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The consumer-brand relationship amongst low-income consumers

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Abstract

The nature of relationships that consumers form with their brands has been well documented in the marketing literature, but research conducted to date has not focused on the relationships that low income consumers form with brands, despite this being an extremely important market globally. Through understanding the consumer-brand relationships with low-income consumers better, companies have greater opportunities for new markets as well as leading to increased innovation. This paper highlights low-income consumers as value-conscious consumers through the brand relationships they have.

Results from thirteen in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 13 women from Alexandra Township in South Africa are presented. Low-income consumers form many different relationships based on value, quality, choice and service, to name a few – with very few relationships being based on price. The low-income consumer requires trustworthiness, innovativeness and a willingness to do things differently. Understanding of their situation and a willingness of management to design processes and procedures around this is found to relate to improved relationships with an extremely brand-loyal market.

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

NAME: _____

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DATE: _____

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1 Chapter 1: Problem Definition

1.1 Introduction

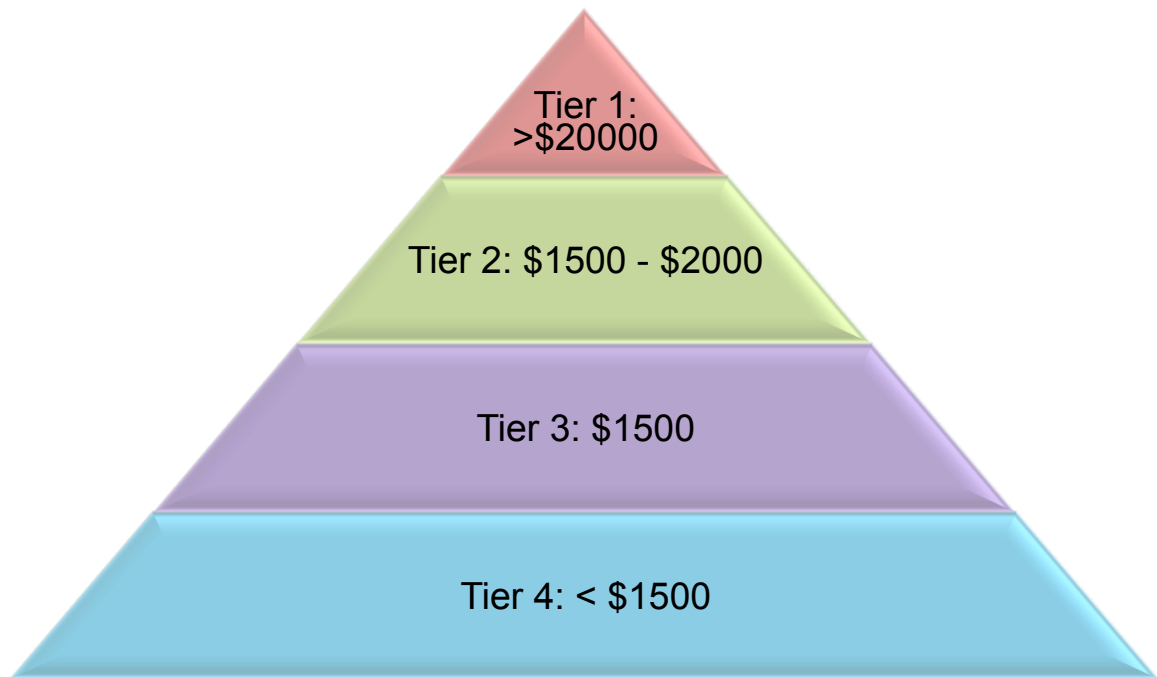
Over 75 percent of the world's population is considered low-income (A.T. Kearney, 2007). Prahalad (2006) classifies the world economically into four tiers, (see Figure 1). Tiers 3 and 4 form the bottom of the pyramid and consist of four billion people. People in tier 4 have an income of less than \$1500 per month and are classified as poor. People in tier 3 earn an income of \$1500 per month and are classified as low-income.

The prevalent assumption is that the poor are not a viable market and therefore are largely ignored (Prahalad, 2006). Low-income consumers have also been ignored due to the belief that companies cannot make money within those consumer markets. However, the reality is that not only are low-income consumers currently a viable market; their attractiveness is also growing as they progress up the pyramid. This means that although they may be currently classified as poor or low-income, this may change in the future (A.T. Kearney, 2007).

Over 15 million people in South Africa earn a household income of less than R2999 per month (AMPS, 2007). This constitutes over 30 percent of the South African population. Rather than ignore these consumers, South African companies have an enormous opportunity to understand them better and investigate the

relationships they form with brands to ensure sustainable strategies for this large group of consumers. “If we stop thinking of the poor as victims or as a burden and start recognizing them as resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers, a whole new world of opportunity will open up” (Prahalad, 2006, p. 1).

FIGURE 1: THE ECONOMIC PYRAMID



Source: Prahalad, 2006

1.2 Research scope

The scope of this research is limited to exploring the relationships low-income consumers in South Africa have with commercial brands where the primary focus is on making a profit (Oxford, 1999). This includes, but is not limited to, physical or tangible goods (fast-moving consumer goods or appliances), a service or intangible

(insurance or telecommunications) or an outlet (supermarket or clothing store) (Kotler and Keller, 2007). Brands promise value to consumers (Kotler, 2005) and consumers attach psychological meanings to the brands (Iacobucci, 2001). The meanings low-income consumers ascribe to their brands are imperative to the research as how the brand lives in the consumer's mind in the form of perceptions is crucial to the relationships that are formed.

A distinction should be drawn between a product and a brand. In this regard, Iacobucci (2001) cites Stephen King of WPP Group: "A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless" (p. 78).

1.3 Research motivation

The aim of the intended research is to explore the consumer-brand relationship amongst a target demographic based primarily on income. By highlighting and exploring the fact that relationships are indeed formed between low-income consumers and brands, it follows that greater attention will be given to this largely ignored market. There is a perception that low-income consumers are not brand-conscious (Prahalad, 2006 and A.T. Kearney, 2007), yet previous research has indicated that brands are in fact extremely important to low-income consumers (A.T. Kearney, 2007 and Synovate, 2006). This research aims to highlight these consumers as an important segment that deserves attention.

Companies should aim to ensure their brands are worthy of relationships with low-income consumers. Awareness of the brand is not enough, as pure awareness of a brand does not affect future, planned purchase: “a familiar brand with a positive image must build a positive brand relationship with the consumer” (Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus, 2006, p. 103). “A deeper understanding of the consumer-brand relationships would thus help us make specific predictions about consumer behavior that would not be possible using theories of brand personality, brand loyalty and brand imagery” (Aggarwal, 2004, p. 88).

Consumers seem to be more distrustful of larger firms and these larger firms could develop a competitive advantage by forming relationships with their consumers, as consumers are happy to form relationships if it makes purchasing easier (Grossman, 1998). Strengthening relationships has become a focus in marketing (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007) and the findings from the present research should not only be used to provide more insights into the brand-consumer relationship amongst low-income consumers, but should also form the basis for further research in this area.

1.4 Research problem

The literature states that there is value at the bottom of the income pyramid and that companies can service these markets profitably (Prahalad and Hammond, 2002). The same article gives countless examples of companies that have been

successful with consumers considered poor and low-income. Despite the perception that low-income consumers are not brand-conscious, research by Kalyanam and Putler, (1997, p. 166) found that “a general finding across existing studies is that the impact of demographic variables on brand choice is neither strong nor consistent.” According to research conducted by Synovate in emerging markets, low-income consumers are not that different from middle-class consumers and expect the same quality; yet there is a perception that the low-income consumer’s primary concern is price (Synovate, 2006).

These contradictory findings indicate that there is need for further research, particularly in emerging countries where a large majority of people are considered low-income consumers. Understanding the role of brands in low-income segments will give companies greater opportunities to enter new markets and could lead to increased innovation.

Exploring the consumer-brand relationship is an important area for research as it leads to more efficient marketing spends, greater customer retention, increased brand value and increased profits (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007 citing Blackston, 2000; Dowling, 2002; Reichheld, 1996 and Winer, 2001). It also allows managers to be better equipped to serve their markets. “A move to the broader relationship metaphor can provide managers with richer information on which to conduct situation analyses and market segmentation studies” (Fournier and Yao, 1997, p. 468).

2 Chapter 2: Theory and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 of this study looked at previous theories regarding low-income consumers and their importance as a consumer market. It also discussed the scope and motivation for the present report and mentioned the importance of consumer-brand relations. Chapter 2 now investigates previous literature relevant to this paper's focus and further explains a number of key concepts.

Consumers can form such strong attachments to certain brands that psychologically they begin to see those brands as a part of themselves. "They identify themselves with the brand" (Sheth, Mittal and Newman, 1999, p. 705). According to Aggarwal (2004, p. 88), "McGill (1998) has suggested that people treat some products as if their characteristics are produced by an underlying, defining essence, analogous to a genetic code" and they assign human qualities to brands. This led to the realisation that consumers relate differently to different brands (Fournier, 1998). Research followed that explored the way people formed relationships with each other and used the interpersonal relationship as a metaphor for the brand-consumer relationship (Aggarwal, 2004).

The metaphor is extremely useful; however, Aggarwal (2004) warns that it is important to not take the metaphor too far, as brands are not breathing, feeling beings. This is an important aspect to the research and highlights that the reciprocity of the brands, excluding the functional benefits, is in the mind of the

consumer. The fact that human qualities are given to brands by the consumer does mean that the interpersonal relationship metaphor offers great opportunities to observe the way consumers interact with brands (Aggarwal, 2004).

The theory reviewed in this section defines brands and why they are important, and briefly discusses brand personality, brand involvement and the difference between national brands and private label brands. Relationships are defined and the conditions for relationships to exist are detailed. Object-person relationships are explored and a definition of the consumer-brand relationship is given as well as a brief summary of the history of the consumer-brand relationship. The consumer-brand relationship is further discussed in terms of Fournier's Brand-Relationship Quality (BRQ) constructs, namely: intimacy, personal commitment, passionate attachment, love, self-concept connection, nostalgic connection and partner quality. The different consumer-brand relationships are discussed as well as the different relationship stages. Brand communities add complexity to the existing consumer-brand relationship and this is further explored.

2.2 Brands

Kotler and Keller (2007) cite the American Marketing Association as defining a brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (p. 136). The differentiation is often based on the consumer's perception due to the fact that the functional differences

are usually marginal (Biel, 1992), “the brand has no objective existence at all: it is simply a collection of perceptions held in the mind of the consumer” (Fournier, 1998, p. 345).

Brands have the ability to obtain a positive emotional response and be trusted by consumers (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001). Consumers can also form attachments to brands; attachments are defined as “an emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person and a specific object” (Thomson, MacInnes and Park, 2005, p. 77-78). It is possible for brands to be chosen based on their symbolic properties rather than their utilitarian properties (Jamal and Goode, 2001) so although functionally they may not offer the best functional properties the brand may still be chosen even if it is for less rational reasons.

2.2.1 Value of brands to consumers and manufacturers

According to Webster (2000), brands give consumers unspoken quality guarantees, lower the costs of searching and can give prestige linked with the brand image. The consumer knows exactly what to expect from the brand and this makes the purchase decision far easier. Brands also benefit consumers by allowing them to be used for self-expression (Aaker, 1999) although this would be primarily relevant for publicly consumed brands (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). Some brands are consumed “behind closed doors” and these are termed privately consumed brands (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001).

Brands have positives for the manufacturer as they can launch new products far more easily, given that the consumer has prior knowledge of the brand. Brands also mean increased sales and lower production costs, more control over their marketing channels and a relationship based on trust with the consumer (Webster, 2000). Brands are a defense against products becoming commodities and price competition as they create trust and often promise greater quality (Kotler, 2005).

2.2.2 Brand involvement

High product involvement has been hypothesised to lead to greater product importance and greater commitment to the product (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Involvement is not dichotomous; rather, it is a continuum. Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) categorise low involvement if low importance is attached to the brand and so the economic or psychological consequence is small and therefore less effort is made in the purchase decision. High involvement is when the perceived economic or psychological risk is high and therefore greater effort is made in the purchasing process as an incorrect purchase has significantly higher economic and/or social consequences.

It is important to note that involvement is not the property of the product but rather the perceived importance for the customer; involvement for one product may be low for one consumer and yet for another the involvement is high (Sheth, Mittal and Newman, 1999). Involvement can be evaluated on the following facets: (1)

perceived importance; (2) perceived risk; (3) perceived value; and, (4) hedonistic value (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985).

2.2.3 National and private label brands

National brands are the brands of the manufacturer whereas private label brands are brands developed by retailers and wholesalers (Webster, 2000 and Kotler & Keller, 2007) and often carry the brand of the retailer or wholesaler and are termed house brands. A private label brand offers greater value to the consumer in either the same quality at a lower price to the or lower quality at a much lower price (Kotler and Keller, 2007). Kotler (2005) states that private label brands are the biggest risk facing national brands as they are increasingly offering the same or increased quality at lower prices. Consumers with higher price sensitivity are expected to purchase private label brands (Webster, 2000) such as house brands.

2.2.4 Brand personality

Biel (1992) says that a brand packages meaning, a brand is not just bought for what it is but also for who it is. Brands can be associated with personality traits (Aaker, 1999). Brand personality is referred to as a set of human characteristics given to the brand that marketers use to differentiate brands (Aaker 1997). “The basic argument is that attitude objects, such as brands, can be associated with personality traits that provide self-expressive or symbolic benefits for the consumer” (Aaker, 1999, p. 45). Five brand personalities have been identified: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness (Aaker 1997).

2.3 Relationships

The Oxford dictionary defines relationship as “the way in which two or more people or things are connected” (Oxford, 1999 p. 1208). The basic elements of social structure are interactions, and a series of interactions constitutes a relationship (Hinde, 1976). These exchanges have a certain degree of mutuality and continuity (Hinde, 1979). The relationship should always be explored within the social environment, as the environment and the group affect dyadic relationships and the dyadic relationship in turn affects the group. “Each dyadic relationship is in fact always embedded in a social group” (Hinde, 1979, p. 20) and “it is essential to remember that dyadic relationships can never be fully understood from their social contexts” (Hinde, 1979, p. 21).

Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) mention three fundamental elements that typify interpersonal relationships, namely interdependence, temporality and perceived commitment. Fournier (1998) states that relationships involve reciprocal exchange, are purposive, are multiplex phenomena and are process phenomena that are based on Hinde’s (1995) four core conditions. These themes will now be discussed further.

2.3.1 Reciprocal exchange

The fundamental basis to a relationship is that of reciprocity; in other words, both parties must benefit from the connection. Social exchange theory explains relationships through the process of exchange whereby a partner receives benefits

that outweigh the costs (Grossman, 1998). This characteristic of mutuality or interdependence is not only dependent on the active partners but also on the interaction of the environment (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). Partners must be involved and mutually supportive. “For a relationship to truly exist, interdependence between partners must be evident: that is, the partners must collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship” (Fournier, 1998, citing Hinde, 1979, p. 344).

2.3.2 Relationships are purposive

Relationships are purposive in that behaviour and the continuation of the relationship is directed towards an objective. “Relationships involve the provision of meaning to the persons who engage them” (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007, p. 627), and no matter what aspect or form they take they must provide benefits to the partners to ensure the relationship continues (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). Relationships give meaning to people’s lives and “meaning is derived from a rich diversity of brand experiences that are themselves dependent on a rich variety of backgrounds and contexts” (Jevons, Gabbott and Chernatony, 2005, p. 300).

2.3.3 Relationships are multiplex phenomena

Relationships are not just single interactions but multiple reactions that all influence the next interactions and the relationship; they are extremely diverse and can be involved in one activity or many (Hinde, 1979). Relationships are complex and can

consist of many parts; they can take on many forms and can be studied in a multitude of ways (Fournier, 1998).

2.3.4 Relationships are dynamic

Relationships exist in time and are not static as each interaction affects further interactions (Hinde, 1979). “The course of the relationship may be affected by the attitudes of the participants to each other, and these may change through the natural processes of growth and development, or as a consequence of events inside and outside the relationship” (Hinde, 1979, p.35).

2.4 Person-object relationships

Gilmore in 1919 coined the term Animism, “the belief that objects possess souls” (Aggarwal, 2004). “Consumers use key possessions to extend, expand, and strengthen their sense of self” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 171). The relationship between the person and object is unidirectional, since the object cannot love back (Shimp and Madden, 1988). However, Belk (1988, cited in Ahuvia, 2005) challenges this by stating that relationships with objects are always three-way (person-thing-person). “Belk was referring specifically to the fact that part of our desire for an object reflects a competitive relationship with other people who may also want the object” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 180). This competitive aspect would not be present in objects that are kept private, for example the privately consumed brands mentioned above.

The anthropomorphising of objects is a common human activity and has been found in almost all societies (Fournier, 1998). Shimp and Madden (1988) state that consumers form relationships with objects, ranging from antagonism to love. The consumer's "love" for a consumption object can be equated with "extreme product enthusiasm" (Shimp and Madden, 1988, p. 163). People often feel love towards consumption objects and can "fall in love" with certain items (Ahuvia, 2005). Shimp and Madden (1998) arrive at eight kinds of love that have been based on Sternberg's triangular theory of love. These eight kinds of consumer-object relations are summarised in the table below.

TABLE 1: SHIMP AND MADDEN'S EIGHT KINDS OF CONSUMER-OBJECT RELATIONS

Kind of Relation	Description
1. Non-liking	Ambivalence
2. Liking	Some degree of affinity
3. Infatuation	Strong yearning but without strong desire
4. Functionalism	To solve a current problem
5. Inhibited desire	Strong desire but something discourages the behaviour
6. Utilitarianism	Form attachments but are not committed
7. Succumbed desire	Strong motivation to buy but without a strong liking
8. Loyalty	Intimate relation

The above classification is a useful tool for those person-object relationships that have progressed to the "extreme product enthusiasm" mentioned above, but it is important to note that not all relationships will be based on love, as "love is only one type of relationship" (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 171).

Meaning attached to objects is not homogenous and the object to which meaning is described is often different between men and women, as is the pattern of relationship. Elliott (1994) cites Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) in stating that men mention action objects more frequently and women mention contemplation objects. “Women’s meanings [are generally] related to emotions and interpersonal relationships, and men’s to instrumental and activity-related features” (Elliott, 1994, p. S14).

2.4.1 Person-brand relationships

Brands have been animated and personified through celebrity endorsements and the use of spokespeople (Fournier, 1998). The brand is associated with a specific person who is/was personally known (Fournier, 1998), such as a brand of fabric softener used by a mother. Another animistic type is the use of animated and/or fictional brand characters (Fournier, 1998) such as the Vodacom meerkat or KFC’s Chicky. Yet brands do not have to be anthropomorphised through brand characters or spokespersons for the relationship metaphor to be relevant (Fournier and Yao, 1997).

2.5 The consumer-brand relationship

2.5.1 Background

The consumer-brand relationship is a series of interactions between the brand and the consumer, and addresses how the consumer is connected to the brand and

whether it is perceived or real. It is based on the idea that consumers and brands can relate to each other (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007).

The consumer-brand relationship was originally described as a long-term, exclusive and committed relationship similar to a marriage (Szmigin and Bourne, 1998). This analogy has been questioned as the relationship with a brand “is less intense, requires less commitment and is not as emotionally involving as a marriage” (Grossman, 1998, p, 27). The consumer may have commitment to one brand exclusively or may be committed to more than one brand and researchers should not “dismiss the importance of the dynamic interplay among brands within a person’s usage portfolio” (Fournier and Yao, 1997, p. 452). In research conducted by Fournier and Yao (1997), one man had meaningful relationships with three coffee brands while another used different coffee brands for different occasions.

Relationships and the behaviours displayed within the relationship are influenced by the personalities of the partners (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel, 2004). Research conducted by Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) found that consumers connect more easily to outspoken brands with exciting personalities but find stronger relationships are built with sincere brands on an emotional basis.

The reciprocity relationship between consumers and brands are not unidirectional as the consumer receives benefits from the relationship. Not only are functional needs met but often brands can offer self-definitional rewards (Bhattacharya and

Sen, 2003). Fournier (1998) identifies the following identity rewards that consumers receive through brand relationships: “reassurance of self-worth, announcement of image, and social integration” (Fournier, 1998, p. 346).

2.5.2 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is described in the literature as having the same marketing benefits as the consumer-brand relations discussed above, such as reduced marketing costs (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Brand loyalty is “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour” (Oliver, 1999, p. 34). As the above quote highlights, brand loyalty is usually described as the consumer being faithful to one brand by exclusively using one product or brand. This description might have been what led to the consumer-brand relationship being described as a monogamous marriage as mentioned above.

According to Fournier and Yao (1997), consumers are usually classified as either loyal or disloyal according to the share of purchase the brand enjoys. Fournier and Yao (1997) further argue that this classification does not take into account the different loyalty levels and types. “Whether the notion of loyalty as exclusive committed partner is relevant in a world of product proliferation, price wars, and hedonistic consumption remains questionable at best” (Fournier and Yao, 1997, p.

454). Only assessing loyalty on the basis of satisfaction or behaviour could result in incorrect predictions as it only looks at the transactional interactions with a brand (Hess and Story, 2005).

2.5.3 Commitment

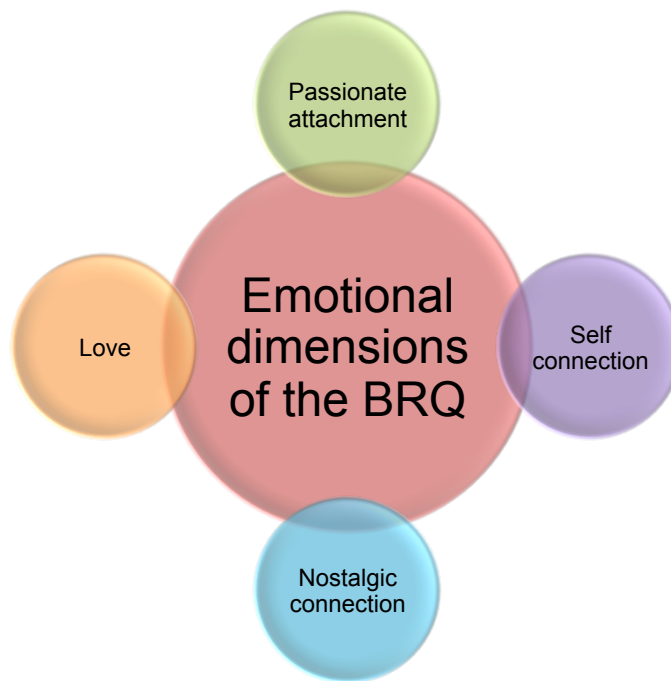
Rather than using the brand loyalty construct, commitment can be used as a measure of continual or frequent use although it need not be exclusive. Hinde (1979) refers to commitment as “situations in which one or both parties either accept their relationship as continuing indefinitely or direct their behaviour towards ensuring its continuance or towards optimizing its properties” (p. 132). Commitment is not only present in positive relationships, as a person may be committed to a relationship with an enemy (Hinde, 1979). For instance, consumers were so disillusioned with a telecommunications company in South Africa that they started a website called Hellkom (Urban Sprout, 2008) to badmouth the company called Telkom. This example certainly demonstrates commitment to a relationship with an “enemy brand”.

2.6 Brand relationship quality

Fournier (1998) proposed a complex, integrated model called the Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ); see Figure 2 and Figure 3. The model is divided between emotional dimensions consisting of: passionate attachment, love, self-connection and nostalgic connection; whereas the behavioural or informational

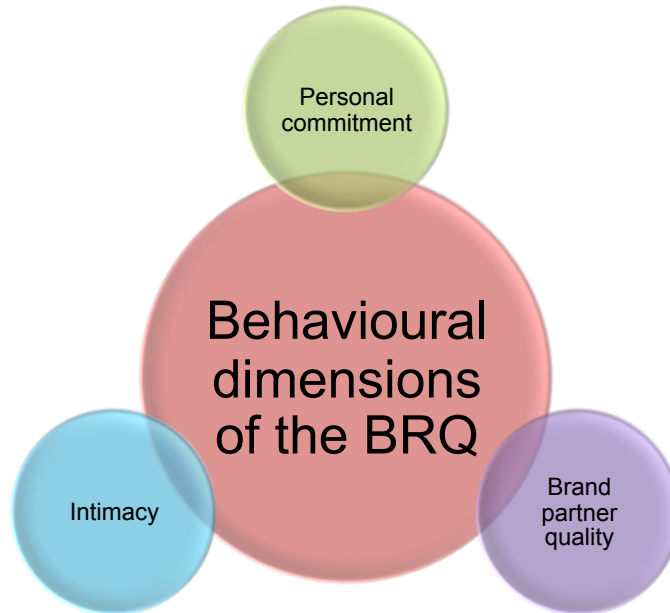
dimension consists of: personal commitment, brand partner quality and intimacy. These seven aspects attempt to investigate the “strength and depth of the person-brand relationship” (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007, p. 628).

FIGURE 2: FOURNIER’S EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE BRQ



Source: Smit, Bronner & Tolboom (2007)

FIGURE 3: FOURNIER'S BEHAVIOURAL OR INFORMATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE BRQ



Source: Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007)

2.6.1 Intimacy

Intimacy is the closeness between the partners and the knowledge the consumer has about the brand (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). The knowledge of the brand combined with the meanings assigned leads to beliefs about brand performance and can even progress to performance myths (Fournier, 1998). Intimacy can be displayed through the willingness of the consumer to share information with the brand (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel, 2004). Intimacy is also the closeness between the partners (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007), a connectedness, a bond, and a sense of warmth (Shimp and Madden, 1988).

2.6.2 Personal commitment

Commitment has been discussed above as the degree of faithfulness to the brand, and was compared to loyalty, which is the exclusive use of one brand. There is a strong personal connection and consumers are devoted to the relationship (Hess and Story, 2005), although the degrees of connection and devotion will vary. It is important to add that commitment is also a willingness to stay with the relationship even when things are difficult or times are tough (Thomson, MacInnes and Park, 2005). Commitment brings relationship stability and discourages the use of brand alternatives (Fournier, 1998).

2.6.3 Passionate attachment

Passionate attachment refers to how much the product or brand has become part of the consumer's daily life (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). Strong attachment manifests itself, as an unwillingness to do without the brand and can progress to the belief that one cannot live without it. Passionate attachment indicates strong feelings of connection and affection, and the greater the attachment to the brand the more it can be expected that the brand will be kept close (Thomson, MacInnes and Park, 2005).

2.6.4 Love

Person-object love has been discussed above and Ahuvia (2005) found that consumer identity is linked to special possessions that people love. "At the core of all strong brand relationships was a rich affective grounding reminiscent of

concepts of love in the interpersonal domain” (Fournier, 1998, p. 363). Love involves emotional feelings towards the brand or emotional bonds with the brand (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007).

2.6.5 Self-concept connection

This dimension indicates to what extent the brand conveys significant aspects of the consumer’s identity (Fournier, 1998). Does the consumer have rapport with the brand and does the brand assist in projecting the correct image? Consumers tend to buy brands that have personalities that match or are congruent with their own personalities (Jamal and Goode, 2001). “Self-concept connection reflects the extent to which the brand is part of the self, part of the self-image, and refers to the question whether the consumer and his or her brand have lots in common” (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007, p. 628).

It is important to note, “different personality traits can be accessed or can become differently salient in different social situations” (Jamal and Goode, 2001, p. 483). Therefore publicly consumed goods may be based more on the idea of the ideal self versus privately consumed goods (Jamal and Goode, 2001).

2.6.6 Nostalgic connection

Nostalgia relates to one’s memories and to things that happened in the past and can include activities, people and places (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). “Consumers bought brands that evoked memories of their grandparents, often

through the smell that instantly returned them to the time and place of their childhood” (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998, pp. 141).

2.6.7 Partner quality

Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) discovered that an important aspect of the brand-consumer relationship is the quality of the partner. The quality of the relationship partner, whether it is perceived or real, has an effect on the quality of the relationship. It is important that “the brand takes good care of the consumer, shows interest and is reliable” (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007, p. 628). Consumers will be willing to enter into relationships should the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs (Grossman, 1998).

2.7 Forms of consumer-brand relationships

Relationships can be classified as social and personal relationships and marriage and friendship (Szmigin and Bourne, 1998). Fournier (1998) classifies 15 relationship forms: Arranged marriage, casual friend, marriage of convenience, committed partnership, best friendship, compartmentalised friendship, kinship, rebound/avoidance-driven relationship, childhood friendship, courtship, dependency, fling, enmity, secret affair, enslavement. These 15 relationship forms are reproduced in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: A TYPOLOGY OF CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIP FORMS

RELATIONSHIP FORM	DEFINITION
Arranged marriages	Non-voluntary union imposed by preferences of third party. Intended for long-term, exclusive commitment, although at low levels of affective attachment.
Casual friends/buddies	Friendship low in affect and intimacy, characterised by infrequent or sporadic engagement, and few expectations for reciprocity or reward.
Marriages of convenience	Long-term, committed relationship precipitated by environmental influence versus deliberate choice, and governed by satisfying rules.
Committed partnerships	Long-term, voluntarily imposed, socially supported union high in love, intimacy, trust, and a commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances. Adherence to exclusivity rules expected.
Best friendships	Voluntary union based on reciprocity principle, the endurance of which is ensured through continued provision of positive rewards. Characterised by revelation of true self, honesty, and intimacy. Congruity in partner images and personal interests common.
Compartmentalised friendships	Highly specialised, situationally confined, enduring friendships characterised by lower intimacy than other friendship forms but higher socio-emotional rewards and interdependence. Easy entry and exit attained.
Kinships	Non-voluntary union with lineage ties.
Rebounds/avoidance-driven relationships	Union precipitated by desire to move away from prior or available partner, as opposed to attraction to chosen partner per se.
Childhood friendships	Infrequently engaged, affectively laden relationships reminiscent of earlier times. Yields comfort and security of past self.
Courtships	Interim relationship state on the road to committed partnership contract.
Dependencies	Obsessive, highly emotional, selfish attractions cemented by feeling that the other is irreplaceable. Separation from other yields anxiety. High tolerance of other's transgressions results.
Flings	Short-term, time bounded engagements of high emotional reward, but devoid of commitment and reciprocity demands.
Enmities	Intensely involving relationship characterised by negative affect and desire to avoid or inflict pain on the other.
Secret affairs	Highly emotive, privately held relationship considered

	risky if exposed to others.
Enslavements	Non-voluntary union governed entirely by desires of the relationship partner. Involves negative feelings but persists because of circumstances.

Source: Fournier (1998), p. 362

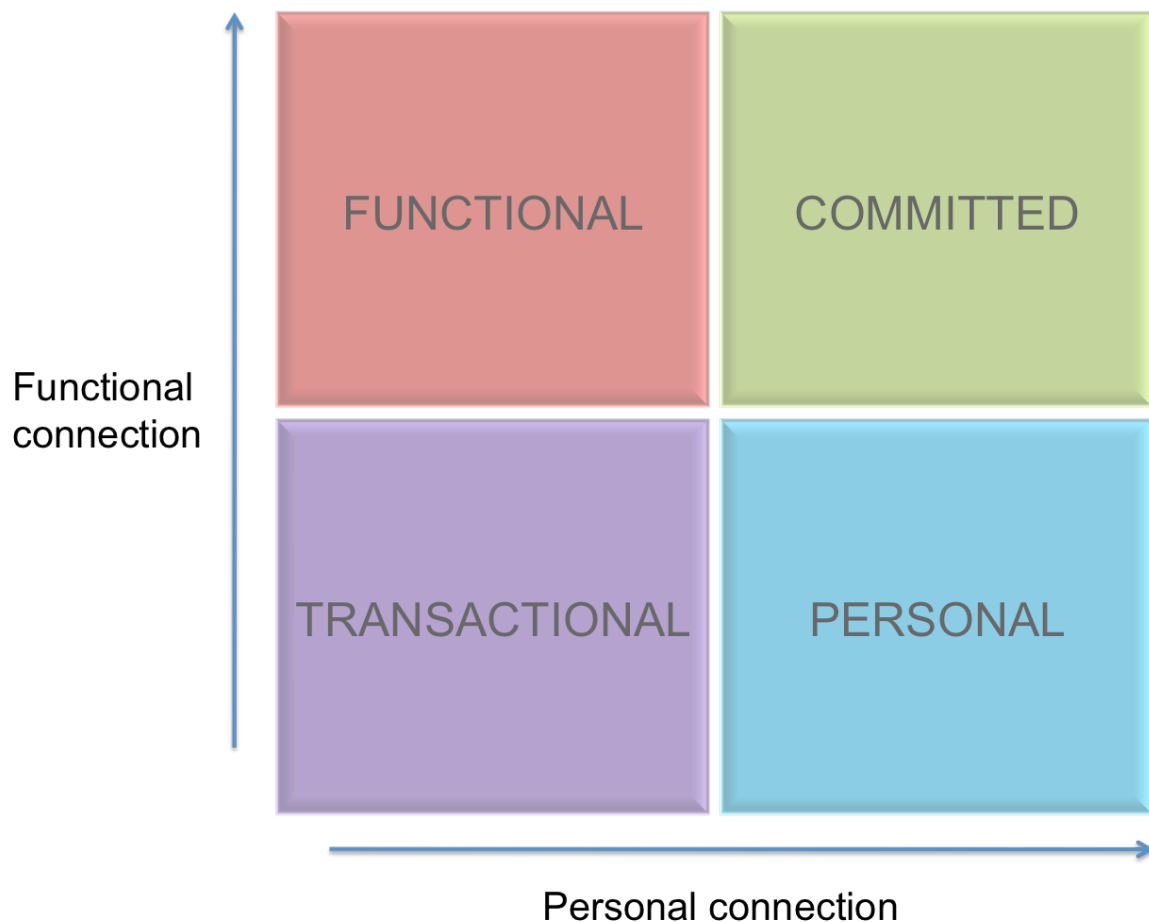
Relationships have also been classified as exchange and communal relationships based on the benefits to the partner (Aggarwal, 2004, citing Clark and Mills 1993). In exchange relationships there is a *quid pro quo* that the relationship partner gives a benefit to receive a benefit in return. In communal relationships, benefits are given to show concern. One can argue that even in the case of communal relationships the partner still receives a benefit although the benefit is not as obvious; for example the knowledge that someone owes you or that the favour will be returned someday or even the joy of having someone thank you.

Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) argue that most of Fournier's 15 relationship forms can be viewed as either exchange or communal. Exchange is based on primarily economic reasons and functional benefits and satisfaction is the outcome. Communal relationships exceed self-interest and trust is the result of these close relationships (Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus, 2006).

Story and Hess (2006) classify relationships according to functional and relational connections with four outcomes: transactional, functional, personal and committed. Brands that score low on functional and relational connection would be considered transactional and consumers would be expected to be extremely price-sensitive.

Brands that score high on functional and relational are considered committed relationships and consumers and are expected to be in the relationship for the long haul (Story and Hess, 2006). See Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: RELATIONSHIP SEGMENTS



Source: Story and Hess (2006)

The customers who have a functional relationship with the brands are satisfied with the performance of the brand, but will choose another brand if greater value is offered. The customers who have a personal relationship with the brand are

personally connected to the brand but do not have strong functional attachments. This model explains why satisfied customers can be disloyal and why seemingly loyal customers can abscond (Story and Hess, 2006).

2.8 Stages of consumer-brand relationships

Relationships change and develop over time and go through different stages that are dependent on the interactions of the partners, the environment, changes in self-concept and changes in the brand. Grossman (1998) has four relationship stages consisting of (1) courtship; (2) maintenance; (3) failure; and (4) dissolution. Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) highlight the following different stages in a relationship: (1) initiation; (2) growth; (3) maintenance; (4) deterioration and (5) dissolution. Consumer-brand relationships as interpersonal relationships deteriorate and dissolve. The reasons for deterioration are discussed below.

2.9 Decline of relationships

Fournier (1998) highlighted two models of relationship deterioration, the entropy model and the stress model. In the stress model relationships are devastated by: (1) environmental stresses whereby situations change or alternatives are introduced; (2) partner-oriented stresses whereby either the consumer changes or the changes are brought about by management; and (3) relational stresses whereby the consumer feels let down by the brand through breaking relationship

rules such as breach of trust and neglect. In the entropy model relationships are no longer maintained and nurtured and fade away due to lack of effort. “A healthy relationship maintains, and preferably expands, the equity and the possibilities that were created during courtship. A healthy relationship requires a conscious and constant fight against the forces of entropy” (Levitt, 1986, p. 119).

2.10 Brand communities

Brands provide the opportunity for individual consumers to feel part of a group and aid social reciprocal action (Patterson and O’Malley, 2006). Social identity theory relates to feeling part of a group, and, as is explained by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003, p. 77) “people need not interact or even feel strong interpersonal ties to perceive themselves as members of a group”.

A brand community is defined as, “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among users of a brand” (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001, p. 412). Carlson, Suter and Brown (2007) classify brand communities as social or psychological brand communities. A social brand community is a “social community of brand admirers who acknowledge membership in the community and engage in structural social relations” (Carlson, Suter and Brown, 2007, p.1). Members do not necessarily meet face-to-face but there is some form of social interaction. A psychological brand community is a group of brand admirers that are boundless, “who perceive a sense of community,

yet never engage in social intercourse with one another” (Carlson, Suter and Brown, 2007, p.2).

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) argue that brand communities, like other communities, have three distinctive components: shared consciousness, whereby the members feel a connection to the brand but also each other; rituals and traditions that revolve around “shared consumption experiences” (p. 421); and a sense of moral responsibility or duty to the community. Carlson, Suter and Brown (2007) agree that these components are found in the social brand communities but are not necessarily found in psychological brand communities. In psychological brand communities the brand is the reason for the sense of community; there is no social interaction so rituals and traditions may not be present and there is no moral responsibility towards members or the group.

Brand communities are important to marketers as the community offers intellectual and social support to the consumer (Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann, 2005). Communities can offer responsiveness to the consumer’s need that a company would struggle to meet. “Brand community membership is more useful as a customer retention device than as a customer acquisition tool” (Algesheimer, Dholakia and Herrmann, 2005, p. 30). Carlson, Suter and Brown (2007) take this one step further and point out that the psychological brand community, being is cheaper and easier to establish, could be used for acquisition while the social brand community could be used for retention. “Community-integrated customers

serve as brand missionaries, carrying the marketing message into other communities. They are more forgiving than others of product failures or lapses of service quality” (Alexander, Schouten and Koenig, 2002, p. 51 cite Berry 1995).

2.11 Conclusion

“Brand relationships may be the result of imagination or actual participation in brand communities” (Esch, Langner, Scmitt and Geus 2006, p. 98). The relationship metaphor has been widely accepted as the dominant model of marketing and it is generally believed that relationships are far more profitable than individual transactions (Hess and Story, 2005). It is not enough that the brand be personified or animated; it should also behave as an active, contributing member of the relationship for the consumer-brand relationship to exist (Fournier, 1998). Szmigin and Bourne (1998) warn us that not all consumers may want or need a relationship and care should be taken to not apply relationship thinking to all brands and situations. This should be kept in mind when designing strategies or researching the topic.

Brands are very different; consumers are very different and have different expectations of the brand; and the context each brand and consumer is in is very different. These differences are not static and are changing and developing over time. The consumer-brand relationship needs to be further explored, as it is an extremely complex phenomenon.

3 Chapter 3: Research Questions

3.1 Research question 1

- What types of brands do low-income consumers form relationships with?

There is a perception that the low-income consumer is primarily concerned with price (Synovate, 2006). This research question aims to explore whether this perception is indeed relevant and is evaluated according to Kotler and Keller (2007), Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) and Webster (2000).

3.2 Research question 2

- What is the perceived quality of the relationships low-income consumers have with brands?

Evaluate according to Fournier's BRQ model. Further evaluate using Hinde (1979), Fournier (1998), Aggarwal (2004), Hess and Story (2005), Story and Hess (2006), Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004) and Fournier and Yao (1997).

3.3 Research question 3

- What are the different forms of relationships that low-income consumers have with their brands?

Classify according to Fournier (1998). Further evaluate using Esch, Langner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) Shimp and Madden (1988) and Story and Hess (2006).

3.4 Research question 4

- How are different consumer-brand relationships impacted by the different relationship stages?

Investigate using Smit, Bronner and Tolboom's (2007) stages. Evaluate relationship decline using Fournier's (1998) Stress and Entropy models.

4 Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the research methodology employed in this study of the relationships low-income consumers form with brands. While Chapter 2 formed the theoretical basis and Chapter 3 highlighted the objectives of the research, Chapter 4 will show how the researcher went about the study. This chapter indicates the methods of data collection and analysis and identifies and mitigates against the limitations inherent in the research.

4.2 Research method

The research took the form of a qualitative, phenomenological approach, as the researcher did not know what the answers to the questions were and was exploring the relationships low-income consumers have with brands. Qualitative research attempts to see something through the eyes of the research participants (Struwig and Stead, 2001). This study attempted to see the regularities regarding the consumer-brand relationship from an insider's view.

According to Zikmund (2003, p. 111), “usually exploratory research provides greater understanding of a concept or crystallizes a problem, rather than providing precise measurement or quantification.” Qualitative research should be chosen

when the purpose is interpretation as it enables a researcher to gain new insights (Creswell, 1994). “In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep: We collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 147). The present research aimed to understand the consumer-brand relationship amongst low-income consumers better and therefore was best suited to an exploratory study yielding qualitative data.

“A phenomenological study is a study that attempts to find common themes (Struwig and Stead, 2001) and to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 153). This study was relevant to the consumer-brand relationship as it aimed to understand the “person’s perception of the meaning of the event”.

4.3 Population and unit of analysis

The population was South African consumers in LSM 3 – 5 whose household income was below R2999 per month. According to AMPS (2007), this is an approximate population size of over 15 million people. The unit of analysis was the consumer-brand relationship.

4.4 Size and nature of the sample

Thirteen low-income women living in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg, South Africa were interviewed. The sampling procedure used was convenience sampling as the research was exploratory research and the aim was not to generalise the results to the population but rather to form a basis for further research (Zikmund, 2003).

Alexandra Township is an area within Johannesburg that is considered low-income and has a high unemployment rate. The respondents chosen to conduct the phenomenological research were not questioned outright about their income but were qualified according to their dwellings, household contents and in the introductory discussions they were asked if they struggled financially.

As the research aimed to explore the respondents' perspectives and their individual relationship with the brands, the low-income consumers interviewed were suitable as they discussed their meanings, realities and perceptions.

4.5 Interview schedule design

The interview schedule (see Appendix 1) was developed with the research questions in mind to ensure the data collected would be able to effectively answer the research questions. The interview schedule helped plan for an unstructured part and a more structured part to the interview. The unstructured part allowed the

respondents to talk about brands freely and thereafter more structured questions were posed for further clarification dependent on what they had discussed previously. The interview schedule ensured that the questions were first general in nature by the naming of brands that are important to the respondents, and then more specific questions were posed to investigate the individual brands in more detail according to the literature; more specifically according to the categories of type, quality, form and stage of the consumer-brand relationship.

The interview started with easy questions to make the respondents feel more comfortable (Struwig and Stead, 2001); this was a request to name brands important to them. It was often evident by their body language if a brand had great significance to them and this made note of to be explored later.

Two pilot interviews were conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the interview design. Results of the pilot study indicated that marketing jargon was being used and should be removed and that respondents got tired after an hour and a half and so it was better to ensure the interviews did not take much longer than this.

4.6 Data collection

The study consisted of undisguised, lengthy, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with women who were classified as low-income consumers. “The phenomenological interview is often a very unstructured one in which the

researcher and the participants work together to arrive at the heart of the matter” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 153). The interviews took place within the homes of the respondents to be able to better observe the brand relationships they had with the brands they used and to make them feel more comfortable. This gave the interviewer access to information that would not have been available in a neutral setting and was also used to validate the respondents’ responses. The interviewer also had the opportunity to ask questions about the brands present within the home.

Only women were interviewed, as previous research suggests that women display stronger brand involvements (Guest, 1964 and Sherrod, 1989 in Fournier, 1998) and are largely responsible for the household shopping (Thompson, Pollio and Locander, 1994).

According to Gillham (2005, p. 15), “race and perceived social class are complex issues: the potency of the latter is curiously persistent and powerful, leading to an intrusive sense of disease in an interview situation.” The interviewer had a translator with at all times who was conversant in the respondents’ home language and was of the same race group as the respondents thereby ensuring the respondents were able to conduct the interview in the language they were most comfortable with. The interviewer and translator were both female, in order to limit the respondents’ level of discomfort. The translator was asked to leave in three of

the interviews, as these respondents felt comfortable speaking in the interviewer's mother tongue and indicated unease at having the translator present.

The researcher recorded the interview using a dictaphone to facilitate analysis of the data and to not have to rely entirely on her notes. Photographic evidence was collected with the respondents' permission. Follow-up interviews with two respondents were conducted where clarification was necessary. The data collection consisted of the following:

- Conduct in-depth interview.
- Study the interviewer's notes and discuss each respondent with the translator after the interview.
- Discuss the mood of respondent, body language, animation, etc.
- Listen to the interview and make further notes.
- Listen to the interview with the notes and write down the results.
- Listen to the interview once more and view the notes and the results.

4.6.1 Personification

The consumer-brand relationship has been likened to an interpersonal relationship, and asking the respondents to attribute human characteristics (Aggarwal, 2004) and qualities to a brand assisted in analysing the relationships. It also assisted in understanding the brand personality and what benefit it brought to the relationships. It is important to mention that not all the respondents were

comfortable with this research method, but in all instances the required information was obtained through further questioning and probing.

4.7 Data analysis

The data analysis included three categories: description, analysis and interpretation (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The three categories did not follow a staged process whereby analysis commenced when description was completed, as analysis and even interpretation happened during data collection. The analysis was structured according to the research questions but as the data could not be packaged into neat, measurable components, flexibility was imperative. Analysis was idiographic as the aim was to improve understanding of the consumer-brand relationship amongst low-income consumers and to highlight common themes for the basis of further research rather than to generalise the findings (Struwig and Stead, 2001). It was a study of individuals rather than a study of a group.

“The central task during data analysis is to identify common themes in people’s descriptions of their experiences” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 153). The common themes within the research were identified according to an idiographic analysis, individual respondents’ personal and social contexts and brand relationships. These were then compared to subsequent respondent analysis to form a cross-case analysis. The constant comparative method was used to highlight similarities and differences in the data.

4.7.1 The constant comparative method

This constant comparative method is defined as, “The researcher [beginning] with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and [comparing] it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set” (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). Finding data that has something in common leads to categorisation that helps the researcher clarify ideas and make sense of the data (Gillham, 2005).

4.7.2 The data analysis spiral

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) explain Creswell’s (1998) data analysis spiral that the researcher used to analyse the data, as well as the steps that the researcher followed, starting with raw data and ending with the final research report:

1. Organise the data. The data was first organised according to the respondent, taking note of their demographics, circumstances and brand selections.
2. Peruse the data a few times to get an overall feel. This was first done on a literal level, which meant documenting what was said (Mason, 2002). The data was then read on a interpretive level, which involved how the researcher interpreted the statement or non-verbal cue, both at the time of the interview and later when listening to the recording and re-reading the notes (Mason, 2002). A reflexive reading of the data was also done to

identify the role the researcher played in the investigation and what effect this had on the interview and the interpretation (Mason, 2002).

3. Identify statements that relate to the topic. These statements were recorded to ensure they would be available for classification at a later stage.
4. Classify the data into meaning themes. Categories were constructed around the research questions and statements were allocated to the relevant category. Findings not directly related to the research questions were noted and later evaluated.
5. Construct a composite. This was divided into two parts. The first part was an idiographic analysis done according to the respondent, and the findings for each respondent were discussed. The second part was a cross-case analysis whereby all data was grouped according to the research questions and discussed.

The indexing and categorising of the data was done to achieve groupings of data that were treated as “unfinished resources” rather than being an end product such as a variable (Mason, 2002, p. 157). The consumer-brand relationship is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that requires a “wider range of analytical and explanatory logics than the variable analysis option” (Mason, 2002, p. 157).

Quantitative methods were not suitable for the exploratory research conducted and Mason (2002) gives four reasons why a quantitative approach to qualitative research is not appropriate. Firstly, although the categories must be consistent,

they are not uniform. In this study the only uniform category was the demographics and, as this research was exploratory in nature, there were no findings being generalised to a larger group. Secondly, variables do not work for interpretive and reflexive readings of the data; this suited the present researcher's goals. Thirdly, "indexing categories may refer to complex and/or specific processes which cannot be reduced to a static or simple variable or type, but which are usefully organized under specific indexing headings for you to retrieve and do further analytical work upon" (p. 157). Lastly, the research design, convenience sampling and semi-structured interviews do not support this form of variable analysis. It is important to look at how the stories are told, at non-verbal cues, and at the language used when analysing the data (Merriam, 1998).

4.8 Data validity and reliability

Validity is difficult to address in qualitative research, as no generally accepted guidelines to test validity exist (Struwig and Stead, 2001). The notion of validity is also questioned for qualitative research as it is considered more appropriate for experimental research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Despite these limitations, qualitative research results must be meaningful and credible. To ensure accuracy in the results the primary strategy employed was the provision of thick description to communicate the findings, which is a detailed description of the interviews to allow readers to draw their own conclusions from the research presented (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

Thick description also allows the reader access to the setting, allows a sharing of the experiences (Creswell, 2003) and supports the dependability of the findings (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). By using thick description the researcher gave enough information to assure the reader that the findings were logical, rather than just giving the findings with little information on the data. The respondents' exact wording was used and these quotations were combined with the researcher's interpretations (Creswell, 2003), which gives the reader more insight into the experience.

Reliability is a misnomer when it comes to qualitative research due to the fact that human subjects differ vastly in their reactions to stimuli, situations and environments. Rather than aiming for reliability, the researcher aimed for dependability – dependability that the results would be consistent with the data (Merriam, 1998). Struwig and Stead (2001) likened reliability in qualitative research to consistency.

Dependability was tested through discussions with the translator who was present at the interviews, as well as discussions with a colleague in the field, Gary Bryant, an expert on brands with over 10 years' experience. Consistency was augmented through the use of multiple collection methods: the interviews were recorded, photographic evidence was collected, behaviour and responses were observed, and interviews took place within the respondents' homes to corroborate what the respondents were saying.

4.9 Potential Limitations

4.9.1 Design limitation

The unstructured interview, although flexible, can yield very different results from different people, which makes it difficult to compare the data (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). The interviews were extremely flexible as the respondents were given the freedom to decide the direction of the discussion. To mitigate against the lack of structured groupings, the research questions were used to ensure that the results could be compared.

The researcher was not a trained interviewer and although well read on research techniques, nuances and non-verbal cues may have been missed due to a lack of experience. The translator was engaged after each interview to ascertain if she noticed any non-verbal reactions to the brands and the discussions.

All thirteen respondents were from Alexandra Township, which could point to cultural and social nuances inherent in the responses that would not be evident in other areas or townships.

4.9.2 Budget constraints

An experienced guide and translator were used to take the interviewer into Alexandra and to assist in arranging people to interview, which limited the number of respondents. The translator and guide also provided valuable information on

Alexandra Township and gave the researcher the opportunity to understand the township better. This proved invaluable in the analysis of the results but did limit the number of respondents due to budgetary constraints.

4.9.3 Cultural differences

Although the interviewer had a translator who was fluent in the respondents' mother tongue, there were cultural differences that may have biased the process. Although the interviewer was well practised and had an understanding of the respondents' culture, the cultural differences were still a barrier. The language difference was still a limitation even with a translator as there were cultural differences with regard to the understanding of scenarios and words.

4.9.4 Respondent error

When interviewing human subjects one relies on the person's memory (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001), and memory can be fleeting or incorrect. It was therefore important to notice hesitation or uncertainty in the respondent and to take note of it. During the interviews it was imperative to ensure that the respondents understood that there were no correct or incorrect responses as the discussions were about their experiences and perceptions.

4.10 Conclusion

This section made extensive use of the literature to ensure the objectives of this research report were met. The chapter highlighted the methodologies used, strategies employed to substantiate the accuracy of the findings, and the limitations of the study. In the following chapter the results of the study will be discussed at length.

5 Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The following section is presented in descriptive, narrative form and thick description is the mechanism used to communicate the respondents' backgrounds, beliefs and brand choices. Table 3 is a summary of the respondent demographics and Table 4 is a summary of all the brands mentioned or displayed by the respondents. The names of the respondents have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE 13 RESPONDENTS

Name	Age	Marital Status	Children	Employment
1. Doris	32	Married	Three	Unemployed
2. Lizzie	56	In relationship	Three	Self-employed
3. Jane	24	Engaged	Nil	Unemployed
4. Violet	40	Married	Four	Employed
5. Betty	31	In relationship	Two	Self-employed
6. Lerato	23	Single	One	Student, part-time
7. Lindiwe	69	Single	Nil	Retired
8. Elizabeth	21	In relationship	Two	Unemployed
9. Rose	31	Married	Two	Part-time
10. Janet	21	Single	Nil	Student
11. Thandi	20	Single	Nil	Employed

12. Prudence	49	Married	Four	Housewife
13. Poppy	29	Single	Two	Employed

TABLE 4: ALL THE BRANDS MENTIONED BY THE 13 RESPONDENTS

CATEGORY			BRANDS MENTIONED (ALL)	TOTAL
FMCG	FOOD		RAMA, FLORA, STORK, GOLDIE CHICKEN, JUNGLE OATS, TASTIC, IWISA, ACE, HULETTS, ALBANY, KELLOGG'S, TASTIC, ACE, HALL'S, SELATI, IWISA, PARMALAT, HULETTS, BLOSSOM, RONDO, KELLOGG'S, SPAR FISH OIL, KOO, 2-MINUTE NOODLES, RAMA, BOKOMO, JUNGLE OATS, WEETBIX, ALBANY, SASKO SAM, ESTCOURT, ACE, HULETTS, LUCKY STAR, GOLDIE'S CHICKEN, KOO, TASTIC, CROSSE & BLACKWELL, WHITE STAR, IWISA	40
	BEVERAGE		COKE, COKE, COKE, FANTA ORANGE, SMIRNOFF, FRESHPACK, EVERFRESH, OROS, COKE, OROS, COKE, CLOVER MILK, SPRITE, COKE	15
	PERSONAL CARE		SANEX, BRUT, INGRAM'S, REVLON, JOHNSON & JOHNSON, PAMPERS, RESTORE, LIL-LETS, LUX, DAWN, GARNIA, POND'S, VASELINE, PROTEX, COLGATE, VASELINE	16
	HOMECARE	LAUNDRY	OMO, SKIP, OMO, MAQ, SUNLIGHT, VANISH, SURF, OMO, SUNLIGHT, JIK, OMO, SUNLIGHT, SUNLIGHT, SUNLIGHT	14
		HOUSEHOLD	HANDY ANDY, HANDY ANDY, SUNLIGHT LIQUID, JEYES, COBRA, PLEDGE	6
TOTAL FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOOD				91
RESTAURANT CHAIN			KFC, KFC, KFC, DEBONAIRS, KFC	5

SUPERMARKET CHAIN	FREEDOM, PICK 'N PAY, SHOPRITE	3
CLOTHING CHAIN	EDGARS, WOOLWORTHS, EDGARS, TRUWORTHS, FASHION DEPOT, WOOLWORTHS, MR PRICE, WOOLWORTHS, EDGARS, IDENTITY, TRUWORTHS, MR PRICE, TRUWORTHS	13
BRANDED CLOTHING	PLAYTEX, LACOSTE, LEVI'S, SOVIET	4
BRANDED SHOES	NIKE, ALLSTARS, NIKE, NIKE, REEBOK, PUMA, ALLSTARS	7
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT	LG, JVC, SAMSUNG, LG, DEFY, RUSSELL HOBBS, SALTON, HISENSE, SONY, RUSSELL HOBBS, LG, TELEFUNKEN, JVC, LG, LG	15
FURNITURE	GRAFTON & EVEREST	1
CAR BRANDS	POLO, RENAULT MEGANE	2
CELLPHONE MANUFACTURER	NOKIA, SONY ERICSSON	2
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	MTN, VODACOM, VODACOM	3
SEVICE BRANDS	HOLLARD INSURANCE	1
OTHER	TUPPERWARE, JA RULE, HEAT, TRUE LOVE	4
TOTAL BRANDS DISCUSSED		151

5.2 Idiographic account

Thirteen interviews took place within the Alexandra Township in Johannesburg, South Africa. Below is an account of the respondents' contexts as well as the brands they have formed relationships with. The respondents do not speak English as their first language, but the imperfect English of their replies has been retained

for authenticity. Photographs have been included to serve as added items in understanding the individuals and their environment.

FIGURE 5: THE STREETS OF ALEXANDRA



FIGURE 6: THE STREETS OF ALEXANDRA



5.2.1 Doris

Doris is 32 and lives with her husband and three children in a tiny one-bed roomed home. Her daughters are aged 10 and five, her is son 15 months old, and Doris is pregnant. Their house is extremely small and the staircase is virtually a ladder.

Doris's husband is a handyman but Doris is unemployed. Doris is striving to improve her situation by getting employment that can pay for training courses at a later stage. Doris is particularly interested in computer courses: "I can type but I'm still slow, I'm not perfect like that," she says. "I'm an unemployed woman but I am looking forward for the future".

Doris would like to improve her situation and is optimistic about the future, "God will help us, you know, some other day". Doris enjoys living in Alexandra as she believes it has the most opportunities. She wants people to think of her as a good person who contributes. Doris discussed the brands OMO, Handy Andy and Freedom Supermarket.

FIGURE 7: DORIS



5.2.1.1 OMO – washing powder

OMO is very effective for her children's clothes and removes the dirt and marks. Her mom used OMO and some friends also use it. Doris makes sure she soaks her

children's clothes first in the bath before she starts washing. She will also do this with her husband's clothes if they have stains or are very dirty. Doris has been using OMO since she had her first child.

Doris is involved in two "grocery stokvels". A stokvel is an informal way to save amongst a group of people whereby the group saves money on a monthly basis, and each individual gets a turn to receive the savings over a fixed period of time. The grocery stokvel means that instead of distributing money, they distribute groceries. Doris is involved in two grocery stokvels, one being a monthly stokvel with three friends; and the other an annual stokvel. OMO is specified on the stokvel list and they must have OMO in the basket of goods. Store brands are called no-name brands and Doris will not buy the no-name brand even if it is much cheaper. Doris was also happy to use Skip but was adamant that she would not use Sunlight. Doris is happy with OMO's price as it is often on sale.

OMO was described as a 30-year-old black woman who has two children. When asked if she was friends with OMO, Doris said they were best friends. OMO likes bright colours and is always very neat. OMO is always there for Doris and it was described as the brand that is most like Doris.

FIGURE 8: BOX OF OMO KEPT OUTSIDE



5.2.1.2 Handy Andy – cleaning detergent

Doris uses Handy Andy to clean in the kitchen and feels that it cleans the stove very well and quickly. It gets rid of oil easily. “I’m using it ’cause when something has spots and I put in a damp cloth and then I put Handy Andy and when I wipe then that spot gets out.” Doris finds that Handy Andy reduces the amount of effort she needs to put in and it makes life easier and cleans very well. It cleans the appliances, bathrooms and the floors; “In the house, the white stuff, and the silver things like this [points to a hi-fi] and also in the toilet, also in the floor, the tiles”.

Her neighbours use Handy Andy as well as her mother and mother-in-law; and Doris learnt how to clean from her mother. Doris uses Mr. Muscle in conjunction with Handy Andy to clean the bathroom and kitchen. Doris will leave the Handy Andy on for five minutes if it is very dirty before she starts cleaning. Doris uses

Handy Andy approximately three times a week and would not buy a no-name brand and would only buy the “real Handy Andy”.

Handy Andy was described as a 28-year-old black woman with one child living in the township. Doris described her as a “friendly someone” and sees her three times a week. She dresses in bright colours and does not like untidy people. She is very talkative.

FIGURE 9: DORIS IN HER KITCHEN



5.2.1.3 Freedom – supermarket

Freedom Supermarket is situated in Alexandra Township and Doris buys groceries there. Freedom Supermarket is described as a chain store that is open every day from 6am to 6pm. The supermarket has a butchery and sells groceries, baby clothes and small appliances. Doris goes to Freedom Supermarket at the end of the month to buy groceries for her family.

Doris likes Freedom Supermarket because it is easier and costs her less money. It is more economical to visit Freedom because if Doris travels to Shoprite in Balfour Park it will cost her R9 but to Freedom Supermarket it only costs R4.50. She can walk to the shop, and save a taxi trip, and can catch a taxi back with all her parcels. Doris trusts Freedom Supermarket and the quality of what they sell; “Got too much nice things inside, and healthy food. They cannot sell you the expired things”.

The Freedom Supermarket also helps Doris with her stokvel. “That’s why I say I love Freedom, I like Freedom, they can help you as a group of women to bank there, the money for the grocery, for the end of the month”. Doris says that they are helpful and the Freedom Supermarket staff help carry all the parcels to the taxi, which is greatly appreciated by Doris. “They are so nice people, they treat you nice. They don’t want the customer to be upset”.

Freedom was described as a 32-year-old black woman who is a good person. Freedom Supermarket has one child and is very caring and does not like people to suffer. She is described as neat and loves to wear bright colours.

Doris says that Freedom Supermarket helps her a lot as a married woman with three kids. Freedom is described as the “closest friend” and Doris would be cross and heart-sore if the supermarket closed down.

Doris has been going to Freedom since she was a child as her mother used to take her and her siblings. They all looked forward to the trip to Freedom Supermarket, as they would get sweets and chips. They had to behave or her mother would get cross and would not take them anymore. Doris goes to Freedom Supermarket early in the morning, as the store gets too busy later on. It is too packed and she cannot take her firstborn with her. At 7am she can take her firstborn with her. Her firstborn loves chocolate and gets a treat so she also enjoys going with her mom. Doris will often send her child with a small list to Freedom Supermarket.

Doris wants to be a good mother and wife and the brands that help Doris achieve this are the brands she will choose. People must say that Doris is a good woman who likes to help people. Her husband approves of the brands she chooses and says she is a good wife.

5.2.2 Lizzie

Lizzie is 56 years old with three adult children, two boys and one girl. She lives with her daughter and her two grandchildren. Her last-born child was in prison but is now a priest. Lizzie was married but has been divorced for 20 years and is currently in a 16-year relationship. Lizzie worked undercover at hospitals as she has a nursing assistant certificate and she would report people that were stealing. She resigned in 1989 and worked for her mother for 14 years. Lizzie has now opened her own daycare centre as she has the nursing background and enjoys

working with children, although the parents make her life difficult. The children arrive as early as 5:30am and are collected from 5pm onwards.

Lizzie is adamant that she does not go for cheaper brands, as the quality is not the same. “I don’t go for cheaper stuff always, when I do the groceries, like no-name”.

FIGURE 10: LIZZIE IN HER KITCHEN



5.2.2.1 Coca-Cola (Coke) – carbonated beverage

Lizzie has been drinking Coke since she was 23 and it is her favourite. Her mother often scolds her for drinking Coke. “It’s my favourite, I always drink Coke and my mother always shout at me, it’s a lot of acid what what, but I can’t do without it. When I finish to eat I want the bottle here and drink maybe three glasses and then I will be satisfied, the thirst will go away”. When she drinks something else she finds something is missing. Lizzie buys 24 litres a month and drinks it with her grandson who is the only one in the household who enjoys Coke.

Lizzie always has Coke after meals and will also wake up at night and will have a drink of Coke. “You know, when you are thirsty eish you drink Coke you feel okay, you feel alright”. Lizzie laughs at her neighbour as he is a worse addict than she is and always sits on the steps with a Coke.

Lizzie started drinking Coke when she started working. The first drink of Coke Lizzie had was in the small, glass bottle and she remembers it being so tasty. She finished the first one and found she was not satisfied, so she bought another one. Lizzie believes that Coke tastes better in the glass bottle and brought out a 1.25l bottle to demonstrate that this is the bottle she chooses. Lizzie still prefers the 200ml Coke.

Her next-door neighbour knows that Lizzie loves Coke and will offer her a glass. Lizzie does publicly consume Coke but people criticise her for drinking too much Coke, so she does not tell everyone about Coke. She also does not keep it a secret either. Lizzie does not like Pepsi but if Coke is not there she will drink Fanta Grape or Iron Brew. Lizzie needs Coke as without Coke her “thirstyness will not go away”. When she does not have money, she asks her mother for money for Coke.

Lizzie described Coke as a person with respect who makes Lizzie number one. He is a 50-year-old black male who is always in a suit. He is smooth and this is a good compliment to Lizzie. She compared Coke to her son as her son always makes an effort and is very fond of Lizzie. Coke loves Lizzie and will get cross with someone

who angers her. Lizzie described Coke as a lover, “Coke is like a lover because I can’t do without it” and “I can’t [give it up] even if I try, I can’t”. She can imagine Coke taking her to Mauritius. “I like Coke [laughs], it’s my favourite, Coke, I am addicted to Coke.”

FIGURE 11: LIZZIE’S COKE IS CHILLED



5.2.2.2 JVC – electronic equipment

“If I got enough money, everything can be JVC in the house from music, DVD, I like it so much”. Lizzie has a JVC television set that she has had for four years, which her son the priest bought her. Lizzie says it is the first JVC product she has and the picture and sound quality is great. It is also very reliable. Lizzie once watched a

Nigerian movie where everything in the house was JVC and this impressed Lizzie, as even the car radio was JVC.

The JVC television set is the first time that Lizzie has such an “expensive thing” in the house. Lizzie does not know of anyone else who has JVC. Lizzie is proud to have a JVC television, because her visitors admire the television and ask her how she afforded such an expensive item. “Makes me feel great because at least I have got one thing which is expensive in the house so I am proud because everyone who comes in ‘ooh your TV, ooh JVC, we like it’. Everybody who knows that brand, so I am proud at least, I have got one thing which peoples are happy about it.”

Lizzie described JVC as a young, black girl who reminded her of her 10-year-old granddaughter. Her granddaughter is very precious to her and so is JVC. JVC is humble and very neat and Lizzie does not like it when JVC is not around, she cannot live without her.

5.2.2.3 KFC – fast-food restaurant chain (chicken)

Lizzie eats KFC at least once a month as long as she has enough money. It is an end-of-month treat or if they go to a church outing. Every month Lizzie will buy a bucket of KFC chicken for her family as a treat. Lizzie treats her family because she loves her family and she is the breadwinner. They must miss her when she is no longer around. The meat is very tender because they use Goldie chicken.

Lizzie feels that KFC cares about their customers and is very happy that there is a toilet inside the KFC premises. Lizzie thinks a lot about KFC but is unhappy with the long queues, this forces her to go to Chicken Licken, which she is very unhappy about. "...month-end we are suffering, because you end up not eating KFC because of people, all the branches. I remember one Good Friday we were going away, we wanted to buy, yoh we didn't, each and every KFC it was so many people until we left, we didn't have any food to eat."

Lizzie's mother often sends her to buy a barrel for supper. Mom will send her to the shops and they will all eat together [two families]. Lizzie can remember clearly the first time she had KFC. Her current boyfriend is a very good man and when she first started seeing him [16 years ago] he brought eight boxes of KFC chicken to a family member's funeral. "It was the first time we have tasted such a nice meat, it was so wonderful to taste KFC. It was my first time." This impressed her and her family, and KFC brings good memories of this man.

Lizzie describes KFC as a white male in his fifties. He dresses casually in jeans and takkies [sneakers] and is approachable. KFC is just a person that Lizzie knows yet she relies on him.

5.2.3 Jane

Jane is 24 years old, unemployed and lives with her mother and brothers. Jane has recently lost her father and misses him terribly. She is engaged to be married and

dreams of starting her own catering business. Jane mentioned that she is shy and would like to be more outgoing. She also mentioned that being light-skinned is better than being dark-skinned like her. Jane mentioned the brands MTN, Edgars, Pick 'n Pay, Renault Megane, Nike, Allstars (Converse), Coke and KFC. However, we will only discuss Edgars, MTN and KFC.

5.2.3.1 Edgars – clothing chain store

Edgars gives Jane very good service and excellent quality and she feels there is always someone around to help her. If Jane has a problem she goes to Customer Service and they help her; Edgars takes care of their customers. They inform you of their specials and sales and send a birthday card on your birthday.

When Jane walks into an Edgars store a security guard always greets her and makes her feel welcome. When Jane needs some help with finding a size or a style she always finds someone to help her. Jane was particularly impressed with the cellphone sales counter as she bought a cellphone for her brother there and they explained everything to her, including the deals and warranties. Jane buys her clothes and sometimes shoes at Edgars and always finds what she is looking for.

A friend told Jane about Edgars in 2000 and Jane thought this friend, “always looked good”. She had an Edgars account and told Jane about the credit facility and the payment terms. “I was with this friend of mine, the one I was telling you about, we walked there and they had a sale on that day and everything that they

had there I wanted, you know I liked, eish everything was so nice, so I walked in and then I opened an account same time and they approved same time. So everything I wanted I got". Edgars makes Jane feel like a top executive with their quality clothes, they make her feel important.

Jane feels that if she does not have cash she can still go to Edgars to buy something because they trust her. "They give an opportunity to buy things, let's say I don't have cash right now, neh, and I need something, like I need maybe a dress to go somewhere, then I am able to go there because I've got an account with them; you know I got a sort of relationship with them. I can go there at any time".

Edgars is described as a 35-year-old black man. He is tall and muscular and light in complexion. He dresses semi-formal in jeans and jackets and will often wear formal shoes and sometimes sneakers. He has no hair. He is described as a close friend of Jane's as when you need something you can always rely on him and he is very honest. He is very friendly but will let you know when you are wrong. He knows what he wants out of life and he is very helpful.

Edgars has disappointed Jane in their unwillingness to understand her financial situation. "Let's say this month I am not able to pay them they won't understand, let's say I call them and tell them uh guys look I've got this and this kind of problem I won't be able to pay you by this date but I will be able to pay you on let's say the due date for Edgars is on the fourth then I tell them okay I will be able to pay you

on the tenth of this month, they will say yes okay no problem it's fine but still they will charge you interest and all of that, you know, of which I don't think is fair."

Jane is thinking of stopping her account with Edgars, as she believes Edgars let her down when her father died. She was the only breadwinner and had to pay for all the funeral expenses and they did not try and help her at all. Jane feels like money comes first to Edgars and they don't care what you are going through. Jane does still believe they sell good clothes but feels like a friend has let her down and she does not know if she can forgive them.

5.2.3.2 MTN – cellular network operator

Jane started smiling when she started speaking about MTN and said the company's catch phrase, "everywhere you go". Her father bought her first cellphone in 2000 and it was an MTN so she was used to MTN. When she went to MTN for her next cellphone she was impressed by the service. "MTN, okay this cellphone that I've got here I bought it on what do you call it, when I went there, eish, you know they gave me the best service ever".

Jane values honesty and forthrightness; "I got there I didn't know what I was looking for actually, I went there just to look and then I met this guy from MTN of which he was very good and I ended up buying this cellphone on contract. The way he explained the product you know everything, how to use it. And you know he was very honest with me, he told me about the advantages and the disadvantages of

this cellphone. That is what every brand needs to do; they need to tell you about the advantages and the disadvantages as well so that when you buy something and this things happens then you knowing, okay, they told me about this.”

FIGURE 12: JANE SHOWS HER CELLPHONE POWERED BY MTN



MTN phoned Jane to find out if she was happy and if her cellphone is still working, which impressed her a lot. They find out if there is anything she would like to change and tell her about something in advance to see if she is interested. Jane was happy with the network coverage as she said she had never had a day where there was no network coverage.

Jane likes the brand and spontaneously mentioned the logo and the catchphrase, the colour yellow is very attractive to Jane and she believes that the adverts are very creative.

Her mother and brother used MTN and so did her father. Jane does not like thinking about her dad because she misses him. Jane cannot live without MTN, most of the people she is close to are far from her and she needs to communicate with them. With MTN she can check the weather, the Lotto numbers and use the internet.

Jane does feel that MTN needs to improve in relation to Vodacom with regard to more competitions. Jane believes that Vodacom always creates new games for people like Yebo Millionaires and is always giving away prizes.

MTN is described as a 25-year-old white female. She is very talkative and knows what she wants. She is outgoing and likes challenges. She dresses very well but is casual and likes expensive things. Jane felt this was sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad thing. She drives a BMW and likes partying a lot. She is a chef and a very close friend. Whenever you need her you can access her, they always talk about life in general. They see each other three times a week; always go out together and share a lot. Give each other advice and motivate each other.

5.2.3.3 KFC – fast-food restaurant chain (chicken)

Jane described KFC as her favourite and she would even like to own a KFC franchise. Jane believes with KFC you cannot go wrong as everyone eats KFC. KFC is consistent; it never changes, and you get what you are expecting. The taste of the chicken and recipe never changes. Jane finds KFC very affordable; if Jane

were to take someone out she will take him or her to KFC as she can afford it. The service is great. Jane eats KFC two to three times a month and always enjoys it.

Jane remembers when she was a child and she went on a school trip her parents would buy her KFC for lunch. “Whenever there was a trip then you knew that okay I’m gonna have KFC today”. Jane thinks fondly of the KFC and the school trips. Jane and her brothers recently spoke about school and how her father fetched them, they also spoke about the KFC on the school trips and how much they looked forward to it. Jane likes to spoil her family and will often buy KFC take-away for dinner.

KFC is described as a 30-year-old black female. She is married with one child and dresses in sportswear and drives a Mini Cooper. She has short hair and is light in complexion. KFC is outgoing, talkative and likes socialising with people. She knows people and will always come up with a topic. She has lots of ideas and loves motivating people. KFC is a positive person and always has an answer, and likes seeing other people succeed. Jane can go to her at anytime as she lives nearby.

KFC always satisfies her and Jane knows she will get exactly what she is looking for. Jane was adamant that she does not like Chicken Licken and will travel further to get her KFC.

5.2.4 Violet

Violet is a 39-year-old married woman with four children aged 13, 10, five and three. Three are girls and the youngest child is a boy. Violet gives home-based care to old, sick people, who helps them to do things for themselves and helps them exercise. Violet describes herself as an accommodating person who loves sharing ideas with other people and believes she is a very good listener. Violet likes cooking and cooks a lot and does not like it if people do not like her meals. A highlight for Violet is visiting her granny once a year in the Free State.

FIGURE 13: VIOLET IN HER LOUNGE/KITCHEN



Violet listed a lot of brands that were important to her and they were: Jungle Oats, Tastic Rice, Iwisa maize meal, Sunlight powder, soap and fabric softener, Sanex roll-on, Brut (for her husband), Samsung, LG, Defy, Hollard insurance, Tupperware, Woolworths (loves shopping here but has to wait for the sales). Violet mentioned that she could not live without any of these brands but was not particularly passionate about many of them.

5.2.4.1 Jungle Oats – porridge

Violet believes that breakfast is the most important meal of the day and one cannot start your day without breakfast. Jungle Oats is quick and easy to make, it helps with the digestive system and it gives you energy. With the work Violet does (caring for sick people) she needs a lot of strength and Jungle Oats helps her get through the day. Violet mentioned a few times that caring for sick people is not an easy thing. Violet eats Jungle Oats every morning during the week but chooses Kelloggs on the weekend as she relaxes on the weekend. Her mother used to make Mabela, a brown porridge made with mielie meal, and she believes it is good and healthy but it takes a long time to make.

5.2.4.2 Tastic – rice

Violet likes Tastic because it is white, tastier and gets bigger than other rice. It cooks to three times as much. Many recipes derive from Tastic and with Tastic you can make many meals. It makes Violet feel special because when she prepares a meal she knows everyone will love it. Violet has tried other rice but prefers Tastic, the brand she is used to.

Violet describes Tastic as a 50-year-old, energetic Chinese woman. She is neat, casual and happy. She is a role model to Violet and Violet believes a friendship can develop.

5.2.4.3 Vanish – stain remover

Violet does not trust Vanish and will never buy the product again. The advertising message said to “trust pink to remove stains” but Violet was adamant that she does not trust pink. Her son messed on his clothes while eating prunes and she almost used the whole bottle of Vanish trying to get the stains out.

Violet was not very passionate about the brands that were mentioned and primarily focused on and discussed the functional benefits. Violet indicated that she has an overall distrust of marketing and brands as the companies say one thing and once you try it, their promises do not hold up. When Violet started discussing brands she disliked she became far more animated. She was particularly passionate about her dislike of Vanish. Violet liked Defy as her mother recommends it, but Violet has not actually used it herself.

5.2.5 Betty

Betty is 31 years old with two children. She has a boyfriend and likes watching television. She runs her own tuckshop in Alexandra. Betty is very proud of her own business and the independence it gives her. It is important to Betty to be neat and tidy, and quality is important. Betty wants people to say that she looks after her family and always looks smart. Betty says she is a good person who is honest and fair. Betty would hate it if anyone thought of her as a rebel. Betty has a famous cousin that she looks up to and admires.

Betty mentioned Coke, Surf, Ace Mielie Meal, Edgars, Ingram's Camphor Cream, Revlon, Hulett's Sugar and Ja Rule even though she stated that he is a criminal.

Betty struggled to single out what brands are important to her and required a lot of probing. A situation was posed to her if someone took her from her home, which three things would she want to take with her. Betty was traumatised by this thought and was adamant that she should not be taken from her home.

FIGURE 14: BETTY TAKES SOME TIME FROM RUNNING HER BUSINESS



5.2.5.1 Surf – washing powder

Surf is important to Betty, as it does not damage her and her family's skin. It washes their clothes thoroughly and makes sure that the clothes are bright. It is important to Betty that her family looks clean and neat. Betty's boyfriend and their children are happy with their clothes. Her clothes must stay the way she bought them. Betty used to buy OMO and Sunlight but decided that Surf is better.

5.2.5.2 Hulett's – sugar

Betty feels she is forced to buy store-branded sugar when she does not have money. Betty much prefers Hulett's sugar. Hulett's sugar tastes great and is worth it, as she requires fewer spoons of sugar in her tea. When she buys the store brand she needs three teaspoons versus two spoons with Hulett's. Hulett's is very good quality. Betty only buys store-branded sugar about four times a year, when there is no money. Betty puts the store-branded sugar into another container so that people cannot see that it is not Hulett's and this ensures her cupboards are kept neat. Betty's mother uses Hulett's sugar.

Hulett's is described as a 32-year-old Indian woman. She is married with two children and drives the latest car. She looks very good and is very trim. She is a pillar of the community although Betty does not know her. Everybody likes her because she is there for everyone, especially children. She is friendly and approachable; she looks after orphans and gives them food. Betty feels she could go to her for help even though she does not know her.

FIGURE 15: BETTY'S KITCHEN



5.2.5.3 Edgars – clothing chain store

Betty mentioned Edgars and said she loves going there as it reminds her of Saleshouse. When Betty was a young child her father would always take them to Saleshouse and would buy them expensive clothes. Betty also likes Edgars because her boyfriend opened an account there and they sell good quality clothes. Betty says that the service is very good and she has been going there for two years. Betty does not believe that the store is very different to other stores but because they allow her credit, and they trust her, means she will continue going there.

5.2.5.4 Ingram's – camphor cream

Betty likes Ingram's Camphor Cream because it keeps her skin smooth and smells like peppermint. Her skin always looks good. Betty uses it all the time and she discovered it as an adult but she cannot remember when she first used it.

Ingram's was described as a beautiful woman who looks very good and presents herself beautifully. She is very neat in relation to other people. She is a married with one child. Betty is a not friends with her but they are acquaintances.

5.2.6 Lerato

Lerato is 23 years old and is unmarried with one daughter who is two years old. She is studying computer science at the University of the Witwatersrand. Lerato

loves music, reading novels and magazines and watching television. Her baby is her first priority and she loves her dearly. Lerato had a good knowledge of what a brand is and different brands but was not very comfortable talking about the reasons why she chooses certain brands.

FIGURE 16: LERATO OUTSIDE HER HOUSE



Lerato mentioned the following brands: OMO, Truworths, Playtex, Albany, Kelloggs, Johnson & Johnson, Heat, True Love, Russell Hobbs, Pampers, Tastic rice, Salton, Nike, Ace, Halls, Fashion Depot Jeans, Fanta Orange and Selati sugar. Here we will discuss Johnson & Johnson, OMO and Playtex.

5.2.6.1 Johnson's Baby – baby range

Lerato says she likes everything about Johnson's Baby, as it is so soft on her baby's skin. It is a very good product that protects her baby, and Lerato only wants the best for her. Lerato's baby is still very young and Lerato trusts all their products on her baby. She uses the foam bath, aqueous cream, Vaseline, bum cream and

the baby cologne. Lerato learnt about Johnson's Baby from her sister and has not tried other products. Johnson's Baby offers a wide variety of products and nobody else offers cologne. Being a good mother is extremely important to Lerato because a lot of children do not have mothers, and if you are not being a good mother your child will be like an orphan, a child must feel that motherly love.

5.2.6.2 OMO – washing powder

Lerato uses OMO because it keeps her clothes white and removes the stains. She finds the price reasonable and again it helps her be a better mother. OMO is not easy on her hands but Lerato continues using it because it gets the clothes clean. Lerato has tried Surf and Sunlight but they do not get the marks out.

5.2.6.3 Playtex – underwear range

Lerato buys Playtex underwear and she says they are strong and beautiful. They are so comfortable yet Lerato feels sexy as they fit so well and are such beautiful colours. Lerato goes on her own to buy the panties, as she is shy to buy with other people. Lerato was very shy to discuss Playtex and indicated that she did not usually talk about the brand at all.

Smirnoff Dry Gin reminds her of her father and although she cannot stand the taste herself she always thinks of her father when she sees the brand.

5.2.7 Lindiwe

Lindiwe is 69 years old and runs a soup kitchen. She had one child but he died. Lindiwe used to sell sandwiches and fruits in Alexandra, but she was getting tired so she stopped last year because of her age. The manual labour was becoming too much for her. Lindiwe stopped working last year and decided she needed to do something for Alex. “Something came into my mind, it was about children, the children that are in the streets, they are called street kids. So I thought if we could get a big shelter, take these kids away from the streets, you know, and put them in the shelter, give them life like any other person and then they can get help. Cause others they have HIV and AIDS and they don’t go for tests”. Lindiwe has not been able to raise the money for a shelter but she feeds the children from her home.

FIGURE 17: LINDIWE IN THE KITCHEN THAT FEEDS MANY CHILDREN



Lindiwe mentioned the following brands: Sunlight, Jik, Iwisa, Freshpack rooibos, Woolworths, Everfresh and Parmalat. Lindiwe displayed the following brands in her

kitchen: Hewlett, Blossom, Rondo (for frying eggs), Oros (for the children that receive food from her), Kelloggs corn flakes (yet she showed Bokomo) and Spar fish oil. “All of them I cannot do without, I cannot do without Rooibos teas, other teas make me sick”.

5.2.7.1 Sunlight – washing powder

Lindiwe likes Sunlight because it does not make her itch. Lindiwe believes Sunlight is value for money because you only have to use a small amount. “You put little bit, then you shake it, it gives a lot of foam then you just wash. Then it lasts longer”.

Lindiwe used to use OMO but since Sunlight was launched she has been using Sunlight. With OMO, Lindiwe used a lot of Sta Soft fabric softener but with Sunlight she uses far less. Lindiwe is very happy with Sunlight and will not change it. “Sunlight is to me, it’s like my own, I don’t know what to say it is like me, when I got Sunlight in my hand I’ve got myself, it is something that I trust, it has never disappointed me”.

Lindiwe does not hesitate to recommend Sunlight to other people. “When somebody says, ‘which is a good washing powder?’, I always tell them that I am one with my Sunlight and we are right, we are friends. Others say ey you are right because I have switched to Sunlight, you see others just say I was using Surf, but now I switched to Sunlight because of you and it’s right. They’re very happy about it, but only when they ask me, I never stand in the street and tell people”.

Lindiwe stated emphatically that she never buys a store brand – “even for a gift, thanks I don’t want it” – yet she showed a Spar branded oil. Lindiwe does not trust new things: “I don’t trust things that are starting, I trust things that has been there for a long time you see” and “I don’t trust new brands”.

5.2.7.2 Iwisa – maize meal

Lindiwe used to use Ace maize meal before, but she prefers Iwisa maize meal because it is moist and soft. Lindiwe does not have to use as much Iwisa as she finds it gets stiff much quicker. A 10kg bag of Iwisa can last her the whole month. It is far easier to wash the pot after using it, as it does not stick. Lindiwe feels that Iwisa never lets her down and she loves the sweet taste. “Iwisa to me is like a friend, a very good friend.”

5.2.7.3 Woolworths – clothing chain store

Lindiwe appreciates Woolworths because they allow her to buy her clothes on lay-by. She only shops at Woolworths because she finds it far cheaper. Lindiwe feels like Woolworths allows her to buy nice things when she does not have money. Should she miss a lay-by payment they don’t push her and give her more time. They give her a chance when she does not have money. Lindiwe has been buying from Woolworths for a long time and they have never disappointed her. “Everything I buy at Woolworths, my underwears, my everything I buy at Woolworths,

Woolworths is my shop”. Lindiwe is happy to buy from any Woolworths but Balfour Park is closest to her and therefore most convenient.

5.2.8 Elizabeth

Elizabeth is 21 years old and lives in a one-bedroom house with her boyfriend and two children. Her children are five and three years old. She is currently unemployed but dreams of starting her own catering business. Elizabeth feels very strongly that women should be able to cook well and need to take care of their families. If the woman does not cook then Elizabeth believes the family will not eat.

FIGURE 18: ELIZABETH IN HER BEDROOM/LOUNGE



Elizabeth mentioned the following brands: OMO, Koo, Maggi 2-Minute Noodles, Rama, Coke, Oros, Restore, Mr Price, Woolworths, Edgars, Vodacom, Hisense and Sony. The following discussion will cover Mr Price, Koo and Maggi 2-Minute Noodles.

5.2.8.1 Mr Price – clothing chain store

Elizabeth likes the clothes at Mr Price because they are beautiful and the clothes are strong. This is especially important for boys because they are so rough and need strong clothes. The clothes are far cheaper yet the clothes are good quality. She enjoys going to Mr Price and feels like it is an outing. She can go there approximately twice a month, although she does not always buy, sometimes she just window shops. When she buys presents for her children then she will go to Woolworths or Edgars. The clothes are more expensive but they often have sales and she can get exactly what she wants.

5.2.8.2 Koo – canned food

Elizabeth loves Koo because it is such good quality and tastes delicious. Her favourite Koo products are baked beans, mixed vegetables and peas. Elizabeth says it tastes like quality food and does not taste like tin food. Elizabeth's mom always used Koo and her mother's cooking is delicious. "Ooh my mother's food is very delicious, I enjoy it". Koo helps Elizabeth cook well which is extremely important to her. "When you cook for a party, like or there is something you must cook nice, when you don't know how to cook people don't eat, they're going to miss their food, so its right to know how to cook because people they can enjoy your food, so that next time there is something they will call you".

5.2.8.3 Maggi – 2-minute noodles

Two-minute noodles remind Elizabeth of her mother as she always made it for the children because it is so fast and delicious. Elizabeth makes two-minute noodles for her children and they love it, they make her children feel strong. Elizabeth feels this is not an option she can use often for her children, as her boyfriend, the children's father, does not believe it is nutritious enough. It is therefore something she will cook for them when she is time-strapped.

5.2.9 Rose

Rose is a 30-year-old married woman with two boys aged nine and four. Her youngest son has a mental disability. Rose is extremely passionate about Alexandra and she feels people think that there are just thugs living in Alex, which is not true, good people live in Alex. Rose is extremely brand-conscious.

FIGURE 19: ROSE AND HER SON



Rose mentioned the following brands: Russell Hobbs, LG, Telefunken, JVC, Grafton and Everest, Nike, Lacoste, Reebok, Puma, Coke, Bokomo, Jungle Oats, Weetbix, Albany, Sasko Sam, Escourt, Handy Andy, Sunlight liquid, Jeyes, Cobra and Nokia. Rose does not mind buying store brands when she is buying food, as food is a short-term thing. When she buys a long-term thing she cannot accept a no-name brand.

FIGURE 20: ROSE'S FRIDGE



5.2.9.1 Telefunken – television set

Rose wanted to discuss Telefunken, as she cannot live without her television set. Rose's husband works for Telefunken so she gets great service from them. "Where he is working it can be broken today, he take it tomorrow morning, when he come back from work he come with it, so for me it is better." Rose does not believe that Telefunken is the best brand as Sony is described as the strongest, but due to the great service and convenience Rose will stick with Telefunken. Rose says that

Telefunken is cheaper which is often better for Rose as she can afford more expensive brands. The quality is described as good but not the best.

Telefunken is described as a black, 31-year-old female who is married with two children. Telefunken is beautiful, sophisticated, generous and supportive; Telefunken is very similar to Rose. Sony is described as a 36-year-old white male who is married with five children. Sony is hard working, strong and very patient. Rose does not know him.

5.2.9.2 Nike – branded sneakers

Rose says Nike is very strong, very comfortable and lasts forever. Rose loves the shoes. When Rose wears Nike, people think that Rose has money. Rose will only buy from Total Sport and will not buy off the street. Nike is her first choice. Rose started wearing Nike in 1996 and will save up to buy Nike. “For me Nike was the strong one cause I did have Reebok, but it did not last for a long time cause when it was dirty I can’t wear the dirty thing I must wash it so I think it did get spoilt and the colours did not last, so for me Nike is the best cause there is leather there. Right now I only wipe it with a warm cloth so it is better for me than to wash it always.”

Nike is a big brand, which is important to Rose as it means it is a quality product. “If you know the real thing you can know the difference between the imitation and the

original.” Rose tries to get her sister to buy Nike sneakers but she won’t as she says it is too expensive.

Nike is described as a 35-year-old unmarried black woman who has no children. She is sophisticated and elegant. She is very formal, has love for people and lots of patience. She has a professional job, drives an Audi and has money. Rose would like to know her and says it will be an informal relationship. She is very beautiful.

5.2.9.3 Nokia – cell phone manufacturer

Rose likes Nokia because it is a very tough phone, as when she drops the phone it does not easily break. It is good quality, looks good, and is easy to use. Rose is proud to have a Nokia, as it is stylish and always has new designs. The menu structure never changes much and Rose likes this consistency, as she manages to stay abreast when getting a new phone. If she had a Samsung she would need to keep reading the booklet, which she does not want to do.

Nokia is described as a 31-year-old married black woman with one child. She is described as a hardworking MD who is passionate about what she does. She is beautiful and loves to help others and does a lot of work with charities. She works with children with disabilities and old people. She is very patient and inspired by her job. Rose does not know her but would like to know her casually.

Rose's sister tries to get Rose to use OMO but she does not like it, it is too strong and it damages her hands. Rose's husband likes Joko tea but Rose prefers coffee or Freshpack Rooibos.

Rose loves All Gold tomato sauce and it brings back good memories. Rose's granny bought All Gold tomato sauce in bulk and Rose and her sister would steal it and eat it on its own. Rose is very close to her sister and loves her very much.

"My granny, she was the most clever granny that a person could wish to have and she was cheeky too." Rose used to live with her granny in the Free State and those were precious days. Her granny spoilt her and would give her and her sister lots of love.

Rose was adamant that cheaper is not often better and gave the example of Russell Hobbs versus Sunbeam. Although Sunbeam costs less it will cost you more in the long run as there are no warranties and no service.

5.2.10 Janet

Janet is 21 years old and is studying Financial Management at College Campus part-time. She is unmarried and does not have any children. Janet enjoys socialising with her friends. Janet describes herself as hardworking and is someone who gives her heart in everything she does and is extremely patient. Janet lives with her father and four sisters in Alexandra. Her mom passed away in

2002. Janet and two of her sisters buy the food and do the cooking for the rest of the family.

FIGURE 21: JANET IN HER FATHER'S HOME



Janet mentioned the following brands: Ace mealie meal, Clover milk, Hulett's sugar, Lil-lets, Lux soap, Dawn cream, Inkomazi, Sunlight, Garnia, Truworths, Identity, Lucky Star Pilchards and Sprite.

5.2.10.1 Identity – clothing chain store

Identity is Janet's favourite store as their prices are reasonable and their clothes are stylish. Janet feels there is a new generation and this new generation must look different. The clothes at Identity fit well and Janet hopes people will say she looks beautiful and clean. It is important to Janet to look good because she values her reputation. "You know if you look good inside you and outside you, you feel good you feel proud." Janet has no time for untidy people and says, "if you are

untidy no one will like you no one will come and talk to you, you can't even make friends.”

Identity helps Janet feel good and look good and she feels she will find what she wants at Identity. Janet trusts Identity and they trust her because she pays her account. “The relationship I can say it's good like because if they didn't trust me they would not have given me the account you know”. Janet says the salespeople are friendly and smiling. Janet relies on Identity although Mr Price can serve as a substitute.

5.2.10.2 Sprite – carbonated beverage

Janet loves Sprite and insists on drinking only Sprite. Janet says Sprite is like water because of the colour and tastes delicious. It quenches her thirst. “It's better because if maybe I am thirsty if I can drink one glass or a half glass of a Sprite I will be fine, if maybe I drink Coke I have to drink two glass.” Janet loves the shape of the bottle and the way the logo is written.

Janet says her family prefers Coke but she only drinks Sprite. If there is no Sprite in the house then Janet will drink water. Janet accepts she is different but there is not always enough money to buy two drinks and then Janet feels left out.

5.2.10.3 Inkomazi – full fat maas

Janet's granny used to give her Inkomazi and this still makes her think of her granny. "I think of her giving me love cause she was the one who was taking care of me when I was still young you know I didn't know my mother by the time I was only staying with her so she was so sweet, she was a mother to me because she was doing everything that mother does. So I can't keep my mind from thinking of her you know I love her."

5.2.10.4 Dawn – body cream

When Janet uses Dawn she feels good and it makes her skin feel soft. "I like it 'cause when I apply it I feel good, I don't develop crocodile skin you know you see crocodile skin. I don't develop crocodile skin I am in the same position I am always smooth." Janet uses Dawn every day and says she loves it.

5.2.11 Thandi

Thandi is 21 years old and works for LoveLife and is very passionate about preventing HIV and AIDS. She loves people and partying and describes herself as a people-person. Thandi lives with her aunt and says when she lives on her own she will change the menu. She is tired of eating the same thing every day and only gets a break from pap and meat on Sunday when her Aunt may cook a bit of rice. Thandi feels it is extremely important to look good and she likes being mysterious and confusing people about who she is.

FIGURE 22: THANDI IN HER ROOM



Thandi mentioned the following brands: Pond's, Sunlight, Mr Price, KFC, Debonairs Pizza, Vaseline Petroleum Jelly, Coke, Levis and Allstars. Here we will examine Mr Price, KFC, Allstars and Pond's.

5.2.11.1 Mr Price – clothing chain store

Thandi loves Mr Price as it is very affordable. Thandi is a jeans person and she buys all her jeans at Mr Price because they are the only jeans that fit her properly: "My body is very complicated ja I find jeans that fit very well and I love their colours". Thandi says her body is complicated because she has a small waist and biggish buttocks. Thandi was not always comfortable buying from Mr Price as her friends would say that the shop is only for people that don't have money. Now she loves Mr Price as they have changed their clothes and is very happy to be paying less, "I love cheap stuff". Thandi feels the quality is good and gives Mr Price 80 out of 100 for quality.

The Mr Price clothes make Thandi feel beautiful and confident. Thandi likes Mr Price because she always finds something that she wants. Thandi does not exclusively shop at Mr Price and will also shop at Jet, Edgars, Legit, Destiny and Identity. Thandi prefers her brands to be understated, which adds to her mystery.

Mr Price is described as a gay man in his 30s. He is generous but gets a lot of bad talk about his clothes. He is outgoing in his fashion sense. He is very time-conscious and knows fashion. Thandi does know him but he does not know her. She trusts him and gave him 90 out of 100 for trust.

5.2.11.2 KFC – fast-food restaurant chain (chicken)

Thandi enjoys their meat because she loves chicken but will not go to Chicken Licken. The meat is well-cooked and is good quality. Thandi gets take-aways because the store gets so busy. KFC does let her down because they make her wait while they help other people that came into the store after her. Thandi will still go there because the meat is worth it. KFC makes her think of her granny because whenever she got her salary her granny would buy KFC. Her granny is addicted to KFC, “Everytime you call her she says ‘when are you bringing my chicken?’” and “when she visits us she does not want to eat anything but KFC”.

Thandi finds the KFC gets too busy and so she does not eat there but rather gets take-aways. When Thandi eats her KFC meal she leaves the chicken till last. This stems from her mother who used to feed her the pap and vegetables first and then

the meat. Thandi feels they should change the face of Colonel Saunders as it is too old and suggests a drumstick would be more appropriate. Thandi craves KFC and would be very upset if KFC was no longer here; it is considered a treat.

Thandi believes KFC cares about her. She trusts them although she does have some health concerns about the amount of oil they use. Thandi describes KFC as a casual friend. “They give me what I want and I give them what they want.” She likes the fact that she can make her grandmother happy but is not happy with the long queues at the end of the month. Thandi’s favourite meal is the Twister. KFC is described as a 50-year-old black woman. She is very focused and loves cooking. Thandi says she is helpful and likes feeding the nation.

5.2.11.3 Allstars – branded sneakers

Thandi loves her Converse Allstars sneakers as she says they are comfortable and look incredibly good. Thandi says they are particularly fashionable when they are dirty but Thandi prefers to wash them. Some people believe people who wear Allstars are gangsters and her granny does not like them because of this reason. Thandi believes Allstars makes her seem more mysterious and confuses people about her because she is not a gangster.

Thandi can remember her first pair of Allstars and was 13 at the time. She had saved up money from doing people’s hair. “I always wanted to buy Allstars but I did not have an allowance.” Thandi remembers feeling elated when she was able to

buy her first pair and felt very independent, as she was able to do something for herself.

Thandi says it is very important to look good and Allstars look very good with a long skirt or jeans. Allstars make Thandi feel confident and get her lots of attention; for a girl this is very important. She likes people wondering about her “to be honest I love attention I want people to want to talk to me.”

FIGURE 23: THANDI’S ALLSTARS



Thandi admitted that the shoes are not great functionally as when she wears them her feet are cold in winter and hot in summer. The fact that the shoes give her confidence and make sure she looks good means she will continue to wear them despite their functional limitations.

5.2.11.4 Pond's – skin cream

Thandi felt that she does not have a choice and is forced to use Pond's skin cream. She used her aunt's cream secretly when she was a child and this made her feel older and beautiful. Now she cannot do without it, as without it her skin gets oily and dark.

Thandi hates using Spar brand toilet paper as it is of a poor quality and would prefer to buy Twinsaver. Thandi says people say bad things about store brands and this discourages her from using them. Thandi has heard that if you cook store brand spaghetti it changes to pap and sticks together.

5.2.12 Prudence

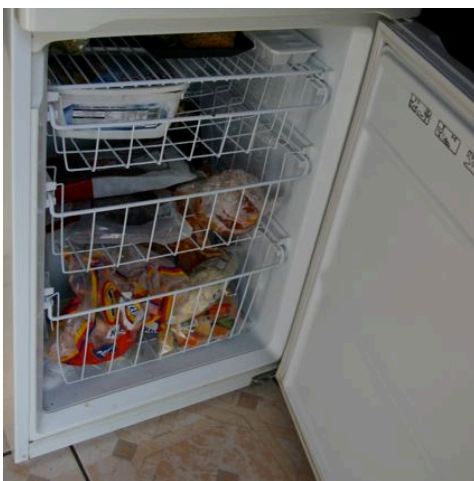
Prudence is a 49-year-old housewife who likes to cook. Prudence has four children, three girls and one boy who are all extremely protective of Prudence as she has led an extremely sheltered life. Prudence grew up in a rural homeland and finds township life extremely disconcerting and stressful. She says between raising teenage children and the radical change she feels worn-out and confused. Prudence longs for the simpler days in the homeland. Prudence perceives herself as friendly and happy but she does not know what her neighbours might say about her. Prudence made extensive use of the translator.

FIGURE 24: PRUDENCE AND THE TRANSLATOR



Prudence listed all the brands she used but indicated that she was so used to the brands that nothing really stands out; the brands have become part of her life. The brands mentioned were: Truworths, Shoprite, Goldie's chicken, Koo, Sunlight washing powder, Protex soap, LG, Tastic rice, KFC and Crosse & Blackwell mayonnaise.

FIGURE 25: PRUDENCE'S FREEZER



Prudence does not like “no-name” as she cannot see the name and does not know what the contents are. She has a rule that there is no “no-name” in her house.

5.2.12.1 Truworths – clothing chain store

Prudence buys her clothes at Truworths because they sell quality clothes. Prudence has been buying clothes from Truworths for a long time, “since I’ve been a lady”. Prudence likes to go to Truworths when there is a sale as she gets a good deal and she feels proud. Prudence believes it is important that a woman dresses neatly and respectably and Truworths helps her achieve this.

5.2.12.2 Sunlight – washing powder

Prudence used to use OMO but it dried out her hands. Sunlight soap does not have any adverse reaction and what they advertise is true. The clothes come clean and you do not need to use fabric softener. Sunlight is seen as having similar goals to Prudence as they both care about the appearance of the washed clothing. Prudence stated that she would change brands if a better brand was launched.

5.2.12.3 Tastic – rice

Prudence is impressed with Tastic rice because you only need to cook a little to feed your whole family. Prudence has just started using Tastic and although satisfied, feels it is too early to tell her friends about the brand.

5.2.12.4 Protex – antibacterial soap

Prudence would prefer to use Lux but her family wants to use Protex so she feels forced to use Protex. She says she has got used to it and has accepted it but does not like it. Prudence would happily change the brand tomorrow if she could.

5.2.12.5 KFC – fast-food restaurant chain (chicken)

When Prudence buys KFC she does not like people to know and keeps it private. Prudence does not like to show off because some people might not be able to afford it and she does not want to rub their noses in it. People have economic challenges and a treat should be kept private. “Sometimes when my husband sometimes he’s happy just buy those Kentucky and eat with my children then no-one could see.”

5.2.13 Poppy

Poppy is 29 years old. She has two children aged eight and seven. Poppy works at the airport and loves jogging. Poppy is very bubbly and seemed extremely happy and jovial. Poppy lives with her mom and dad and siblings and says her mother’s word is final.

FIGURE 26: POPPY IN HER PARENTS' HOME



Poppy mentioned and discussed the following brands: LG, Sony Ericsson, Vodacom, Colgate and Soviet jeans (even though she cannot afford it). Poppy is forced to use Iwisa, Pledge and Vaseline that she is extremely unhappy about.

5.2.13.1 Vodacom – cellular network operator

Poppy likes Vodacom because it is affordable, gives good customer service and is efficient. Vodacom has lots of specials and competitions and Vodacom sponsors many community projects. Poppy feels companies should give back to the community, as this is where everyone comes from. Poppy loves the Vodacom advertising and finds it very funny. Poppy feels like she can trust Vodacom, as so far they have not let her down. Vodacom gives Poppy good service and affordability. Poppy is proud to buy Vodacom airtime. Poppy says Vodacom does not let her down; yet she did mention that almost every Friday evening she is unable to talk on her cellphone, as there are network problems, but added hastily that it does not last very long. Poppy always recommends Vodacom.

Vodacom is described as a black, 40-year-old male, unmarried with no children as he is always busy. He is efficient, intelligent, caring, has respect for people, is not selfish or judgmental and accepts people for who they are. Poppy says he is tall, dark and handsome and although he is formal and presentable, he is very approachable. Poppy does not know him personally but if she did, he would be her second father. She thinks she will be a bit nervous of him at the beginning, but once she gets to know him, she will relax. He is described as reliable and always keeps his promises. “The relationship is good because I always get what I want, if I don’t understand I just make a call and they will explain everything, their service is excellent.”

5.2.13.2 White Star – maize meal

Poppy would rather use White Star maize meal but her mother prefers Iwisa maize meal. Whoever does the shopping controls what maize meal is bought. “But every time that I go shopping they know they are going to eat White Star.” Poppy likes White Star because it is quick, delicious and nutritious. Her mom does not like White Star because she is used to Iwisa and White Star is a new brand. Iwisa takes too long to cook and Poppy does not like the texture. White Star is fluffy and soft. What her mom says is final. When Poppy has her own house one day she will never have Iwisa. Poppy is proud to use White Star as it shows that she can stand for what she believes in.

Iwisa is described as a black woman in her early 50s. She is married with four children and three grandchildren. She is mean, unfriendly, unapproachable and manipulative. She is very selfish and self-centred. She dresses semi-casual and is scruffy. Poppy knows Iwisa, as she is a family friend yet they do not like each other.

5.2.13.3 Soviet – jeans

Poppy likes the material that Soviet jeans are made of and the fact that they cater for every size of person. The design is very unique and the label is understated. Poppy likes being mysterious and people should not know what brand she is wearing. Poppy does not own anything Soviet yet, but plans to start buying Soviet Jeans once she has money. Poppy likes being different and wearing things that other people do not know of.

Soviet is described as a woman in her 30s who is not scared to try new things. She is ready for action and is single with no kids. Poppy says that people think she is very mean, but she wears a mask to scare people off. Once you get to know her then you know that she is good. Poppy and Soviet are very close friends, as Soviet goes all out to make the next person very happy. Poppy admires Soviet's self-confidence, as Poppy believes she herself lacks self-confidence and is easily intimidated.

Poppy does not like Pledge (furniture polish), as the smell is too strong. Poppy finds that Pledge makes life more difficult as Pledge requires so many more steps. Poppy was unable to suggest a better alternative.

Poppy's family has used Colgate for generations. It is not too strong and does not burn her mouth as some toothpaste does. Poppy loves the thickness as it lasts longer. She has tried Dentazyme but it is not good as she emphatically stated she still had bad breath. Poppy says that bad breath is terrible, as people will not forget that you have it, and it affects your self-confidence. Poppy emphatically states that Dentazyme is horrible and should be taken off the shelf.

Poppy has just started using a Sony Ericsson cellphone, and she likes what she sees. It is strong as she has dropped it and it was fine. Poppy loves the fact that it is complicated to use as it gives her a challenge. Poppy loves the design and the features. The memory is good and it takes quality photos.

Poppy believes LG makes a kitchen look classic. "Oh life's good, I just love their design, it is so stunning." There are no LG products or appliances in her parents' house but once she has her own house she will make sure she has lots of LG. If you use LG it says that you are stylish and complicated and you will not settle for less.

5.3 Summary of consumer-brand relationships

TABLE 5: THE CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

CATEGORY			BRANDS DISCUSSED	TOTAL
FMCG	FOOD		JUNGLE OATS, TASTIC, HULETTS SUGAR, IWISA, KOO, MAGGI, TASTIC, WHITE STAR	8
	BEVERAGE		COKE, SPRITE, INKOMAZI	3
	PERSONAL CARE		INGRAMS, JOHNSON'S BABY CARE, DAWN, PONDS, PROTEX	5
	HOMECARE	LAUNDRY	OMO, VANISH, SURF, OMO, SUNLIGHT, SUNLIGHT,	6
		HOUSEHOLD	HANDY ANDY	1
TOTAL FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOOD (FMCG)				23
RESTAURANT CHAIN			KFC, KFC, KFC, KFC	4
SUPERMARKET CHAIN			FREEDOM	1
CLOTHING CHAIN			EDGARS, EDGARS, WOOLWORTHS, MR PRICE, IDENTITY, MR PRICE, TRUWORTHS	7
BRANDED CLOTHING			PLAYTEX, SOVIET	2
BRANDED SHOES			NIKE, ALLSTARS	2
ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT			JVC, TELEFUNKEN	2
CELLPHONE MANUFACTURER			NOKIA	1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS			MTN, VODACOM	2
TOTAL BRANDS DISCUSSED				44

Table 5 above highlights the consumer-brand relationships discovered amongst the thirteen respondents. These brands and the relationships will be analysed further in Chapter 6.

6 Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter uses thick description to give the reader a glimpse into the respondents' lives, beliefs and brands. The purpose is to take the reader on a journey to better understand the respondents and so be better equipped to understand the relationships these respondents have with their brands. The following section, Chapter 6, is an analysis of these results according to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The objectives of the research described through the research questions in Chapter 3 are as follows:

- Research question 1: What types of brands do low-income consumers form relationships with?
- Research question 2: What is the perceived quality of the relationships low-income consumers have with brands?
- Research question 3: What are the different forms of relationships that low-income consumers have with their brands?
- Research question 4: How are different consumer-brand relationships impacted by the different relationship stages?

6.2 Research question 1: Types of brands

6.2.1 Idiographic analysis

TABLE 6: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY DORIS

DORIS		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
OMO	Washing powder, Laundry, FMCG	Used for her children's clothes
Handy Andy	Cleaning aid, Household FMCG	Used for cleaning kitchen cupboards, stove, bathroom and floors
Freedom Supermarket	Supermarket chain	Helps bank her stokvel money

Doris and her family are struggling to make ends meet, yet Doris is determined to ensure that her children and husband are taken care of. The children do not get new clothes often and there is a deeply held belief that OMO ensures her children's clothes last and do not have to be thrown away prematurely due to stains. Doris is extremely proud of the cleanliness of her house and challenges anyone to walk around and try to find dust. Doris chose to discuss these brands because they help her be the good woman, wife and mother that she strives to be.

The reasons Doris gives for choosing Freedom Supermarket are its proximity, convenience and cheaper travelling. After some discussion it was ascertained that Freedom assists Doris with the banking of her stokvel money. Doris believes that the stokvel helps her take care of her family and makes sure she is able to buy the brands that she wants and trusts. Doris seems to idealise her mother, and her mother used all of the brands mentioned by Doris.

TABLE 7: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY LIZZIE

LIZZIE		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Coke	Carbonated drink, FMCG	Daily use, describes herself as addicted
JVC	Electronic equipment	Television is JVC
KFC	Restaurant chain	Sees it as a treat

Lizzie gives the impression that she is enjoying her life right now and that she has a newfound independence that she finds exhilarating. Not only is she involved with a wonderful man and her son has reformed, but she has opened up her own business. Although the business is not thriving, it does allow her a certain amount of independence and autonomy. The brands that she has chosen seem to be more on the playful side and allow her to enjoy her life by engaging in the activities that give her pleasure. She is unapologetic about her addiction to Coke and seems proud of the fact that she depends on it despite her mother's criticisms. JVC allows her the relaxation she requires and is also the most expensive thing she owns; she feels special about this and other people's reactions to it. KFC allows her to spoil her family and make sure they will miss her when she is not there. All three brands make Lizzie feel that she is making the most out of life despite her limited means.

TABLE 8: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY JANE

JANE		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Edgars	Clothing chain	Trusts her as they give her credit
MTN	Telecommunications	Dad bought her first cellphone on MTN
KFC	Restaurant chain	Her favourite

Jane is engaged and about to get married and is very excited about this, yet is also feeling despondent due to her lack of employment. During the discussions she mentions that she wishes she were more confident and outgoing. Jane is extremely impressed with Edgars because they give her credit and trust her. Looking good is important to Jane and Edgars allows her to look good when she needs to. MTN allows her to stay in touch and was originally bought for her by her father, who has recently passed away. KFC was a treat for her and her brothers on their school trips and she absolutely loves it. All the brands she discusses have some connection to her late father. She is upset with Edgars because they did not understand when she did not have money to pay her account due to her father's funeral. Her father purchased MTN for her and KFC was always a treat bestowed on the family by her father. It must be very difficult for Jane to be getting married without her dad and this definitely comes through in the brands she is close to.

TABLE 9: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY VIOLET

VIOLET		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Jungle Oats	Food, FMCG	Gives her strength throughout the day
Tastic	Food, FMCG	Reliable
Vanish	Laundry, homecare, FMCG	Extremely resentful

Violet has four children and a very taxing job helping elderly people stay positive, fit and healthy. She seems very tired yet happy to be useful and making a difference. She has an overall distrust of brands, yet there are two brands she is extremely complimentary about: Jungle Oats and Tastic Rice. Jungle Oats and Tastic do

what the marketing messages promise; Jungle Oats gets her through the day and Tastic makes sure she can cook delicious meals. Vanish had let her down and this angers Violet; she has no time to waste and Vanish did not do what it said it would, so she is emphatic that she will never use it again. The brands she did choose help her make it through her day and be a good mother and wife.

TABLE 10: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY BETTY

BETTY		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Surf	Laundry, homecare, FMCG	Does not damage her and her family's skin
Hulett's sugar	Food, FMCG	Value for money
Edgars	Clothing chain	Reminds her of going to Saleshouse with her dad
Ingram's Camphor Cream	Personal care, FMCG	Keeps her skin smooth

Betty is adamant that women should look good, be good caretakers and nurturers, and maintain their independence. Her children are very important to her and she cares greatly what other people think. The brands Surf, Edgars and Ingram's all allow her to look neat, tidy and good. Hulett's was a little more difficult to understand until Betty explained that her mom used Hulett's sugar. Betty hates the fact that she is forced to use store brand sugar and this may be due to the fact that when her mother visits, she notices the "cheaper" brand.

TABLE 11: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY LERATO

LERATO		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Johnson's Baby	Baby care, personal care, FMCG	Very serious about being a mom
OMO	Laundry, homecare, FMCG	Gets the clothes clean
Playtex	Underwear, branded clothing	Makes her feel sexy

Lerato is a young, unmarried mom trying to raise a child and get through her studies. She adores her daughter and is passionate about giving her the best. Lerato seems to be feeling guilty about leaving her child with her mother but feels she has no other choice. Johnson's Baby and OMO are used with her baby in mind. Lerato admits OMO is hard on her hands but gets her daughter's clothes clean. Lerato is shy to talk about Playtex and gives the impression that this is the one area where she could spoil herself a little, yet nobody else needs to know about it.

TABLE 12: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY LINDIWE

LINDIWE		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Sunlight	Washing powder, laundry, homecare, FMCG	Value for money, easy on her skin
Iwisa	Maize meal, food, FMCG	Far easier to cook and clean the pot
Woolworths	Clothing chain	Can buy on lay-bye

Lindiwe is selflessly feeding the children that live on the streets in Alexandra Township and although she seems to get a lot of satisfaction doing it she definitely

seems tired. It is therefore no surprise that two of the brands that are important to her make her life easier. Sunlight does not make her hands itch and Lindiwe feels she only has to use a small amount. Iwisa she finds far easier to cook with and it makes the pot far easier to clean. Lindiwe does not like debt and Woolworths' lay-by option is a big reason for her relationship with the brand. They not only sell quality clothes but also allow her a payment method that suits her and helps her avoid credit.

TABLE 13: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY ELIZABETH

ELIZABETH		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Mr Price	Clothing chain	Good, strong clothing for her children
Koo	Food, FMCG	Does not taste like tin food
Maggi	Food, FMCG	When you need to feed your children quickly

Elizabeth had her first child at 16 and at the age of 21 has two children aged five and three. She is unemployed and has very strong feelings about women that they must be able to cook and take care of their families. She is currently unemployed but dreams of starting her own catering business. It was thus surprising that the food brands she loved are “quick-fix” meals. Mr Price is where she buys her children’s clothes, as these clothes are tough and long lasting. Woolworths and Edgars were used when she needed to buy her children presents. Elizabeth seems to be saying that Mr Price is okay for everyday clothes but the special outfits needed to come from another clothing store.

TABLE 14: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY ROSE

ROSE		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Telefunken	Electronic equipment	Convenience as her husband works for Telefunken
Nike	Branded shoes	Last for longer
Nokia	Cellphone	Easy to use

Rose likes the finer things in life and loves showing off with her brands. Her husband works for Telefunken, which gives her access to great service – even though she would prefer to have Sony or JVC. She saves up for her Nike sneakers as she believes in their quality and enjoys it when people comment about her expensive shoes. She is very proud of the fact that she can spot fake Nike shoes. Nokia is chosen because it is stylish yet tough and the menu stays the same through the different range of phones.

TABLE 15: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY JANET

JANET		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Identity	Clothing chain	Clothes for a new generation
Sprite	Carbonated soft drink, beverage, FMCG	Quenches her thirst
Inkomazi	Healthy drink, beverage, FMCG	Makes her think of her Granny
Dawn	Personal care, FMCG	Makes her skin feel soft

Janet is very proud of the fact that she does not have friends, which is surprising as she is extremely bubbly and happy. However, she is concerned about her reputation and looking good. Identity and Dawn cream were discussed because

she thinks they help her achieve her goal of looking good. Sprite was chosen because she loves the taste but she does give the impression that she enjoys being the different one in her family. Inkomazi reminded her of her grandmother, who she loves dearly.

TABLE 16: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY THANDI

THANDI		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Mr Price	Clothing chain	Affordability
KFC	Restaurant chain	Loves their chicken
Allstars	Branded shoes	Look really good
Pond's	Personal care, FMCG	Feels forced to use it

Thandi is the youngest respondent interviewed and seems very brand-conscious. She has opinions on colours, logos and jingles. She is also very aware of what matters to her. Her brand choices are about being young and fabulous and enjoying life to the full. She loves getting a good deal and has no problem admitting she is price sensitive.

TABLE 17: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY PRUDENCE

PRUDENCE		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Truworths	Clothing chain	Proud to wear their clothes
Sunlight	Washing powder, laundry, homecare, FMCG	Don't need fabric softener
Tastic	Rice, food, FMCG	Only need a little to cook a lot
Protex	Soap, personal care, FMCG	Would prefer to use Lux

KFC	Restaurant chain	A treat that she hides
-----	------------------	------------------------

Prudence is a housewife and her life revolves around her family. She feels pride at being a good mother and wife and looking good. The brands she feels strongly about that help her achieve her goals are Truworths, Sunlight and Tastic. Protex is not her choice but she accepts it because her family wants it while KFC is seen as a treat that should not be advertised.

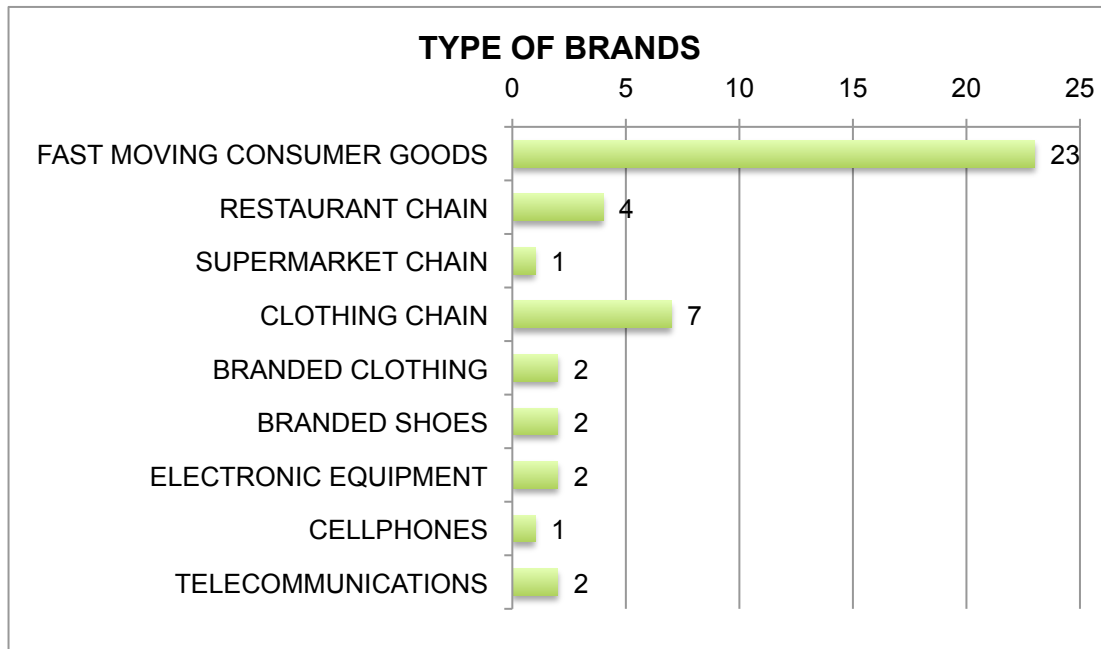
TABLE 18: TYPES OF BRANDS DISCUSSED BY POPPY

POPPY		
BRAND	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION
Vodacom	Telecommunications	They give back to the community
White Star	Maize meal, food, FMCG	Much tastier than Iwisa
Soviet	Jeans, Branded clothing	Has not owned a pair but will as soon as she can afford it

Poppy is the most vocal about the brands that are important to her and the brands she dislikes. Iwisa and Pledge are disliked intensely by Poppy and two of the brands she gushes about she has never owned (LG and Soviet).

6.2.2 Cross-case analysis

FIGURE 27: TYPES OF BRANDS

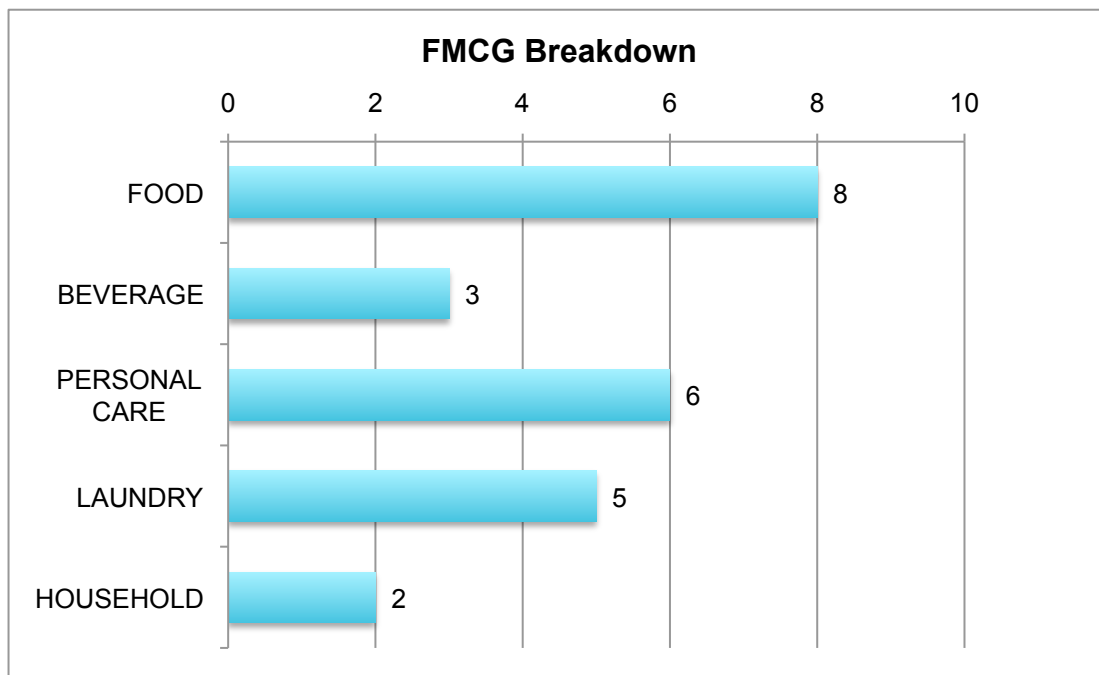


Fast Moving Consumer Good (FMCG) is the leader with 23 of the 44 brands, that low-income consumers have relationships with, coming from this category (see Figure 27 above). This seems logical as a big portion of their money is spent on these brands. The FMCG brands are further broken down (see Figure 28 below) into food, beverage, personal care, laundry and household, with food being the biggest category. Appendix 2 offers pictures of these FMCG brands.

Many of these women are mothers (nine out of the 13) and perceive their role as mother as the most important role a woman can have. Therefore it is understandable that the food and laundry brands are important. All of the respondents who are mothers mentioned the laundry brands. Lindiwe also

mentioned a laundry brand and although she is no longer a mother, she does wash the clothes of the street children; therefore her relationship with a laundry brand is congruent with the findings.

FIGURE 28: FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF FMCG BRANDS



The clothing stores also rate as important with this group of women, regardless of age or whether they are mothers or not. Clothing chains as a category is the second highest, after to food. Most of the women state that looking good is important and that their men should be proud to be seen with them. A significant finding is the important role that payment terms play with the respondents who chose Edgars, Truworths and Woolworths. The fact that these stores give Jane, Janet, Lindiwe (lay-bye), Prudence and Betty an opportunity to buy the clothes they want, even when they do not have money, is deeply appreciated by these women.

The six women under 30 seem to choose brands that are about looking good, keeping in contact, and food. The two exceptions are Lerato and Elizabeth, and they both have children that they are required to look after. Lerato is passionate about Playtex and this is about feeling confident and sexy. The younger women all mention branded clothing and shoes; Rose is the exception, as she is slightly older yet loves Nike.

The types of brands that the respondents have relationships seem fitting to their life stages and the responsibilities they have. The brands they choose help them in their everyday lives, give them joy and help them portray an image of the ideal self.

The literature states that private label brands such as store brands offer a great alternative to the price-sensitive consumer (Webster, 2000; Kotler and Keller, 2007), yet this is not found to be the case with these respondents. Most of the women react negatively to store brands. Reasons cited are poor quality and perceived inferiority. The store brands are generically labeled “no-name”, from the name of the Pick ‘n Pay house brand. Respondents are not just referring to the Pick ‘n Pay house or store brands, however; but to all store brands. Betty mentions that the Woolworths store brand is of good quality, but that all the rest are not. Doris will not buy “no-name” as she does not have experience with it. Lizzie says, “I don’t go for cheaper stuff always; when I do the groceries like no-name”. Betty is forced to buy store brand sugar when she does not have money, and she does not

like this. Lerato is emphatic in her dislike of store brands, “I don’t buy ‘no-name’ brands”. Lindiwe states, “even for a gift, thanks I don’t want it”, referring to a store brand. Prudence even has a rule in her house – no “no-name”. Rose has a slightly different take on store brands, “I think ‘no-name’ brands and brands are the same only different is only the container for me, the container is the only difference”. Prudence does not like store brands as she feels she could not see who made it, “I don’t like ‘no-name’, you can’t see what companies”.

This surprising result of ambivalence towards store brands supports Prahalad (2006) in showing that low-income consumers are value-seeking consumers and not just a group of people concerned only with price (Synovate, 2006). The types of brands identified by the low-income consumers support the notion that low-income consumers are brand-conscious (Prahalad, 2006 and A.T. Kearney, 2007).

6.3 Research question 2: Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ)

Smit, Bronner and Tolboom (2007) describe the Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ) model proposed by Fournier (1994, 1998) as the perception of the consumer as a gauge to the degree of intensity and complexity of the relationship. The BRQ has seven dimensions and these dimensions have been used to evaluate the intensity and complexity of forty-four brand stories told by thirteen women. The evaluation of each dimension is based on a continuum of very weak to very strong.

TABLE 19: BRQ FOR DORIS

DIMENSIONS	RATING	EVIDENCE
OMO		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Doris feels that OMO does a great job of cleaning her children's clothes but no "closeness" is observed, nor does she know much about the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Always insists on OMO, yet if someone gave her Skip she would not mind. Would recommend OMO to others if they asked.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	OMO is a significant part of her daily life. Is used almost everyday.
Love	Strong	Warmth and affection toward OMO because of the effectiveness with her children's clothes.
Self-concept connection	Strong	OMO helps her portray the image of a good woman, that is, a good wife and mother who takes care of her family. By buying OMO she demonstrates to her husband that he has made the right choice. During a personification exercise she described OMO as being very similar to herself.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Mother used OMO and her mother is seen as the "ultimate woman".
Partner quality	Strong	"OMO works for me too much that is why I am so happy using it."
HANDY ANDY		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Doris knows a lot about the different products within the Handy Andy range and what she prefers but does not seem particularly close to the product.
Personal commitment	Strong	Handy Andy performs and is also seen as the right thing to use, as her mother and mother-in-law use Handy Andy.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Handy Andy is a significant part of her daily life and is used approximately three times a week.
Love	Weak	Not a highly emotional connection; no evidence of affection.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Important to be seen as a good woman, and Handy Andy assists with this.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Doris remembers her mother using Handy Andy and remembers the smell.
Partner quality	Strong	Partner quality is perceived as high, although a distinction was made between the green

		bottle and the white bottle. Strong preference shown for the white bottle and hostility toward the green bottle.
FREEDOM SUPERMARKET		
Intimacy	Strong	Knows Freedom and displays closeness to the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Doris would continue to buy at Freedom even if a Shoprite opened next door, as she knows they are trustworthy. Spar and Shoprite opened recently but Freedom is still her choice.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Proud to use and a definitive part of her life.
Love	Very strong	Strong loyalty towards the brand, with great emotion and affection being displayed.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Seen as having similar values and ideals.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Doris vividly remembers going to Freedom with her mom and she knew she was going to get sweets. Doris and her siblings looked forward to going there.
Partner quality	Very strong	Great respect for the brand, "got everything" "got butchery inside". Doris believes Freedom treats her well and staff members are friendly, respectful and helpful.

All the brands Doris discussed are congruent with her self-image and/or her ideal self. Doris idealises her mother and views her mother as the ideal-self Doris would like to achieve; therefore, it is not surprising that all the brands had an intense nostalgic connection. Doris feels she is evaluated on the brands she brings into her family's life, and all the brands score well in terms of partner quality.

TABLE 20: BRQ FOR LIZZIE

DIMENSIONS	RATING	EVIDENCE
COKE		
Intimacy	Strong	Lizzie feels extremely close to the brand and believes wholeheartedly that one needs Coke.

Personal commitment	Very strong	Extremely faithful to the brand and highly devoted. Lizzie does not seem to care that Coke is unhealthy.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Lizzie has a strong physical and verbal reaction to the brand. She drinks Coke every day and it has become ingrained in her everyday life.
Love	Very strong	Compared Coke to her son; she knows she is first in his life and that they love each other. "He (Coke) is so much fond of me".
Self-concept connection	Very strong	Coke is not seen as being similar to Lizzie, yet it represents her independence and the freedom that she values.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Lizzie started drinking Coke when she started working and could decide to buy it for herself. This represented an important time in her life.
Partner quality	Very strong	"Coke dresses well, always in a suit like Dr. Phil". Lizzie believes Coke has the ability to make her feel better, "Once I drink Coke, I feel alright".
JVC		
Intimacy	Weak	Not very strong; does not know much about the product or company.
Personal commitment	Weak	Not very strong as she is happy to have LG and Telefunken as well.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Lizzie feels that JVC was an important aspect of her life "cannot do without her".
Love	Strong	Lizzie feels strong affection towards the brand.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	"First time I have an expensive thing in this house". She does not know anyone else with JVC and this makes her proud. Her friends ask her how she afforded it because JVC is expensive. This appears very important to her.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her son bought the JVC TV for her and she is extremely close to her son. The TV is even more valuable because it was a gift from her son.
Partner quality	Strong	Highly complimentary to the brand but does admit that she has not had it for very long. So far the brand has not let her down.

KFC		
Intimacy	Strong	Lizzie feels very close to the brand and has good knowledge of the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Very committed due to high functional benefits.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Passionate connection: loves meat, especially chicken, and insists on KFC.
Love	Very strong	Strong emotional bond.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Lizzie loves the fact that she can spoil her family with KFC and this ties in to her idea of herself as a spontaneous, happy woman.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Her current boyfriend is a very good man and when she first started seeing him (16 years ago) he brought eight boxes of chicken to a family member's funeral. "It was the first time we have tasted such a nice meat, it was so wonderful to taste KFC. It was my first time." This impressed her and her family. KFC brings good memories of this new man. This was the first time she tasted KFC. Mom will send her to the shops and they will all eat together (two families).
Partner quality	Strong	Good partner but is unhappy with the long queues; this forces her to go to Chicken Licken, which she is very unhappy about. "...month-end we are suffering, because you end up not eating KFC because of people, all the branches. I remember one good Friday we were going away, we wanted to buy yoh we didn't, each and every KFC it was so many people until we left, we didn't have any food to eat." She does believe they care about their customers.

Lizzie had two of the most intense relationships out of all the relationships. These intense relationships are with Coke and KFC; all dimensions are rated as strong or very strong. Lizzie has a sense of excitement and happiness about her, as many things in her life have been going well. This is reflected in the intense feelings of affection and attachment she feels for all the brands that make her life better.

Lizzie is also rather reflective of her life and it is interesting to note that all the brands have strong nostalgic connections for her.

TABLE 21: BRQ FOR JANE

DIMENSIONS	RATING	EVIDENCE
EDGARS		
Intimacy	Intermediate	A good knowledge of the brand but Jane does not seem particularly close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Jane is considering leaving the brand due to the perceived insensitivity to her father's funeral.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Jane buys jeans and dresses from Edgars and is very impressed with their clothes. Jane buys most of her clothes from Edgars as they make her feel like an executive.
Love	Intermediate	Some degree of affinity.
Self-concept connection	Strong	The friend that introduced Jane to Edgars was someone Jane looks up to and admired. Jane would like to be more like this friend and having access to the same clothing store helps Jane feel more successful.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Does not evoke strong memories.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Jane does consider Edgars a good company but they have let her down. Jane is considering "terminating the contract" but still seems willing to continue.
MTN		
Intimacy	Very strong	Jane feels extremely close to MTN and has great knowledge of the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	Strong personal connection and devotion due to her father buying her the brand for the first time and the service they give.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	MTN is a big part of Jane's life and is extremely important to her. She cannot imagine her life without MTN. "Without MTN because you know ey no without MTN I cannot eish I cannot be able to, I can live but you know it is going to be difficult because most of the peoples that I am close to they are far from me so I need to communicate with them like on a daily basis or once or twice in a

		week or so. You know so if I did not have MTN it would be very difficult for me to do that.”
Love	Strong	Great loyalty and affection towards the brand.
Self-concept connection	Weak	Jane did not feel like she had a great deal in common with the brand.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Will not change the brand because that is what her father bought her.
Partner quality	Strong	Trusts MTN, loves their creativity and respects their honesty. Says they have never let her down. Jane does feel MTN could improve by offering more competitions and prizes.
KFC		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand and feels close to KFC; would like to become business partners.
Personal commitment	Strong	Jane is very committed to KFC even though there are long queues.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Jane is extremely attached to KFC, to the extent that she would like to own a KFC branch, “Its my favourite you know when I mentioned KFC it’s one of the things I would like to own one day because with KFC you can never go wrong, everybody eats KFC you know and they’re consistent you know the recipes never change, the taste it never changes as well. So whenever you go to KFC you will find what you are expecting”.
Love	Strong	Strong functional connection as well as great affection for the brand.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Jane says they were very similar but she was shyder than KFC and she would like to be more outgoing.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Reminds her of when she was at school and her parents bought KFC for Jane and her siblings. “Whenever we had school trips that’s when you know they gonna buy you KFC”. “KFC would definitely be in your lunch box”.
Partner quality	Strong	“So whenever you go to KFC you will find what you are expecting.”

Jane has two very intense relationships with MTN and KFC. Both brands have a strong nostalgic connection to her father, who passed away recently. Edgars has

let Jane down in the form of a relationship stress (Fournier, 1998) and the relationship quality has deteriorated because of this breach of trust. All Jane's brands have some connection to her father. According to Jane, Edgars punished her for her lack of payment because of her father's funeral expenses, and it is clear from her brands that this ordeal affected her deeply.

TABLE 22: BRQ FOR VIOLET

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
JUNGLE OATS		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand as well as the mother brand, Tiger Brands.
Personal commitment	Strong	During the week Violet will not eat anything else for breakfast, although she eats Kelloggs on weekends.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Violet uses Jungle Oats every morning and believes Jungle Oats gets her through the day.
Love	Intermediate	A very functional relationship. It solves the problem of her feeling weak and un-energetic during the day.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Violet sees Jungle Oats as a wholesome, hardworking brand.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Her mom used Mabela, so no memories of Jungle Oats came to mind.
Partner quality	Strong	Tiger Brands is the first brand she mentioned and Violet has a high opinion of Tiger Brands and Jungle Oats.
TASTIC RICE		
Intimacy	Weak	Does not know much about the brand and does not feel particularly close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	Has tried other rice but only wants Tastic and uses Tastic exclusively.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Strong personal and emotional connection to the brand. Makes Violet feel special because everyone will love the food.
Love	Weak	Primarily a functional connection.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Describes Tastic as happy, neat.

Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her mother used Tastic for special occasions.
Partner quality	Strong	Swells to three times the size, gives variety and helps Violet derive many more recipes. A good partner to Violet.
VANISH		
Violet refuses to use Vanish and therefore could not be evaluated according to the brand relationship quality, as the relationship no longer exists.		

Violet is an extremely practical and forthright person and she expects her brands to be the same; hence her brands have a strong self-connection. She values honesty and believes brands should deliver what they promise. Partner quality is extremely important to her. Violet feels many brands do not live up to their promises; as seen in the relationship with Vanish, which dissolved because the brand did not deliver what it promised. This deterioration of the relationship is classified as a relational stress (Fournier, 1998). The brands Violet continues relationships with are considered quality partners.

TABLE 23: BRQ FOR BETTY

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
SURF		
Intimacy	Weak	Not a very close relationship and Betty does not have great knowledge of the brand nor share a bond with the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	"You know I used to buy the OMO and the Sunlight, when I bought the Surf I've seen the difference between those, Surf is better than the other soaps."
Passionate attachment	Strong	Surf has become important in her life because it is soft on her skin, and her children and boyfriend love the way their clothes turn out. "It can't change my skin, it does not damage it."
Love	Strong	Great affection for the brand, "I love Surf, it is very good to me, and to make the washing

		whiter”.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Betty feels it is extremely important to look after one’s family well and to be nurturing and caring. Betty also believes in looking your best and ensuring your man is proud of you. Surf helps her achieve both by keeping the clothes clean and by being gentle on her hands.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her mom likes Surf.
Partner quality	Strong	Great sense of reciprocity, “it washes my clothes thoroughly”.
HULETTS		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Betty believes Hulett’s sugar is a far better option than the store brand she is sometimes forced to buy. Betty seems more upset with the store brand’s cheaper price than she is with the higher price of Hulett’s. The involvement with the store brand tends to be higher than what it is with Hulett’s.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Betty will use “no-name” sugar when times are tough, although she would much prefer Hulett’s.
Passionate attachment	Intermediate	It seems her desire for Hulett’s is due to her dislike of having to use store brand sugar.
Love	Intermediate	The focus of intense dislike seems to be focused on the store brand rather than a love for Hulett’s.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Betty described Hulett’s as a pillar of the community and this is how Betty would like others to see her.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Betty’s mother uses Hulett’s and Betty has a desire to impress her mother.
Partner quality	Strong	Betty feels that Hulett’s sugar is far superior to store brand sugar and that one requires less because of the sweetness. “It’s nice and it’s worth it.”
EDGARS		
Intimacy	Weak	Betty does not know much about the brand at all, “I can’t say there is a difference between the other shops”.
Personal commitment	Weak	Seems committed to Edgars due to other people in her life rather than any value she sees herself. “I like Edgars, yes I like it because of my boyfriend opened an account there so we used to buy there.”

Passionate attachment	Strong	Betty does seem attached to Edgars and seems comfortable with the brand, "I like to buy at Edgars, I'm used to buying at Edgars, I got an account there".
Love	Strong	A very utilitarian relationship, Betty is attached but is not yet committed.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Betty believes looking good is a woman's responsibility and Edgars helped her achieve her desire to be admired.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her dad used to buy expensive clothes at SalesHouse and SalesHouse is connected to Edgars.
Partner quality	Strong	Betty feels Edgars delivers good quality and they trust her because they allow credit.
INGRAM'S CAMPHOR CREAM		
Intimacy	Weak	Betty knew very little about the brand other than the benefits provided her.
Personal commitment	Strong	Betty has been using the brand since she became an adult and will continue using it into the future.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Betty uses the cream every day and will not consider another brand.
Love	Weak	Betty liked the brand but did not show much affection for the brand.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Betty felt that the brand helped her project the image of a beautiful, successful woman.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Betty cannot remember when she started using Ingram's. It does not remind her of anything.
Partner quality	Strong	The brand takes care of Betty's skin and does what it promises.

Betty primarily chooses brands that are congruent with her personality and the image that she wants to project, as well as reflective of partners that are seen as supportive of her. Betty does not seem to get emotionally involved with the brands, unless it is directly related to a task that she must complete well (for example, the washing is an area that her boyfriend evaluates her on).

TABLE 24: BRQ FOR LERATO

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
JOHNSON AND JOHNSON		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of all the products and feels close to the brand. As Johnson & Johnson is often applied directly to her daughter's skin, Lerato felt she should research the product.
Personal commitment	Very strong	"My baby is my first priority, I always want the best for her." Has never tried any other products on her baby.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Big part of her daily life. "I like everything about it."
Love	Very strong	Great affection and loyalty.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	Johnson and Johnson is seen as a nurturing, caring brand, and this is how Lerato sees herself. Both put the baby first.
Nostalgic connection	Weak	Her sister introduced her to Johnson & Johnson but her mother never used the products.
Partner quality	Very strong	Johnson & Johnson is the only brand that Lerato will allow on her baby's skin.
OMO		
Intimacy	Weak	Does not have good knowledge of washing powders or of OMO.
Personal commitment	Strong	Lerato has tried Surf and Sunlight but only OMO gets the clothes clean. Lerato will only use OMO even though it is hard on her hands.
Passionate attachment	Strong	A big part of her everyday life and something she would not like to do without.
Love	Weak	A functional relationship, "It keeps your clothes white, it removes the stains". Lerato does not display affection for the brand.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Lerato believes she is caring and nurturing and that OMO is too.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her mother uses OMO but Lerato did try other brands first before settling on OMO. This affirmed to her that her mother is right.
Partner quality	Strong	Lerato believes in the functional benefits of the brand and believes the brand will not let her down.
PLAYTEX		
Intimacy	Weak	Lerato believes Playtex offers superior product benefits, "they are strong and beautiful". Lerato did not display knowledge of the brand.

Personal commitment	Intermediate	Playtex is seen as a treat rather than the only brand she will wear. "I use other but I prefer Playtex."
Passionate attachment	Strong	Lerato is attached to Playtex and although it is not something that has become a big part of her daily life, it is something that she aspires to and feels connected to.
Love	Strong	Lerato has great affection for the brand, "I just love Playtex, the name Playtex."
Self-concept connection	Strong	Lerato feels very sexy in Playtex. It allows her to feel more confident. Playtex is congruent with her secret self.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Lerato does not know anyone else who wears Playtex.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Lerato relies on the brand but it is not perceived to take care of Lerato. The Playtex underwear is described as colourful and a good fit.

Amongst all the brands discussed by Lerato, the study finds that she is attached to all of them; that all are congruent with her and all are seen as functionally good partners. Lerato is a young mother and it is not surprising that the brands chosen are seen to be helping her be a good mother. The Playtex brand was interesting as this brand helps Lerato feel sexy and more than just a mother.

TABLE 25: BRQ FOR LINDIWE

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
SUNLIGHT WASHING POWDER		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand and feels extremely close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Extremely faithful to the brand; not only uses the washing powder but also the dishwashing liquid and the green bar soap, even on her body. Talks about Sunlight at the communal gatherings.

Passionate attachment	Very strong	"I cannot do washing with other soap, uh when I do my washing with eh Sunlight it doesn't uh you the other soaps itches my body."
Love	Very strong	Extreme loyalty to the brand.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	"Sunlight is to me, its like my own, I don't know what to say it is like me, when I got Sunlight in my hand I've got myself, it is something that I trust, it has never disappointed me."
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	No evidence of a nostalgic connection.
Partner quality	Very strong	"To me it lasts long it because it got a lot of foam, Sunlight has got a lot of foam it lasts long. You put little bit then you shake it you see a lot of foam then you just wash, then it lasts longer." "How did I trust Sunlight is because when I bought Sunlight for the first time it did me good, second time third time fourth time then I settled with it. For the first time I was trying it of course I said let me switch from OMO to Sunlight but now Sunlight helped me".
IWISA MAIZE MEAL		
Intimacy	Weak	Lindiwe does not know much about the brand other than the fact that she likes the sweet taste. She does not know what contributes to this sweet taste either.
Personal commitment	Strong	Lindiwe previously used Ace but now she will only use Iwisa. Strong degree of faithfulness to the brand.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Very attached to the brand due to the functional benefits. These benefits are that it gets stiff quickly and it is easy to clean the pot. Iwisa makes her life easier.
Love	Intermediate	Lindiwe feels close to the brand because of the functional benefits and the fact that it solves a current problem.
Self-concept connection	Strong	The brand is seen as a friend that helps make Lindiwe's day easier, which is exactly what Lindiwe aims to do for the street children of Alexandra.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Lindiwe discovered the brand on her own.
Partner quality	Strong	When asked if she trusted Iwisa, Lindiwe replied adamantly, "very much!" The brand

		never lets her down.
WOOLWORTHS		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand and their internal workings.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Lindiwe likes to shop only at Woolworths because of the cheaper clothes and the lay-bye option. The fact that they understand her situation and that she may not be able to pay regularly makes her fiercely loyal to Woolworths.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Lindiwe is attached to the brand because she believes Woolworths has been there for her. Lindiwe feels a connection to the Woolworths brand.
Love	Very strong	Deep affection and extreme loyalty.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Lindiwe feels Woolworths gives people a chance and this is something she is trying to achieve with her soup kitchen and dreams of a shelter for children.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Lindiwe discovered the brand on her own and does not have any memories associated with the brand.
Partner quality	Very strong	<p>"I like Woolworths because Woolworths is always got cheaper clothes for me and I don't have an account with Woolworths but when you go and buy something at Woolworths and you give them monies and next month they take it when you don't have money you talk to them they still keep it for you. Unlike other shops they will say no no no we can't keep this more than 30 days but Woolworths can keep it for you as long as you report."</p> <p>"They have never disappointed me I've been buying through Woolworths for a long, long time. I used to buy at OK but when Woolworths came I started buying at Woolworths then Woolworths became so sweet to me."</p>

Lindiwe is committed to the three brands, which is not surprising as she has a passion about her that gives the impression that she does not do things in half measures. All the brands have a strong self-connection as well as strong perceived

partner quality. Lindiwe displays intensity towards her brands and gives the impression that she would still be passionate about these brands in 10 years' time.

TABLE 26: BRQ FOR ELIZABETH

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
MR PRICE		
Intimacy	Weak	Poor knowledge of the brand with a general lack of closeness.
Personal commitment	Weak	Elizabeth uses many clothing retail brands but Mr Price is identified as the cheapest. Elizabeth will not buy presents from Mr Price.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Elizabeth is attached to Mr Price as she feels she gets good quality for the price. She enjoys shopping at Mr Price and sees it as a fun outing.
Love	Intermediate	Elizabeth is attached to the brand but there is no strong commitment.
Self-concept connection	Weak	The relationship is centred on the clothing for her children rather than congruency with Elizabeth's own personality.
Nostalgic connection	Weak	Elizabeth discovered the brand on her own.
Partner quality	Strong	Elizabeth trusts Mr Price and as long as it is for everyday clothing for her sons then she knows what to expect.
KOO		
Intimacy	Very strong	Elizabeth had extensive knowledge of the brand and the products within the Koo range.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Extremely committed and loyal to Koo.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Elizabeth feels affection towards the brand and it has become part of her everyday life. Elizabeth will not use anything else.
Love	Strong	Extremely loyal to the brand and the products.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	It is important for Elizabeth to cook well and she loves it when people enjoy her food.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Her mother cooked with KOO and Elizabeth says it is delicious.
Partner quality	Very strong	Great trust and affection for the brand. She feels the brand helps her be a good mother and woman.

MAGGI 2-MINUTE NOODLES		
Intimacy	Very weak	Has very little knowledge of the brand.
Personal commitment	Very weak	Elizabeth would prefer not to use this brand at all but sometimes situations dictate it.
Passionate attachment	Intermediate	Elizabeth is attached because sometimes she feels she has no choice, but she would prefer not to use the brand.
Love	Weak	The brand solves a problem and it is very functional relationship; Elizabeth almost dislikes the brand because she does not make it herself.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Elizabeth is very proud of her cooking and 2-minute noodles are only to be used when she is in a rush and her children are hungry. She does not identify with the brand at all.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Mother always used it when she needed to get a meal together quickly for her hungry children.
Partner quality	Strong	Elizabeth feels that 2-minute noodles is a healthy meal should a mother be in a rush. It is not however something one should feed to one's children every day; it is for specific situations that require a quick meal.

Elizabeth seemed unsure of herself during the entire interview until she started talking about cooking. To a large degree, her success is based on how well she can cook and whether or not people enjoy her cooking. Elizabeth contradicts herself with regard to Koo and Maggi. Maggi is criticised because it is a quick meal, yet Koo is canned food that is more convenient than fresh food. Further probing reveals that Elizabeth's boyfriend is against 2-minute noodles and feels Elizabeth should be preparing more substantial meals, but he approves of Koo as it is seen as more nutritious due to the vegetables.

TABLE 27: BRQ FOR ROSE

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
TELEFUNKEN		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Rose seems rather removed from the relationship and does not display a strong closeness to the brand. However, her knowledge of the brand is good.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Rose is committed to Telefunken because of the good service she receives because her husband works for Telefunken. Should that benefit disappear Rose would easily move to JVC or Sony.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Rose is attached to her Telefunken TV and hates being without music and her television. The benefit that she derives from her husband working at Telefunken means she will only have to do without her Telefunken for a short period of time.
Love	Intermediate	Rose seems to like the brand but there was not much evidence of a strong love.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Using personification, Rose describes the personality of Telefunken as very similar to herself.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Discovered the brand through her husband's work.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Rose says the quality of Telefunken is good but definitely not the best.
NIKE		
Intimacy	Strong	Rose is very close to the Nike brand and can tell the imitation from the real thing, "If you know the real thing you can know the difference between the imitation and the original".
Personal commitment	Strong	Rose is extremely happy with the brand. She tries to convince her sister to buy Nike, as she believes her sister will be as impressed as she is.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Rose is extremely attached to the brand, not only for the functional benefits but also because of about the image Nike gives Rose.
Love	Very strong	Rose is extremely loyal to the Nike brand.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	Rose aspires to the Nike brand and would like to be seen in the same way. Nike is seen as a sophisticated, elegant woman.

Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Rose discovered the brand on her own and the brand does not conjure any strong memories.
Partner quality	Very strong	Rose likes the fact that Nike is a big brand; this is important to her because it promises quality. Rose trusts Nike.
NOKIA		
Intimacy	Strong	Rose knows a lot about Nokia and displays connection with the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	Rose is committed to Nokia largely due to the menu structure that does not change, as well as the stylish designs. Rose has had more than three Nokias and is extremely happy with the phone brand.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Rose is attached to the brand mostly because of its functional benefits such as the easy menu structure and the fact that the phone still works even after being dropped. Rose aspires to Nokia and feels affection for the brand.
Love	Strong	Rose loves the brand because of all it enables her to do.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Rose felt Nokia helped the community, is passionate and a hard worker. Rose would like to be described as she describes Nokia.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Discovered the brand through a work colleague.
Partner quality	Strong	Rose is proud to have a Nokia.

Rose is extremely brand-conscious and wants people to know that she chooses good brands. All the brands have a strong self-connection and Rose seems extremely concerned about how people perceive her. She seems almost apologetic about the Telefunken brand as it is not considered the best. None of Rose's brands have a nostalgic connection, although she does mention All Gold as conjuring strong memories.

TABLE 28: BRQ FOR JANET

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
IDENTITY		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Janet does not have good knowledge of the brand but does describe the relationship as close.
Personal commitment	Strong	Janet describes Identity as her favourite and there is a strong personal connection. Janet will shop at Truworths but Identity is her favourite.
Passionate attachment	Intermediate	Janet is attached to the brand but when asked how she would feel if the brand no longer existed, she said she will feel bad but will go to Mr Price. Truworths and Mr Price will easily substitute for Identity.
Love	Weak	Some affinity but with a lack of emotion.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Identity is about looking good and Janet believes it is important to look good and to make a good impression. "If you look good inside you and outside you, you feel good you feel proud."
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Janet does not have strong memories associated with Identity.
Partner quality	Strong	Janet always finds what she wants at Identity and they trust her with credit. Janet believes Identity is very trustworthy.
SPRITE		
Intimacy	Strong	Describes Sprite as her favourite cold drink; has a good knowledge of the brand and logo.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Janet continues insisting on Sprite even though her family prefers Coke. This means she often has to do without Sprite, but she still remains committed.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Janet would drink Sprite every day and has a strong connection and affection for the brand due to the thirst-quenching benefits.
Love	Strong	Janet loves the brand and the thirst-quenching benefits.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Janet feels she is different because she drinks Sprite, which made her feel unique.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Janet is the only one in the family that drinks Sprite; her late mother also preferred Coke.
Partner quality	Strong	The benefits of Sprite (thirst-quenching) far outweigh the cost of Janet not always having Sprite because of financial reasons. "It's

		better because if maybe I am thirsty, if I can drink one glass or a half glass of a Sprite I will be fine...”
INKOMAZI		
Intimacy	Very weak	The relationship is centred on her grandmother rather than the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Committed to the brand because of the happy memories it conjures.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Attached to the brand because of the connection to her grandmother. The brand is extremely important to her because of the memories it conveys.
Love	Very strong	Extremely enthusiastic about the brand and displays love and loyalty.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Janet saw her grandmother’s personality in the brand rather than her own.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	Whenever Janet drinks Inkomazi it makes her think of her grandmother who took care of her. Janet has great affection for her grandmother.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Not much known about the brand and is not necessarily viewed as a partner but was valued due to the connection with her grandmother. Because her grandmother chose it, it must be good.
DAWN		
Intimacy	Weak	Does not display good knowledge of the brand. Does not ascribe much personal meaning to the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Janet originally seemed very committed to the brand but then stated that she is sure other creams would have a similar effect.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Janet uses the cream every day and it plays a big part in her personal care repertoire.
Love	Intermediate	Janet says she loves the cream yet seemed to only connect with the brand at a functional level.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Dawn helps Janet achieve her ideal self.
Nostalgic connection	Weak	The brand does not bring strong memories to mind and Janet discovered the brand on her own.
Partner quality	Strong	“I like it cause when I apply it I feel good, I don’t develop crocodile skin...”.

Janet is one of the youngest respondents and had no commitments other than her studies. The brands chosen by Janet are all strong in the self-connection dimension and the perceived quality of the partner. Sprite is her most intense relationship and this may be due to the fact that it makes her feel unique in a big household.

TABLE 29: BRQ FOR THANDI

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
MR PRICE		
Intimacy	Very strong	Good knowledge of the brand and how people see it. Thandi feels very close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	Committed to Mr Price because it is affordable and she likes the colours of Mr Price. Thandi has tried many stores but none suit her like Mr Price. Thandi does not, however, shop exclusively at Mr Price.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Thandi is very attached to the brand and relies on Mr Price for all her jeans. Thandi continues to use Mr Price even though her friends criticise the brand.
Love	Strong	Has affection for the brand as well as a strong emotional connection.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Thandi does not identify with the brand but the brand gives her what she desires. Described Mr Price as gay and very different to her.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Discovered the brand on her own. It does not evoke strong positive memories; in fact Thandi remembers that when Mr Price first launched she was unhappy with their quality.
Partner quality	Strong	Mr Price has improved since the brand first launched. Thandi trusts Mr Price and Mr Price do not let her down.
KFC		
Intimacy	Very strong	Good knowledge of the brand and the corporate identity.
Personal commitment	Strong	Thandi is committed to the brand because of its tasty chicken and consistency, even though KFC lets her down in the form of long queues.

Passionate attachment	Strong	KFC is a big part of Thandi's everyday life and she cannot imagine life without KFC.
Love	Strong	Emotional connection and great affection for the brand.
Self-concept connection	Weak	Thandi does not identify with KFC at all.
Nostalgic connection	Very strong	KFC reminds Thandi of her grandmother, as she loves KFC and introduced Thandi to KFC. Reminds Thandi of carefree times.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Very happy with the chicken but disappointed with the service KFC provides. Thandi feels the corporate identity of KFC needs to be updated.
ALLSTARS		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand and feels close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Thandi is committed to the brand because it allows her to look good and seem mysterious. Thandi continues using the brand even though her grandmother is against them. She often gets negative reactions from people who make incorrect assumptions about her.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Thandi cannot imagine life without her Allstars and they are a regular part of her life.
Love	Strong	Thandi has deep affection for her Allstars and the image they allow her to portray.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	Thandi perceives the brand as being mysterious and meaning different things to different people, and this is how she sees herself. Thandi loves attention and Allstars elicits attention from other people.
Nostalgic connection	Strong	Thandi remembers buying her first pair with the money she saved from doing people's hair.
Partner quality	Strong	Functionally the shoe is not the best, but Thandi admires the brand for what it does for her image.
POND'S SKIN CREAM		
Intimacy	Weak	Thandi did not seem to be very close to the brand and in fact harboured some resentment against the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Thandi is committed to the brand because of the negative consequences should she stop using it, but there does seem to be a willingness to change brands should she find one that has the same functional benefits.

Passionate attachment	Very strong	Thandi has a physical reaction with her skin whenever she stops using Pond's.
Love	Weak	Thandi feels like she should use it for functional reasons, but does not feel affection for the brand.
Self-concept connection	Very strong	Pond's makes Thandi feel like an older and beautiful woman. Pond's helps her aspire to her ideal self.
Nostalgic connection	Intermediate	Brings memories of when she lived with her aunt and secretly used her face cream.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Thandi believes she cannot do without Pond's and there is a slight distrust of the brand because of this. Thandi seems to regret the day that she started using Pond's.

Allstars and Mr Price are intense relationships for Thandi and she ascribes great importance to them because they assist her in projecting a specific image. Thandi feels committed to Mr Price because she believes it is the only outlet that sells jeans that fit her unique body shape. Thandi believes Allstars helps her appear mysterious and interesting. The relationship with Pond's is interesting as functionally it delivers superior results to such a degree that Thandi now believes she cannot do without the brand as her skin quickly deteriorates without it.

TABLE 30: BRQ FOR PRUDENCE

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
TRUWORTHS		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Prudence does not seem particularly close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Strong	Prudence is committed to the brand due to the affordable prices, good selection and quality of the clothes.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Prudence has been buying at Truworths for a long time and the brand has become part of

		her life.
Love	Strong	Prudence has deep affection for the brand and is loyal to the brand.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Prudence did not view the brand as similar to her and seemed to think that the brand's existence was far more frivolous than hers.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Does not conjure strong memories. Prudence discovered the brand for herself.
Partner quality	Strong	Prudence feels the brand has been good to her and the staff members are always friendly.
SUNLIGHT WASHING POWDER		
Intimacy	Very weak	Prudence did not display any feelings of closeness to the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Prudence is willing to stay with the brand until something better appears.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Prudence is currently attached to Sunlight and is a part of her life.
Love	Intermediate	Strong degree of liking without great emotion.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Viewed Sunlight as wanting to achieve the same things as she does.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	The brand did not conjure any strong memories.
Partner quality	Strong	Values Sunlight because it does not damage her hands, clothes come clean and she uses less fabric softener.
TASTIC		
Intimacy	Weak	A very new relationship with little known about the brand.
Personal commitment	Weak	Prudence seems to be satisfied with the product to date but feels it is too early to start telling her friends about the brand.
Passionate attachment	Strong	Tastic has become part of the food that Prudence prepares for her family.
Love	Intermediate	No strong feelings of affection displayed but Prudence was extremely excited about the functional benefits.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Prudence has a very traditional role as mother and wife and Tastic was viewed in a similar way.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Prudence discovered Tastic recently and did not have any memories tied to the brand.
Partner quality	Strong	Prudence believes Tastic does what it promises to do, which is extremely important to her.
PROTEX		
Intimacy	Weak	Prudence would prefer to use Lux and is

		therefore not interested in Protex.
Personal commitment	Strong	Prudence seems resigned to use it because her family dictates it.
Passionate attachment	Weak	Prudence would change this brand in a heartbeat if she was given the opportunity.
Love	Weak	Prudence is bordering on dislike of the brand although she does admit that the soap does clean well.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Prudence does not see the brand as being anything like her, nor is it something she would aspire to.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Prudence did not bring this brand into her home and has no pleasant memories of the brand.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Prudence does not seem to feel that the brand offers quality. It is not the brand she would choose.
KFC		
Intimacy	Weak	Prudence did not feel close to the brand and did not display good knowledge.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Prudence enjoys her KFC but gives the impression that she would end the relationship if it made other people uncomfortable.
Passionate attachment	Strong	KFC is viewed as a treat and is a part of her family's life.
Love	Strong	Prudence has a strong emotional attachment and loves eating KFC with her family.
Self-concept connection	Very weak	Prudence views KFC as a luxury yet describes herself as a simple woman who likes the simple things in life.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	No strong memories surrounding the brand.
Partner quality	Strong	Prudence believes KFC is a good brand and a good partner that assists the family in celebrating together.

Prudence does not have very intense relationships with brands as they mostly fulfill a functional role. Prudence has strong self-connection with the brands Tastic and Sunlight, as these assist her in her role as wife and mother. Prudence has to trust the brand, and partner quality is important to her. Protex is not her choice of brand

and she harbours some resentment towards the brand even though she is getting used to it.

TABLE 31: BRQ FOR POPPY

DIMENSION	RATING	EVIDENCE
VODACOM		
Intimacy	Strong	Good knowledge of the brand, advertising and activities. Feels close to the brand.
Personal commitment	Very strong	Happy to be with Vodacom even though the network coverage is not always good
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Poppy considers Vodacom as an essential that she cannot do without.
Love	Very strong	Extremely loyal to the brand.
Self-concept connection	Strong	Would like to give back to community and so Vodacom is the ideal self.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Poppy does not have any memories involving the Vodacom brand.
Partner quality	Strong	Vodacom is seen as a very good partner due to the community projects and competitions. The brand does let her down but this is largely overlooked due to the community projects.
WHITE STAR		
Intimacy	Intermediate	Poppy seemed to know more about Iwisa than White Star.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Poppy is intensely committed to White Star but seems to be more intensely opposed to Iwisa Maize Meal.
Passionate attachment	Very strong	Poppy connects to the brand and feels great affection.
Love	Intermediate	Poppy seems to be more infatuated with the brand because her mother is opposed to it.
Self-concept connection	Strong	White Star is seen to be a brand for young, strong individuals and Poppy feels she is standing for what she believes in by choosing White Star.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Poppy does not have memories of White Star. Her mother being opposed to it makes Poppy more attracted to it.
Partner quality	Strong	The brand is seen as a good partner due to the fact that the brand delivers functionally. It is also seen as a good partner as it allows

		Poppy to be different.
SOVIET JEANS		
Intimacy	Weak	Did not know much about the brand and did not have any experience with the brand.
Personal commitment	Intermediate	Cannot afford the brand yet yearns to one day afford them. In the interim she is content to wear other jeans.
Passionate attachment	Intermediate	Poppy has great affection for the brand but the brand is not currently used.
Love	Strong	Poppy has a strong desire to own the brand but the cost discourages her from owning it. However, she still feels emotionally connected to the brand.
Self-concept connection	Strong	The brand is described as understated and Poppy likes to be mysterious.
Nostalgic connection	Very weak	Poppy does not have any memories of Soviet but aspires to afford the brand.
Partner quality	Intermediate	Poppy thinks highly of the brand as a partner but as she has never used Soviet she cannot substantiate her belief in the brand.

Poppy has two children but is not very focused on them as her mother provides the childcare. Poppy's most intense relationship is with Vodacom, which she trusts and whose transgressions of poor network coverage on Fridays she is willing to overlook. Poppy's brands all display strong self-connection with weak nostalgic connection. This may be due to the fact that Poppy is trying to assert herself in a matriarchal household. Poppy does not yet own anything Soviet, but aspires to the brand and vows she will own a pair of jeans soon.

6.3.1 Summary of evaluations

Table 32 below is a summary of the frequency of the evaluations of 44 consumer-brand relationships. Overall the women tend to be more attached to their brands

rather than committed, and this manifests itself in the belief that they cannot do without the brand.

It is interesting to note that partner quality had the second highest “strong” and “very strong” evaluations; self-concept connection had the third highest, with 35 and 34 respectively. Partner quality had zero “weak” or “very weak” evaluations, which suggests that partner quality is a qualifier to the relationship. The self-concept connection also has zero intermediate evaluations, suggesting that brands either contribute to the self-connection or they do not.

Nostalgia had the most (25) “weak” and “very weak” evaluations – 22 of which were “very weak”. The intimacy dimension had the second highest “weak” and “very weak” evaluations with 17.

TABLE 32: SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS FOR THE SEVEN BRQ DIMENSIONS

	INTIMACY	PERSONAL COMMITTMENT	PASSIONATE ATTACHMENT	LOVE	SELF- CONNECTION	NOSTALGIC CONNECTION	PARTNER QUALITY
Very strong	5	10	16	9	9	7	6
Strong	12	17	22	15	25	10	29
Intermediate	9	10	3	11	0	1	8
Weak	14	5	1	8	3	3	0
Very weak	3	1	1	0	6	22	0
TOTAL	43	43	43	43	43	43	43

6.4 Research question 3: Relationship forms

The 44 brand stories are classified according to the relationship forms provided by Fournier (1998) in Table 1.3.1 below. Fournier's classification can be found in Table 2 in Chapter 2. The relationships are classified using two measures: the BRQ analysis above and the respondents' descriptions of their relationships with each brand. The two measures are incongruent in a few cases: for example, a relationship is described as casual by the respondent but when evaluated according to the BRQ a different result is achieved. This is the case with Lizzie and KFC, Betty and Ingram's and Rose and Nike, where the relationships are described as very casual while the analysis finds them to be more committed. In all cases the interview was replayed and further analysis indicated the BRQ analysis being valid in all cases. Table 33 is a presentation of all the relationship forms.

TABLE 33: RELATIONSHIP FORM CLASSIFICATION

RELATIONSHIP FORM	EXAMPLE	EVIDENCE
Arranged marriages	Prudence and Protex	Her family wants it so she is forced to use Protex although she would prefer to use Lux
Casual friends/buddies	Doris and Handy Andy	Mostly a functional relationship. Handy Andy is described as a friendly someone.
	Betty and Ingram's	Good functional connection but very low personal connection. Betty described Camphor as an acquaintance.
	Janet and Dawn	Very functional relationship

Casual friends/buddies continued	Elizabeth and Mr Price	Elizabeth views Mr Price as a place to buy her children's clothes. Her boys grow quickly so the clothes don't have to last as long and the price is right.
Marriages of convenience	Violet and Jungle Oats	A highly functional relationship with very little emotion or affection. It is necessitated by her working obligations rather than choice; on the weekends she chooses Kellogg's.
	Rose and Telefunken	"Where he is working it can be broken today, he take it tomorrow morning, when he come back from work he come with it, so for me it is better."
Committed partnerships	Jane and MTN	High trust and exclusivity. Jane says she cannot live without MTN.
	Lerato and Johnson's Baby	Uses Johnson's Baby exclusively on her daughter and trusts it implicitly.
	Lindiwe and Sunlight	"Sunlight is to me, it's like my own, I don't know what to say it is like me, when I got Sunlight in my hand I've got myself, it is something that I trust, it has never disappointed me".

Committed partnerships continued	Elizabeth and Koo	Elizabeth aspires to have her own catering company and loves people enjoying her food. Koo is seen as a partner in Elizabeth's quest for delicious meals like her mother makes. Lindiwe's mother also uses Koo.
	Rose and Nokia	Rose and Nokia are always together. They share the same interests and Rose is always available to assist someone with their Nokia, as she understands the phone and has good knowledge of the menu structure.
	Janet and Sprite	Janet is the only person in her household to drink Sprite. She is so committed to it that even when the family can only afford Coke she will not drink it. Her love of Sprite means she must often do without, but she continues to be committed.
	Thandi and Mr Price	Thandi is committed to the brand even though her friends are against the brand. Thandi trusts Mr Price and feels close to the brand.
Best friendships	Doris and Freedom	Doris described Freedom as the "closest friend" and would be devastated if the store closed down.
	Lizzie and KFC	Loves KFC and their strengths; very open about their shortcomings but still extremely committed.

Best friendships continued	Thandi and Allstars	Has been wearing them since she was 13 and intends to wear them for a long time to come.
	Lindiwe and Woolworths	“Woolworths is my shop”. Lindiwe loves the fact that she can buy on lay-bye and that they are so understanding. Loves the fact that her clothes come from Woolworths.
	Poppy and Vodacom	An intense relationship that Poppy perceived as close and a brand she was incredibly attached to.
Compartmentalised friendships	Doris and OMO	Doris relies on OMO and says, “she is always there for me”, but OMO is only valued for her children’s clothes.
	Jane and Edgars	Lower intimacy but high socio-emotional rewards. “They give an opportunity to buy things, let’s say I don’t have cash right now...”
	Violet and Tastic	Violet gets great rewards from using Tastic through the compliments she receives. Tastic is only used when entertaining people or cooking a special meal.
	Betty and Surf	Relationship is confined to washing clothes and benefits Betty receives through the good results the brand gives.
	Lerato and OMO	OMO is selected for the good results obtained when washing her daughter’s clothes.
	Lindiwe and Iwisa	“Iwisa to me is like a friend, a very good friend.”

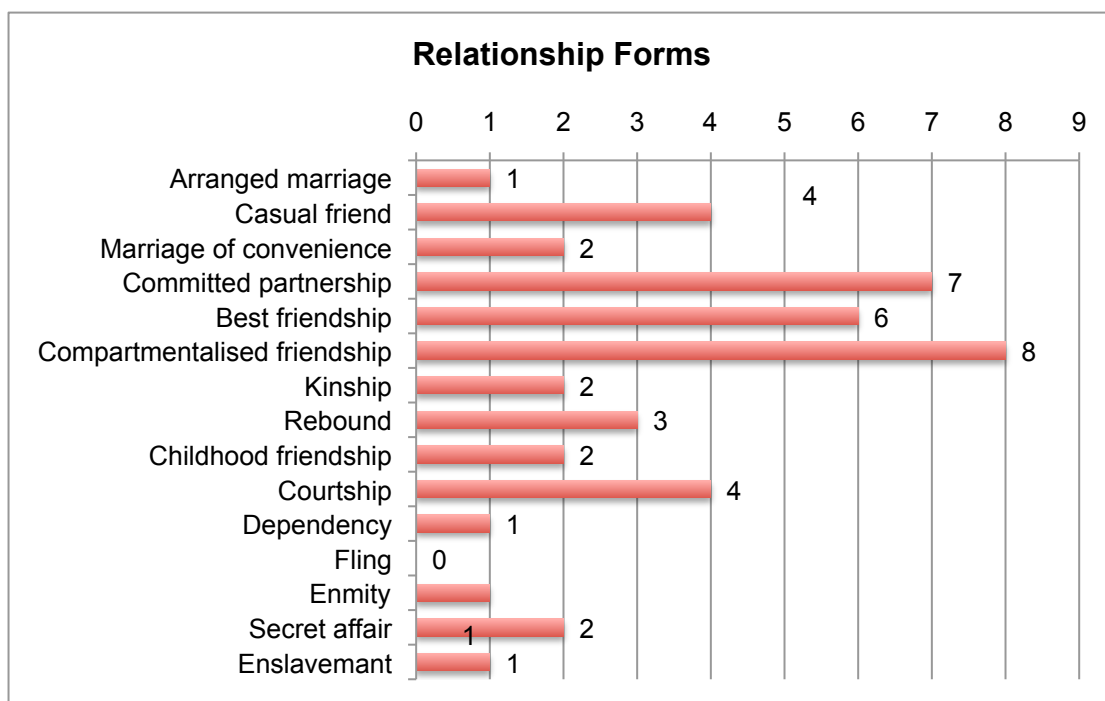
Compartmentalised friendships continued	Janet and Identity	The relationship is highly situational, “The relationship I can say it’s good like because if they didn’t trust me they would not have give me the account you know”.
	Prudence and Truworths	The brand was a priority when Prudence needed clothes and Prudence felt they delivered every time.
Kinships	Elizabeth and Maggi 2-minute noodles	Elizabeth uses 2-minute noodles because her mother used it to create a quick, affordable meal for her hungry children, but it is not something she is proud of using.
	Jane and Inkomazi	Strong memories of her beloved grandmother
Rebounds/avoidance driven relationships	Betty and Hulletts	Betty is intensely opposed to buying store brand sugar (the available partner), more than she is attracted to Hulets.
	Prudence and Sunlight	Prudence was extremely unhappy with OMO and Sunlight was chosen as a way to move away from OMO.
	Poppy and White Star	Poppy seemed more opposed to Iwisa than attracted to White Star.

Childhood friendships	Jane and KFC	Reminds her of when she was a child and her parents bought KFC as a treat. KFC gives her comfort and reminds her of good times.
	Thandi and KFC	Reminds her of her grandmother, as her grandmother loves KFC, “when she visits us she does not want to eat anything but KFC”.
Courtship	Lizzie and JVC	Lizzie seems enamoured with JVC due to the status yet there seems to be little understanding of the brand, “If I got enough money, everything can be JVC in the house from music, DVD, I like it so much.”
	Betty and Edgars	Betty has the emotional connection to the brand but lacks the informational connection.
	Rose and Nike	Rose is extremely attached to Nike and is well on her way to becoming committed.
	Prudence and Tastic	Prudence has just started using Tastic and is impressed with it so far.
	Poppy and Soviet	Poppy has just become interested in Soviet but has yet to purchase the brand.
Enmities	Violet and Vanish	Violet does not trust “Pink” and was angry about their false messaging.

Secret affairs	Lerato and Playtex	Was very shy to discuss it and did not want anybody to know about her love of Playtex and how much she buys.
	Prudence and KFC	Does not want her neighbours to see her family enjoying KFC as they may think badly of her.
Enslavements	Thandi and Pond's	Thandi feels forced to use Pond's because without it her skin deteriorates. She feels if she never started using it then she would be able to use other products.

Figure 7 below shows the frequency of the relationship forms identified from the 13 respondents.

FIGURE 29: RELATIONSHIP FORMS IDENTIFIED



Fourteen of the relationship forms identified by Fournier (1998) are identified in the respondents' brand stories. The one form not identified is a fling, which may be coincidental or it could be because the women do not feel like they can make risky mistakes with the brands they choose. A fling does not have high reciprocity demands (Fournier, 1998) and the majority of the women felt strongly about getting as much value as possible from the brands.

The relationship form complemented the research conducted by Story and Hess (2006), whereby the relationships that have a strong personal and functional connection are committed relationships. This was found to be the case with committed partnerships and best friendships. Both forms had a strong functional and personal connection with the respondents and were the most committed as well as the most intense.

6.5 Research question 4: Relationship stage

The stage of the relationship was analysed using the five-stage model consisting of initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration and dissolution (Smit, Bronner and Tolboom, 2007). Relationship decline was analysed according to the stress and entropy model (Fournier, 1998).

6.5.1 Idiographic analysis

TABLE 34: DORIS AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

DORIS		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
OMO	Maintenance	Has been using OMO since she became a mother and is very happy with the brand's performance. Shows no signs of dissatisfaction.
Handy Andy	Maintenance	Handy Andy has almost become a habit and Doris will continue using the brand for the foreseeable future.
Freedom Supermarket	Maintenance	Relies heavily on Freedom and although it is not used as frequently as the other brands it is well established within Doris's brand portfolio.

Doris is traditional and the brands she chooses support her belief that she is a good woman, wife and mother. Her brands are all in the maintenance phase and seem to be rather effortless and well established.

TABLE 35: LIZZIE AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

LIZZIE		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Coke	Maintenance	Lizzie seems almost proud of her love of Coke and does not care that people tell her how unhealthy it is.
JVC	Growth	A relatively new brand

		for Lizzie, which she adored but which she admits she does not know much about. Should the brand continue to perform it will move into the maintenance phase.
KFC	Maintenance	Lizzie adores KFC and is willing to overlook the busy stores, but there does seem to be a growing unhappiness with this and this may lead to deterioration of the relationship.

Lizzie had fulfilled a largely traditional role and now that she no longer has those responsibilities she is feeling carefree and happy. Her brands reflect this as they are all about her and what she enjoys. KFC is at risk of deteriorating as Lizzie values her time and the time spent in KFC queues is becoming more problematic for Lizzie.

TABLE 36: JANE AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

JANE		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Edgars	Deterioration	Jane felt very close to Edgars and valued the fact that they gave her credit, but they had recently let her down and the relationship has deteriorated. Jane was considering cancelling her card with Edgars.
MTN	Maintenance	Jane gets value from MTN every day and this reaffirms the

		relationship. Jane believes she cannot do without MTN.
KFC	Maintenance	An easy relationship that goes back to Jane's childhood.

Jane's relationships are all well established and were progressing well, except for the relationship with the Edgars brand. Jane felt that Edgars was not there for her when she needed them and is now considering terminating her account. How Edgars treated her in the coming months will definitely affect her decision.

TABLE 37: VIOLET AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

VIOLET		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Jungle Oats	Maintenance	A well-established relationship provided Violet continues to require a breakfast that gives her energy.
Tastic	Maintenance	Violet wholeheartedly believes in the functional performance of Tastic and will continue using this brand for her special occasions.
Vanish	Dissolution	Vanish did not deliver what its advertising message promised, therefore Violet will no longer use the brand.

Jungle Oats and Tastic were in the maintenance phase because they delivered what they promised and Violet knew she could rely on the brands. The relationship with Vanish had dissolved due to the brand not delivering what it promised.

TABLE 38: BETTY AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

BETTY		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Surf	Growth	Betty recently changed to Surf and is happy with the performance of the washing powder. Betty also states that her boyfriend and children are happy with their clothes, which is important to Betty.
Hulett's sugar	Maintenance	Betty wishes she could always use Hulett's but finances dictate that she sometimes use a store brand. Should her financial situation improve, Betty will insist on Hulett's.
Edgars	Growth	Betty has been going to Edgars for approximately two years but cannot really tell the store apart from other store brands.
Ingram's Camphor Cream	Maintenance	Betty has been using the brand since she became an adult and is extremely satisfied with the results.

TABLE 39: LERATO AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

LERATO		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Johnson's Baby	Maintenance	Lerato has started using Johnson's Baby from the birth of her daughter

		and the brand is already well established.
OMO	Maintenance	Although OMO is hard on Lerato's hands it is effective in keeping her child's clothes clean, so the brand seems set to stay for the foreseeable future.
Playtex	Growth	Playtex is a very recent brand choice and Lerato is still exploring the brand.

TABLE 40: LINDIWE AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

LINDIWE		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Sunlight	Maintenance	Sunlight can be used sparingly, lasts longer and does not make Lindiwe itch. Lindiwe is extremely loyal to Sunlight washing powder.
Iwisa	Maintenance	Due to the functional benefits of Iwisa, Lindiwe is committed to the brand and will continue using the brand.
Woolworths	Maintenance	Lindiwe feels close to the brand and believes that the relationship will survive long into the future.

Lindiwe states that she has a distrust of new brands and gives the impression that with her age and benevolent activities, she cannot be bothered with trying new brands. She has settled on her brand portfolio and is content with them all.

TABLE 41: ELIZABETH AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

ELIZABETH		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Mr Price	Growth	Elizabeth has recently discovered Mr Price and is largely satisfied with Mr Price for everyday clothing for her children.
Koo	Maintenance	Elizabeth has been using Koo for a long time, her mother uses Koo and both will use Koo for a long time to come. Elizabeth's boyfriend is also satisfied with the brand, which is important to Elizabeth.
Maggi	Deterioration	Maggi seems to be declining and, combined with Elizabeth's boyfriend's disapproval, the relationship is waning.

TABLE 42: ROSE AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

ROSE		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Telefunken	Maintenance	As long as Rose's husband continues to work at Telefunken the relationship will continue.
Nike	Maintenance	Rose is convinced that Nike is the best sneaker available and is impressed by the big brand status.
Nokia	Maintenance	Rose feels extremely comfortable with Nokia and does not plan to change the brand.

The relationships are all in the maintenance stage as all brands are delivering on projecting the image of Rose as someone who appreciates good quality, is brand savvy and is comfortable with technology.

TABLE 43: JANET AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

JANET		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Identity	Growth	The relationship is still relatively new and Jane is still exploring other brands. Identity seems set to form part of her brand portfolio of clothing stores.
Sprite	Growth	Sprite is also a new brand chosen by Janet and although it seems rather strong at the moment it could deteriorate should Janet get tired of always having to do without her brand.
Inkomazi	Maintenance	The close relationship Janet has with her grandmother means this relationship will always be maintained. The nostalgic connection is extremely strong, fuelling the relationship.
Dawn	Maintenance	Janet shows no sign of deterioration, although the relationship is not a high-intensity relationship and is based mainly on functional benefits.

Identity and Sprite are both in the growth phase but their trajectory does seem to be leading them towards the maintenance stage. Sprite may be threatened with deterioration should Janet's family increasingly be unable to afford two choices of carbonated beverage.

TABLE 44: THANDI AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

THANDI		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Mr Price	Maintenance	Thandi is extremely happy with the clothes at Mr Price. Given that she can only find jeans at Mr Price, this relationship is well entrenched.
KFC	Maintenance	Thandi adores KFC and it reminds her of carefree times. Although the brand does sometimes let her down the rewards make up for it.
Allstars	Maintenance	Thandi admits that the shoes do not perform well functionally but the image rewards make up for this.
Pond's	Maintenance	Thandi believes she cannot do without Pond's and therefore is extremely hesitant to try other brands, although she would like to. Thandi has negative feelings towards the brand yet the relationship will continue.

TABLE 45: PRUDENCE AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

PRUDENCE		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Truworths	Maintenance	A long-standing relationship that Prudence is extremely comfortable with.
Sunlight	Maintenance	Sunlight is seen as the opposite of OMO and therefore a brand Prudence will continue using into the foreseeable future.
Tastic	Growth	Prudence has recently started using Tastic and is greatly impressed with the functional benefits the brand offers.
Protex	Maintenance	Prudence feels this is what her family has chosen to use and she must accept it. Says she is getting used to it.
KFC	Maintenance	KFC is an established brand in her household.

TABLE 46: POPPY AND HER BRAND RELATIONSHIP STAGES

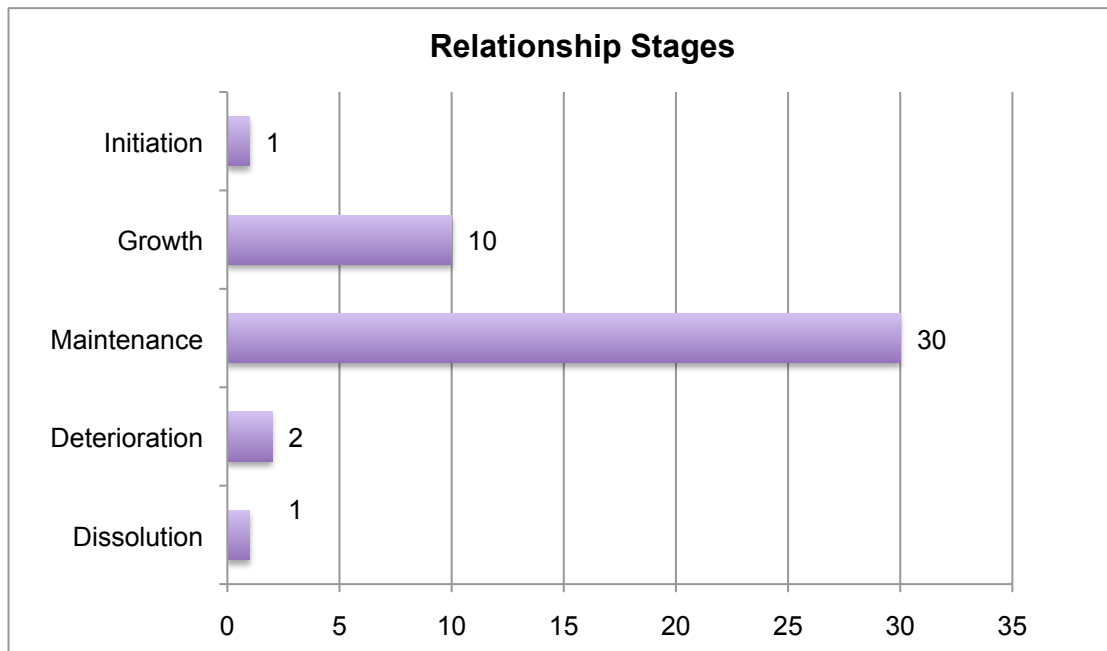
POPPY		
BRAND	RELATIONSHIP STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Vodacom	Maintenance	Vodacom often lets Poppy down, yet Poppy is firmly committed to the relationship.
White Star	Growth	Poppy has recently discovered White Star and seems attracted to the brand mainly because it is different to Iwisa. Time will tell if this is a relationship that lasts.

Soviet	Initiation	Poppy has just recently become attracted to the Soviet brand but has not yet been able to purchase Soviet. This relationship is in the early stages.
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6.5.2 Cross-case analysis

Over 40 of the 44 brands are in the growth or maintenance phase, with 30 being in the maintenance stage (see Figure 8 below). This makes it difficult to gauge the impact of the stage of the relationship but it does suggest that once the respondents find a brand that they are content with, they largely stick with it. There is no evidence of a great deal of trialing going on unless a specific chosen brand transgresses in some way or circumstances and situations change. These changes relate primarily to relational and environmental stresses (Fournier, 1998).

FIGURE 30: SUMMARY OF THE RELATIONSHIP STAGES



6.6 Conclusion

All thirteen women have consumer-brand relationships with brands varying from fast moving consumer goods to clothing stores and electronic equipment. The Brand Relationship Quality construct (Fournier, 1998) presents many varied and interesting aspects to the relationship, with partner quality seeming to be a pre-requisite to the relationship. Fourteen of Fournier's (1998) 15 brand relationship forms are identified, with the majority derived from the friendship form. The relationship stages identified are mostly in the maintenance stage.

The research objectives, as established in Chapter 3 by the four research questions, have consequently been achieved. The research findings presented in Chapter 6 are largely consistent with the existing international literature regarding brand-consumer relationships. This research contributes to the theory around low-income consumers in South Africa and how they perceive brands and the relationships they form.

7 Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this research is to better understand the consumer-brand relationship amongst low-income consumers and in so doing understand low-income consumers better. This objective has been achieved in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. What follows is a summary of the highlights, recommendations to brand managers and retail outlets, and recommendations for further research.

7.1 Highlights

7.1.1 Low-income consumer-brand relationship choices

It is interesting that many of the respondents were antagonistic toward the private label brands. The store brands are expected to offer similar quality at a lower price or less quality at greatly reduced prices (Kotler and Keller, 2007) and yet fundamentally the respondents are opposed to them. When further probed about the store brands, some had used the brands and had been disappointed, while others had heard that those brands are not to be trusted. This finding should be further investigated but it is a strong indication that the low-income consumer is not only concerned with price. Value is a far bigger concern.

Life stage and individual situation has a strong bearing on what types of brands are going to be chosen. Many of the 13 respondents in Alexandra Township held very

strong beliefs on the role women should play in the household and this was evident in the brands they chose.

There were six women under 30; only one of them chose a laundry brand and only two chose a food brand. The younger respondents were more interested in looking good and having fun. There was a definite desire to carve their own way, celebrate their uniqueness and be independent.

The respondents were more likely to have relationships with the clothing stores than the clothing brands. The clothing store category was the second largest grouping of brands and this corresponds with all the women emphatically stating that appearances are important and that one should take pride in one's appearance. The desire for cleanliness and neatness was stronger than the desire to be fashionable. One respondent said it was fashionable to have dirty shoes but that she felt compelled to clean the shoes. All of the women showed concern for how people perceived them.

7.1.2 Low-income consumer-brand relationship quality

As with interpersonal relationships, so it is with consumer-brand relationships amongst low-income consumers: the quality of the relationship depends on the interplay between the two relationship participants. Partner quality was an important factor in the consumer-brand relationships discussed in Chapter 6. None of the relationships scored a “weak” or “very weak” in the partner quality

dimension. This leads one to believe that these women will not have relationships with partners who do not measure up. However, it should be noted that this finding might be due to the data collection design whereby respondents were invited to self-select brands.

Attachment was more prevalent than commitment, with many women believing they cannot do without a brand. These brands face a bigger threat of new alternatives, as they have not managed to secure commitment.

Self-connection is important to the respondents as 34 of the 43 relationships rated self-connection as “strong” or “very strong”. It is also the one BRQ dimension that had absolutely no intermediate values. This finding indicates a dichotomous characteristic of the self-connection, whereby brands either enhance the self-connection or do not. This finding supports the belief that these women have in the importance of appearance and the concern with how they are perceived.

Nostalgia had an influence on the relationships but not to a great extent, as 34 out of the 43 relationships had a “strong” or “very strong” nostalgic connection and 22 out of the 43 are rated as “very weak”. However, when the nostalgic connection was “very strong” the respondent tended to think very highly of the brand.

Intimacy scored relatively few “weak” and “very weak” ratings and this could be due to the high prevalence of fast moving consumer goods. These products are known

on a more superficial basis, as the risks involved with these products are far less on a psychological and economical scale. However, it should still be remembered that the low-income consumers were indeed concerned about making an incorrect purchase at a functional level; it just did not manifest itself as a need or desire to know as much as possible about the brand.

7.1.3 Low-income consumer-brand relationship forms

Of Fournier's 15 relationship forms there are three that are non-voluntary: arranged marriages, kinships and enslavements. Only four of the 44 brand stories were non-voluntary, which suggests that largely the women are responsible for the shopping, and decide which brands are brought into the home.

Friendships, particularly compartmentalised friendships, formed the biggest relationship forms and these relationships largely have an ego purpose (Fournier, 1998). This again supports the assumption that self-connection and self-image enhancement is a big factor in the brands that the women formed relationships with.

Another interesting finding is the low level of temporal relationships such as the four courtships and the lack of flings. This supports the notion that the women do not trial extensively and once a brand is deemed functionally adequate it is accepted. Considering their financial constraints this makes intuitive sense, as they

cannot trial everything that is out there as there is a risk that the majority is poor quality and money would be wasted.

7.1.4 Low-income consumer-brand relationship stage

The relationships the 13 respondents had with their brands were overwhelmingly in the maintenance phase. This may mean that once a relationship has been established it is well entrenched and that, barring relationship stress or entropy, they are likely to stay with that brand. This suggests that marketers and brand managers should not only focus on getting consumers to try the brand but also to move them to the maintenance phase of the relationship as quickly as possible, thereafter to keep them there.

7.1.5 Other highlights

Clothing stores offering payment terms and different payment options are valued and appreciated by these women. These stores allow them to purchase important merchandise, clothing. This relates to how understanding the low-income consumers situation can benefit companies. Two stories can be contrasted here, namely those of Edgars and Woolworths.

Edgars automatically punishes a customer through higher interest rates even though she contacted them to explain that her father had passed away. Woolworths shows understanding of a consumer's situation by keeping merchandise for her on lay-by even though she misses payments. The Edgars

consumer is considering terminating the relationship whereas the Woolworths consumer could not praise the company enough.

It is not suggested that there should not be consequences for lack of payment, but showing understanding in difficult times can go a long way in ensuring a committed customer.

KFC was a popular brand with the women and this was attributed to their delicious chicken, their consistent quality, and their well-maintained bathrooms. The respondents welcomed the fact that there were good facilities for them to use inside the store. What was also interesting was that KFC's popularity was negatively affecting their customers, as they were required to wait in very long queues. Yet the women were prepared to look past this because the brand delivered so well on its promises.

Another important finding was how often people within the community meet to socialise and converse with one another. Many brands are discussed at these community gatherings and it is an opportunity for women to get advice from other women. These gatherings offer a great opportunity for word-of-mouth.

7.2 Recommendations

The recommendations featured below develop from the findings discussed in Chapter 6 and in the highlights above.

7.2.1 Brand managers

It is important that brand managers be sensitive to how gender roles are portrayed, as many of the older respondents believed that women should still play a very traditional role in the home. Advertising and brand communication could be rendered ineffective if this detail is overlooked.

Honesty and trustworthiness were extremely important to the women interviewed. There seems to be a willingness to forgive transgressions and mistakes provided that the partner is honest and forthright with them. Consistency in the brand performance and in management's policies gives the women a sense of security, as they know exactly what to expect.

It is recommended that brand managers keep the lines of communication open and find innovative and cost-effective ways to talk to the low-income consumer and to contribute to the community. The women were really appreciative of service calls from the cellular network operators as well as the work done in the community.

Brand managers should avoid assuming that the low-income consumer cannot afford the product and therefore is not interested in it. The low-income consumer

aspires to products considered the domain of the middle class, and with a willing and innovative partner will be able to purchase these goods.

7.2.2 Retail outlets

The researcher suggests that retail outlets treat the low-income consumer as they would any other consumer, as they are valuable customers. Retailers should offer good amenities (as in the case of KFC), offer advice and not just assume they cannot afford anything the company has to offer.

As stated previously, the low-income consumer aspires to greater things yet does not always presently have the means to pay for it. By offering flexible and innovative payment terms companies can successfully sell to the low-income consumer. An example in South Africa is what prepaid airtime did for the telecommunications industry in South Africa. By offering a different payment method, the cellular operators expanded their markets significantly and provided low-income consumers with mobile communication.

There is a negative perception regarding the private label brands and this needs to be addressed. Consumers should be educated on the better quality private label brands, perhaps through free trialing and in-store promotions.

7.3 Recommendations for further research

This study is an exploratory study and further research should investigate the phenomenon of the consumer-brand relationship. A quantitative tool should be investigated and designed to be able to measure the Brand Relationship Quality.

Research that looks at the effect low-income male consumers have on the purchasing decision could contribute great insight. This study found the shopping to be largely left to the women, but the men had a role to play through their happiness with the brands chosen.

Further research could address questions such as whether manufacturing brands really are better quality or whether marketing just pays off in creating the correct perceptions. A study into the views that the younger generation of low-income consumers has about traditional roles and how these are changing would further add to this body of research.

Future researchers may also benefit from conducting a study that compares different income groups and evaluates them according to the consumer-brand relationship theory to ascertain what the differences are, if any, in the consumer-brand relationships. Finally, the researcher considers stokvels to be interesting and suggests that they offer many opportunities for the low-income consumer to be able to purchase the brands they aspire to.

7.4 Conclusion

Low-income consumers are not merely concerned with surviving and only buying brands and products for that purpose. They are value-conscious and are prepared to pay a premium for quality that they trust.

It is anticipated that the above discussion will break the stereotypes held about the low-income consumer and that South African companies will view this huge market in a different light by engaging more with them, offering great value and providing quality partnerships.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Schedule

Consumer-Brand Relationship Among Low-Income Consumers

Phenomenological study directed at understanding the relationships low-income consumers form with brands.

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews; the structure is highlighted below but the order is not preset, with the respondent largely influencing what is discussed when.

1. INTRODUCTION (10-20 minutes)

- Interviewer introduction, the respondent has the opportunity to know more about the interviewer; for example, work, background, family and interests.
- The respondent gets the opportunity to tell the interviewer about herself – as much as she chooses to share. The interviewer may ask questions for clarity and to get specific information, being careful to not ask sensitive questions. The interviewer must be interested and warm. During the interview the interviewer should be learning more about the respondent and her context.
- Use this time to establish if the respondent is comfortable with the interview being recorded and if photographs can be taken. Does the respondent have time to sit with the interviewer for approximately two hours?
- The consent form is discussed and confidentiality is assured.
- The interviewer should use this time to establish trust and rapport with the respondent as well as get a sense of who she is and what is important to her.

2. ESTABLISH WHAT A BRAND IS

This is discussed to ensure understanding up-front and to encourage any questions the respondent has about brands.

The interviewer can then give the following explanation of a brand:

A brand is what is done to a product to make it different. It is made different through the use of colours, logos, names, advertising, brand characters (e.g. Popeye), music, etc. Washing powder is the type of product but OMO is the brand. Cars are a type of product but Nissan is the brand.

Note: The interviewer has a good understanding of brands and is able to answer questions the respondent may have.

3. BRAND-CONSUMER EXPLORATION

3.2 Types of brands

The respondent will then be asked to discuss brands that are important to her. This gives the opportunity to establish that the respondent understands what a brand is and gives the researcher information on the types of brands. Examples of further questioning:

- Please show me what brands are important to you?
- What three brands can you not do without?
- What brands do you use every day?
- What brands do neighbours and friends know that you use?
- Please tell me about brands you always buy but that are not very important to you?
- Please tell me about brands you buy that are extremely important to you?

3.3 Brand Relationship Quality

Probing questions will be asked to find out more about the relationship in terms of intimacy, personal commitment, passionate attachment, love, self-concept

connection, nostalgic connection and partner quality. Purpose, reciprocity, mutuality, complexity and intensity of the relationship is explored

- Please tell me more about brand X that you mentioned? *The respondent is encouraged to speak her mind; whatever information is not obtained now will be explored through a series of suggested questions.*
- Why have you chosen to discuss this brand?
- If this brand were a person, how would you describe this person that the brand is?
- When did you first start using this brand and can you remember the moment? If so, describe the moment.
- Do you have this brand in your house or have you bought it before?
- Will you chose brand X again?
- Do your friends and family use this brand?
- How does this brand make you feel?
- What does this brand give to you?
- What upsets you about this brand?
- Tell me what you know about the brand?
- Does the brand know you?
- What do you think of the company that makes this brand?

3.4 Relationship form

Relationship form (how does the consumer perceive the brand?)

Insights from the previous section will inform the relationship form. It is important to look for the following dimensions:

- deliberately chosen vs. imposed
- formal vs. informal
- intense vs. casual
- long-term vs. short-term
- positive vs. negative
- public vs. private

- functional vs. personal

Also look for nostalgia, rituals and image:

- How do you describe yourself?
- Does this brand remind you of anything?

3.5 Relationship stage

- How long have you been using this brand?
- Will you continue to use this brand?
- How does the brand still need to prove itself to you?





The respondent should be encouraged to add anything about the brand they find interesting, boring, fun, trustworthy, etc.

4. CLOSING

- The interviewer will thank the respondent for the time taken to participate in the interview.
- The respondent will be asked if there is anything else she would like the interviewer to know.
- Confidentiality must again be assured.
- The interviewer should establish the possibility of a follow-up interview if necessary.

APPENDIX 2: Brand Images

DESCRIPTION	BRAND	IMAGE
Food	Jungle Oats	 A rectangular box of Jungle Oats. The top half is green with a circular logo featuring a lion's head. The words "Jungle Oats" are written in a stylized, yellow, cursive font. The bottom half is red.
Food	Tastic	 A rectangular box of Tastic. The top is brown with the word "TASTIC" in large, bold, black letters. Below it, there's a circular image of a white, star-shaped object. The bottom is brown with some text.
Food	Hulett's	 A white bag of Hulett's White Sugar. The bag has a red and white striped design. The word "Hulett's" is in red, and "White Sugar" is in blue. It also says "5 kg" at the bottom.
Food	Iwisa	 A green and white bag of Iwisa. The bag has a green top and bottom with a white middle section. The word "IWISA" is in red. There's a green circular logo with a white "1" inside.
Food	Koo	 A cylindrical can of Koo Baked Beans. The top is black with the word "KOO" in yellow. Below it, it says "Baked Beans" in white. The bottom half of the can is filled with orange-brown baked beans.

Food	Maggi	
Food	White Star	
Carbonated beverage	Coke	
Carbonated beverage	Sprite	
Maas	Inkomazi	

Camphor Cream	Ingram's	
Baby care	Johnson's Baby	
Body cream	Dawn	
Skin cream	Pond's	
Anti-bacterial soap	Protex	

Washing powder	OMO	
Stain remover	Vanish	
Washing powder	Surf	
Washing powder	Sunlight	
Household detergent	Handy Andy	

Source: Pick 'n Pay online shopping website