are now have an hourglass figure. 46% were described as rectangular, 20% pear shaped and 14% are inverted triangles. Gina Pisut, (2007) carried out another study which revealed it seems women are more pears shaped and larger than 50 years ago. Her results revealed that 33.6% were an hourglass shape, 32.6% were rectangular, 28.1% were pear shaped.

The majority of a sample of 18-28 year olds in a US university were hour glass shaped who mainly shopped in boutiques/speciality stores, (Honey, 2007).

2.6 Selling Online

When selling online different aspects need to be taken into account. For a business to compete successfully in a global economy, they must measure and continuously improve the performance criteria of cost, quality, delivery, service, flexibility and reliability. The emergence of field logistics combined with the power of the internet has created significant scale opportunities for firms to successfully compete in a variety of arenas through the power of web-enhanced supply chain management systems.

The number of consumers buying online and the amount being spent by online buyers has been on the rise. The main reason people purchase online is to either save money or time. Shopping online also helps customers by ensuring that businesses can offer a wider variety of certain items, allow less likelihood of impulsive buying, offer convenience for those who do not have to drive to the mall or outlet stores, and offer product reviews. However according to a Purdue university customer survey, 48% of the respondents complained about the web site being slow, 31% about product unavailability, 30% about late deliveries and 25% about the inability to track lost items.

Internet based commerce threatens traditional mall owners, especially since online retailing has the potential to reduce tenant rents. Online consumer-decision making will continue to play a major role in everyday lives as well as if they continue to use this method for their purchasing, the future looks bright for ecommerce however if they decide to return to the old fashion way of actually walking into a retail outlet, then things may not be so good, (Smith, 2003).

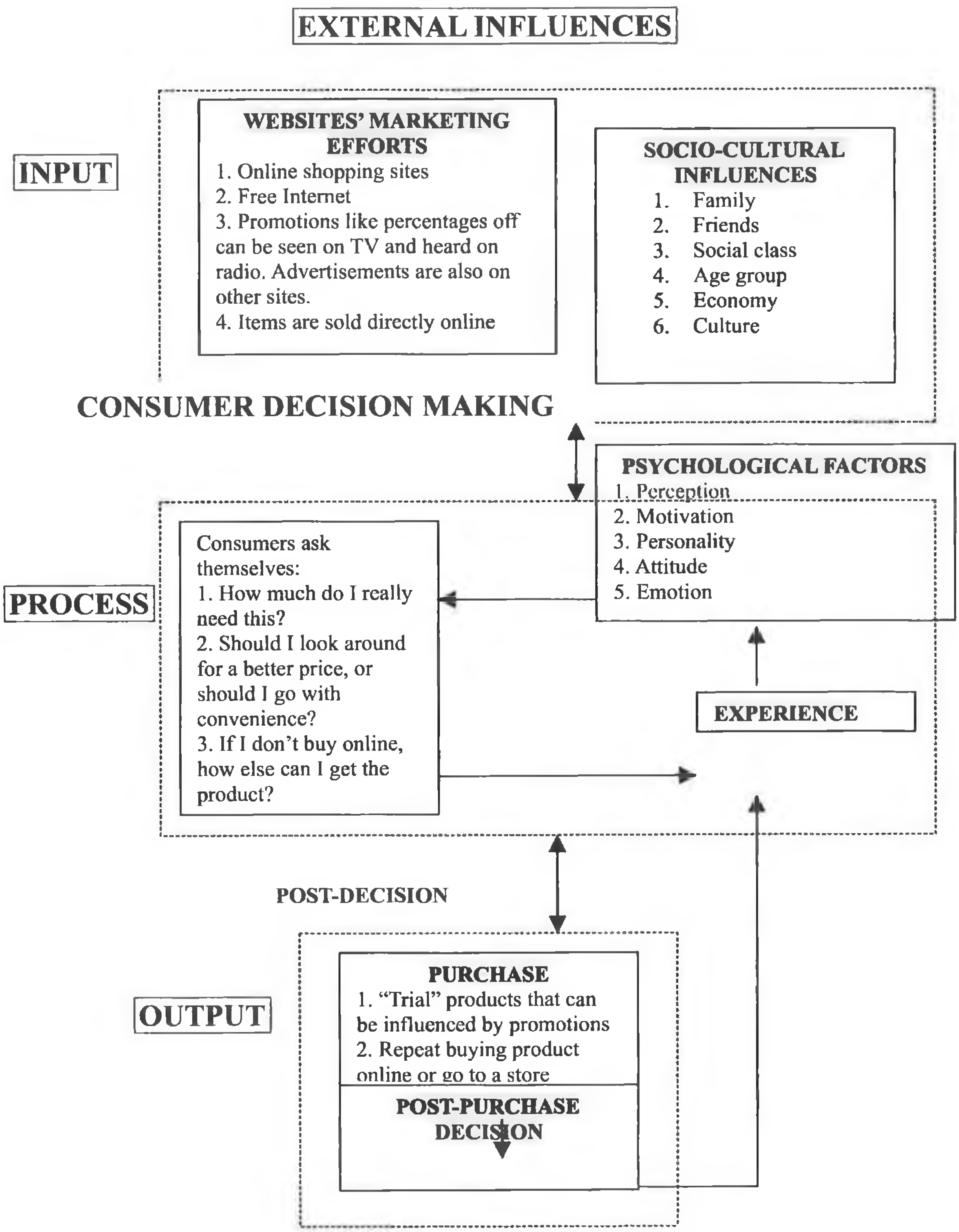

Figure 2-1: Proposed consumer decision making model for online shopping behaviour (Smith, 2003)

	The product: online shopping Web sites	The price: of the online Web sites	Product promotion through: cross advertising	Where the product is sold: Internet
Family	All family members can use online Web sites. Children frequent them because they tend to have more time	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	Online Web sites promote to families by having Web sites aimed directly toward family. Websites may include coupons on family movies bought in stores	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet
Friends	Friends influence consumers by relaying information on interesting Web sites they have bought from	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	Online Web sites promote to consumers" friends the same way they promote to anyone. With "buy one get one" sales. E-mails alerting them about sales, some of them even including coupons	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet
Social class	Social class of a consumer also affects what Web sites if any, particular consumers are frequenting	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	Consumers who frequent Web sites and actually buy items are far more likely to receive coupons and e-mails about promotions	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet
Age group	Consumers of a certain age group may tend to use the Internet more often	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	Older consumers who do not know how to use a computer are not going to get information concerning promotions	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet
Economy	The type of economy we are in also greatly affects willingness and ability to buy	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	If the economy is not in good standing, fewer promotions and coupons will be sent to consumers	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet
Culture	Those cultures that do not own computers will not buy from online Web sites	Almost all Web sites are free for anyone to browse	If there are cultures that do not believe in the Internet or cannot afford the Internet, they will not be given promotions	Online Web sites sell their products on the Internet

Figure 2-2: The basic factors defining the input stage of the model illustrated in Figure 2-1, (Smith, 2003)

	Questions consumers ask themselves when buying online
Motivation	Should I look around for a better price? If online shopping saves me time, should I shop online more often? How much do I really need this product?
Perception	I feel that this site seems pretty secure. It seems that the site has a good product but how can I be sure?
Personality	What types of Web sites are best suited to me for my personal buying preferences?
Attitude	I am pretty unsure about extra costs, should I really be buying items off the Internet? If I do not buy the item online, how else can I get it?
Emotions	The last time I ordered from the Internet I had a really bad experience. Should I try buying online again? What is the future of buying online? If Web sites get better should I invest more time in buying online?

Figure 2-3: Understanding the process stage of online consumer behavior, (Smith, 2003)

2.6.1 Business Innovation

The internet impacts business innovation by expanding reach and minimising the time lag to market. Many people in the UK now buy a product or service directly because of comments posted on a community by other consumers. This trend is fundamentally changing the relationship between businesses and their customers, particularly as the information is displayed in a very public, indeed global forum. Social networking is a huge craze at present and micro blogging is used to launch new products. Online communities play a key role in the future of marketing because they replace customer annoyance with engagement, and control with collaboration for those firms brave enough to take the plunge. The businesses that prosper are those who proactively embrace this new world, because they regard change as an opportunity rather than as a threat to be avoided at all costs, (Lisa Harris, 2010).

M.B Kolesar, (2000) states that the internet is a poor service delivery medium, it lacks the capacity for direct personal interaction enjoyed by non-internet based services. The characteristics of a specific service in terms, for instance, of the degree of contact with employees, customisation, and personalisation required Bowen, (1990) and the associated degree of consumers risk and variability perceptions needed to be taken into consideration, when looking at the purchases of services online, (KB Murray, 1990). We need to go beyond broad categorisations and we need to improve our understanding of the drivers and barriers to shopping online for a wide range of goods and services. Since face to face interaction with service personnel not only is fundamental to the delivery of some services, but it is also considered to be a significant risk reliever.

Familiarity with the brand and general experience with internet purchasing has been recognised as important facilitators of online shopping for tangible goods, (A.V Citrin, 2003) (R.E Goldsmith, 2002). Previous literature has suggested that consumers should find it easier to purchase services rather than tangible goods online, as services do not require a tactile input prior to buying (Vijayasarathy, 2003). We would expect consumers intentions to purchase a service online to be lower for more customised, personel services, requiring moderate too high contact with the provider. Conversly, we expect consumers intentions to purchase a service online to be higher for standardised, non personal services offerings, requiring moderate contact with the provider, (M.B Kolesar, 2000).

2.6.2 Business Recognisable Online

Consumers are more likely to shop online for goods with well known brands and are more likely to shop from well known retailers, even if they carry lesser brands (A.K Kau, 2003), (K.S Lee, 2003). Traditional retailers will therefore have an advantage over start ups in electronic retailing since they can capitalise on thier reputation as risk reliever, reducing the risk aversion of some online consumers, (K.S Lee, 2003).

The complete lack of physicality in buying straight from the internet could make consumers feel uneasy and uncertain and heighten risk perceptions, (G Tulay, 2002). Consumers with a high need for inter personal contact will tend to avoid self service technology such as the internet, (P.A Dabholkar, 2002), (ML Meuter, 2005).

Burke, (2002) found that young people under 25 are more interested in using new technologies to find out about new products, search for product information, and compare and evaluate alternatives. It also seemed that consumers with higher education appear to be more comfortable using non-store channels to find out new products, search for product information, purchase products and have the merchandise delivered. Phone contact with the service provider is considered by consumers to be as good as face-to-face contact in obtaining the relevant information, (F Dall'olmo Riley, 2009).

For such differentiated products consumers will often perceive great variations in quality and therefore perceive shopping online as more risky than offline purchasing (D Grewal, 2004). In light of this, it comes as a surprise that statistics (Demark, 2007) show that clothing is one of the most common product categories purchased online. Moreover, statistics reveal that clothing is one of very few categories with more women than men purchasing online, (Demark, 2007).

Research also found evidence that women are more involved in fashion and clothing than men. Dennis, (2002) suggests that many consumers regard offline shopping to be more enjoyable than online shopping. Consumers will often characterise clothing as a "feel-and-touch product", requiring high sensory evaluation and/or trial to judge its quality (E.Y Kim, 2004). Online shopping environments obviously are less efficient than traditional stores in providing such an opportunity to the consumer. Many consumers, particularly those who need advice from personnel, may therefore perceive it as more difficult to select items online than offline.

2.6.3 Women have different shopping characteristics to men when purchasing

Women are more "shopping for fun" oriented compared to men, the latter being more "quick shoppers", which in turn may have an effect on their respective perceived benefit or barriers when purchasing clothing online. However, the reduced possibility of obtaining personnel advice when buying clothing in an online setting makes it more difficult for consumers to select items, which subsequently may prevent them from purchasing. The significant mediating effect of "difficulty in selecting items" suggests that online retailers should consider offering personnel advice via chat rooms, in order to provide guidance to consumers. Guidance, that successfully reduces perceived difficulty in selecting items, is likely to increase consumer purchasing. It seems plausible to expect need for advice and perceived difficulty in selecting items to be more pronounced when consumers purchase a party dress as compared to purchasing a pair of socks, (Hansen, 2009).

Online retail sales account for a small fraction of total retail sales; it is the fastest growing segment of retailing, outpacing the growth rate of retailing in general (U.S Census, 2004). In early online retailing, a web presence and low prices were believed to be key drivers of success. More recently beyond having a simple online presence and low prices, service has become essential for creating customer loyalty and improving customer satisfaction, (Yang, 2001), (V.A Zeithaml, 2002). Apparel is one of the key items sold in online retailing. Our study was limited to online apparel web sites, (Internet retailer, 2003).

2.6.4 Efficiency and Privacy

Empirical evidence shows that poor service quality negatively affects online retailers such that over 60 percent of online shoppers exit prior to completion of the transaction due to factors such as distrust of shopping and handling charges (www.shop.org, 2001). Incomplete product information (for example missing links and non-working buttons) leads to customer frustration and in turn to exiting. Given the difficulties related to the acquisition of customers in online retailing, it is crucial for online retailers to retain customers (F.F Reichheld, 2000). Nonetheless, some online retailers lose a valuable opportunity to build loyalty because of poor service quality (Wachter, 2002).

Evidence suggests the importance of efficiency in online retailing. Convenience and the saving of time have been frequently considered the most important reasons to shop online (C. Ranganathan, 2002). Difficulty in searching and slow download and display time lead consumers to leave those sites and visit other sites. With regard to efficiency, Santos, (2003) asserted that it is crucial to provide a well-organized, well-structured, navigable site with concise and understandable content, terms, and conditions plus an easy-to-remember URL address.

The degree to which the site is safe and protects customer information and the issue of privacy has been a critical issue in online retailing (A. Parasuraman, 2005), (A. Sharma, 2004). Because of perceptions of risk related to misuse of personal information, many people are still unwilling to buy products from the internet. Due to heightened concern with privacy, online retailers are becoming more aware of the importance of providing consumer privacy policies, (C. Ranganathan, 2002). When a customer has a problem, a process to contact a customer service agent is vital. Previous research has stressed the negative impact on attitudes towards a web site caused by unprompted or delayed customer inquiry services, (M Wolfinbarger, 2003).

Information is also an important dimension of online service quality (M Wolfinbarger, 2003). This is particularly true for online apparel retailers because online shoppers cannot try on the garment to check fit, texture, or color. Due to a need for an adequate amount of product information to make a purchase decision, online shoppers largely depend on information available on the web site. Unless information necessary for online apparel purchase is available on the web site, online shoppers will exit the site and visit a competitor's web site (J.H Song, 2003).

In addition, due to the absence of salespeople to answer shoppers' questions, it is especially critical for online apparel retailers to have necessary information available on the web site (M Kim, 2005). J.G Lynch, (2000) found that the ability to find necessary information on a web site, especially about price and quality, positively influenced satisfaction with the online shopping experience, the product purchased, and patronage intention. Both visual and verbal information are used by consumers to form product inferences (Smith R. , 1991).

For payment options, more than 40 percent of web sites accepted only credit cards. Store cards were accepted on about one-fourth of the web sites; gift certificates were accepted even less often. All methods were accepted in less than one-fifth of the web sites. According to a recent Cyber Source report, the number of payment options offered on North American web sites was directly related to sales conversion suggesting that online apparel retailers should accept multiple payment options.

Making online service attributes available that reduce consumers' concerns for example explicit privacy and security policy and increase confidence for example business ethnics is critical for success of online retailing, especially for retailers without strong brand names (M Kim J. K., 2006).

2.6.5 Presentation of Webpage

Graphic style is another important service dimension for apparel retail web sites. Graphic styles include color, layout, and print size, number of photographs, graphics, and animation. Researchers have found that graphic styles influence consumer perceptions of online shopping (M Kim J. K., 2006). In the context of a mock apparel retail web site found that aspects of graphic style affected satisfaction with the site. Since apparel is a product that requires sensory evaluation, various visual presentation techniques are important to online apparel retailers.

Physical buildings and facilities influence consumer confidence in traditional retailing (M Kim J. K., 2006), and similar effects are likely to hold in online retailing. Therefore, the use of a picture of a company's founder, a physical building, employees, or business partners may be beneficial for online retailers in the absence of a physical presence. However, pictures were found infrequently in web sites analyzed.

Most research and industry reports consistently emphasize easy navigation as a critical factor in online retailing and suggest that web sites with easy to read and clear content attract customers to shop more and buy more. However, only about half the analyzed web sites provided such services which make online shopping easy. The e-billing service was available on very few web sites. Many web sites failed to facilitate convenient shopping for customers.

When shoppers are notified about stock outs after selecting an item to purchase, they exhibit stronger negative emotions and lower purchase intent than when notified before selection. Order status tracking service was available at about 75 percent of the web sites, commonly in text.

2.6.6 Services provided

Content analysis showed that alteration service was seldom available. Deferred billing service was also seldom available, (internet retailer, 2003d). Free shipping was infrequently available, although industry reports show that free shipping is effective and has been used successfully by several online retailers such as Amazon.com (M Kim J. K., 2006).

Email service was frequently available and commonly in text only. Email to a friend service was available on nearly half the web sites, predominantly in text. This kind of service is akin to personal information sources such as word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth communication is perceived as a credible source of information and thus has a significant influence on one's purchase decision-making and a company's reputation (M Kim J. K., 2006). Thus, providing such an opportunity to consumers might be smart for online retailers.

Overall, service attributes that accommodate individuals' specific needs were often unavailable in many web sites. Unlike store shopping, customers cannot easily request specific services due to the absence of salespeople in online retailing. Accordingly, online retailers may want to anticipate needed services and make them available before they are sought after, (M Kim J. K., 2006).

2.7 Conclusion

This literature review illustrate that a change is needed within the apparel sector in relation clothing sizes. It illustrates that the clothing size models being used by apparel companies are out dated and that this in returns effect women psychologically. This literature also states that women's satisfaction levels in relation to ready to wear clothing is low and many have to get alteration made to their garments after purchasing the garment. Jeans seems to be the garment would have most difficulty finding the proper fit to. In relation to an online customised service, the literature states that it is recommended that a clothing manufacturer be somewhat recognised before using the web to sell its services. And finally it states that more are using the internet to purchase services which can mean that many more businesses will be carrying out their business via the web.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The clothing needs of women in regards to customised clothing and satisfaction with ready to wear clothing are analysed in this exploratory study. This chapter explains the theoretical framework, hypotheses, the selection and the description of the sample, development of the instrument and administration, data collection procedure, and the treatment of the data.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Many different theories were used for this research when drafting the questionnaire. A study by (Alexander, 2005) called "the clothing fit preference of young female adult consumers "stated that Fit in a garment is one important factor that contributes to the confidence and comfort of the wearer. Well fitted clothes are considered vital to an individual's psychological and social well being. According to Postrel, (1993) in her study "right size me" indicate Women have difficulty finding the right fit, and what manufacturers need to realise is that sizes maybe standardised but bodies are not.

Kennedy, (2009) identifies that as the fit of women's clothing is inconsistent and does not conform to an acceptable size standard, it generates much confusion and frustration for women when determining clothing size. Rose Otieno, (2005) also identified that there are Still a lack of size ranges in desirable styles and colours available in retail outlets.

Alexander, (2005) carried out another study which revealed that 64% of the respondents had to alter their ready to wear garments on a regular basis to achieve the desired fit. 54% were satisfied to mostly unsatisfied with the fit of ready to wear garments. This shows that substantial problems exist in the ready to wear market and are consistent with the Goldsberry study.

Cormack, (2005) study also revealed that women's waistline have expanded 6 inches since the 1950's.These study were carried out both in the U.S and the U.K but as the Irish have a similar lifestyle and eating habit, that they mirrored each other.

Other research carried out revealed that more than half of the female population in the US cannot find clothing to fit and that it is the third most frequent reason for not making an apparel purchase. Women sometimes have to try on up to 20 pairs of jeans before they get a good fit, Alexander, (2005).

Gina Pisut, (2007) again identified that if women experience many occasions where there clothing does not fit then this cause them to feel unsatisfied, and it is most likely that they will not return to that shop and that it will affect both their self esteem and self perceived physical attractiveness.

3.3 Objectives of the Research

In order to accomplish the objectives of the research the following hypotheses were generated based upon the review of literature.

a) Is there a market for customised clothing for Irish Females?

b) The garment of clothing women have most difficulty finding the proper fit for?

c) The percentage of women in Ireland who already avail of customised clothing services?

d) The method Irish women would prefer to buy customised clothing, if the service was available?

e) Would Irish women buy customised clothing if the service were available online?

3.7 Why purchase Customised Clothing

In question 2 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked why they purchase customised clothing. The options given included “difficulty in finding clothing to fit”, “just want to get the perfect fit” or “other”. A blank space was provided for respondents to specify if there was another reason for purchasing customised clothing that was not listed in the options given.

3.8 How often the respondent gets their Clothes Customised

In question 3 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked how often they purchased customised clothing. The options given for this question included “monthly”, “yearly”, “once off” or “other”. A blank space was provided for the option “other” so the respondent could specify how often they purchase customised clothing if none of the options given previously were accurate for them.

3.9 The Garment which respondents get customised most often

In question 4 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked which garment they would get customised most often. The options given included “Trousers”, “Dress”, “Top”/”Blouse”, “Jacket”, “Skirt”, “Jeans”, “Jumper”/ “Sweater”, “Suit”, “All of the above” and “other”. A blank space was provided with the option “other” so the respondent could state an item if it was not included on the list.

3.10 How Customised Clothing is purchased

In question 5 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked how they purchased their customised clothing. The options included “Online”, “Retail outlet”, “Dress maker” and “other”. A blank space was provided with the option “other” so respondents could state if they purchase their customised clothing elsewhere.

3.11 Why respondents do not buy customised clothing

In question 6 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked why they did not purchase customised clothing. The options included: "too expensive", "difficult to find", "too time consuming", "all" and "other". A blank space was provided with the option "other" so respondents could state another reason why they would not purchase customised clothing other than those options listed above.

3.12 The garment respondents have most difficulty finding a proper fit for

In question 7 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked what garment(s) they have a lot of difficulty finding a proper fit to. The options included "Jeans", "Dress", "Pants", "Skirt", "Top" and "other". A blank space was provided with the option "other" so respondents could state a garment not listed in the options provided which they have the most difficulty finding a proper fit to.

3.13 Would respondents use the service in the future?

In question 8 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they would use this customised service in the future. The options given were: "Yes", "No" or "Maybe".

3.14 Which garment would respondents be most interested in purchasing online

In question 9 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked what garment they would be most inclined to purchase if the service was available online or through a retail outlet. They options given included: "Jeans", "Dress", "Pants", "Skirt", "Top" and "other". A blank space was provided with the option "other" so respondents could state another garment not listed in the options provided which they may have difficulty with.

3.15 The maximum price respondents would pay for a customised garment

In question 10 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked the maximum price they would pay in Euros for a customised garment. The options given included: "40 or less", "50", "60", "70", "80", "100", "150", "200", "300", "400" and "negotiable". A blank space was provided with the option "negotiable" so respondents could state how much they are willing to pay if the amount was not listed within the options provided.

3.16 The preferred method for respondents purchasing Customised Clothing

In question 11 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked their preferred method of purchasing customised clothing. The options given included: "Online", "Retail", "Dressmaker" and "other". A blank space was provided with the option "other" so respondents could state other way that they purchase their customised clothing other than those option listed. A comment box was left after this question so respondents could express their feelings on this issue if they wished.

3.17 Demographic characteristics

In question 12 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked the age category they fit into. The options given included: "16-23", "24-35", "36-45", "46-65" and "65+".

In question 13 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked what type of employment they were in. The options given included: "Unemployed", "Part time", "Full time", "Contract" and "Casual". They were also asked to specify the job.

In question 14 the respondents were asked how much they spend per month on clothing. The options given included: "Less than 100", "100-250", "250-400", "400-600", and "600+".

3.18 Data collection procedure

The draft questionnaire was pre-tested for ease of use and interpretability by respondents. Participants were a convenient sample of six female students from Galway Mayo Institute Of Technology. Additional adjustments were made in terms of rewording and reordering of questions to enhance clarification. The dependability of the draft was also tested before the final administration.

Administration of the final questionnaire occurred in March, 2010. The questionnaire was handed to each female respondent randomly in the quayside shopping centre in Sligo. Each individual participated in the study on a voluntary basis.

3.19 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were coded into a computer system utilizing statistical software (Microsoft Excel). Data were statistically analysed for application to the specific hypotheses of the study.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, were utilised to define the characteristic of the sample. The “different means to purchase clothing” and “what garment women would be most likely to get customised” was analysed using descriptive statistics. Pivot tables were used to analyse the statistics.

3.20 Conclusion

The method for gathering information used for this research was questionnaires. The questions for the questionnaire were carefully chosen after the literature review was complete. There were fourteen questions in total on this questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Background

The purpose of this research was to investigate if there was a market for customised clothing for Irish females and to determine if Irish female would prefer to purchase their customised clothing online. Questionnaires were randomly distributed to sixty Irish women at quayside shopping centre in Sligo town in March 2010. All of the sixty questionnaires were completed accurately. The final database was 60 women aged 16+.

Frequency distributions were tabulated to describe the sample in terms of demographic characteristics, the purchasing outlets women used to purchase their clothing most often, how many of the sample purchased customised clothing, how often these women purchase customised clothing, what garment they would get customised, how they would purchase the customised clothing, why women do not purchase customised clothing, what garment women have most difficulty getting the proper fit for, would they purchased customised clothing online and what is the maximum price a respondent would pay for a customised garment. Pivot tables were used to illustrate the frequencies and percentages.

4.2 Reliability of Scales

There is a virtual consensus among researchers that, a scale needs to be reliable to possess practical utility. Conceptually, reliability is defined as "the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results"(peter,1979,p6). Peterson, (1994) conducted research to identify "acceptable" or sufficient" level of reliability purposes. Peterson, (1994) indicated that the required degree of reliability may vary depending upon a function of research purpose, whether the research is exploratory, applied, and so forth. In his study, the most commonly practised level of reliability for scales measuring involvement scale.

4.3 Description of Final Sample

In March 2010, the questionnaire was distributed randomly to 60 females in quayside shopping centre in Sligo town. Every fifth woman was picked randomly and a final database was composed of 60 women.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics - Age

As presented in Table 4-1, the age of the respondents in this study ranged from sixteen years to sixty five years and over. The mean age of the respondents is 37.6 years. The largest percentage of respondents fell into the “16-23” age bracket with thirty two percent (nineteen respondents), followed by the “36-45” age category with twenty seven percent (sixteen respondents), the 246-65” age category with twenty one (thirteen respondents), the “24-35” with thirteen percent (eight respondents) and the “65+” age category with seven percent (four respondents).

4.5 Employment

In relation to employment, the largest percentage of respondents worked in full time positions with 48% (twenty nine respondents), 18% (eleven respondents) were students, 13% (eight respondents) were part time workers, 12% (seven respondents) were unemployed, 7% (4 respondents) were retired and 2% (one respondent) had a contract. All this information can be seen in table 4-2.

As outlined in Table 4-3, the largest percentage of unemployed respondents is within the “36-45” age categories with 57% (four out of the seven respondents). The largest percentage of part time respondents is within the “36-45” age categories with 37.8% (three out of the eight respondents). The largest percentage of “full time” respondents is within the “46-65” age categories 34% (ten out of twenty nine respondents). 100% (All the eleven) of the “student” respondents are within the “16-23” age categories. The one “contract” respondent is within the “36-45” age categories. Of the retired respondents, the largest percentage is within the “65+” age category with 75% (three out the four respondents).

CHAPTER IV

Age Categories
16-23
24-35
36-45
46-65
65+
Total

Frequency	Percent
19	32
8	13
16	27
13	21
4	7
60	**100**

Table 4-1: Age of respondents

Code	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed	7	12
Part time	8	13
Full time	29	48
student	11	18
contract	1	2
retired	4	7
Total	**60**	100

Table 4-2: Employment of respondent/age categories

Code	16-23	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	Frequency
Unemployed	2	0	4	0	1	7
Part time	1	2	3	2	0	8
Full time	5	6	8	10	0	29
student	11	0	0	0	0	11
contract			1			1
retired				1	3	4
Total	19					19

Table 4-3*:* Age group/Employment categories

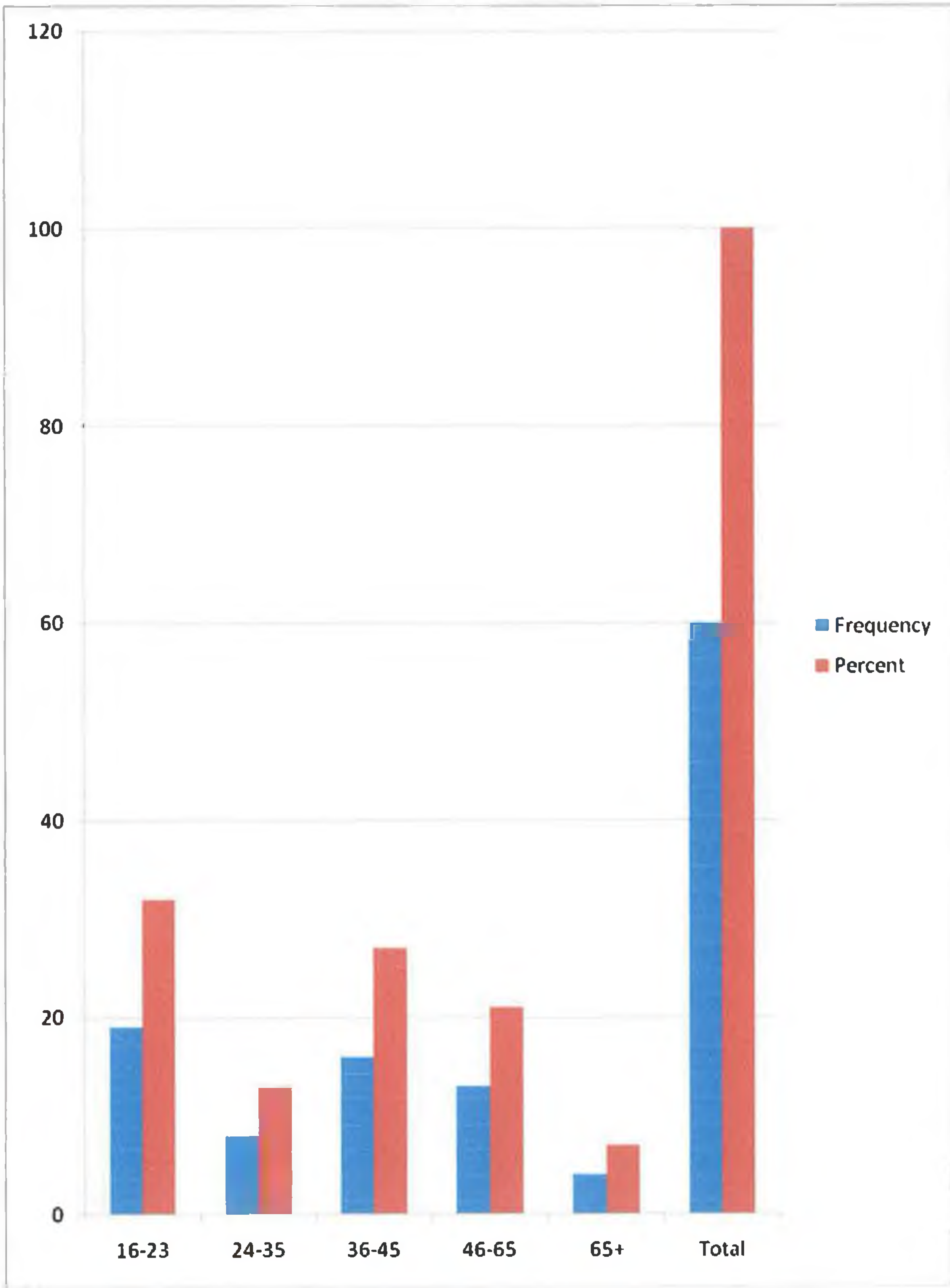

Figure 4-1: Age of Respondents

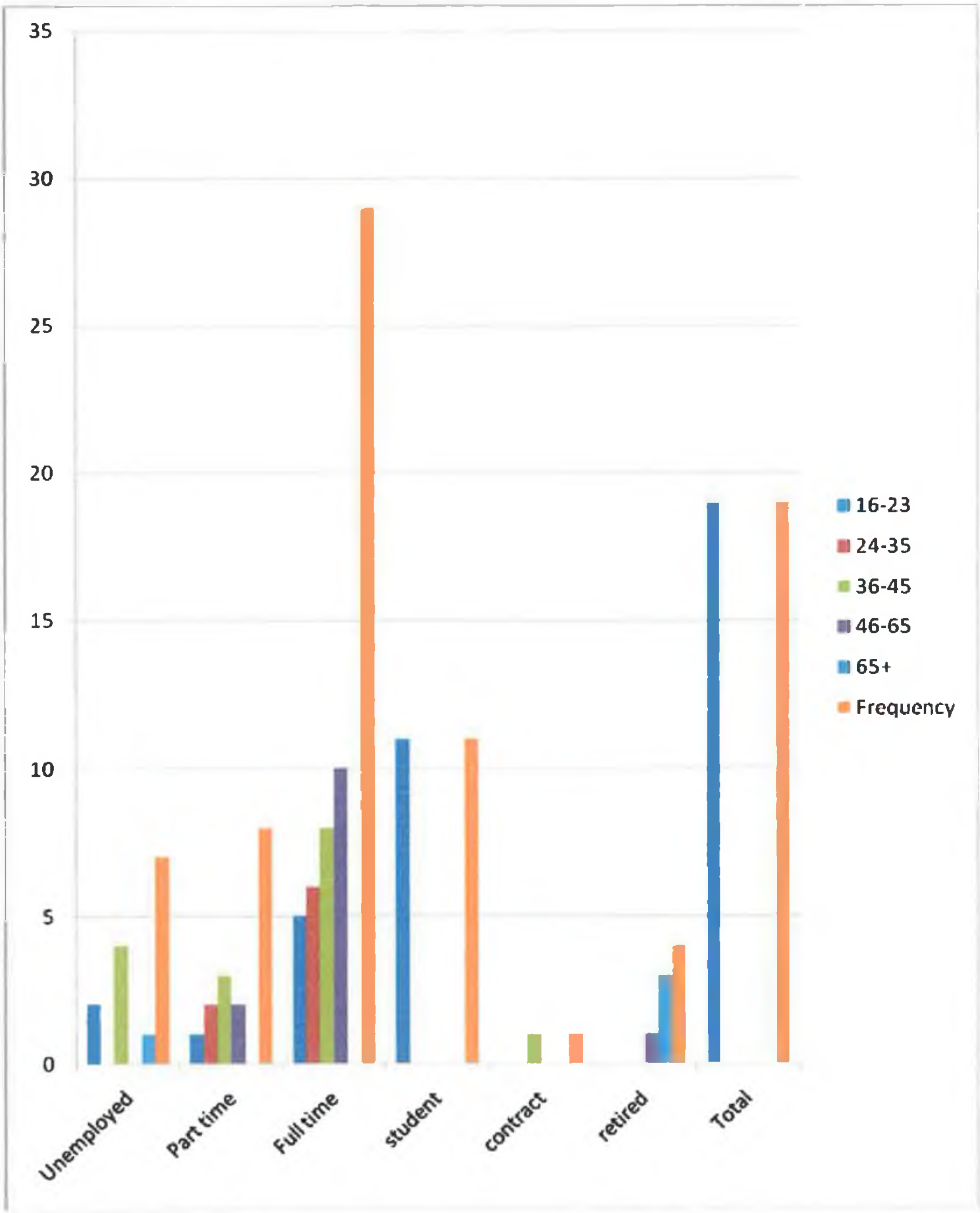

Figure 4-2: **Employment of respondent/age categories**

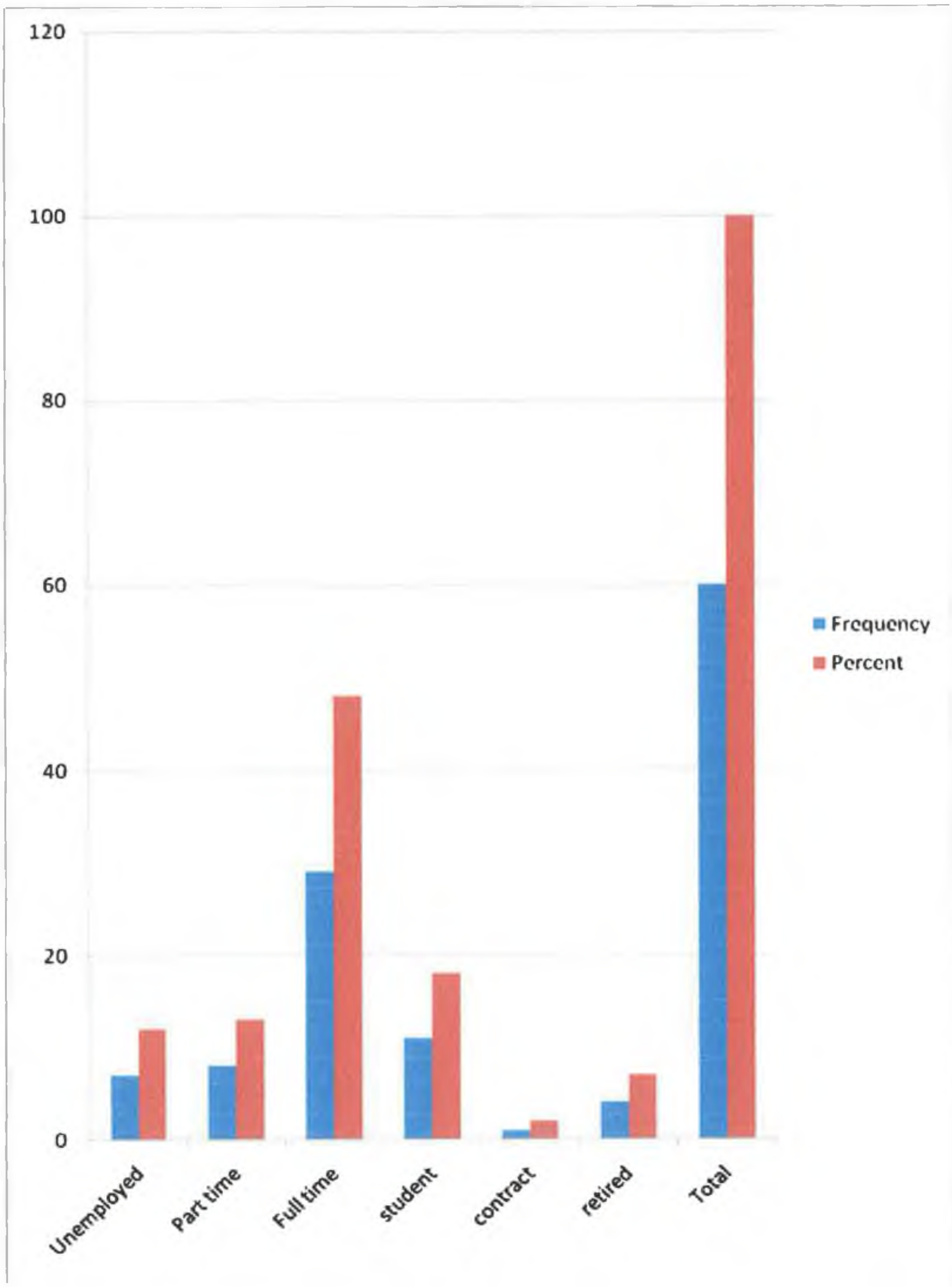

Figure 4-3: Employment status

4.5.1 Monthly Expenditure on Clothing

The respondents expenditure on clothing ranged from less than "one hundred" euro to "six hundred" euro per month. The largest percentage was within the "less than one hundred" category with fifty three percent (thirty two respondents), followed by "one hundred to two hundred and fifty euro" category, with forty two percent (twenty five respondents), the "four hundred to six hundred euro" category with three percent (two respondents) and "two hundred and fifty to four hundred euro" category with two percent (one respondent).

The largest percentage of respondents who spent less than one hundred euro was within the "16-23" age categories at thirty seven point five percent (12 of the 32 respondents). The 32% (8 of the 25 respondents) of respondents who spent one hundred to two hundred and fifty euro was within the "24-35" age categories. One hundred percent of the respondents spent two hundred and fifty to four hundred euro monthly on clothing is within the "36-45" age categories and the fifty percent of respondents who spent four hundred to six hundred euro was within the "16-23" and "36-45" age category. This can seen on the table and histogram below.

Code	Frequency	Percent
less than 100	32	53
100-250	25	42
250-400	1	2
400-600	2	3
600+	0	0
Total	60	100

Table 4-4*:* How much the respondents spend a month on clothing

Code	16-23	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	Frequency
less than 100	12	1	8	7	4	32
100-250	6	8	5	6	0	25
250-400			1			1
400-600	1		1			2
600+						0
Total	19	9	15	13	4	60

Table 4-5: How much each age category spends

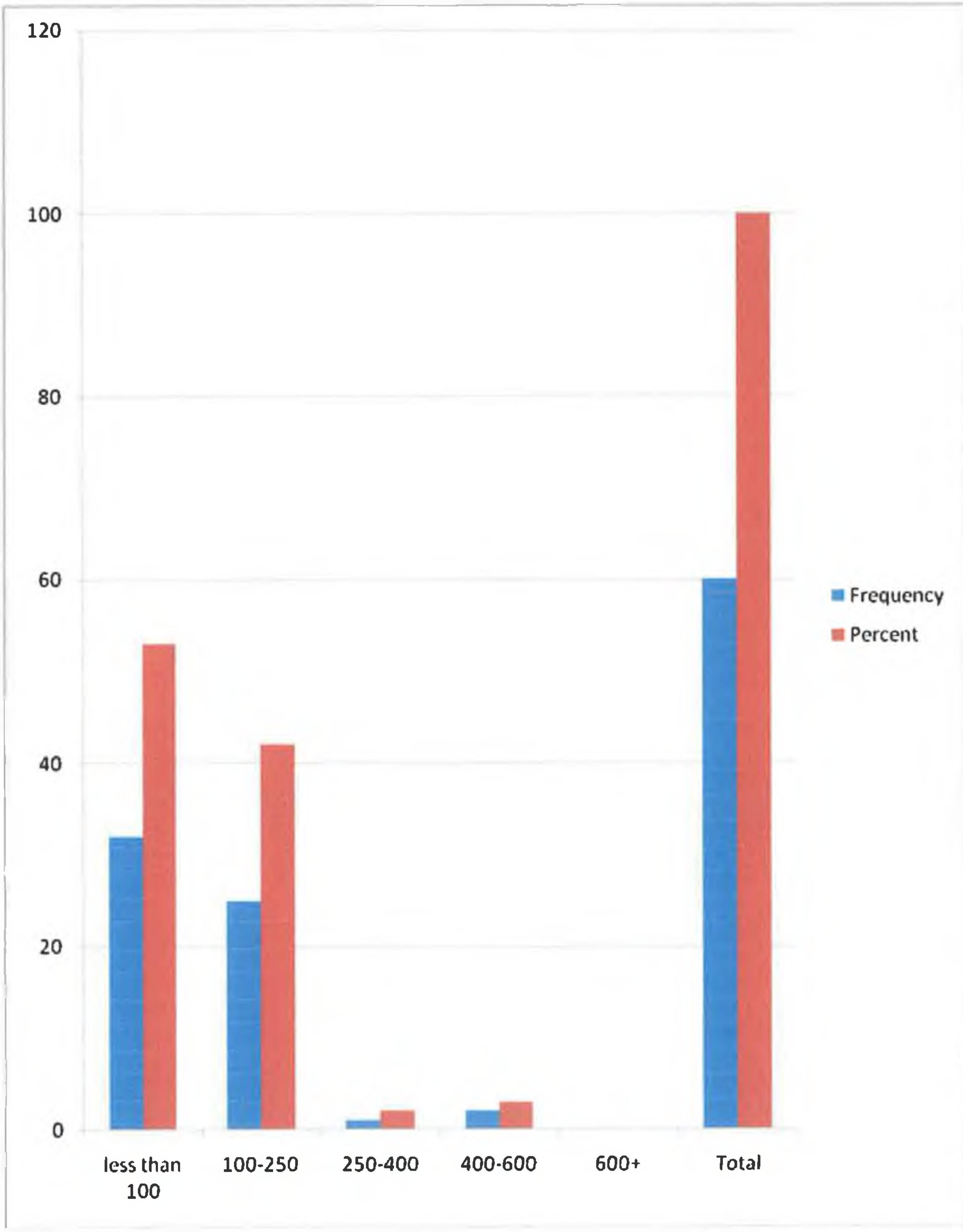

Figure 4-4: How much the respondents spend a month on clothing

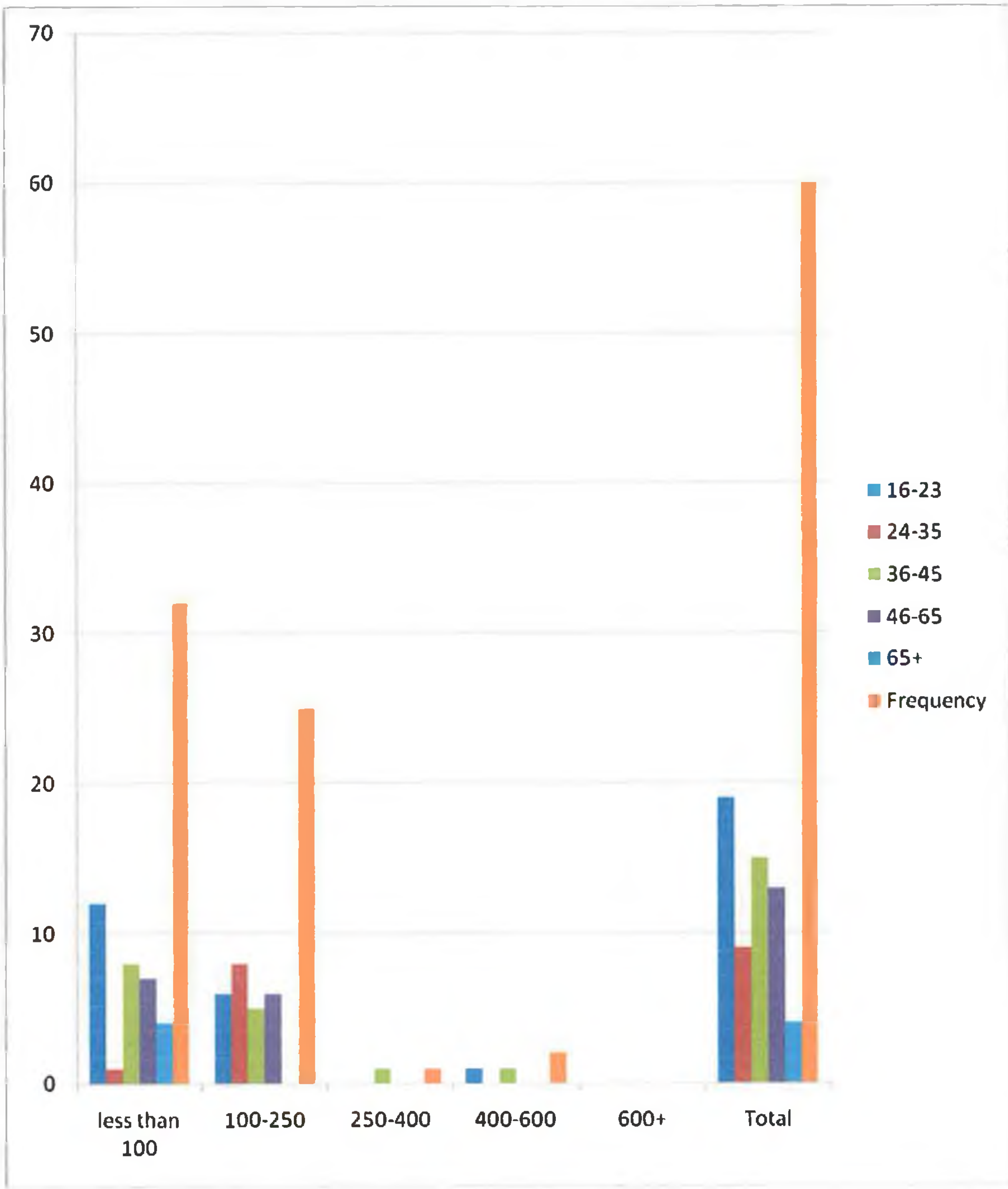

Figure 4-5: How much each age category spends

4.6 How Respondents Purchase Their Clothing Most Often

The largest percentage of respondents purchase their clothing within a retail outlet, with ninety percent (fifty four respondents out the sixty), followed by seven percent (four of the sixty respondents) purchasing their clothing from all the options given, one respondent purchased clothing online and one respondent purchased clothing from charity shops solely.

The largest percentage of respondents who purchased their clothing in retail outlets most often were within the "16-23" age categories with thirty three percent (eighteen of the fifty four respondents), followed by twenty four percent (thirteen out of the fifty four respondents) the in the "36-45" age categories.

The two percent of respondents who purchased their clothing "online" were within the "46-65" age categories. Seven percent of the respondents who purchased their clothing using "all the options" were within the "36-45" age categories. Two percent of the respondent who used charity shops to purchase their clothing was within the "36-45" age categories.

Code	Frequency	Percent
Shops	54	**90**
Customised	0	**0**
Online	1	**1.5**
All	4	**7**
Other	1	**1.5**
Total	**60**	**100**

Table4-6: How the respondents shop

Age group	16-23	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	Total
Shops	18	7	13	12	4	**54**
customised						**0**
online				1		**1**
All	1	1	2			**4**
other			1			**1**
Total	**19**	**8**	**16**	**13**	**4**	**60**

Table 4-7 : How the different age categories shop

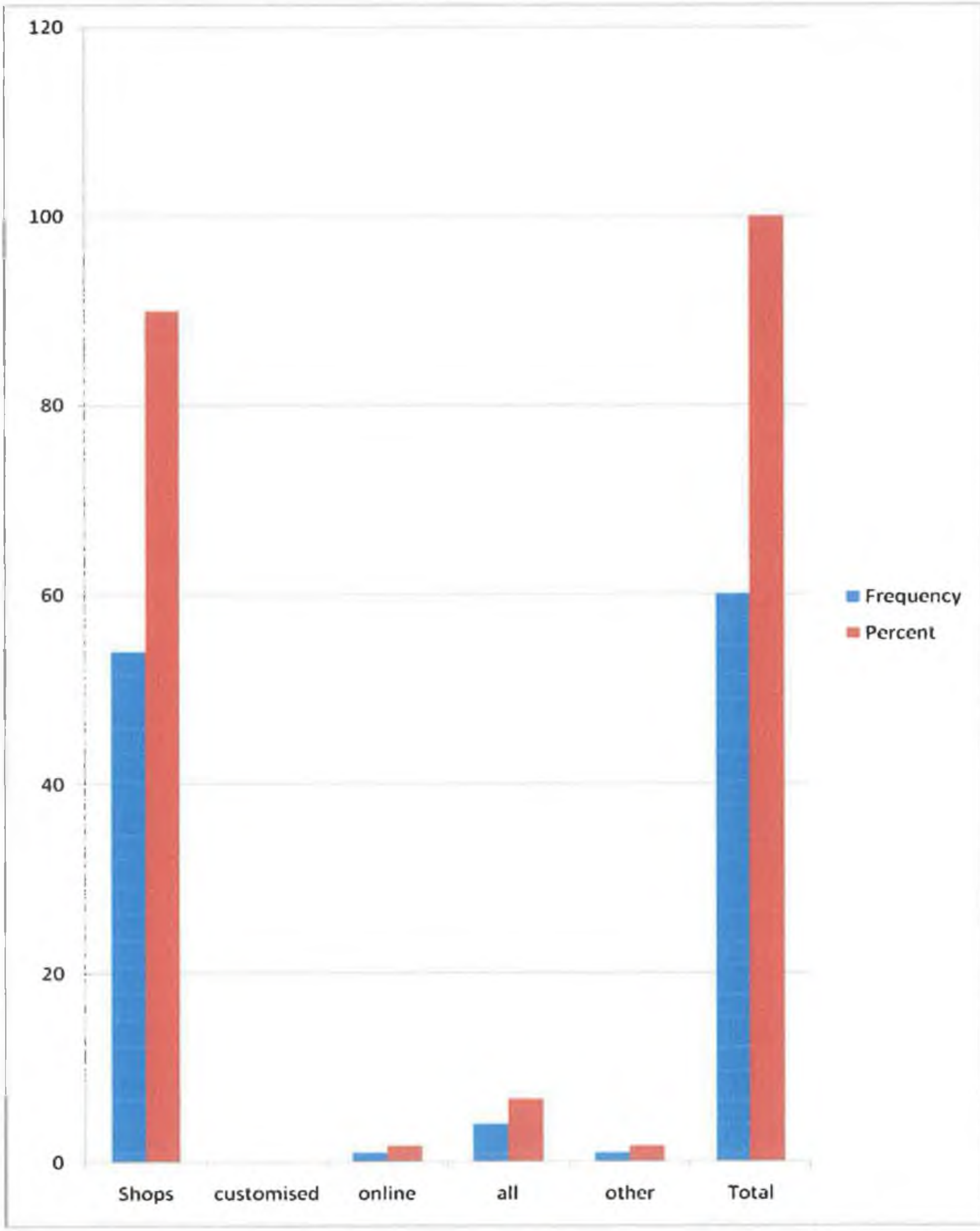

Figure 4-6: How respondents shop

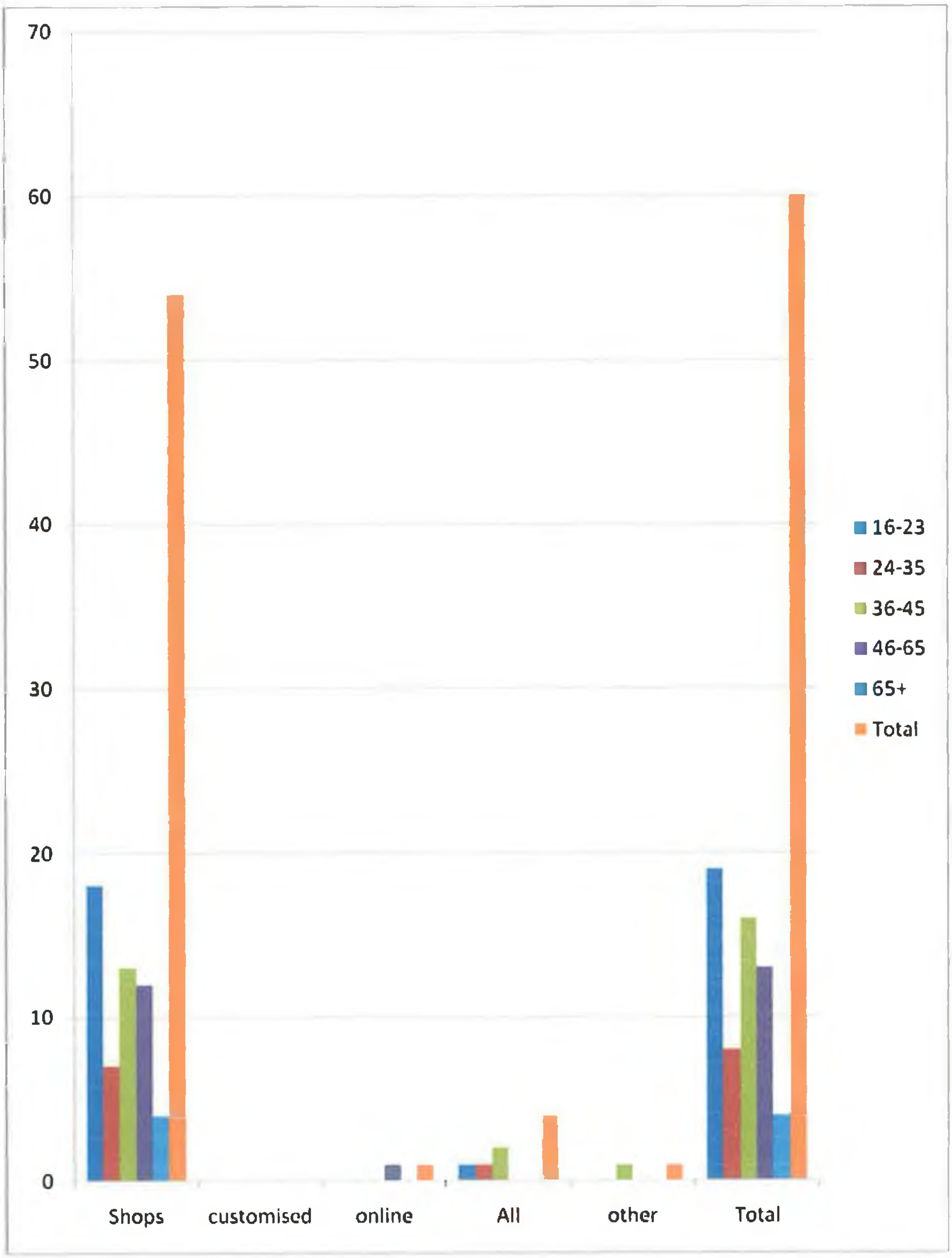

Figure 4-7: How the different age categories shop

4.7 Why Respondents Purchase Customised Clothing

Out of all the respondents surveyed only thirteen percent (eight of the sixty respondents) purchase customised clothing. Fifty percent (four of the eight respondents) of those respondents who purchase customised clothing do so because they have "difficulty finding the proper fit" and the other fifty percent (four of the eight respondents) who use this customised service do so because they "want the perfect fit". An "other" option was given to the respondents however no respondent used this option.

4.8 How often Respondents get their Clothing Customised

Fifty percent (four of the eight respondents) of the respondents who use a customised service get their clothing customised only "on a once off occasion". Twenty five percent (two of the eight respondents) of these respondents uses the service "monthly" and the final twenty five percent (two of the eight respondents) only use the service "Yearly". An "other" option was given to the respondents however no respondent used this option.

Code	Frequency	Percent
Difficulty with fit	4	**50**
want perfect fit	4	**50**
Other	0	**0**
Total	**8**	**100**

Table 4-8: Why respondents purchase customised clothing

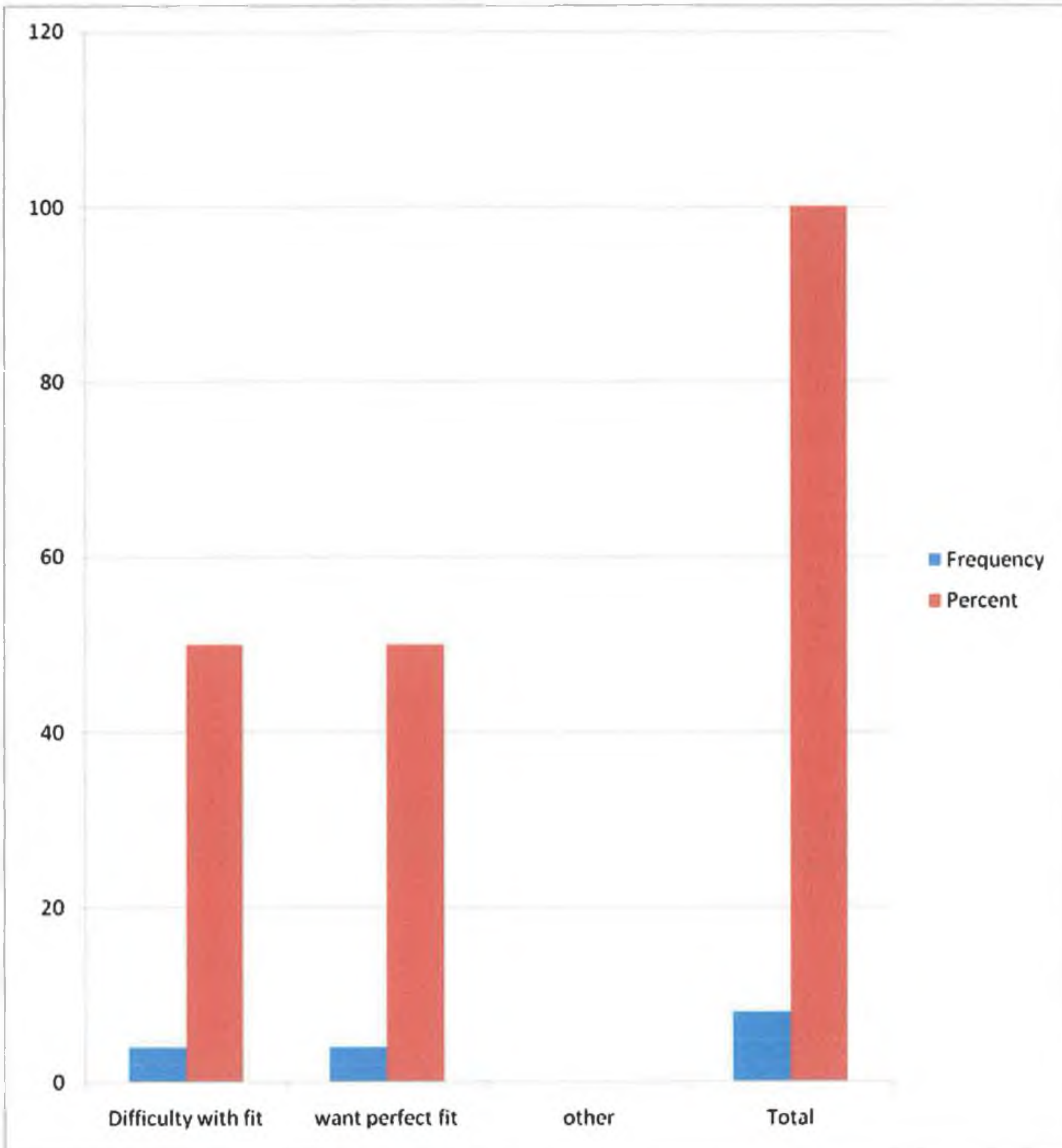

Figure 4-8: Why respondents purchase customised clothing

Code	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	2	25
Yearly	2	25
once off	4	50
other	0	0
Total	8	100

Table 4-9: How often respondents get their clothing customised

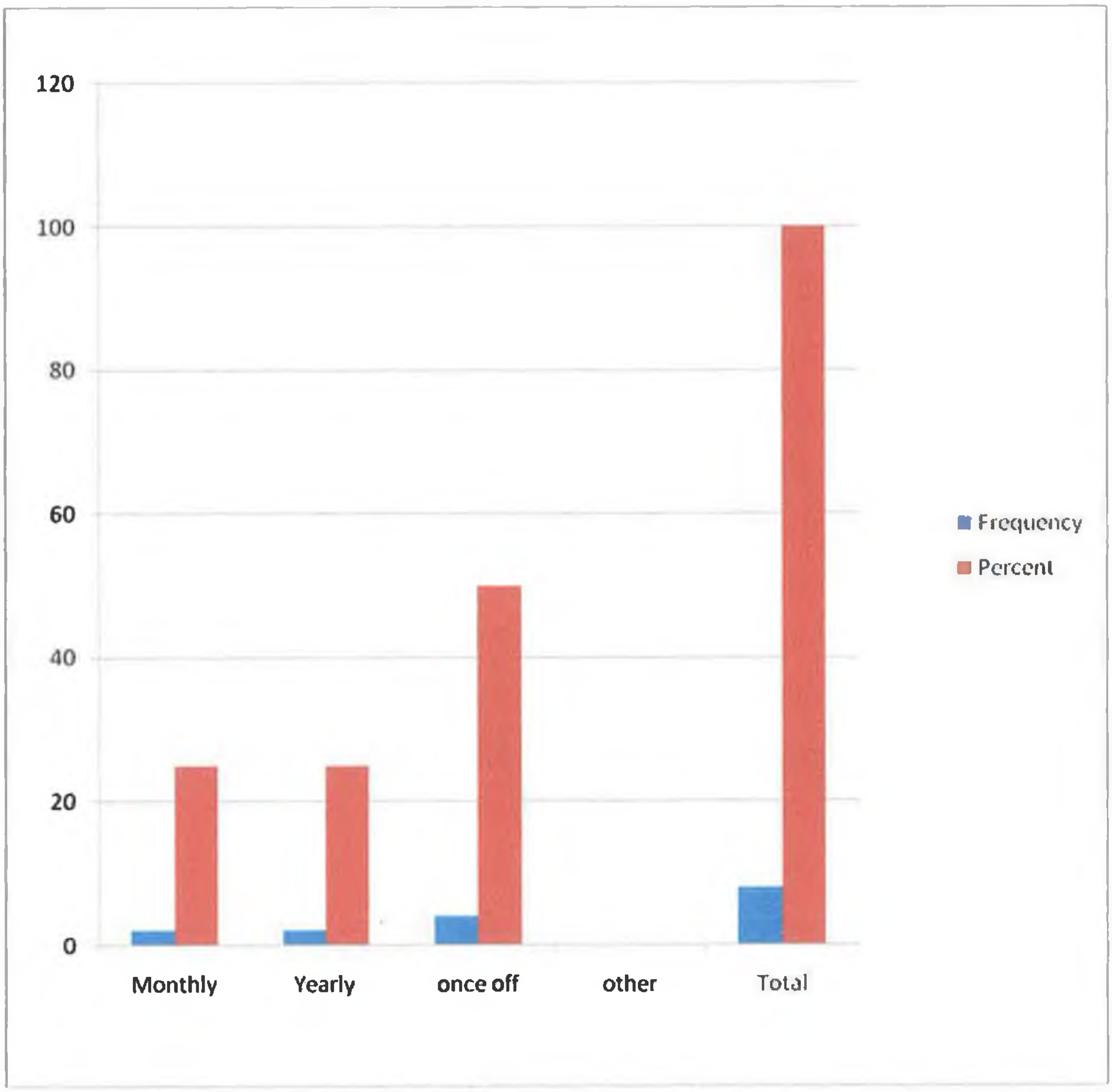

Figure 4-9: How often respondents get their clothing customised

4.8.1 The Garments Respondents Get Customised Most Often

Fifty seven percent of those respondents who purchase customised garments get "dresses" made to measure most often. Twenty nine percent of the respondents get "trousers" made to measure and Fourteen percent of the respondents get "tops" made to measure. The largest percentage of these women was aged between "36-45". The Other options given were not used as you will see in the table below.

4.9 How do the Respondents Purchase their Clothing

Sixty percent of the respondents who purchase customised clothing do so in a "retail outlet". The other forty percent of the respondents purchase their clothing through a "dressmaker". Each of the different age categories were represented equally. Other options were given however as you will see in the table below, none of these options were used.

Code	Frequency	Percent
Trousers	2	29
Dress	4	57
Top/Blouse	1	14
Jacket	0	0
Skirt	0	0
Jeans	0	0
Jumper	0	0
Suit	0	0
All of the above	0	0
other	0	0
Total	7	100

Table 4-10: The garments respondents get customised most

Code	16-24	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	frequency
Trousers			2			**2**
Dress	2	1	1			**4**
Top/Blouse				1		**1**
Total	**2**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**7**

Table-13: The garments respondents get customised most often/age categories

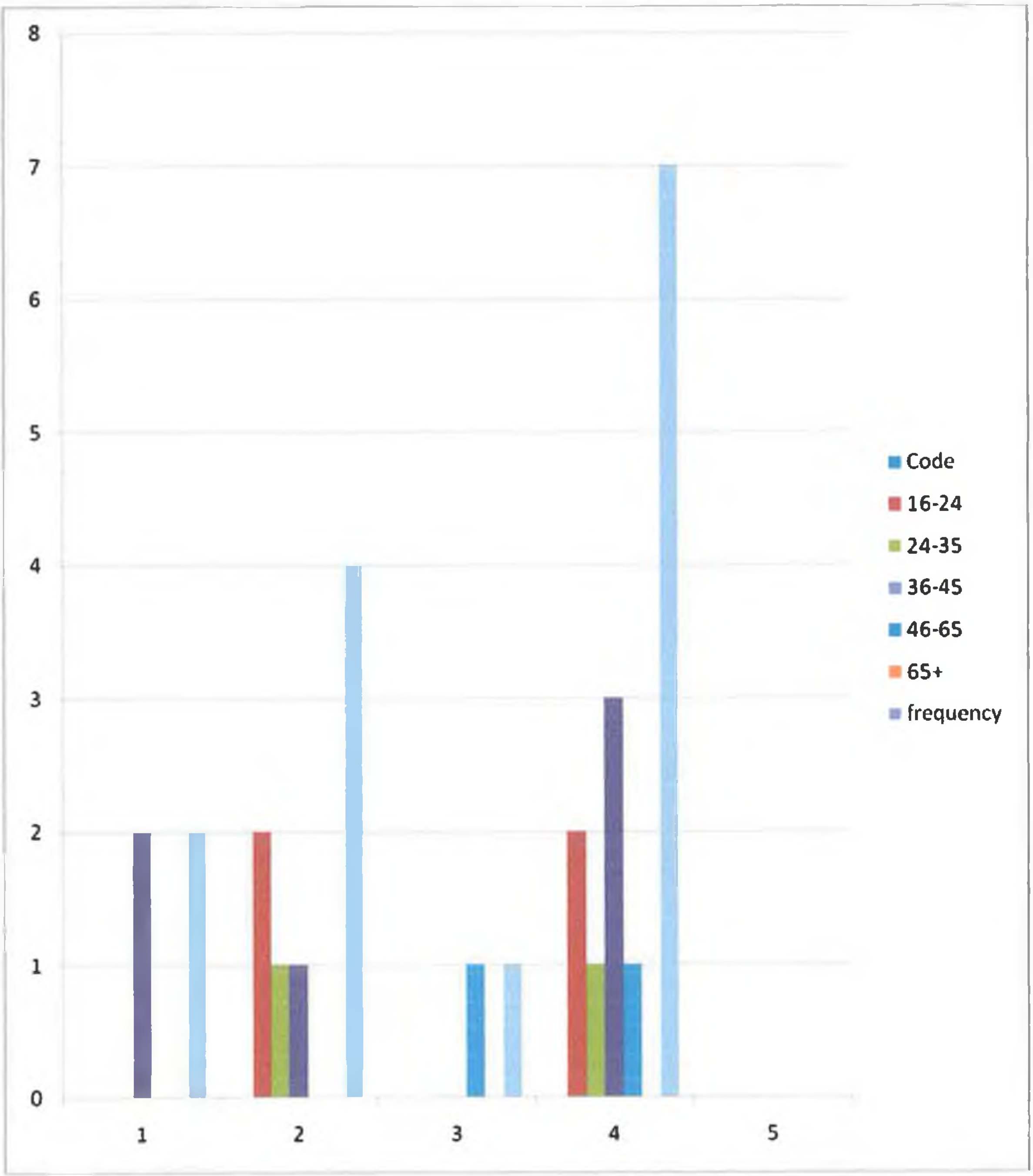

Figure 4-10: The garments respondents get customised most often/ age categories

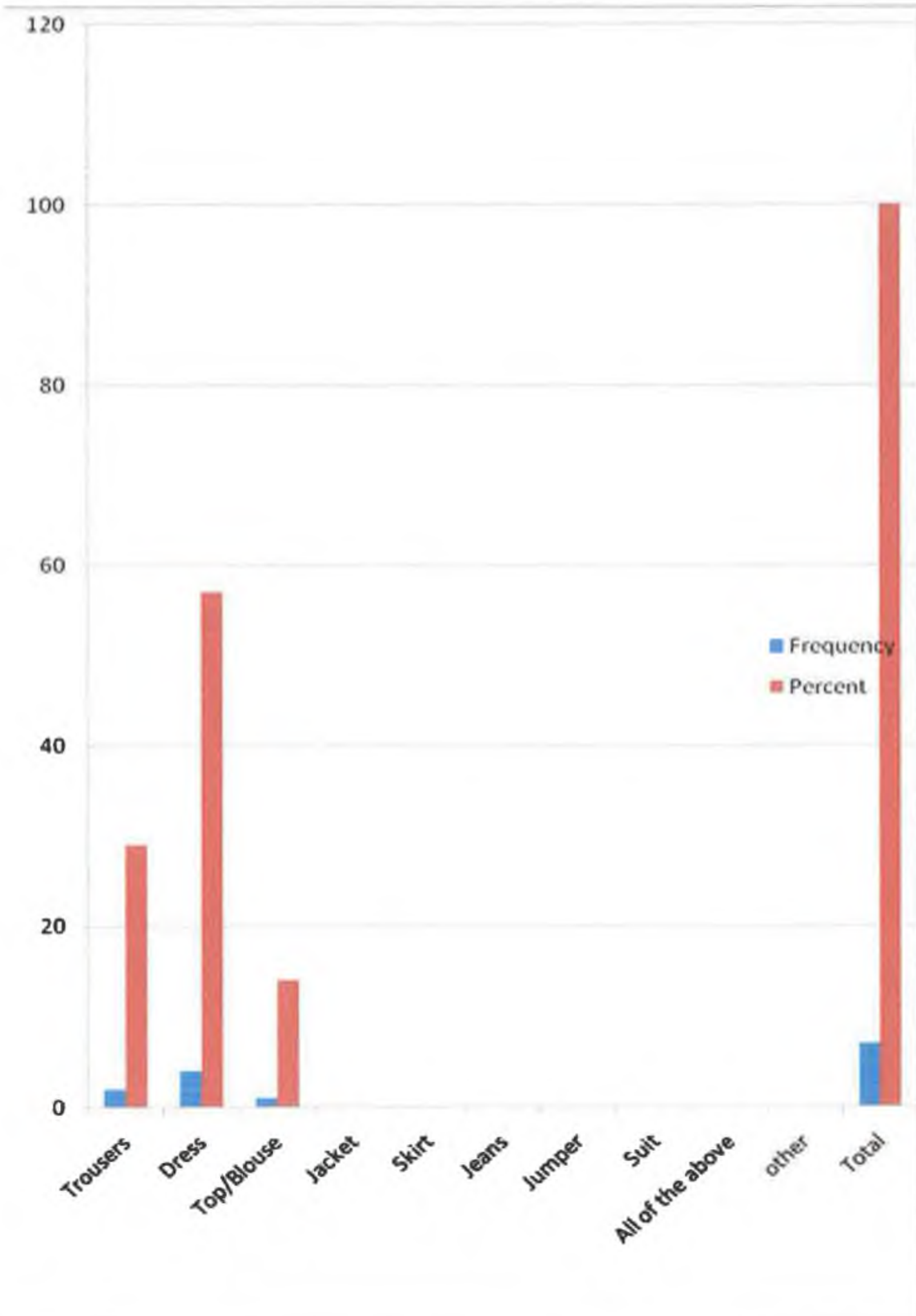

Figure 4-11: The Garment respondents get customised most often

Code	Frequency	Percent
Online	0	0
Retail	3	60
Dress maker	2	40
other	0	0
Total	5	100

Table 4-11: How the respondents purchase their clothing

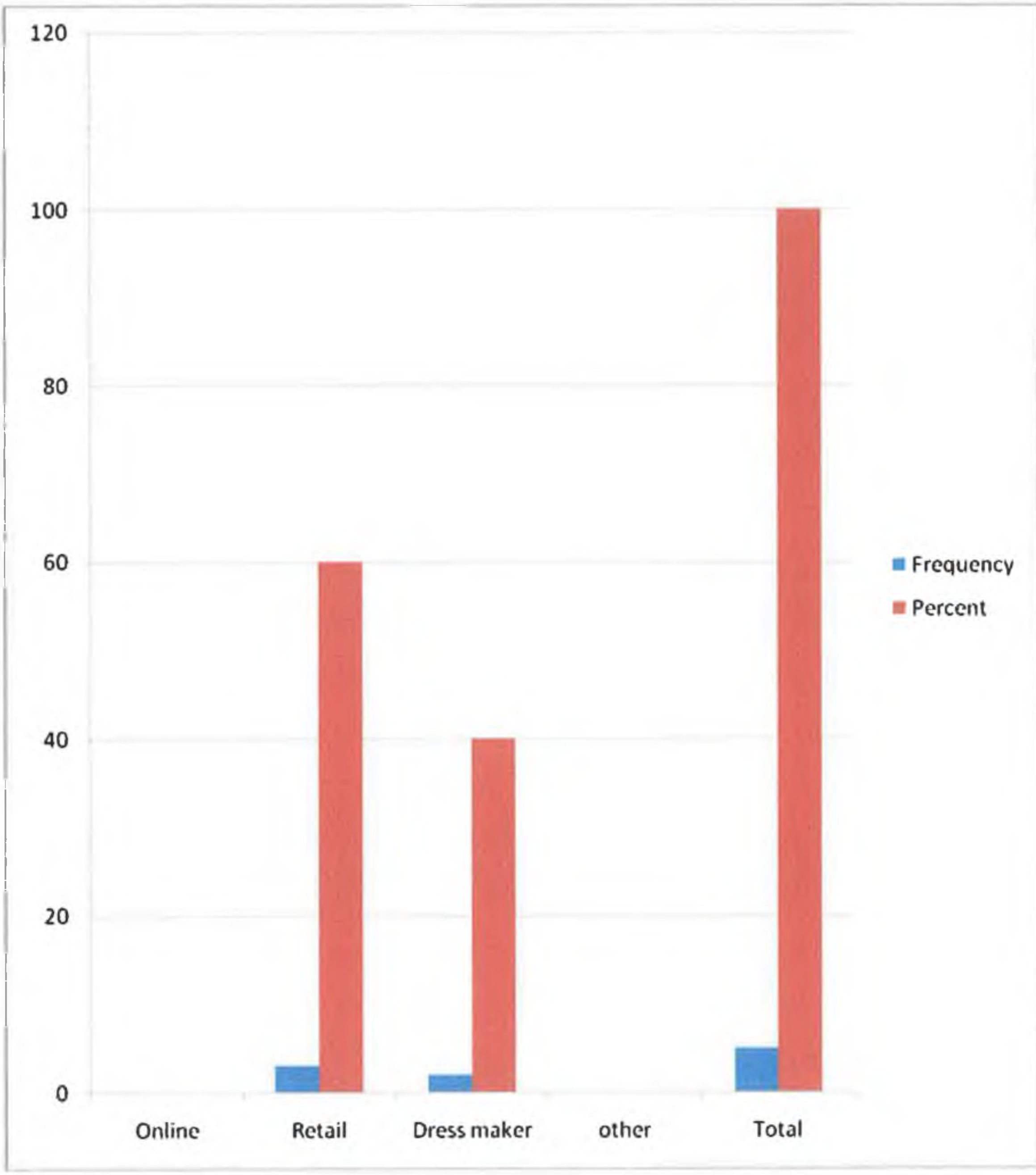

Figure 4-12: How do the respondents purchase their clothing

Code	16-24	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	frequency
Online						0
Retail	1	1		1		3
Dress maker	1		1			2
other						0
Total	2	1	1	1	0	5

Table 4-12 : How do the respondents purchase their clothing/age categories

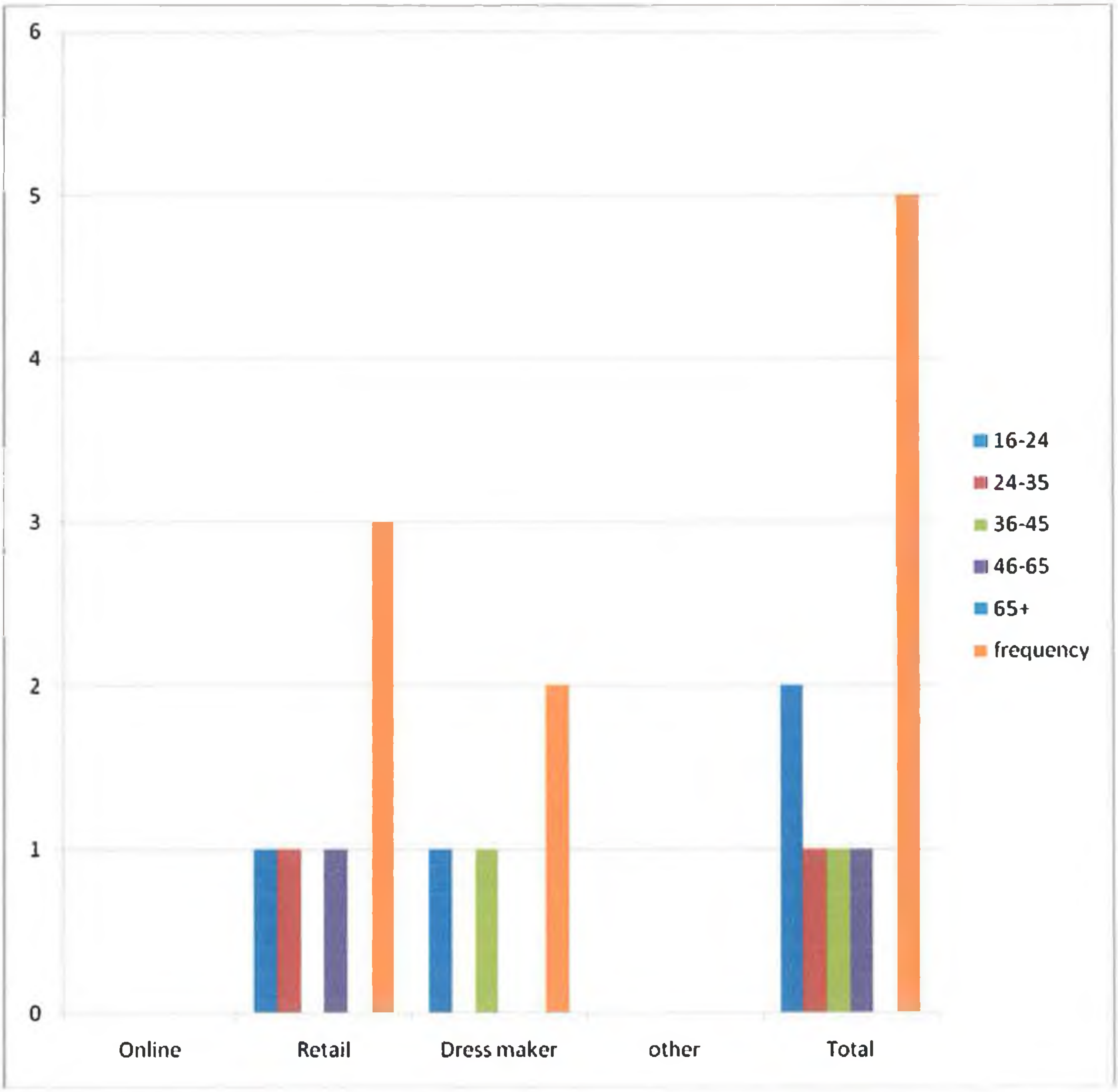

Figure 4-13: How do the respondents purchase their clothing/ age categories

4.10 Why Respondents do not Purchase Customised Clothing

Twenty seven percent of respondents (fourteen out of the fifty two respondents) do not purchase customised clothing as it is "too time consuming". Twenty five percent of the respondents (thirteen of the fifty two respondents) found it "difficult to find the service". Twenty five percent of the respondents (thirteen of the fifty two respondents) selected "the All" option and twenty three percent of the respondents (twelve of the fifty two) said that they do not purchase this service as it is "too expensive".

4.11 What Clothing Garment Respondents would have the Most Difficulty finding the Perfect Fit to

Fifty five percent of respondents had the most difficulty finding a proper fit to Jeans, followed by twenty percent of the respondents chose dresses, ten of the respondents chose Pants, eight percent of the respondents chose tops, five percent chose a Skirt and two percent chose a Bra. Fifty percent of the respondents who chose Jeans were within the "16-23"age category. Ninety percent of respondents who chose "dresses" were equally represented within the following three age categories "16-23", "24-35" and "46-65". Of the five respondents who chose Pants, four were within the "46-65" age category. Of the three respondents who chose Skirts, they were within 3 age categories, "36-45","46-65" and "65+".

4.12 Would Respondents use this Customised Service if it were Available Online

The largest percentage of the respondents said "Yes" (51%), followed by 23% of the respondents saying "no". 26% of the respondents said "maybe".

Code	Frequency	Percent
Too expensive	12	23
Difficult to find	13	25
Too time consuming	14	27
All	13	25
Other	0	0
Total	**52**	**100**

Table 4-13: Why respondents do not purchase customised clothing

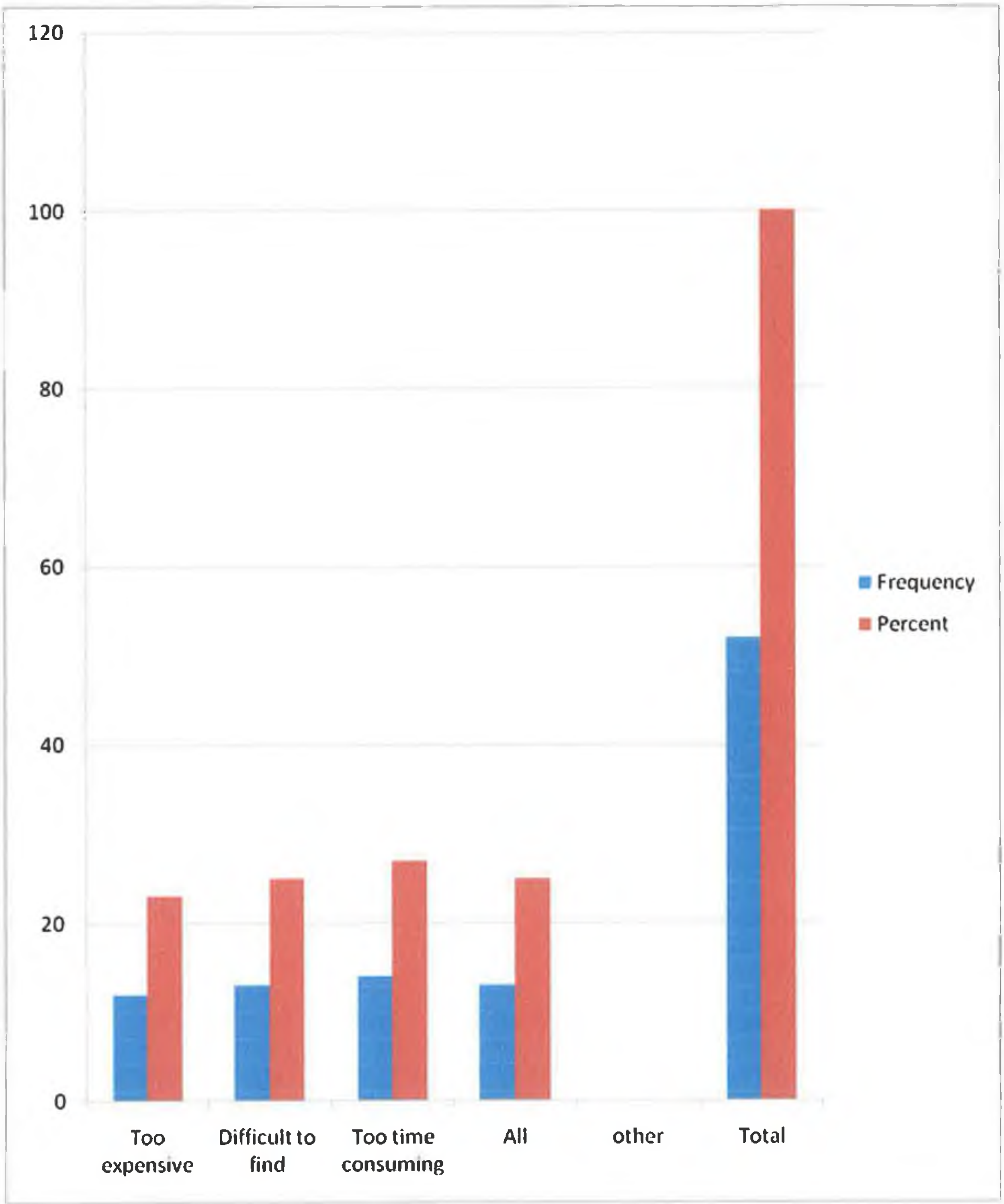

Figure4-14: Why respondents do not purchase customised clothing

Code	Frequency	Percent
Jeans	28	55
Dress	10	20
Pants	5	10
Skirt	3	5
Top	4	8
Other	1	2
Total	**51**	**100**

Table 4-14: The clothing garment respondents would have the most difficulty finding fit to

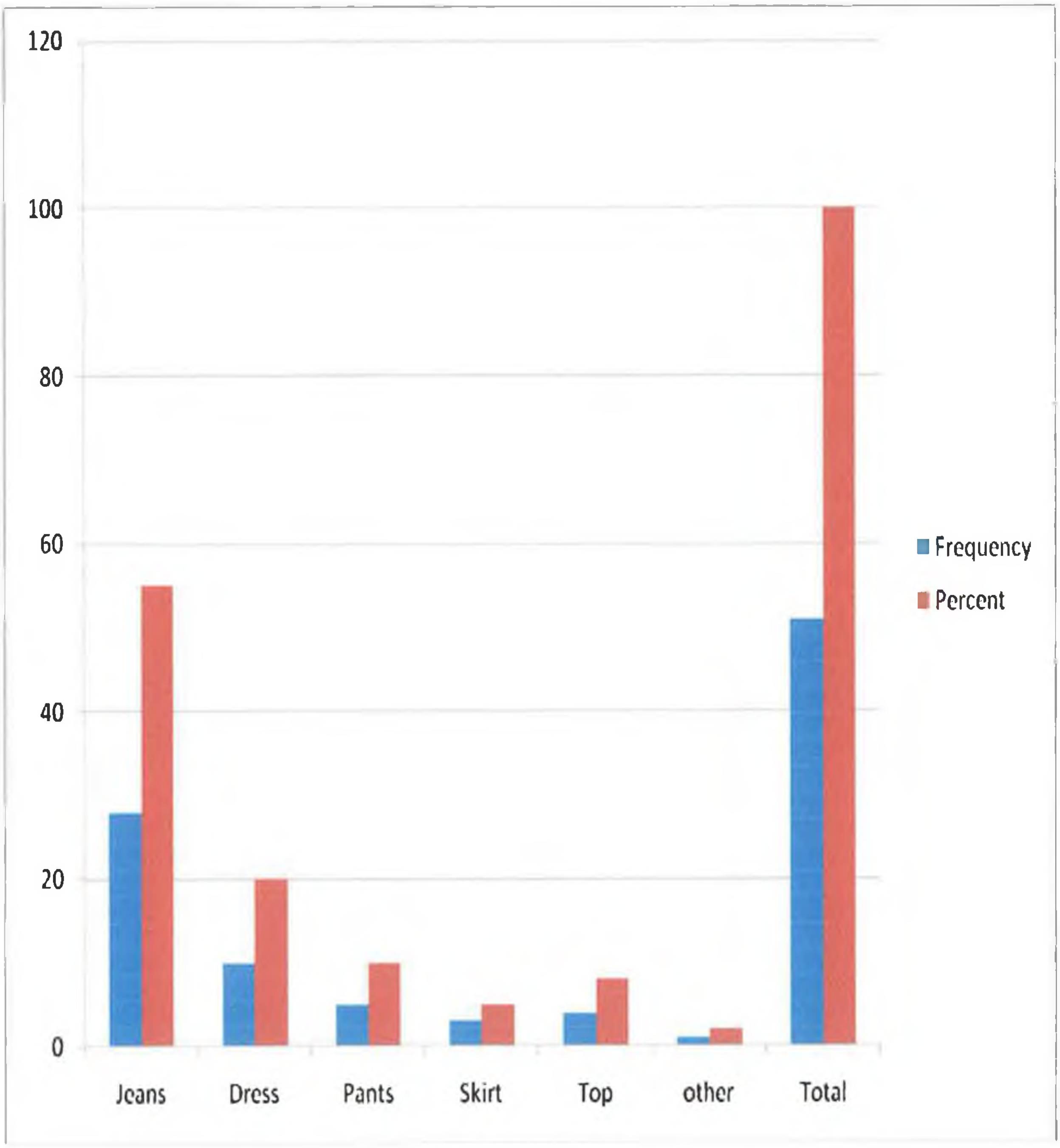

Figure 4-15: The clothing garment respondents would have the most difficulty finding

Code	16-23	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	frequency
Jeans	14	3	7	3	1	28
Dress	3	3	1	3	0	10
Pants	0	1	0	4	0	5
Skirt	0	0	1	1	1	3
Top	0	0	2	1	1	4
Other	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	**17**	**7**	**12**	**12**	**3**	**51**

Table 4-15: the clothing garment respondents would have the most difficulty finding the perfect fit to/age categories

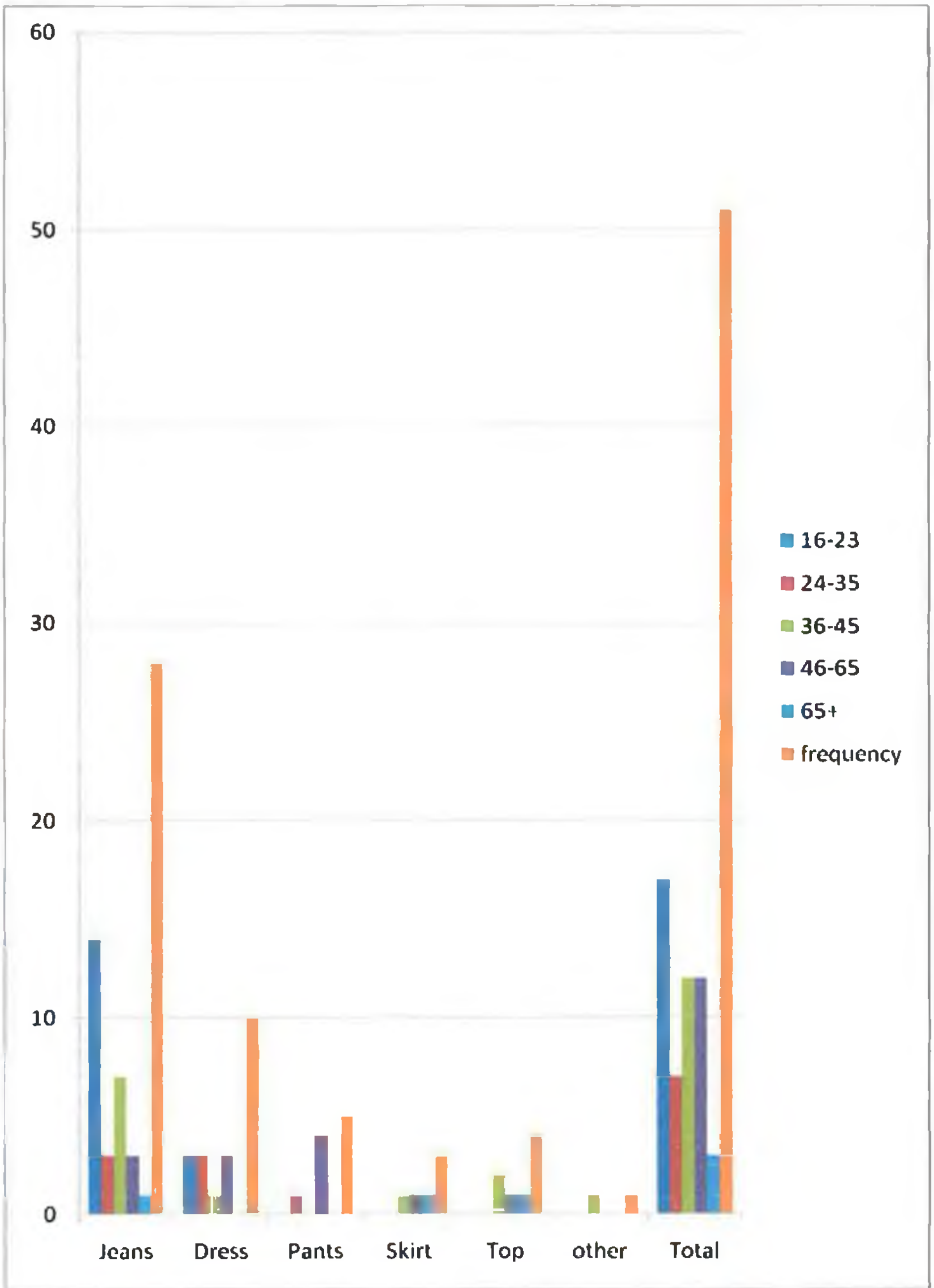

Figure 4-16: the clothing garment respondents would have the most difficulty finding the perfect fit to/age categories

Code	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	51
No	12	23
Maybe	14	26
Total	**53**	**100**

Table 4-16: Would respondents use this customised service if it were available online

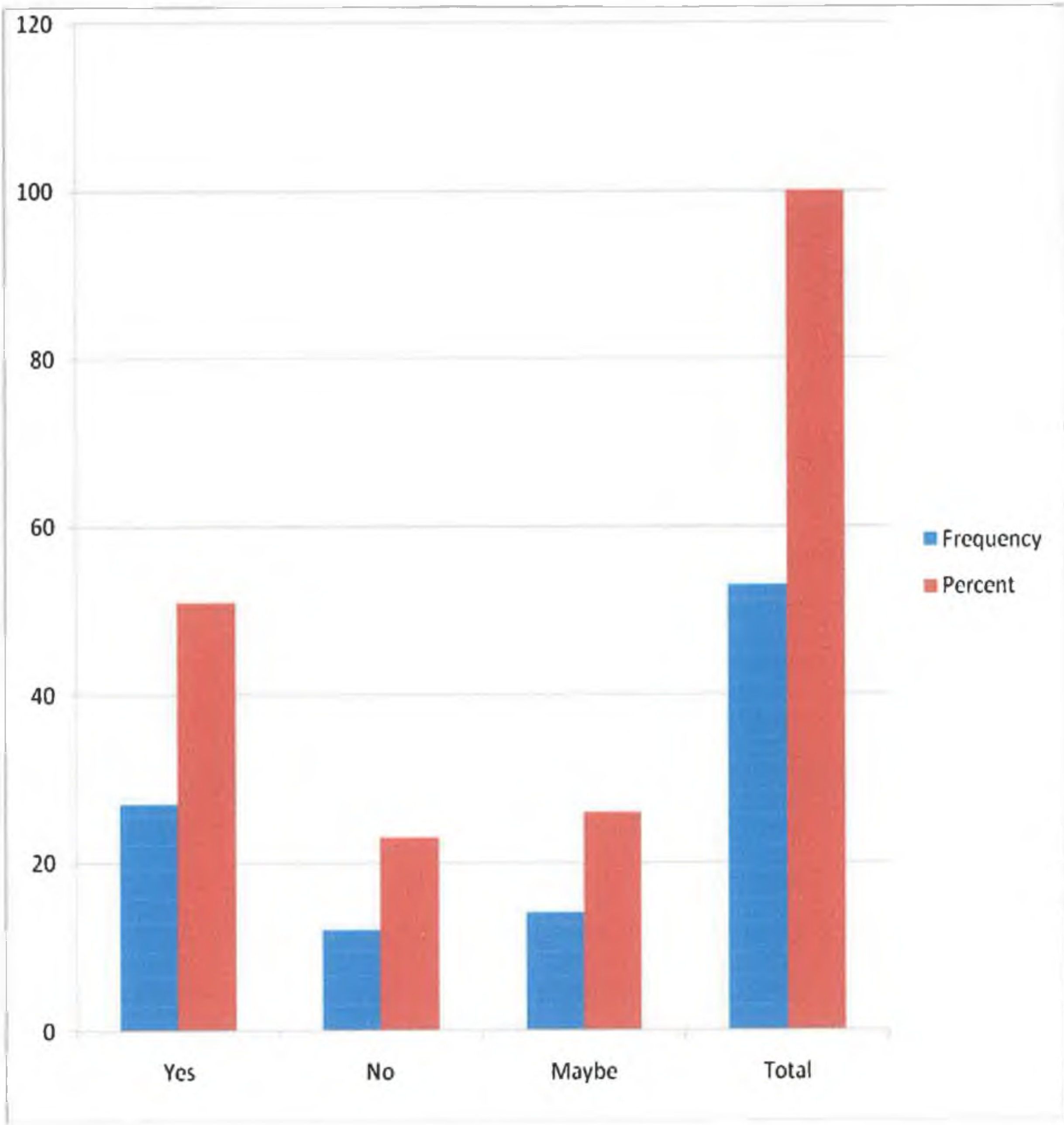

Figure 4-17: Would respondents use this customised service if it were available online

4.13 People Who Prefer to Purchase Customised Clothing in a Retail Outlet

Forty six percent of those respondents, who would prefer to purchase their clothing in a retail outlet, would purchase jeans. Thirty three percent of these respondents would buy a Dress. Thirteen percent would purchase Pants, and eight percent would buy a Top.

4.14 Of the Respondents Whom Would Use the Online Customised Clothing Service, Which Garment Would They be Most Interested in Purchasing

Of the respondents who would buy this service online, fifty nine percent of these respondents said they would buy Jeans. Twenty six percent of the respondents would buy a dress. Seven percent of the respondents would buy Pants, four percent of the respondents would buy a skirt and the final four percent% ticked the "other" option.

Code	Frequency	Percent
Jeans	11	46
Dress	8	33
Pants	3	13
Skirt	0	0
Top	2	8
Other	0	0
Total	**24**	**100**

Table4-17 : How people prefer to purchase customised clothing in a retail outlet

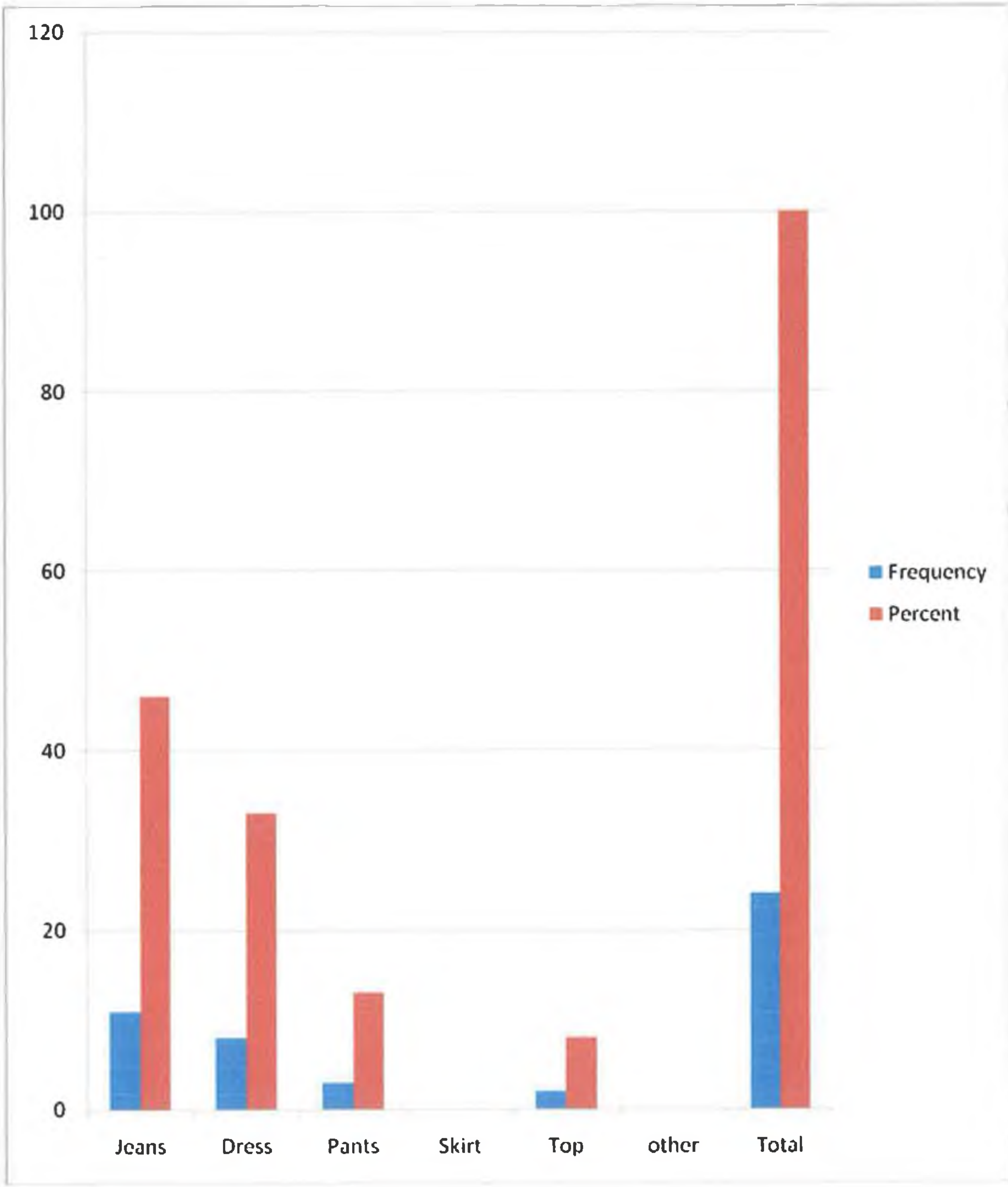

Figure 4-18: People who prefer to purchase customised clothing in a retail outlet

Code	Frequency	Percent
Jeans	16	59
Dress	7	26
Pants	2	7
Skirt	1	4
Top	0	0
other	1	4
Total	**27**	**100**

Table 4-18: What garment the respondents would most like to get customised

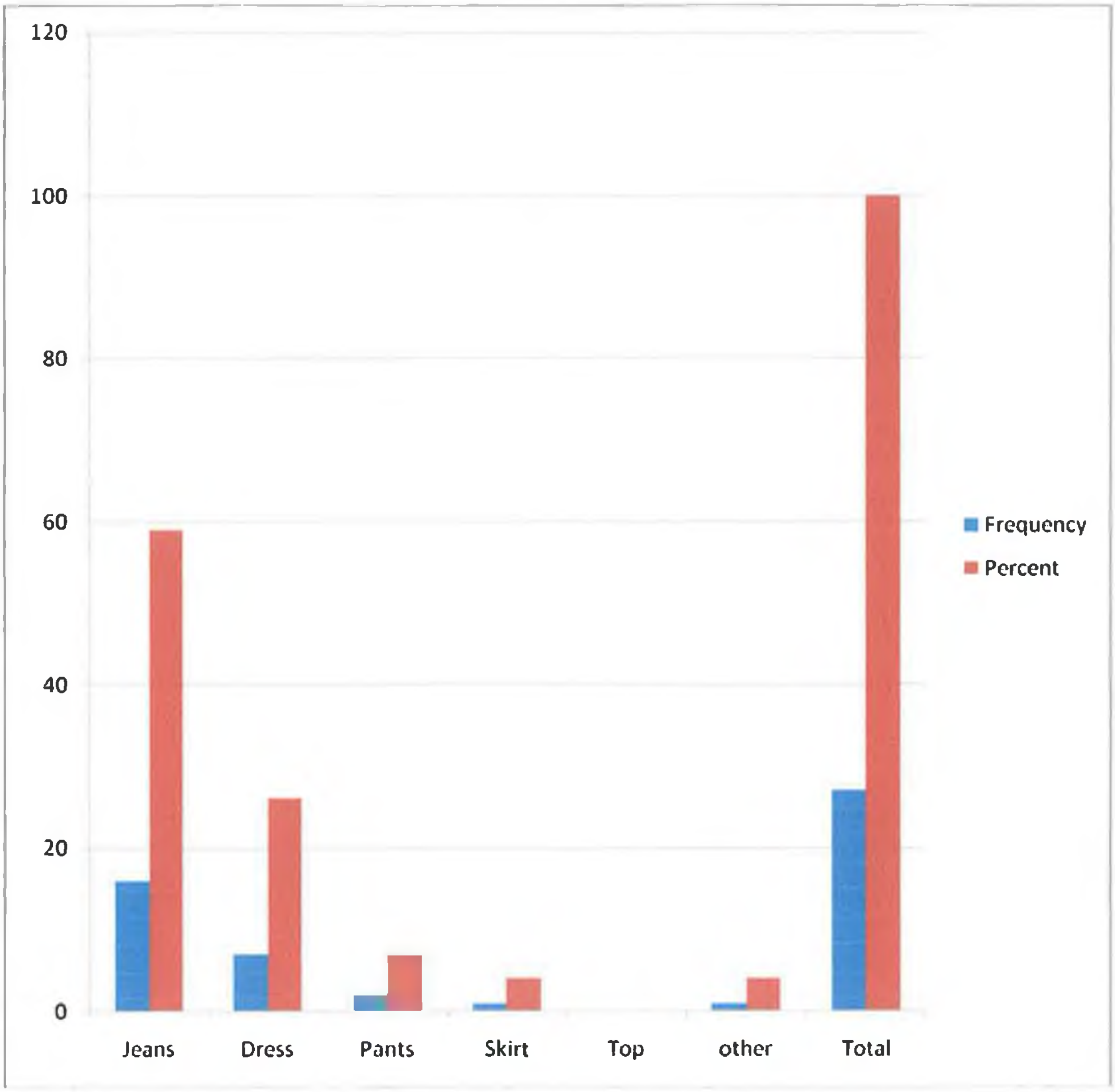

Figure 4-19 : Of the respondents whom would use the online customised clothing service, which garment would they be most interested in purchasing

4.15 The maximum price respondents would pay for a customised garment

The Price a respondent pays for a garment varies from forty to four hundred euro. The respondents were willing to pay more for a dress than a top. Thirty seven percent of the respondents were willing to spend one hundred euro. Fifteen percent of respondents are willing to spend two hundred euro, ten percent of the respondents are willing to spend sixty euro, eight percent of the respondents are willing to spend fifty euro, six percent of the respondents are willing to spend seventy euro, six percent of the respondents are willing to spend one hundred and fifty euro, six percent are willing to spend three hundred euro, four percent of the respondents are willing to spending forty euro, four percent are willing to spend eighty euro, and two percent of respondents are willing to spend four hundred euro, and the final two percent are "negotiable "on the amount they are willing to spend on getting a garment customised.

4.16 Preferred method of purchasing customised clothing

Sixty nine percent of respondents would prefer purchasing their clothing within a "retail store", as they prefer touching the material. Nineteen percent of the respondents would go "online" to purchase their customised clothing, and twelve percent of the respondents would go to a "dressmaker".

Of those respondents who chose a "retail outlet" to purchase their customised clothing, thirty three percent were within the "16-23" age category, twenty five percent of the respondents were within the "36-45" age category and twenty five percent of the respondents were within the "46-65" age category.

Of those respondents who chose to purchase their clothing "online", thirty percent of the respondents were within the 16-23, thirty percent of the respondents were within the 24-35 age group and thirty percent of the respondents were within the 46-65 age group. Ten percent of the respondents were within the 65+ age category.

Of those respondents who chose a "dressmaker", 67% (4 of the 6 respondents) were within the 36-45 age categories. 17% (1 of the 6 respondents) were within the "16-23"age category and 17% (1 of the 6 respondents) were within the "24-35" age category.

Code	Frequency	Percent
40<	2	4
50	4	8
60	5	10
70	3	6
80	2	4
100	18	37
150	3	6
200	7	15
300	3	6
400	1	2
negotiable	1	2
Total	**49**	**100**

Table 4-19: The maximum price respondents would pay for a customised garment

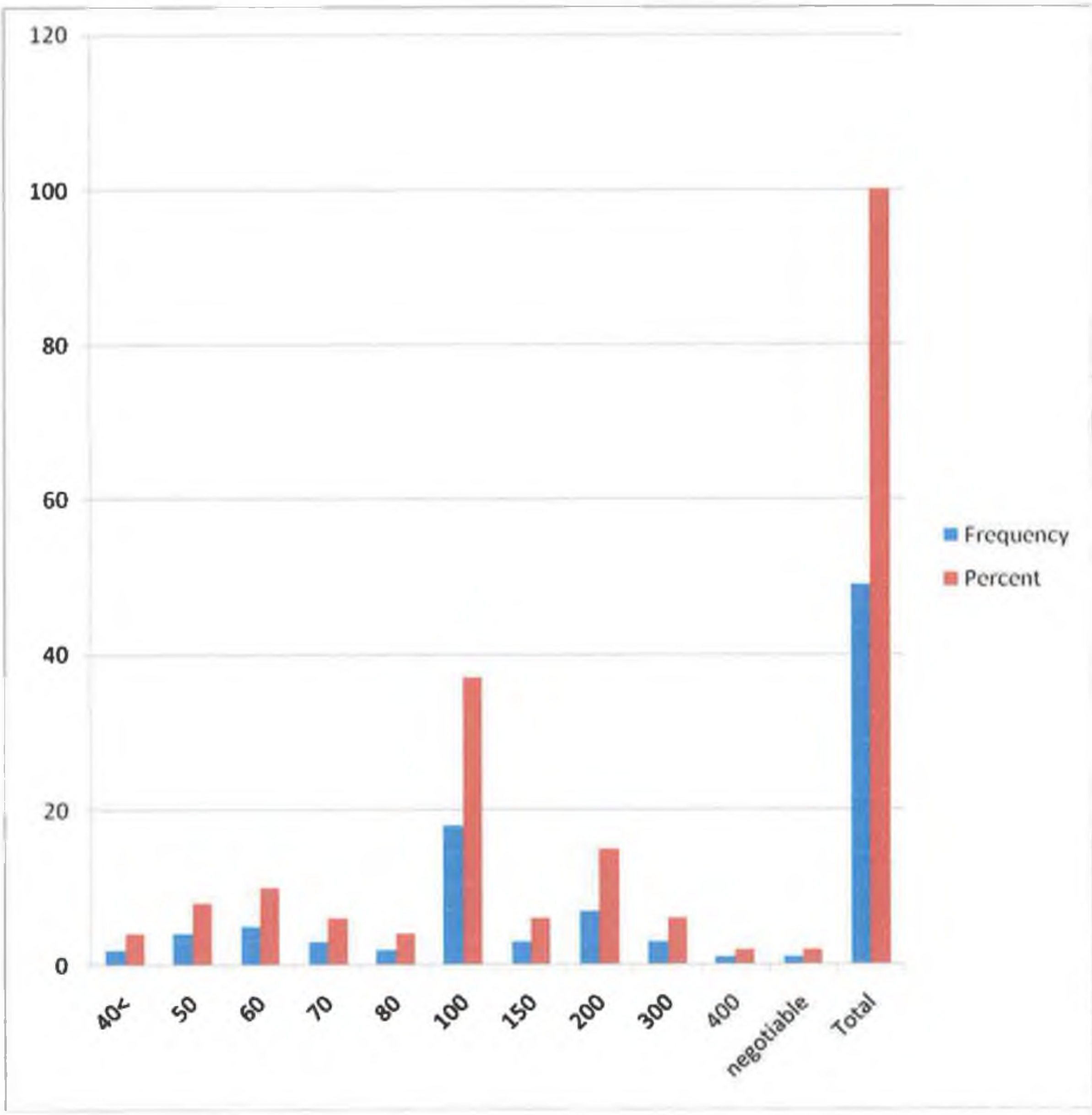

Figure 4-20: The maximum price respondents would pay for a customised garment

Code	Frequency	Percent
Online	10	19
Retail	36	69
dressmaker	6	12
other	0	0
Total	**52**	**100**

Table 4-20: Preferred method of purchasing customised clothing

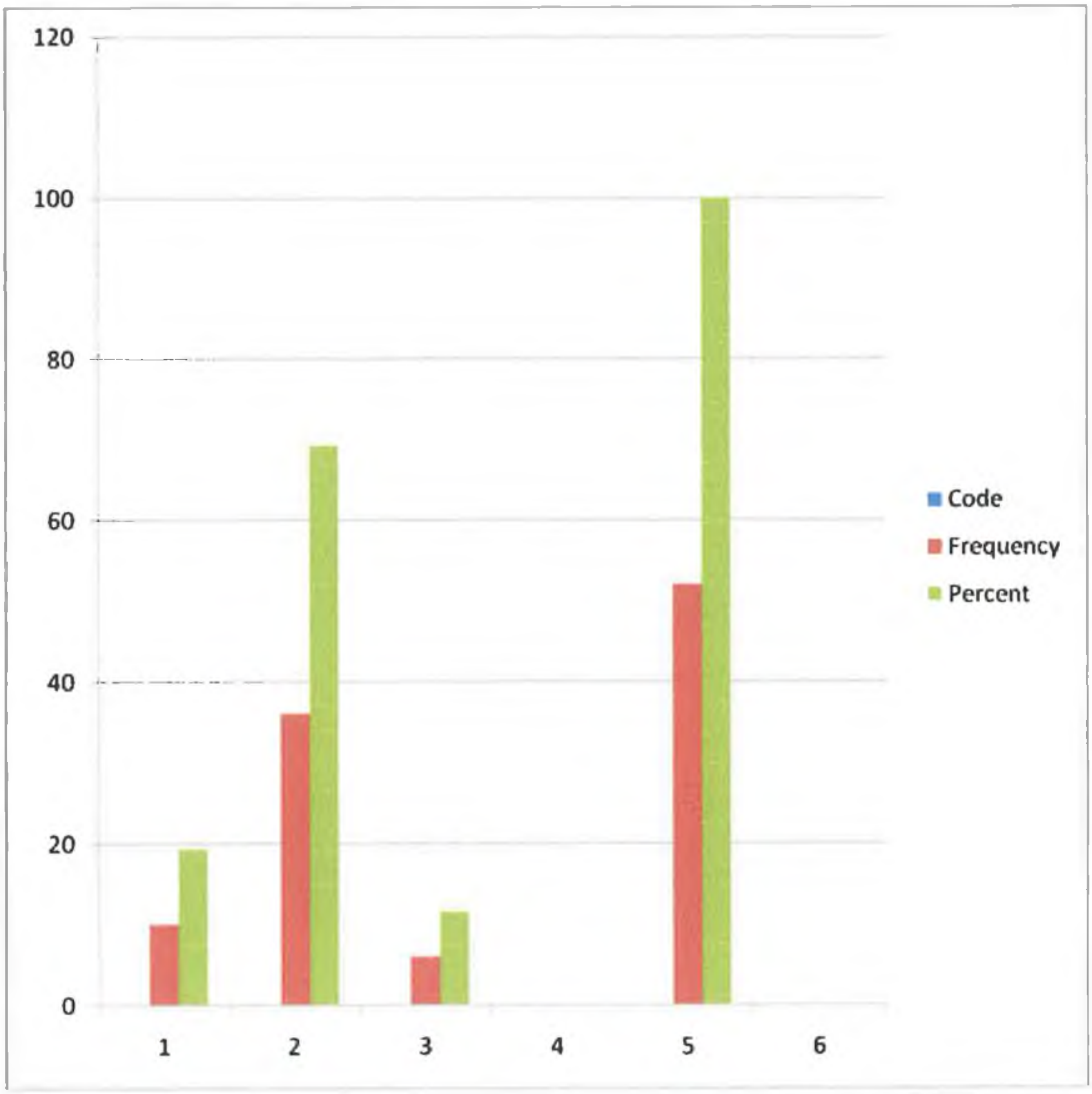

Figure 4-21: Preferred method of purchasing customised clothing

Code	16-23	24-35	36-45	46-65	65+	Frequency
Online	3	3		3	1	10
Retail	12	4	9	9	2	36
dressmaker	1	1	4			6
Other						0
Total	**16**	**8**	**13**	**12**	**3**	**52**

Table 4-21: Preferred method of purchasing customised clothing/ age categories

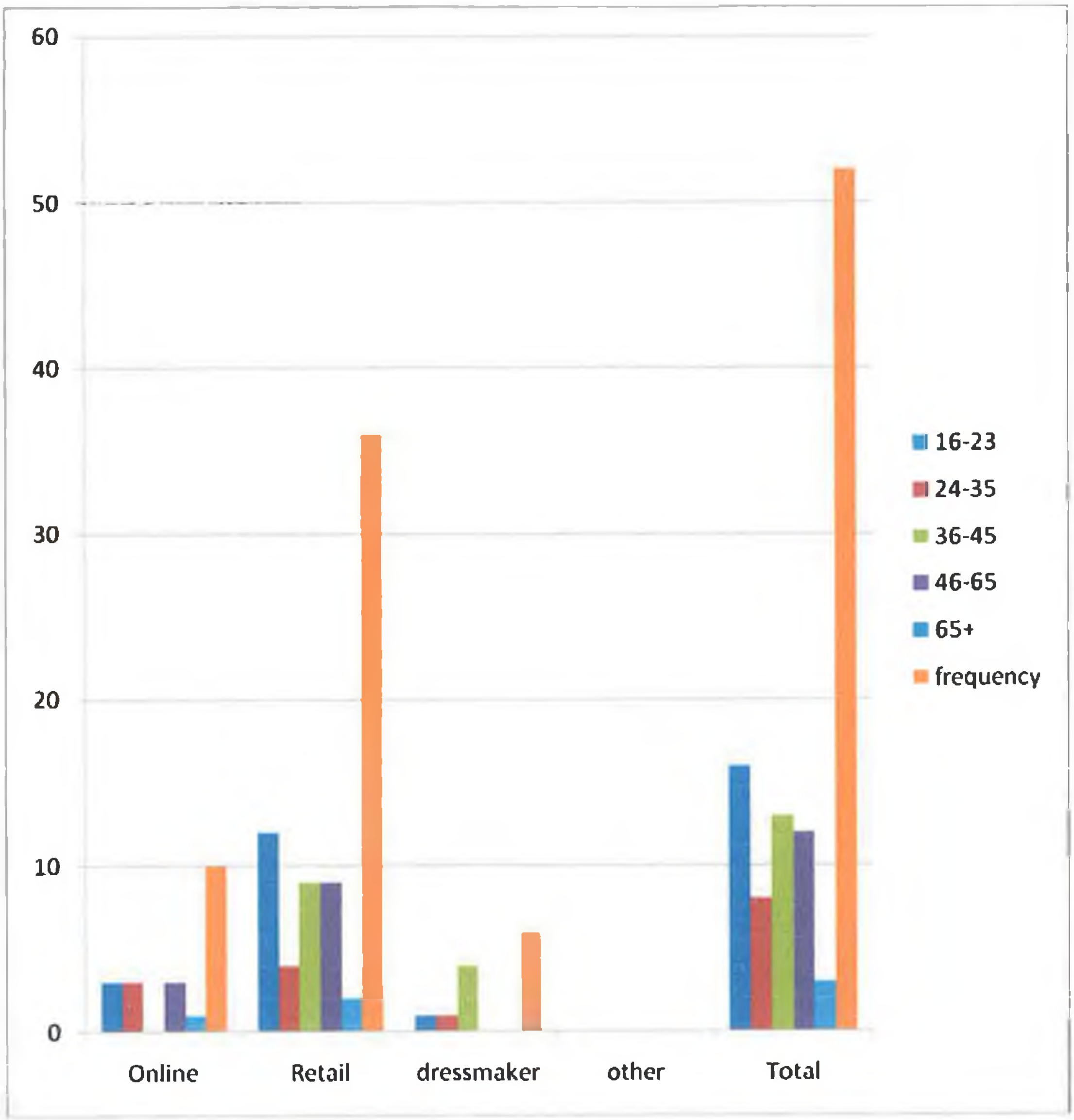

Figure4-22: Preferred method of purchasing customised clothing/ age categories

4.17 Conclusion

The finding from research illustrated that: (1) there was a market for a customised service, (2) there was not a market at present for a customised service via the internet, (3) the preferred method of purchasing customised clothing was Via a retail outlet, and (4) the garment that the respondent had most difficulty finding a proper fit to were jeans.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Women's needs are not being met in relation to their clothing fit. It is important that this be provided to these women. Instead of women getting alterations made after purchasing their ready to wear garment, they should have a garment that fits them perfectly.

When a woman's clothing needs are not being satisfied, this can lead to both physical and mental issues with themselves. The most convenient way to solve the problem and satisfy this group of consumers would be by taking the special needs of these consumers into consideration in apparel production.

The purpose of the study was to investigate (1) whether there was a market in Ireland for women's customised clothing, (2) if Irish women would purchase their customised clothing online (3) what garment they have most difficulty finding a proper fit to and (4) where Irish women would prefer to purchase their customised clothing. This chapter contains a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications of the study, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The area which my research is based on came about after thinking for weeks on the topic that would be interesting to carry out research on. After examination of all literature in relation to "clothing for women" and "the fit of clothing for women" it was straightforward to pick this title. Being innovative with this title was a must. It was vital to know that this research question was somewhat possible to answer and also having a map in your head as to how you were going to succeed with this. The following were used to gain this knowledge:

A questionnaire was developed to meet the purposes and objectives of the study. This was to identify if there was a market for a customised clothing service in Ireland. Questionnaires were distributed to 60 women at the quayside shopping centre in Sligo Town. This involved random sampling technique where every fifth women who passed by was asked to fill out a questionnaire. All the questionnaires were able to be used in this research. The final database composed of 60 women, who were aged 16 years old and older.

Data were analysed using frequency distribution and Pivot tables to identify where the respondents purchased their clothing, if they used a customised clothing service before, how often they got their clothing customised, what garment they got customised most often, how they availed of this customised clothing service, why respondents did not purchase customised clothing, what garment the respondents had most difficulty finding the proper fit to, would respondents purchase customised clothing online, what garment would they purchase, what is the maximum price a respondent would pay for a customised garment, how the respondents would prefer to purchase customised clothing, the age category the respondents fit into, the type of employment the respondents are in and how much the respondents spend on clothes a month. All this information is also illustrated using Bar charts.

Respondents were asked if they had any comments to make. Some of the respondents did give a response. These comments included: difficulty finding proper fit, would not purchase online as can not feel clothing, would only use a service like this for a special occasion as too expensive, would use online if reasonable, have no difficulty with fit, hates shopping experience, difficulty in getting right length in jeans and pants, never wear fitted clothing, use retail outlet for to feel fabric and seek advice and hard to find customised service

There were other objectives in this research which included: whether there was a market for an online customised clothing service, what would be the preferred method for purchasing this customised clothing service and what garment would the respondents be most inclined to get customised.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The respondents appeared to be represented well in relation to their demographics. All age groups were reached in this questionnaire. The largest percentages of the respondents were in full time employment, and the majority of the respondent spent no more than one hundred euro on clothing per month.

The bulk of the respondents bought their clothing in Retail outlets most of the time. The reasons respondents purchased customised clothing was because they wanted to get the perfect fit or because they had difficulty finding clothes to fit them. Most of those who purchased customised clothing before did so for a once off occasion. The respondents who normally got their clothing customised usually got a dress made. This links to the question of "how often respondent use the customised service?" which respondents answered "once off". The respondents usually availed of this service via "retail outlet".

The reason why the respondents did not purchase customised clothing was because they felt it was too time consuming. The garment the respondents had most difficulty finding the proper fit to was "Jeans". This links to the literature which stated that women have more trouble finding clothing for their lower body, as hip sizes are increasing. Other literature stated that the average women tries on twenty pairs of jeans before she gets a pair that fits right.

The respondents were asked if they would use an online customised clothing service and the majority said "Yes". The Garment they would be most interested in purchasing online was "Jeans". For those who would not like to use this service online but rather as a retail outlet also chose "Jeans". The max price a respondent would pay for a customised Garment was €100. The preferred method of using a customised clothing service was through a "retail outlet" as the respondents preferred touching and feeling the materials. The respondents who prefer purchasing online did so as they were either "not confident with their appearance" or they "hated the shopping experience".

5.3 Conclusions of the study

The purpose of the study was to (1) identify if there was a market for women's customised clothing in Ireland and (2) if there was a market online for women's customised clothing in Ireland. (3) To identify how the women of Ireland would like to purchase customised clothing if available and (4) what garment they would have most difficulty finding the proper fit to. The results indicated that there were a market in Ireland for women's customised clothing. The results also indicated that there was a market for an online customised clothing service in Ireland at present. Retail outlets seemed to be the preferred alley the respondent wanted to purchase their customised clothing and Jeans seemed to be the garment which the respondents would be most inclined to get customised.

5.4 Suggestions for online retailers and apparel manufacturers and retailers

Online retailers should bear in mind that consumers prefer shopping online with retailers they are familiar with rather than a retailer they know little about. Websites who own walk in retail outlets are in a better position to get more custom than a website with no retail outlet.

Female apparel manufacturers should consider introducing a new change of clothing shapes to their ranges of clothes. There are a total of four different shapes a women can have. If two were available in a shop women may be more satisfied with their clothing. This may be expensive at the start however it should pay off in the long term.

5.5 Recommendation for further research

If research is being carried out in this field, I would look specifically at what clothing means to an individual psychologically. What percentages of the market buy clothes for "practically use" or as a "fashion statement" in Ireland. Irish women do seem to be more fashionable in recent years than a decade ago. Women in their forties now seem to dress more youthful. This is an area that could be looked into. The title could be called "how fashion trends in Ireland have changed over the last four decades".

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APPENDICE A

CUSTOMISED CLOTHING QUESTIONAIRE

Customised Clothing Questionnaire

This survey is being carried to identify if there is a market for an online website which provides customised clothing to females. Customised clothing is measured to fit clothing. This information is being used for education purposes and all information given will be held in the strictest confidence.

1. How do you purchase your clothing?

Boutiques, Shops, Retail outlets ☐

Customised/measured to fit outlets ☐

Online ☐

Dressmaker's ☐

All ☐

Other, please specify________________

If you tick "customised" then answer questions 2-5, otherwise skip to Question 6.

2. Why do you purchase customised clothing?

Difficulty in finding clothing to fit ☐

Just want to get the perfect fit ☐

Other, please specify____

3. How often do you get your clothes customised?

Once Every Month or more often ☐

Once every Year or more often ☐

A Once off, for a special occasion ☐

Other, please specify ____

4. What garments do you get made to fit? Choose using 1-5 your preference of garments. 1 is least preferred, 5 is most preferred.

Trousers ☐
Dress ☐
Top/Blouse ☐
Jacket ☐
Skirt ☐
Jeans ☐
Jumper/sweater ☐
Suit ☐
All of the above ☐
Other, please specify: ______________________________

5. How do you purchase this customised clothing?

Online ☐
Retail outlets ☐
Dress maker ☐
Other, please specify ______________________________

(Please skip to question 9)

6. Why do you not purchase measured to fit clothing?

Too expensive ☐
Difficult to find the service ☐
Too time consuming ☐
All of the above ☐
Other, please specify: ______________________________

7. What garment(s) do you have most difficulty finding a proper fit for?

Jeans ☐
Dress ☐
Pants ☐
Skirt ☐
Top ☐

Other, please specify____________________________

8. Do you think if measured to fit clothing was available online would you use the service in the future?

Yes ☐
No ☐
Maybe ☐

9. If yes, which garment(s) would you be most interested in purchasing online?

Jeans ☐
Dress ☐
Pants ☐
Skirt ☐
Top ☐
Other, please specify____________________________

10. What is the max price would you pay for this customised garment?

____

11. What would be your preferred method of purchasing customised clothing be?

Online ☐
Retail outlet ☐
Dress maker ☐
Other, please specify: ____________________________________

Any other comments:
____
____
____

12. What age category do you fit into?

16-23 ☐

24-35 ☐

☐

36-45

46-65 ☐

65+ ☐

13. What type of employment are you in?

Unemployed ☐

Part time ☐

Full time ☐

Contract ☐

Casual ☐

Please specify____

14. On average how much do you spend on clothes per month?

Less than 100 ☐

100-250 ☐

250-400 ☐

400-600 ☐

600+ ☐

Thank you

APPENDICE B

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

APPENDICE B

Statistics from questionnaires

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3,	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
1	Shop	perfect fit	once off	top	retail		
2	Shop					too expensive	Jeans
3	Shop					time consuming	jeans
4	Shop					time consuming	jeans
5	Shop					difficult to find	Jeans
6	Shop	difficulty with fit	yearly	trouser	d-maker		
7	Shop					time consuming	dress
8	Shop					time consuming	Jeans
9	Shop					too expensive	dress
10	Shop					difficult to	dress

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Age	Employment	Spending
		dress	€100	retail	46-65	PT	less than 100
	Yes	jeans	€70	retail	46-65	PT	less than 100
	Maybe	jeans	€100	retail	46-65	FT	less than 100
	yes	dress	€200	retail	16-23	Student	less than 100
	yes	jeans	€50	retail	24-35	FT	100-250
		jeans	€100	d-maker	36-45	FT	100-250
	maybe	dress	€300	d-maker	24-35	FT	less than 100
	yes	jeans	80	retail	16-23	Fas	100-250
	yes	dress	€200	online	46-65	FT-Bank	100-250
	no	pants	€150	retail	46-65	FT-science	100-250

							find	
11	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
12	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
13	Shop						difficult to find	Jeans
14	Shop						All	Jeans
15	Shop						time consuming	dress
16	shop						time consuming	jeans
17	All		difficulty with fit	once off	trouser			
18	Shop						time consuming	jeans
19	All		perfect fit	once off	dress			
20	Shop						time consuming	jeans

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

	Maybe	jeans	€100	retail	36-45	PT-radio	100-250
	yes	jeans	€60		16-23	FT-hospitality	100-250
	yes	jeans	€100	retail	36-45	unemployed	less than 100
	maybe	jeans	€100	retail	46-65	FT-public sector	100-250
	yes	dress	€200	online	24-35	FT-medical	100-250
	Maybe	dress	€100	d-maker	16-23	FT-	100-250
		jeans	€200	d-maker	36-45	housewife	less than 100
	no	jeans	€80	retail	65+	housewife	less than 100
		dress	€150	d-maker	36-45	FT	100-250
	maybe	jeans	€70	retail	36-45	FT	less than 100

APPENDICE B

21	Shop						too expensive
22	Shop						too expensive
23	all		difficulty with fit	monthly	dress	retail	
24	Shop						too expensive
25	online						too expensive
26	other-charity						too expensive
27	Shop						All
28	shop						difficult to find
29	Shop						All
30	Shop						too expensive
31	Shop						difficult to find
32	Shop						all

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

jeans	yes	jeans	negot	retail	16-23	student	less than 100
jeans	yes	jeans	€100	retail	36-45	FT	less than 100
		dress		retail	16-23	unemployed	less than 100
Jeans	Maybe	jeans	€150	retail	16-23	student	less than 100
top	yes	other-bra	€40	online	46-65	FT-carer	less than 100
other-swim suit	no				36-45	housewife	less than 100
pants	Yes	pants	€100	retail	24-35	PT-auctioneer	100-250
jeans	yes	jeans	€60	retail	16-23	student	less than 100
Jeans	yes	jeans	€100	online	24-35	PT nurse	100-250
	no				65+	retired	less than 100
Jeans	Yes	jeans	€30	retail	16-23	Student	less than 100
dress	no				16-23	Student	less than

33	Shop						All	top
34	Shop						too expensive	skirt
35	Shop						too expensive	dress
36	Shop						difficult to find	pants
37	Shop						All	Jeans
38	Shop		difficulty with fit	yearly	dress	d-maker		
39	Shop						too expensive	Jeans
40	Shop						All	dress
41	Shop						All	top
42	Shop						difficult to find	skirt
43	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
44	Shop						difficult to find	

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

							100
	no	top	€50	retail	36-45	PT chef	100-250
	yes	skirt	€100	retail	36-45	FT catering	100-250
	yes	dress	€100	retail	16-23	PT-carer	100-250
	maybe	dress	€100	online	46-65	FT-education	100-250
	Yes	jeans	€60	online	16-23	FT-factory	100-250
		dress	€50	online	16-23	Student	less than 100
	Yes	jeans	€150	d-maker	36-45	contract	less than 100
	no			retail	16-23	student	less than 100
	Maybe	top	100	online	65+	retired	less than 100
	Maybe	skirt	€70	retail	65+	retired	less than 100
	Maybe	jeans	€150	retail	16-23	FT pharmacutical	100-250
	no				36-45	PT education	less than 100

APPENDICE B

45	Shop						too expensive	Jeans
46	Shop						difficult to find	dress
47	All		perfect fit	once off	dress	retail		
48	Shop							jeans
49	Shop						difficult to find	Pants
50	Shop						All	top
51	Shop						All	skirt
52	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
53	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
54	Shop						difficult to find	Jeans
55	Shop						All	Jeans
56	Shop						all	pants

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

Yes	jeans	50	retail	16-23	Student	less than 100
Yes	dress	200	retail	46-65	retired	100-250
	dress	300	retail	24-35	FT education	100-250
no				16-23	student	less than 100
no	pants	100	retail	46-65	FT HSE	100-250
no				36-45	FT-nursing	less than 100
no				46-65	FT-self employed	less than 100
Maybe	jeans	60	online	16-23	Student	less than 100
Maybe	jeans	300	retail	36-45	FT pharmacutical	400-600
Yes	jeans	200	retail	24-35	FT finance	100-250
Yes	jeans	100	retail	16-23	FT nurse	400-600
Maybe	pants	60	retail	46-65	FT civil	less than

57	Shop						difficult to find	dress
58	Shop						time consuming	Jeans
59	Shop						All	pants
60	Shop		perfect fit	monthly			difficult to find	dress

STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONAIRES

						servant	100
	Yes	dress	200	online	24-35	FT bank	100-250
	yes	jeans	100	retail	36-45	FT HSE	100-250
	Yes	pants	100	retail	46-65	FT public sector	less than 100
	Yes	dress	400	retail	36-45	unemployed	250-400

APPENDICE C

COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS QUESTIONAIRES

Comments from some of the respondent's questionnaires

1. Want to see clothes in person
2. Issues with length of pants
3. Difficulty with proper fit
4. Finds in difficult to get proper fit
5. Size 16-18,difficult to get right size and fit
6. Wont purchase online
7. Just use service for special occasion
8. Never purchase online
9. Would use online if reasonable
10. No difficulty with fit
11. No difficulty with fit
12. No difficulty with fit
13. Hates shopping experience
14. Difficult to get right size in jeans
15. Length of jeans an issue
16. Use service for special occasion
17. Never finds fitted clothes
18. Hard to find customised service
19. Use retail outlet for to feel fabric and seek advice