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Respect as a factor influencing the value proposition for low income consumers

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the interaction between respect or disrespect and the customer value proposition, including identifying experiences of respect or disrespect, within the context of low income consumers. The study was conducted by means of exploratory research, applying the critical incident technique, whereby a positive and a negative experience in the marketplace was analysed for each low income participant.

The study showed that low income consumers value respect in the marketplace, and are typically prepared to pay a premium for respectful treatment. As regards disrespectful treatment, the study showed that low income consumers have a strong tendency to complain when faced with disrespect, and if this is not remedied, the low income consumer is extremely likely to not purchase from the relevant supplier then or in the future, regardless of price or convenience. This study also highlighted various actions or behaviour categories that low income consumers consider respectful or disrespectful within the marketplace.

KEYWORDS

Respect

Disrespect

Value proposition

Low-income consumer

Bottom of pyramid

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.

E P Williams

Date

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My friend, Ronel van Wyk, said that “MBA” stands for “Ma Baie Afwesig”. To my three beautiful children, I am blessed to have you, and I truly hope that the completion of my MBA will bring about a new era in our lives, where you no longer have to suffer my absence in the way you have in the past.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Blocker, Ruth, Sridharan, Beckwith, Ekici, Goudie-Hutton, Rosa, Saatcioglu, Talukdar, Trujillo & Varman (2012) argue that transformative consumer research is necessary, as a means of using deeper understanding of the poor as consumers to transform their lives and the nature and experiences of institutions interacting with them. Understanding in general is limited, as most consumer research takes place in contexts of affluence or material abundance and that there are gaps in the research in relation to low-income consumers (Martin & Hill, 2012).

A critical area of consumer research, which would similarly apply to low-income consumers, is customer value. Customer value has increasingly become a critical focus area for both business and academia (Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook, 2011; Graf & Maas, 2008; Woodall, 2003), and the customer value proposition is a strategic priority and source of competitive advantage (Graf & Maas, 2008; Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007). There is an understanding that customer value is perceptual (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011; Day & Crask, 2000; Woodall, 2003) and influenced by customer value systems (Day & Crask, 2000), which would include respect. In spite of the common use of the term “value proposition”, there is little published research on this concept (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey & Payne, 2011; Frow & Payne, 2011). Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook (2011) suggest that the focus on value drivers needs to be broadened beyond simply price and quality, and that research should be conducted on other factors affecting value. For all of these reasons, further research relating to the impact of respect on customer value and correspondingly on the value proposition, would accordingly be valuable.

The aim of this research was to identify what low income consumers experience as respect or disrespect in the marketplace, and how these experiences affect their perceived customer value proposition. Since recent literature on customer value focuses on customer experience (Shilpa Iyanna, Bosangit & Mohd-Any, 2012), this approach of assessing the customer's experience was considered most appropriate. Part of this research was to establish to what extent low income consumers judge there to be “value in acquisition”, the acquisition

process being a service process where the majority of opportunities for experiences of disrespect arise (Kumar, 2009), which may impact significantly on the customer value proposition if “value in acquisition” forms part of the total value proposition.

This research would provide greater understanding of low income consumers, including consumers at the bottom of the economic pyramid, which Prahalad & Hammond (2002) and Prahalad (2010) have argued are misunderstood and an unexplored opportunity for increased growth and income. Given that 35.8% of the population in South Africa falls within the bottom of the pyramid and South Africa is a majority low-income market (Chipp, Corder, & Kapelianis, 2009), this was relevant within the South African context.

This research would give managers of businesses a clearer understanding of what actions or behaviours may be perceived by low income consumers to be respectful or disrespectful, and the impact of these on the customer value proposition. Apart from the direct potential financial benefit of improved customer value propositions, there would be the indirect benefit to business of acting in a more ethical manner by treating low income consumers with respect. This would be relevant for business since businesses have various individual stakeholders (directors, employees, customers and shareholders) who may seek to comply with the so-called “golden rule” (Crane & Matten, 2007, p.106) of “treat others as you wanted to be treated yourself”, which is approximated in one of the core tenets of many belief systems including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism (Crane & Matten, 2007, p.106).

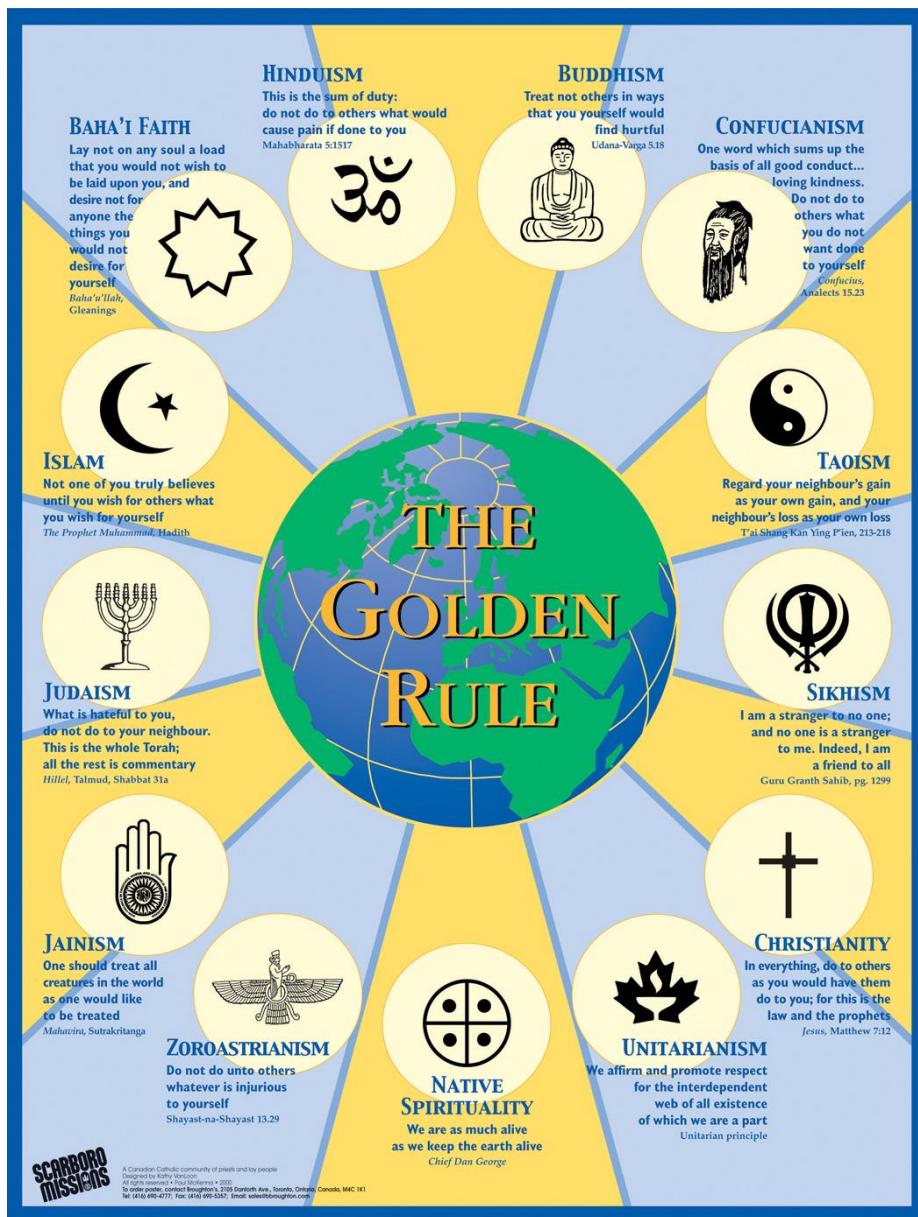


Fig. 1 (Crane & Matten, 2007, p.106, courtesy Scarboro Missions)

In addition, ethical behaviour is important to business because according to Grappi, Romani & Bagozzi (2013), consumers respond to corporate irresponsibility through negative word of mouth and protest, and so businesses need to protect their profitability through maintaining a corporate image encompassing responsibility and ethical behaviour.

Finally, various forms of unfair/unethical dealing may cause or aggravate poverty, such as cigarette distribution which has been estimated by Yuanli Liua, Raob, Huc, Sund, & Maoe (2006) to drive into poverty in China 41.8 million people annually as a result of direct cigarette spending and a further 12.1 million

people annually as a result of smoking related medical spending. Income inequality and objective poverty have each been found to be related to violence (Crutchfield & Wadsworth, 2003; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark & Schafer, 2000), and one theory that suggests that violence may follow from experiences of disrespect (Crutchfield & Wadsworth, 2003, p. 77). Given these links between disrespect (unfair dealing) and poverty, poverty and violence, and disrespect and violence, there were compelling reasons why business leaders within South Africa should be interested in identifying which actions and behaviours are perceived to be disrespectful to low income consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research is necessary to identify the manner in which respect features in the value proposition to low income consumers, and what would be considered respectful or disrespectful from the perspective of a low income consumer, a conclusion which is based on the following key arguments: that the literature on customer value proposition is incomplete, in that economic literature divides value into “value in use” and “value in exchange” (Kowalkowski, 2011; Smith 1776/2012), whereas value also, it is submitted, includes “value in acquisition”. This type of value falls within the more modern perceptual value and experiential value in terms of service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008), and in terms of customer-dominant logic (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013).

In both the original and the contemporaneous approaches to customer value proposition, understanding what the customer values is critical (Frow & Payne, 2011; Kowalkowski, Persson Ridell, Röndell & Sörhammar, 2012). Respect is important to all people and particularly to low income consumers as a result of the experiences of consumer exclusion or relative deprivation (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011). In modern society, status and correspondingly respect is typically obtained through consumption (Oxoby, 2004). Respect is a key driver in the consumption process, particularly of high-status goods (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Oxoby, 2004; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). It appears from the tendency to retaliate against extensive disrespect regardless of other factors such as prospects of success or financial harm (Miller, 2001), that respect has a “price tag” in the customer value proposition. Whereas there have been some studies regarding what consumers perceive as respectful or disrespectful (Barki & Parente, 2010; Friend, Costley & Brown, 2010, Kumar, 2009), these concepts are culturally influenced (Barki & Parente, 2010; Miller, 2001) and there is little literature focussing specifically on disrespect experienced by consumers (Kumar, 2009), therefore this is something that should be studied in the South African low-income consumer context where respect is a key priority (Barki & Parente, 2010).

2.1. Customer value proposition

2.1.1. Value

2.1.1.1. *Goods dominant logic - traditional economic definition*

Smith (1776/2012) defined “value” in terms of either “value in use” or “value in exchange”, and this economic categorisation has continued until the current day (Kowalkowski, 2011). “Value in use” is the usefulness of a good or service, or the utility to be gained from use, whereas “value in exchange” is a market value of the good or service, or what it could be exchanged for in the market (Smith, 1776/2012).

However, it appears that this approach is missing other elements, including specifically the concept of “value in acquisition”. Van Kempen (2003), in a study of deceptive status signalling, referred to the practice of people dressing well, filling their trolleys with expensive items, and then inconspicuously abandoning the trolleys and leaving without purchasing anything. This example indicates that the very act of acquisition can give value or utility, unrelated to the value or utility of use of the underlying goods or services, which value in this case was, according to Van Kempen (2003), status signalling.

2.1.1.2. *Service-dominant logic – perceptual value*

Vargo & Lusch (2004) likewise recognised the shortcoming of the view that value is embedded in goods, and proposed that a new service-dominant logic approach should be applied to all market offerings. The service-dominant logic explains that the value is as perceived by the customer, and dependent on the manner in which the customer utilises the offering (and in that sense the value is created by the customer) (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008). Where the offering includes tangible goods, the goods may have the potential for usefulness, however the value is broader and is service (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), “service” meaning “a process of doing something for someone” rather than an output (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 282).

Adopting this service-dominant logic, the acquisition process is part of the overall “service” or market offering, and since value relates to all components of the market offering, respect or disrespect in the acquisition process potentially affects value. Similarly, it is not the “objective” situation, but rather the customer’s perception of respect or disrespect, which would affect the perceived value.

Ballantyne et al. (2011) support the views of Vargo & Lusch (2004) as regards the shortcomings in the traditional “value in use” approach in terms of goods-dominant logic. According to Ballantyne et al. (2011), value creation should take place in a broader cycle of communication within the buyer-seller relationship over time, in terms of service-dominant logic. Ballantyne et al. (2011, p. 205) highlight other value, “value of knowledge gained prior to sale”, which is distinct from “value in use”, and would appear to form part of the category of “value in acquisition” which is posited in this document.

2.1.1.3. *Service-dominant logic – experiential value*

A further development in the perspective of value, contrasted with the traditional economic model of “value in use” versus “value in exchange”, is that value is experiential (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This approach focuses on the consumer experience, rather than the purchase decision (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), and the entire experience of the customer is relevant, including pre-purchase activity, purchase activity, consumption and memory of the experience (Carù & Cova, 2003). In terms of this approach, there would be a “value in acquisition”, and experiences of respect or disrespect in this or any of the other key stages of the customer experience would affect the perception of value.

Emotions feature in two key components of Holbrook & Hirschman’s (1982) model of consumer behaviour. Firstly, rather than attitudes and preferences, in terms of the experiential approach emotions and feelings may drive the behaviour of customers (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

Applying this model, therefore, the emotions and feelings associated with any experience of respect or disrespect would weigh heavily in the behaviour and perception of the customer (as opposed to a rational and cognitive assessment of features or attributes of the goods or services concerned). Secondly, the customer's objective or sought consequences may not be functional; instead his or her objective may be wholly or partially emotional, such as the desire for fun, enjoyment or pleasure (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Sarkar, 2011). Given the posited specific need of low-income consumers for respect (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011), this may be an emotional need that is fulfilled by goods or services in terms of the experiential model. In other words, the perceived value of the positive emotions associated with experiencing respect may influence customer behaviour in search of this value; and any emotions and feelings associated with incidents of perceived respect or disrespect (which may not have been sought out) would influence value judgments and future behaviour in relation to the relevant goods or services.

The experiential approach recognises that the acquisition process itself has value based on experiences such as socialisation and enjoyment of the process, unrelated to the desire for the products themselves (Carù & Cova, 2003; Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007), in which case the emotional consequences of experiences of respect or disrespect would affect the value of the acquisition process.

2.1.1.4. *Customer-dominant logic – experiential value*

Various authors (for example Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013) have argued that both goods-dominant logic and service-dominant logic are producer dominated, and that these should be contrasted with a new customer-dominant logic. However, it is submitted that several of the underlying assumptions and arguments of the customer-dominant logic are similar to those of the service-dominant approach, and this could be seen as a rational extension of the current literature on the service-dominant approach incorporating experiential value. In any event, the

customer-dominant logic approach sees value as being experiential and multi-layered, including social and psychological factors (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013), which would support the argument that experiences of respect or disrespect in the overall customer experience would impact on “value-in-experience”.

2.1.2. Customer value

There is little consensus in either the definition of customer value, or its measurement (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011; Day & Crask, 2000; Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook, 2011; Graf & Maas, 2008; Woodall, 2003), which indicates that this is an appropriate area for research.

As indicated above, the value for a customer is based on the customer's own perceptions (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011; Day & Crask, 2000; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Woodall, 2003). A customer's value system, or values, will influence the perceptions of the customer of the value of an item (Day & Crask, 2000), and accordingly the existence of a core value such as respect or Ubuntu is likely to affect the customer value of goods or services.

Customer perceptions of value extend beyond subjective perceptions of benefits, to include subjective perceptions of cost (Barki & Parente, 2010; Day & Crask, 2000). On this basis, it may be anticipated that even the purchasing actions of rational low-income consumers seeking purely the lowest cost products and services may be influenced by their value system (including priority of respect) towards purchasing different goods or services that may not objectively have the lowest cost (Barki & Parente, 2010).

Klanac (2013) recognises that customers are not necessarily rational in their behaviour, in highlighting the assumption of rationality in the means-end approach to customer value research. The means-end approach considers three conceptual levels to customer value, being the characteristics or attributes of the offering, the consequences of these characteristics or attributes, and link between these consequences and the desired end state (Klanac, 2013). Even Ajzen (2011), well known for his

“theory of planned behaviour” (Ajzen, 1985) accepted that attitudes, norms and perceived control, which form the basis of intentions and behaviours in terms of the theory of planned behaviour, are not necessarily formed rationally or in an unbiased manner, and may not reflect reality. In other words, Ajzen (1985, 2011) argues that behaviour is reasoned or planned, but this is significantly affected by emotions and biases.

Acting rationally, as indicated above, a customer could rationally pursue the desired end state of emotional, psychological or social satisfaction by seeking respect (in acquisition or in use); or a customer could rationally pursue the desired end state of least cost but owing to misperception could perceive respectful retailers as having the lowest cost goods (Barki & Parente, 2010). However, since customers do not necessarily act rationally, the subjective perception of customer value is accordingly not necessarily linked to characteristics/attributes, consequences or a desired end state (Klanac, 2013), and customers may also seek market offerings owing to experiences of respect, unrelated to a rational pursuit of low cost items, even if pursuit of low cost items is alleged to be the customer’s objective.

In summary, various authors have argued for different numbers of domains for value, from two domains of value (for example value-in-use and value-in-exchange, alternatively hedonic value and utilitarian value) to eight domains of value (excellence, efficiency, status, esteem, play, aesthetics, ethics, and spirituality) (Gallarza et al., 2011); however, most of these attempts to develop comprehensive frameworks of customer value have recognised the emotional, psychological or social aspects to value (Gallarza et al., 2011), which would relate to value derived from self-respect or respect from others, accordingly respect arguably comprises a driver in all of these value systems.

2.1.3. Value proposition

Ballantyne et al. (2011) trace the origin of the concept “value proposition” to a McKinsey & Co project in the 1980s, and an initial view in early literature

that the value proposition was essentially a supplier driven price versus performance concept, in terms of which the value was typically embedded in a product, in line with goods-dominant logic.

This concept evolved in time, to cover firm-wide strategies, stakeholders other than customers, and more recently co-creation and reciprocity, although the primary focus on “value in use” remains (Ballantyne et al., 2011). In current literature, it is acknowledged that enterprises do not “deliver” value, rather enterprises can offer value propositions (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Customer value propositions are no longer unidirectional, but rather reciprocal (Ballantyne et al., 2011).

Even in its original, supplier-driven form (Ballantyne et al., 2011), it was necessary to understand what aspects the customer would value, since a customer does not seek to purchase a good as an end in itself but rather to obtain the specific benefits or characteristics of the relevant good (Lancaster, 1966). In the more recent approaches of co-creation and reciprocity (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Frow & Payne, 2011; Kowalkowski et al., 2012), the value proposition is created through communication with stakeholders, understanding the values of stakeholders, and the negotiation and creation of the final value proposition in terms of reciprocal agreements (Frow & Payne, 2011; Kowalkowski et al., 2012). This approach therefore inherently requires a fundamental understanding of what the customer values, as part of the co-creation and reciprocal negotiation process. Accordingly, theory on customer value propositions supports the need for research on the extent to which respect is a characteristic or benefit which consumers value, and which may form part of the customer value proposition.

Within the customer value proposition, economic and functional value propositions are more likely to be points of parity amongst competitors, whereas emotional and symbolic value is more likely to give opportunities for organisations to demonstrate points of difference (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007). It would therefore appear that the key “competitive edge” can be derived through providing customers with positive emotional

and symbolic experiences (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007), which would include experiences of respect or the acquisition of goods that symbolise success or status, which according to Schembri, Merrilees & Kristiansen (2010), customers would use to construct and communicate their sense of self.

2.2. Respect and why it is of high importance to low income consumers

2.2.1. The concept of respect for persons

The German philosopher Kant is arguably the "father" of the philosophical concept of respect for persons. Kant's most famous statement (1785/1964, p.96) in relation to respect for persons is: "*Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end*".

In relation to Kant, Atwell (2010) commented that nearly all modern proponents of "respect for person" purport to rely on Kant's philosophies, Hendrick, Hendrick & Logue (2010) refer to the revolution in thinking about ethics that Kant initiated, and the massive literature over the following two centuries attempting to interpret and delimit the above famous statement of Kant on respect for persons. This demonstrates that these ethical principles founded by Kant, remain relevant to this day.

Within an African context, respect falls within in the concept "*Ubuntu*", which concept Letseka (2012, p. 48) explains as "a human being is a human being because of other human beings", encompassing social interdependence, deep rootedness in community, compassion, respect and human dignity. While *Ubuntu* is a "comprehensive ancient African worldview" (Letseka, 2012,p. 48), it remains debated and discussed (Grange, 2012; Letseka, 2012; Metz & Gaie, 2010), as a moral and philosophical framework, which demonstrates its continued relevance.

2.2.2. Specific need for respect: vulnerability of low income consumers

Notwithstanding the resourcefulness of low income consumers (Hamilton, 2009; Nolan & Whelan, 2010; Ridge, 2011), low income consumers are both cognitively and socially vulnerable to marketers (Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Karnani, 2009). Typically low income consumers have limited education and may be illiterate which impacts on the ability to properly understand and critically evaluate marketing messages, and poverty creates emotional need for belonging which may result in exploitation where marketing messages target this need for belonging (Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Karnani, 2009). Accordingly the normal requirement for respect, including contractual respect which relates to fair dealing, becomes even more important. Similarly, Harrison & Gray (2010) argue that vulnerable consumers may make decisions that are contrary to their own best interests, as a result of effective marketing by scrupulous corporations, which demonstrates the increased need for contractual respect in these circumstances. Similarly, Cui & Choudhury (2003) highlight the ethical issues concerning marketing to vulnerable consumers, and develop a three dimensional model for ethical marketing based on the nature of the product, consumer characteristics (including vulnerability), and market selection, to facilitate ethical marketing practices or contractual respect.

2.2.3. Specific need for respect: social exclusion of low income consumers

2.2.3.1. Demonstrated through treatment of others

The importance of respect to low-income consumers can be seen in their treatment of others. Saunders (2010), in a study of disposition actions of low-income consumers in South Africa, found that they would typically destroy items that they themselves no longer found useable (broken, too old, and so on), rather than give or throw these away. One of the two key reasons for this was that it was considered demeaning to allow the option of another person to use something (either because it is given to them or because they find it in the rubbish), that was not good enough for oneself (Saunders, 2010). This reflects the importance of respect to

low income consumers, and perhaps the more broad concept of *Ubuntu*, which is such that they will go to extra effort to destroy items that are "not good enough", to prevent even indirect disrespectful treatment of another.

2.2.3.2. *Need for respect as a result of consumer exclusion / relative deprivation*

Wang (2011) explains modern society to be one of consumer culture, where consumption is part of the "way of life", and an expression of self. In such a consumer culture, where consumption has social meaning, exclusion from consuming in the "normal" societal manner, for example as a result of low income, would comprise social exclusion. In this context, and adapting the definition from the definitions of Haron (2013) and Wright & Stickley (2013) of "social exclusion" and the definition of Arnould & Thompson (2005) of "consumer culture", one could define "consumer exclusion" as ***an inability to participate in the normal consumption practices of society that provide experience, action and meaning in life within one's social context***. Similarly, Hamilton (2009) identifies consumer exclusion as a construct with three perspectives, namely material deprivation, social deprivation, and stigmatisation, and Ward (2009) argues that social exclusion is associated with non-recognition and disrespect.

Based on the modern social context of consumerism, the concept of "relative deprivation" may frequently overlap with "consumer exclusion". Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin & Bialosiewicz (2012) argue that relative deprivation has three components: 1) a comparison made by an individual, 2) a cognitive appraisal that the individual or group is at a disadvantage, and 3) perceived unfairness or inequity of the appraised disadvantage.

Various recent studies (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Hamilton, 2009; and Ridge, 2011 in the context of children) found that low income consumers subjectively experience consumer exclusion, with associated reduced

status or respect. Based on Wang's (2011) explanation of the role of consumption in modern consumer society as a manner of displaying or raising status, it follows that an inability to consume in accordance with societal norms results in a lack of experienced status or respect.

In a study of affluent black South Africans, Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi (2011) highlighted the link between relative deprivation in emerging markets and conspicuous consumption, and found that the research participants had experienced relative deprivation which initiated increased consumption, even after the relative deprivation had objectively ceased. In this regard, it appears that the earlier experience of relative deprivation may be linked to increased drive to meet social needs through consumption, and shifting perceptions of the normative group, so that there is an ongoing need to "catch up" and "keep up" (Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011).

Various research, for example Sawady & Tescher (2008), has highlighted that respect is of prime importance to low income consumers. Sawady & Tescher (2008) found that, in the financial services sector, tactics that dealt with emotional needs, and specifically respect and belonging, were rated by low income consumers as more important than tactics that dealt with practical needs, which demonstrates the primary importance of respect to low income consumers.

From both the consumer exclusion literature and relative deprivation literature, therefore, it appears that denial of respect and status is experienced by low-income consumers, which influences the consumption behaviours of low-income consumers to meet these unmet respect/esteem needs. This suggests that experiences of respect or disrespect may feature more strongly in the value proposition for low income consumers than would ordinarily be the case.

Apart from theoretical bases that explain why low income consumers value respect highly, various empirical studies (Barki & Parente, 2010; Thupae, 2010) demonstrate similar findings. Barki and Parente (2010) found that maintenance of self-respect and treatment with dignity are

critical to low-income consumers, as a result of the lower self-esteem and dignity experience of the normal low-income consumer. Thupae (2010), in assessing negative brand experiences, found that low-income consumers value being treated with respect, and will easily judge a brand negatively if the brand is associated with disrespectful treatment. These findings likewise imply that respectful treatment may feature strongly in the value proposition in relation to goods or services, as opposed to the value proposition being limited to or dominated by lower prices and functional value of the good or service.

2.2.4. Respect for low-income consumers

Garcia (2012) argues that Kant's writings identify three different categories of respect for persons, namely: 1) respect as "esteem", which differs from person to person, based on that person's "unequal comparative value"; 2) respect as "political respect" or contractualism, where a person should engage in fair and honest dealings with other people, based on the "equal comparative value" of persons; and 3) respect as "moral respect", which relates to attitudes and feelings, not only behaviour, recognising a person's dignity and value superior to animals and things, as an end in itself.

Applying these categories to low-income consumers, it is clear that low-income consumers deserve "moral respect", as a basic right of all human beings, as well as "political respect" or contractual respect, which right to fair and honest dealings, according to Garcia (2012), extends to all persons equally. Respect (moral respect) has been operationalised for low-income consumers as "caring" (Sawady & Tescher, 2008).

Whereas many low-income consumers likewise deserve the third type of respect identified by Garcia (2012), namely respect as esteem, based on their resourcefulness giving them further "unequal comparative worth", this is not necessarily an aspect that would feature in marketplace interactions.

In this regard, low-income consumers are resourceful and in many instances able to employ coping strategies in relation to consumer exclusion (Hamilton, 2009; Ridge, 2011). Similarly, Nolan & Whelan (2010)

note, in highlighting the limitations of income based indicators of poverty, that higher income participants were more likely to report difficulty in making ends meet than lower income participants (above the income poverty threshold), which supports the view that low-income consumers are resourceful and are in many instances able to employ coping mechanisms.

However, Martin & Hill (2012) comment that, notwithstanding recognition by various scholars that low-income consumers are a viable market segment, this has not “*advanced their humanity*”, which appears to be a reference to Kantian “moral respect” for all humans and the failure of businesses to demonstrate respect for low-income consumers in their dealings with them.

2.2.5. Respect through consumption

Status provides for self-esteem and a sense of power (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010). In modern society, status is typically achieved through consumption (although status orientation may change based on cognitive dissonance experienced by people unable to achieve sufficient status through consumption) (Oxoby, 2004). The consumption process and respect are accordingly interrelated.

Conspicuous consumption, which according to O'Cass & McEwan (2004) is overt consumption to communicate status and improve image, has been identified as taking place amongst both higher income and lower income consumers (for example Ordabayeva & Chandon, 2011), although this occurs disproportionately amongst low income consumers (Pettit & Sivanathan, 2011). A closely related concept is *deceptive status signalling*, in terms of which the person does not actually consume the relevant products, but appears to do so (Van Kempen, 2003). This public consumption or purported consumption is only one aspect of obtaining respect through the consumption process, however, since consumption can also take place in private. *Status consumption*, which according to O'Cass & McEwan (2004) means valuing status and acquiring and consuming products to build status or esteem, is a broad concept that includes

ownership or consumption of products in private to build esteem (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). The private aspect implies that this may relate to self-respect or self-esteem. Jiang & Cova (2012) had similar findings, in terms of which the purchase of counterfeit luxury goods in China operated either on a (public) social level, relating to status from others, or on a (private) personal level, relating to own enjoyment and self esteem.

People consume material goods, particularly brands, to construct and communicate their sense of self (Schembri, Merrilees & Kristiansen, 2010). Higher status goods, particularly, are used to soothe past, or to buffer against future, psychological suffering or threats to the sense of self, with low income consumers spending a disproportionate percentage of income on high status goods because of low self-esteem (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010).

Many of the costs of not achieving status are internal psychological costs, for example feelings of jealousy, disappointment, and inadequacy (Oxoby, 2004), which may impact on a person's self-respect. There are also external social costs, such as social criticism, exclusion and peer pressure, although these have been found to have less impact than the internal psychological costs (Oxoby, 2004). Min, Overby, & Im (2012) appear to reach similar conclusions concerning the relative importance of self-respect versus respect from others. Min, Overby, & Im (2012) recently studied the relationship between *inter alia* purchase consequences (psychological consequences such as self-esteem or self-respect, social consequences such as status, and functional consequences) and purchase frequency. The most surprising finding was the "apparent insignificance of desired social consequences upon purchase frequency", whereas the authors had anticipated that consumers who sought social status would purchase frequently to keep up with fashions or trends (Min, Overby, & Im, 2012, p. 430). In this particular study, therefore, it appears that the need for self-respect featured more strongly than the need for social status.

In conclusion, therefore, where respect is a key driver in the consumption process, particularly of high-status goods (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004;

Oxoby, 2004; Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), one can anticipate that respect or disrespect experienced during the acquisition process would feature strongly in the customer's perception of value. This is particularly the case given that self-respect and protection against threats to the sense of self features more strongly than respect from others (Min, Overby, & Im, 2012; Oxoby, 2004).

Viewed differently, if it is not possible for low income consumers to obtain sufficient respect through the purchase of high-status goods, owing to inadequate financial capacity to consume to a satisfying level of self-respect, it may be that respect afforded to the consumer during the acquisition process could achieve the self esteem enhancement and protection objective (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), adding value to the customer.

2.2.6. Respect and its alignment with services literature

Schneider & Bowen (1999) argue that, whereas the more traditional customer satisfaction model is based on the difference between expectations and reality, in terms of which significantly exceeding expectations may result in customer delight, this does not appear to explain the realities in terms of which most customers range from moderately dissatisfied to moderately satisfied and so are in effect close to ambivalent, that exceeding expectations quickly results in adaptation of expectations so that customer delight cannot be achieved, and that a met/unmet expectations model is typically not emotionally charged enough to explain either customer delight or customer outrage. Schneider & Bowen (1999) therefore propose an alternative model, being a needs-based model, based on the three basic customer needs of security, justice and self esteem. This model is based on two key premises: that customers are human beings first and consumers only second, and that meeting core needs takes priority over meeting customer expectations (Schneider & Bowen, 1999).

Respect has clear overlaps with these three basic customer needs identified by Schneider & Bowen (1999). Firstly, Miller (2001) describes

disrespect as being the denial of entitlements or any other “unjust” actions or behaviours. Esteem is commonly considered a synonym for status or respect, and one of the three categories of Kantian respect identified by Garcia (2012) is respect as “esteem”. The denial of security would typically be considered unjust or disrespectful.

Arnold, Reynolds, Ponder & Lueg (2005) submit that customer satisfaction is inadequate to maintain customer loyalty and profitability, and that what is needed is customer delight.

Schneider & Bowen (1999) propose that customer outrage is as a result of not meeting (or violating) the need for security and justice, and that customer delight is as a result of meeting the need for esteem. To the extent that these concepts overlap with disrespect and respect, therefore, the services literature on customer outrage and delight appears to support that disrespectful treatment will result in customer outrage and loss of custom, whereas respectful treatment of customers that relates to esteem would result in customer delight and associated loyalty.

2.3. Disrespect

2.3.1. What is disrespect broadly?

Miller (2001) describes disrespect in terms of a denial of entitlements, including denial of the right to be heard, lack of interpersonal sensitivity, impoliteness, breach of agreement, breach of trust, failure to explain any actions that have an impact on another person, or any other action considered “unjust”. These aspects can be broadly categorised into two categories: entitlement to polite and respectful treatment, and accountability (Miller, 2001).

One of the specific areas considered unjust or disrespectful, is discrimination between ethnic groups (Juul, 2012). This is an aspect that may prove relevant in the South African context, given the historical background (Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011) of racial discrimination and financial deprivation of black people.

2.3.2. What consumers experience as respectful and disrespectful treatment in the marketplace

Specific actions or conditions that have been identified as conveying respect include: high interpersonal interaction or personal approach, high service levels (as opposed to low service level or self-service requirement), equal treatment of all customers, and acknowledging all customers who enter the business premises (Barki & Parente, 2010 - Brazil; Friend, Costley & Brown, 2010 – New Zealand). In another study of specific disrespectful incidents, Kumar (2009) categorised the incidents into six broad categories, namely general rudeness, negative expressions, unwillingness to help, actions of superiority, perceptions of inequality, and uncaring behaviour.

However, views of respect or disrespect (injustice) would be influenced by context or cultural background, and so cannot simply be applied cross-culturally (Barki & Parente, 2010; Miller, 2001). In addition, there is very little literature focussing specifically on disrespect experienced by consumers (Kumar, 2009). Accordingly, there is a gap in the literature as regards experiences of disrespect by low income consumers in South Africa.

With little published research on the customer value proposition (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey & Payne, 2011; Frow & Payne, 2011), the interaction between respect, disrespect and the customer value proposition is an area that remains unexplored. In this regard, Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook (2011) argue that research should be conducted on factors affecting value, other than merely price and quality.

2.3.3. Responses to disrespect

The customer value proposition is the offer or promise of value that is made to the customer, in exchange for which the customer is prepared to expend the purchase price, effort, and risk (Hassan, 2012). Accordingly, although low-income consumers may “value” respect, in that they perceive respect as important (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae,

2010; Wang, 2011), what is being investigated here is respect as factor in the customer value proposition, that is the influence on either the purchase decision or the purchase price which the consumer is willing to pay. This can be contrasted with deceptive signalling (Van Kempen, 2003), where no purchase needs to be made. It is this specific link between valuing respect in concept, which has been established by the literature, and “putting a price tag on respect” in practice, which this research aims to test, and accordingly the consumer’s response is important to study.

Miller (2001) highlights various factors which determine the nature and extent of the likely response to disrespect. Retaliation acts typically have the goal of education of the offender or restoration of respect or status, and the nature of retaliation acts would typically include voluntary withdrawal, involuntary withdrawal, and attack (protest, theft, sabotage, violence, badmouthing, and litigation) (Miller, 2001). Kumar (2009) found that frequent responses to perceived disrespect were avoidance, switching behaviour, and negative word of mouth, followed by complaint (which typically allows for an opportunity for correction), taking no action and dealing with a different salesperson. Because the perceived extent of disrespect has been found to be a better predictor of an aggrieved person pursuing a legal claim, than other factors such as the degree of physical or financial harm, the likelihood of success or whether procedures were put in place to address the problem in the future (Miller, 2001), it appears that consumers do place a “price tag” on respect, even in conflict with objective indicators of financial harm. This supports the view that low income consumers may factor respect in to the customer value proposition.

One of the conclusions of Kumar’s (2009) research was, however, that respect and disrespect in the marketplace should be studied further, which this study aims to do.

2.4. The bottom of the pyramid concept

The “bottom of pyramid” (BOP) concept was first introduced by Prahalad and his colleagues in 1998 to 1999 in the form of working papers (subsequently

published as Prahalad & Hammond, 2002 and Hart & Prahalad, 2002), which focussed on the joint goals of business profitability and reducing poverty amongst BOP consumers.

Martin & Hill (2012) express surprise that BOP research has focussed on supply side challenges of supplying to low income individuals and has done little to advance the knowledge on consumption and well-being of BOP consumers. The supply side challenge in relation to the BOP frequently deals with appropriate price points, however this does not necessarily factor in the use by BOP consumers of trusted brands to minimise risk (Broyles, Schumann & Leingpibul, 2009; Prahalad, 2010). Risk in this context is uncertainty of the outcome of the purchase decision (Broyles, Schumann & Leingpibul, 2009), which arguably includes any respect or disrespect experienced during the acquisition process. Kolk, Rivera-Santos & Rufín (2013) reviewed a decade of journal articles in relation to the development of the BOP concept, and find that, in relation to the role of the poor, some BOP literature argues that the poor should have a variety of roles, including consumer, producer, employee, and co-creator, whereas the vast majority of the BOP literature views the poor primarily as consumers, in spite of the “BOP 2 protocol” (refer Prahalad, 2010). This implies exclusion of the poor from the value-creation process, and demonstrates a lack of respect. Various authors argue that there is a conflict between the two BOP goals of profitability and social welfare (Mitchelson, 2011; Varman, Skålén & Belk, 2012), which may be a factor in enterprises choosing to pursue profits in a manner which threatens social welfare (Karnani, 2009; Varman, Skålén & Belk, 2012) and demonstrates disrespect to low-income consumers. Karnani (2009) considers the views of the BOP concept as romanticising the poor, and argues that the “respect” shown by Prahalad (2010) in the form of treating low-income consumers as value-conscious consumers is, in fact, not supported by empirical evidence and harmful to these same consumers that Prahalad seeks to help.

Whereas this research will take place largely across the BOP, as introduced in the BOP literature, the BOP concept adds little to the research, owing to the fact that it appears that the BOP concept is largely aspirational (Karnani,

2009), with respect a theoretical component that is not frequently reflected in the commercial or practical (Varman, Skålén & Belk, 2012) realities.

2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, the literature review has demonstrated a specific need of low-income consumers for respect (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011), and the existence of occurrences of disrespect (including unfair dealing) particularly during the process of acquisition (Kumar, 2009). The economic literature on customer value divides value into “value in use” and “value in exchange” (Kowalkowski, 2011; Smith 1776/2012), whereas based on inferences from certain authors’ work (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Van Kempen, 2003) and from the service dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008) and customer dominant logic approach (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013), it appears that this concept should be extended to include “value in acquisition”. Retaliation against disrespect (Miller, 2001; Kumar, 2009) may involve a financial aspect, which demonstrates a “price tag” may be attached to respect in the customer value proposition. Whereas low income consumers may not be able to fully follow the typical approach of gaining status and correspondingly respect through consumption (Oxoby, 2004), similar effects of soothing past and protecting against future psychological suffering or threats to the sense of self (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010) may potentially be achieved through other means (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), perhaps experiences of respect during the acquisition process. From these aspects, it is apparent that there is a need to investigate whether respect features in the value proposition for low income consumers, since there are indications in the literature of the importance thereof but not the “financial value” or willingness to pay a price for respect displayed to the consumer in the consumption experience.

Furthermore, the literature review has demonstrated that, while some studies have given indications of what consumers perceive as respectful or disrespectful in service interactions or in the marketplace (Barki & Parente, 2010; Friend, Costley & Brown, 2010, Kumar, 2009), these concepts are culturally influenced (Barki & Parente, 2010; Miller, 2001). There is therefore

a need to research, in the South African low-income consumer context, what consumers experience as respect or disrespect in the marketplace, and the interaction of experiences of respect or disrespect with the broader concept of the customer value proposition, particularly since the key “competitive edge” in relation to the customer value proposition appears to be providing customers with positive emotional and symbolic experiences (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007).

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this research was to explore the interaction between respect or disrespect and the customer value proposition, including identifying experiences of respect or disrespect, within the context of low income consumers. To do so, the following research questions were developed:

3.1. Research question 1:

Does respect form part of what is valued in the marketplace? How does respectful or disrespectful behaviour, actions or incidents impact on the customer value proposition and preparedness of a customer to buy, if at all?

Subquestions:

Question 1a) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of the purchasing decision in relation to the relevant good/service

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer more likely to purchase the good or service, and/or an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer less likely to purchase the good or service?

Question 1b) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of the supplier at which the relevant good/service will be purchased

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer more likely to purchase the good or service at the relevant supplier who demonstrates respect and/or an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer less likely to purchase the good or service at the relevant supplier who demonstrates disrespect?

Question 1c) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of potential financial purchase price

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer prepared to pay more (financially) for the good or

service and/or an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer only prepared to purchase at a lower (financial) price for the good or service?

Question 1d) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of potential non-financial purchase price

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer prepared to endure inconvenience (eg. travel further) for the good or service and/or an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer only prepared to purchase at a lower inconvenience level for the good or service?

3.2. Research question 2:

What actions, behaviours or incidents do low income consumers within South Africa experience as demonstrating respect, or disrespect, in the marketplace?

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed to explore the behaviours that low income consumers experienced as respectful or disrespectful, and how these positive or negative experiences impacted on the value proposition, including the purchase decision and purchase price (financial and non-financial) that low income consumers would be willing to pay. This chapter identifies and substantiates the methodology used in the research study, and sets out key limitations of the research.

4.2. Research design

4.2.1. Qualitative

Qualitative studies are appropriate for three key purposes: to explore, explain or describe (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). This study sought to explore the connection between respectful and disrespectful actions, behaviours or incidents in the marketplace, on the one hand, and the decision to purchase and purchase price (financial and non-financial) on the other hand; and to identify experiences of respectful or disrespectful treatment, within the context of low income consumers. Accordingly, a qualitative study was appropriate.

Qualitative studies start with intellectual curiosity or even passion for a topic, and give rise to a process of exploration and discovery (Agee, 2009). Because this study aimed to explore the impact of respectful and disrespectful behaviours on the customer's own perception of value, and so involved a process of exploration and discovery, a qualitative study was appropriate. In addition, qualitative studies enquire regarding the experiences of events or conditions, generally from the perspective of the individual/s or group/s concerned, and involving a rich understanding of the experiences within the specific context (Agee, 2009). This study sought to identify key experiences of respect or disrespect as subjectively experienced within the low income consumer context, and how these

influenced the specific individuals' purchasing behaviours and future purchasing intentions, making qualitative research most appropriate.

4.2.2. Exploratory

Saunders & Lewis (2012) distinguishes among the three key research methods, as follows:

- Exploratory studies - research into new phenomena, or where the research problem is uncertain and requires exploration.
- Descriptive studies - research to accurately describe the characteristics of the relevant phenomenon. This tends to answer the question "what?".
- Explanatory studies (causal research) - research to identify cause and effect relationships between variables. This tends to answer the question "why?".

Similarly, Marshall & Rossman (2010, p. 33) identify exploratory research as most appropriate "*to investigate little-understood phenomena, to identify or discover important categories of meaning, to generate hypotheses for further research*".

In this case, the concept of disrespect in the marketplace, and how this impacts on the customer value proposition, was a relatively new phenomenon, with little existing theory, and accordingly it appeared that exploratory research was appropriate.

Whereas the research questions could have been answered by means of a descriptive study, a descriptive study relies upon the pre-conceptions, understanding and framework identified for the descriptive study, from existing literature, which existing literature it is submitted based on the literature review above, was not sufficiently developed to justify a descriptive study. In this respect, the literature discussed above demonstrates that, both as regards the consumer behaviour aspects (for example Martin & Hill, 2012) and as regards experiences of respect and

disrespect (for example Kumar, 2009), this area has attracted minimal attention.

According to Gallarza, Gil-Saura & Holbrook (2011), the methodology for exploration of consumption experiences should include introspective accounts, and accordingly interviews in terms of which research participants provide detailed narratives of the relevant experiences were considered most appropriate. Furthermore, an exploratory study using the critical incident technique during semi-structured depth interviews as is detailed below, gave the participants a voice in defining their reality, which added to the richness of the data, which thick, rich descriptions, according to Creswell & Miller (2000), provide an opportunity to establish credibility in research studies.

4.2.3. Critical incident technique

Flanagan (1954) described the critical incident technique as a flexible approach, which should be adapted as necessary, to gather important facts about direct observations or incidents, in order to solve problems or develop theory. In this case, the purpose was to develop theory concerning respect as a factor in the customer value proposition, based on information from incidents of respect or disrespect and the consumer's responses, feelings and actions following these incidents, which made the critical incident technique an appropriate method to use.

There are various benefits to the critical incident technique, including: it allows participants to use their own words, which gives rich data that is less influenced by the tester's own framework or views; it is a flexible, inductive approach that allows development of new concepts and theories; it generates accurate and in-depth information; it provides clear, practical and relevant information useful to managers in business; and it is a culturally neutral method (Gremler, 2004). For all of these reasons, it was an appropriate method for the current research, where the participants come from a different background and culture to the researcher, and where new concepts or theories were anticipated.

4.2.4. Generating primary data

The research was original research with participants, generating primary data, since there was no available secondary data on which to base the research.

4.2.5. Data collection

Saunders & Lewis (2012) submit that semi-structured interviews are appropriate where *inter alia* questions are complicated, the researcher is uncertain of the answers that will be given, and there are certain key topics and questions to be covered which may need to be explored further. The critical incident technique requires in-depth and detailed discussions about the relevant incidents. For these reasons, this research was qualitative, conducted by means of semi-structured interviews.

Whereas the critical incident technique can be implemented using a variety of different methods, for example interviews, group interviews, questionnaires and record forms (Flanagan, 1954), the benefits of rich data sources that are not informed by the tester's preconceptions, framework or understanding (Gremler, 2004), would not be obtained through questionnaires; the researcher was unaware of appropriate record forms; and group interviews may have discouraged honesty because of the sensitive nature of talking about having been treated with disrespect. Accordingly, individual interviews were considered most appropriate.

These were face-to-face interviews, which the researcher considered more appropriate for low-income participants and given the exploratory nature of the research. This was also selected to minimise non-response and question bias. A co-interviewer/translater fluent in relevant African languages was used, to address the credibility issues that potentially arise from language barriers and mistranslations.

An appropriate pre-test using the list of key questions was done to pre-screen for any problems.

The interview guide that was used as the basis of the semi-structured interviews is attached as Annexe B.

4.3. Population and sampling

4.3.1. Population

Chipp, Corder, & Kapelianis (2009) did empirical research on the BOP within South Africa, and found that the size of the bottom of the pyramid was 35.8% with an average daily personal income of \$6.25, and that the core of the pyramid represented 33.7% with an average daily personal income of \$12.58. It was these two categories of low income consumers that fell within the scope of this research.

The population comprised of each and every experience of respect or disrespect, as experienced by lower-income consumers in South Africa, specifically these "foundation" and "core" groups identified by Chipp, Corder, & Kapelianis (2009), using the Living Standards Measure (LSM), at LSM1-4 and LSM5-6 respectively.

4.3.2. Sample unit

The sample unit was each incident of respect or disrespect experienced by the individual who was actually interviewed (being someone involved in household or personal shopping, although the identification was based on the LSM of the household in which he or she lived).

4.3.3. Sampling method and size

There was no sampling frame used.

Non-probability sampling techniques were used, including elements of quota and convenience sampling. Quota sampling is where units are selected to ensure that the sample contains a sufficient number of units satisfying certain specified criteria (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In this context, the quota sampling was done by asking the short-form questions (Chipp & Corder, 2009) set out in Annexe "A", that were designed to classify

research participants based on the LSM group of their household. This quota was applied to ensure that there will be a minimum number of 20 (of a total number of fifteen township residents) participants falling within LSM1-4 or LSM5-6. In this respect, apart from ensuring that the relevant quota requirements were met, participants were selected based on ease of access, within the geographical areas Alexandra and Thembisa, South Africa.

The minimum number of fifteen was based on the likely data saturation point for homogenous populations in Saunders & Lewis (2012).

Whereas the target population is low income consumers, LSM1-4 persons which form the base of the pyramid live primarily in rural areas (Chipp & Corder, 2009) and are not easily found in urban studies (Breytenbach, 2011), and accordingly the LSM1-6 levels were used in this study.

4.4. Data analysis

The researcher made use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software.

4.4.1. Qualitative data analysis

Saunders & Lewis (2012) list the following three steps to analysing data qualitatively: 1) develop categories or codes, 2) decide on a unit of data to which to attach the codes, and 3) code the units of data based on these codes.

The unit of analysis was each separately identifiable incident of respect or disrespect (that is, separate incidents from the same research participant were not combined), to ensure specificity of the data.

In developing the categories or codes, all transcripts were read and re-read to identify frequently raised issues and key themes that recur, which could be used as the basis for categorisation or coding (inductive coding). This process is a key first stage of familiarising oneself with the data, according to Braun & Clarke (2006). The coding was applied using Atlas, and allowing

for co-occurring codes. Once the data was coded, it was comparatively analysed, to identify areas of similarity and difference.

4.4.2. Data quality

According to Flanagan (1954, p. 340), data quality can be assumed where full and precise details are provided, however vague reports indicate that data is of a poor quality. On this basis, where research participants did not provide comprehensive and detailed explanations of the relevant incident, even after probing questions by the researcher in an attempt to uncover the full story, these incidents were discarded, to preserve data quality.

4.4.3. Both deduction and induction

Saunders & Lewis (2012) define deduction as a research approach where one tests a theoretical proposition, and induction as a research approach where one derives theory from data collected.

This research was based on existing theories of disrespect and responses to disrespect, and the customer value proposition, and aimed to test whether these general theories of respect and disrespect applied equally (and in the same manner) to low income consumers, and how these interrelate with the customer value proposition. There was therefore a deductive approach being applied, at the starting point, in designing the research questions. However, the data analysis was done in an inductive manner, seeking to identify themes connected to the data itself rather than to the questions posed to participants based on the literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data allowed the researcher to develop new and alternate theories to explain the findings, using an inductive approach.

4.4.4. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was used, on the bases that: this is appropriate for less experienced qualitative researchers; it is appropriate within many varied theoretical frameworks; it is highly flexible; and it facilitates a rich description across all incidents investigated, which is particularly useful

when research participants' views are unknown or in an area on which there is limited research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The approach of "describe, compare, relate" (Bazeley, 2009, p. 10) was applied to analyse the data using a structural approach to thematic analysis.

4.5. Ethical considerations

The key ethical considerations relate to the participants. Particularly given the vulnerability of low-income consumers (Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Karnani, 2009), it was critical to protect the interests of the participants. To achieve this, it was clearly communicated to the participants that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time, and the interviews were conducted in a language with which the participants were comfortable. In one instance, the participant appeared to become uncomfortable during the interview, and the interview was accordingly abandoned. Whereas the participants all elected to be interviewed in English, notwithstanding the availability of a translator, the translator was present throughout the interview in case of any language difficulties.

4.6. Research limitations

Key limitations of the research methodology and scope are:

- Qualitative, exploratory research is by its nature preliminary, or to explore new ideas, and needs to be followed up with more detailed research (quantitative analysis - descriptive and causal) to provide more dependable results (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- The use of non-probability sampling means that the sample does not represent the population statistically (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), and so the results cannot be validly generalised to the population as a whole.
- Judgmental sampling and the small sample size negatively affects the validity of the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).
- The critical incident technique may give rise to recall bias, consistency factors, memory bias or reinterpretation of the incident (Gremler, 2004).

- The length of time necessary for participants to properly tell their detailed stories about the incidents, may discourage participation, giving rise to higher non-response bias, or may result in inadequate or incomplete data being provided (Gremler, 2004).
- The BOP market is highly heterogeneous, and accordingly focusing on a small sample of low-income consumers increases the chance of external and irrelevant factors featuring in the analysis and conclusions.
- Exploratory research is very subjective and reflects the perspectives of the researcher, in other words there may be researcher bias (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher in this case is an attorney, strongly influenced by the fundamental values of the South African Constitution, namely dignity, equality and human rights and freedoms (Constitution, 1996, section 2). This may influence the researcher to over-emphasise or prioritise respect, as a means to promote dignity, equality and human rights, and may be more inclined to find that respect is a critical feature of the value proposition, than is perhaps the case objectively.
- Translation errors may occur and culturally based concepts may not translate well, which would affect the validity of the research. In this respect, while there was a translator available, all participants chose to be interviewed in English, which, particularly given the education levels and language abilities of the low-income participants, increased the possibility of translation errors.
- Interviewees may be affected by the testing process and may want to appear in a positive light, resulting in skewed answers from social desirability bias, which would affect the validity of the research.

4.7. Validity of data

According to Creswell & Miller (2000), there are 9 key validity procedures, from which researchers typically select one or more, in order to increase the credibility or validity (validity being the level of accuracy of representation of the participants' experiences and realities) of the study. Of these 9 key validity

procedures, the researcher selected three, namely: researcher reflexivity; thick, rich descriptions; and, to a lesser extent, triangulation.

Researcher reflexivity involves the up-front disclosure by the researcher of her or his personal beliefs, values and biases, early in the research process, to enable readers to understand and adjust for any such beliefs (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As set out in 4.6 above, the researcher highlighted her own bias under the description of researcher bias, and specifically that the researcher is an attorney who is strongly influenced by the fundamental values of the South African Constitution, namely dignity, equality and human rights and freedoms, which may influence the researcher to overemphasise respect. This disclosure enables readers to control for the findings and discussions thereof, in chapters 5, 6 and 7, and accordingly improves the validity of the findings.

Thick, rich descriptions, or deep, dense and detailed descriptions, enable readers to virtually experience the experiences of the participants through involvement in the narrative (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To facilitate this, the researcher has made extensive use of the actual detailed narratives of the participants, so that readers can experience the participants own words and how these convey the richness of the experience and emotion; and this improves the validity of the findings.

The final method utilised by the researcher, albeit to a lesser extent, is triangulation. This is where a researcher looks to different sources to corroborate the information, themes or categories identified in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As set out in more detail in Chapter 6 below, the researcher has compared some of the findings to issues identified in the literature, to make sense of the emergent ideas surrounding respect.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the behaviours that low income consumers experienced as respectful or disrespectful, and how these positive or negative experiences impacted on the value proposition.

The participants were asked to discuss first a negative experience in the marketplace, and then a positive experience in the marketplace. The wording “respect” and “disrespect” was not used in the interview questions, rather the researcher wanted to see if these specific words would be said by any of the participants, or if this concept would emerge through operationalised descriptions and examples.

5.2. Demographic details

The demographic details of the participants are tabulated below. There was a good spread across age levels, apart from the absence of older participants (aged 50 and above). The sample was heavily biased towards females, with 13 of the 16 participants being female. Whereas these demographics reflect lower than average South African education levels, given the typical correlation between education and income levels, this is consistent with a sample of lower income consumers.

Table 1: Demographics of participants

Demographics		Count
Gender	Male	3
	Female	13
Race	Black	16
Age	20 to 29	8
	30 to 39	5

	40 to 49	3
Education level completed	Unknown	1
	Grade 10	2
	Grade 11	8
	Grade 12	2
	1 year past grade 12	3

5.3. LSM classification of participants

The short-form LSM questionnaire (Annexe A) was applied according to the determined method (Chipp & Corder, 2009), in terms of which a score of 10 was applied for each “yes” answer a score of zero for each “no” answer, and the categorisation based on total score is as follows:

- a score of 0-10 is equivalent to LSM 1-4;
- a score of 11-30 is equivalent to LSM 5-6;
- a score of 31-50 is equivalent to LSM 7-8; and
- a score of 51+ is equivalent to LSM 9-10.

The LSM classification of participants was as follows:

Table 2: LSM classification of participants

LSM Classification		
LSM and related value		Count
LSM 1-4	0 – 10	4
LSM 5-6	11 – 30	9

LSM 7-8	31 – 50	2
LSM 9-10	Over 50	1*

* This higher LSM participant is aged 44. Since the LSM classification is based on possessions, and it is common to accumulate possessions over time, it is to be expected that low income consumers may fall within higher LSM categories as they get older and accumulate certain assets. This participant continues to live within a township, works as a domestic worker, and does not have hot running water in the home that she rents.

5.4. Results by category of good/service

The context in which the relevant positive and negative critical incidents occurred, across fast moving consumer goods, clothing & shoes, durable goods (furniture), cellular phones & service, personal services, financial services and restaurants/fast food/club, is tabulated below. From these tables, it is clear that the positive experiences all related to services, the service aspect of goods and gifted goods; and the vast majority (14 of 16 incidents) of negative experiences related only to services and the service aspect of goods, with two experiences relating to inferior products combined with poor service aspects.

Table 3: Positive experiences - context

Goods/service context of positive critical incidents				
	LSM 1-4	LSM 5-6	LSM 7-8	LSM 9-10
Goods: Fast moving consumer goods – service aspect	1			1
Goods: Clothing & shoes – gifted goods	1	1*		

Goods: Clothing & shoes – service aspect	2	7		
Cellular phone & service – service aspect		1		
Personal services		1		
Restaurant / fast food / club – service aspect			2	

* - in addition to clothing & shoes service aspect, same incident

Table 4: Negative experiences - context

Goods/service context of negative critical incidents				
	LSM 1-4	LSM 5-6	LSM 7-8	LSM 9-10
Goods: Fast moving consumer goods – service aspect	1	2	1	1
Goods: Clothing & shoes – product aspect		1*		
Goods: Clothing & shoes – service aspect	2	3		
Durable goods (furniture) – product aspect		1*		
Durable goods (furniture) – service aspect		2		
Cellular phone & service – service aspect		1		
Financial services	1			

Restaurant / fast food / club – service aspect		1	1	
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* - both product and service (flawed product, poor associated service / treatment)

5.5. Results by Kantian category of respect

In chapter 2 above, Garcia's (2012) identification of three categories of Kantian respect is discussed, and the conclusion is reached that the two categories of Kantian respect that feature in the marketplace are "moral respect" as a basic right of all human beings and the recognition of people as an end and not only a means, and "political" or "contractual" respect, as the right to fair and honest dealings (Garcia, 2012).

One can apply these categories to the incidents identified by the research participants (in ascending LSM level then age), in other words one can classify the various experiences according to their objective respect category as follows:

Table 5: Positive experiences categorised by category of Kantian respect

Positive experiences			
Participant	Event	Moral respect	Contractual respect
LSM1-4, female, 25	Given some free clothes when buying for a large sum	X	
LSM1-4, female, 29	Sincere and repeated apologies for wrongful accusation of theft	X	
LSM1-4, female, 29	Allowed to swap kids shoes		X

LSM1-4, female, 35	Cashier polite and friendly when card was declined	X	
LSM5-6, female, 21	Served promptly and well at a hair salon	X	
LSM5-6, male, 21	Assistance and attention when looking for sneakers	X	
LSM5-6, female, 27	Assistance and attention when buying a dress	X	
LSM5-6, female, 30	Assistance and attention when looking for a phone	X	
LSM5-6, female, 33	Sales assistant kept a hat for her, when asked	X	
LSM5-6, female, 36	Manager cared and helped when her baby was crying	X	
LSM5-6, female, 36	Accepted return of flawed goods		X
LSM5-6, male, 40	Assistance and attention when buying jeans	X	
LSM5-6, male, 42	Service (suggestion to size shoes before purchase)	X	
LSM7-8, female, 21	Question answered verbally and by showing items on a printed menu	X	
LSM7-8, female, 23	Apology when her friend complained about the food	X	

LSM9-10, female, 44	Noticed and given new eggs when eggs broke outside the shop	X	
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Table 6: Negative experiences categorised by category of Kantian respect

Negative experiences		Moral respect	Contractual respect
Participant	Event		
LSM1-4, female, 25	Laybuded goods sold, accused of lying about the laybuy	X	X
LSM1-4, female, 29	Investment for 2 years allegedly for 3 years		X
LSM1-4, female, 29	Initially ignored when wanting to return shoes (shared as part of the positive incident)	X	
LSM1-4, female, 35	Shop assistant rude and complained when asked to help	X	
LSM5-6, female, 21	Ignored (not served) at a bar	X	
LSM5-6, male, 21	Rubber off sneakers, blamed by store	X	X
LSM5-6, female, 27	Unable to claim on cellphone insurance, “told stories”		X
LSM5-6, female, 30	Bed not delivered, no communication	X	X

LSM5-6, female, 33	Missing packet at packet counter, accused of lying	X	X
LSM5-6, female, 36	Glass shelf broke after purchase, blamed	X	X
LSM5-6, female, 36	Followed around as if she were a shoplifter	X	
LSM5-6, male, 40	Ignored when pointed out damaged milk packaging	X	
LSM5-6, male, 42	Ignored when asking for tracksuit prices	X	
LSM7-8, female, 21	Not spoken back to in Venda or even English	X	
LSM7-8, female, 23	Given the wrong kind of burger, blamed	X	
LSM9-10, female, 44	Off fruit, then verbal abuse	X	X

5.6. Results in narrative format

The specific experiences described by each participant are summarised in narrative format in Annexe C.

5.7. Results according to research questions

Research question 1: Does respect form part of what is valued in the marketplace? How does respectful or disrespectful behaviour, actions

or incidents impact on the customer value proposition and preparedness of a customer to buy, if at all?

5.7.1. Respect and its operationalisation – inductive analysis

5.7.1.1. Respect

As indicated above, participants were asked about a positive and a negative experience in the marketplace, without any of the questions relating directly to respect, or using the word respect, unless this issue was first raised by the participant concerned. Apart from the fact that, based on the literature review, these experiences were capable of being objectively categorised as “moral respect” or “contractual respect” from a Kantian perspective (Garcia, 2012), seven of the participants spontaneously referred to “respect” in one form or another, in other words there was a subjective perception that the incidents related to respect, as follows.

Table 7: Word count related to respect

Word	Count
Respect	15
Respected	4
Disrespected	1
Disrespectful	4
Total	24

The spread of these comments across LSM category, age and gender is set out in the following table. The female bias (6 of 7 participants) is unsurprising, considering that the sample is heavily weighted towards women (13 of 16 participants). This issue appears to emerge across age

categories, with an age spread of 23 to 40. LSM5-6 is most heavily represented (5 of 7 participants), with one LSM1-4 participant and one LSM7-8 participant.

Table 8: Word count related to respect across participant category

Participant	Count
LSM1-4, female, 29 (Ms S)	2
LSM5-6, female, 27 (Ms LS)	2
LSM5-6, female, 30 (Ms LP)	1
LSM5-6, female, 33 (Ms ZR)	4
LSM5-6, female, 36 (Ms JS)	1
LSM5-6, male, 40 (Mr JP)	1
LSM7-8, female, 23 (Ms IS)	13
Total	24

Examples of the references to respect:

LSM1-4:

(Ms S) “...but the last time they didn’t treat me right, but I think some times in other shops they do have the thing of **respect** and they **treat people special**” (emphasis added).

LSM5-6:

(Ms LS) “And then somebody else comes in with that **tone**, yeah, with **no respect at all**... there was never a point when I felt they wanted to **listen to my story, to understand** what happened. No, it was like a **push and shove**, like, okay, you didn’t do this, so we can’t do anything. That kind of a thing. Yeah, and I felt that was really not right” (emphasis added).

(Ms LS) “*The people, they were wonderful. The salespeople there are matured ladies, who would approach you in a nice way. People who know how to talk to people. There's a level of respect. That kind of thing.*” (emphasis added).

(Ms LP) “*A customer, you know when ... the minute a customer walks into a store they must be acknowledged. Number One, you must get the status that you deserve, nê? They must treat you with respect. And they must know that you are paying their salaries, so they must basically treat you like a Queen when you walk in.*” (emphasis added).

(Ms ZR) “*He is rude. He doesn't have respect of other people's stuff. Because it seems like he took it*” (emphasis added).

(Ms ZR) “*She treated me with love, respect. She respected me and I respected her. So that's why everything went out perfectly*” (emphasis added).

(Ms JS) “*it was 2004...their service there was so nice for me even he have a smaller gift for him they say 'okay we'll give you something extra for him for appreciation of you coming to the store even though your son you know that your son is not well... even now I love Woolworths I love Woolworths...I was so proud you feeling like a respected person say 'okay this is nice' it means that I can come here every time, yea they do this then maybe next time you're going to get coffee' so even Woolworths I do go to Woolworths always every month when I go shopping I must get there and see what's in store*” (emphasis added).

(Mr JP) “*I don't know what they are experiencing around the shops but for them it wasn't good to treat a customer like that, because customers buys there is were you get your salary from and yes so a person that pays your salary you need to treat them with respect*” and “*They didn't have what we call ubuntu, you know*” (emphasis added).

LSM7-8:

(Ms IS) “*Mostly you experience it when you go to shops that are basically for ... like the whole market is for black people, where when you arrive you don't get the hello and you know, so people just look at you funny and sometimes they don't even give you service until you ask them to like – hi can I please get assistance, from maybe the cashiers or the shop attendants, and I think also when you get followed around in the store like you're going to steal, I think that's a bit offensive because you find other people are not being followed but you walk in and all of a sudden, and mostly maybe because of my body, I am very small in structure, when people treat you like you're a kid, you know and things like that. So you don't get the same respect that they would give to some people and things like that, when you're actually bringing the same money*” and “*I think just treating someone as a human, and as they matter, you know? Because when I come and you're looking away or you're speaking to your colleague while I'm talking*

to you or I'm busy, I need your attention or your service, then you're just saying you don't matter, you can leave if you want type of thing, so that's just a bit disrespectful you know?" and "here in our community is that there's no respect. There's always a delay, there's always – you'll sometimes stand there and they're busy talking about their weekends, just like next to you, you know, it's an open plan thing where you can see the kitchen and the stuff, they'll just be standing there talking about something completely not related to their work and you're standing there, you know what, you somehow don't treat customers as if they're customers, like they're paying customers" (emphasis added)

5.7.1.2. Care

As discussed in the literature review, the Kantian moral respect is also operationalised for low-income consumers as "caring" (Sawady & Tescher, 2008). Certain participants also referred to "care" or "caring".

Table 9: Word count related to care

Word	Count
Care	37
Cares	2
Cared	4
Careless	1
Careful	1
Total	45

The spread of these comments across LSM category, age and gender is set out in the following table. The female bias (ten of 12 participants) is unsurprising, considering that the sample is heavily weighted towards women (13 of 16 participants). This issue appears to emerge across age categories, with an age spread of 21 to 44. All LSM categories are represented, with two LSM1-4 participants, LSM5-6 most heavily

represented with seven of 12 participants, two LSM7-8 participants and one LSM9-10 participant.

Table 10: Word count related to care across participant category

Participant	Count
LSM1-4, female, 29 (Ms S)	1
LSM1-4, female, 29 (Ms PT)	1
LSM5-6, female, 21 (Ms TM)	1
LSM5-6, female, 27 (Ms LS)	7
LSM5-6, female, 33 (Ms ZR)	10
LSM5-6, female, 36 (Ms JS)	3
LSM5-6, female, 36 (Ms SM)	1
LSM5-6, male, 40 (Mr JP)	11
LSM5-6, male, 42 (Mr MN)	3
LSM7-8, female, 21 (Ms NR)	1
LSM7-8, female, 23 (Ms IS)	5
LSM9-10, female, 44 (Ms LM)	1
Total	45

Examples of the references to care:

LSM1-4:

(Ms S) “some of them they **love their job**, they know how to treat their **customers**, they know how to **take care of them**. But if you are **not**

willing to work there you will treat them the way you like" (emphasis added).

LSM5-6:

(Ms TM) "She just looked at me and **rolled her eyes**, like she **don't care that I've been standing there for how long**" (emphasis added).

(Ms LS) "It's even worse. They **even ignore or they care more about selling the product than what a person can benefit** from the product. It was just a push and push sales. Let's **push sales and forget about the person** who is actually buying it... I felt that nobody cared. Like my idea is I know the phone is insured, if anything were to happen to it, I was going to get another phone, have it replaced, but only to find out it's a different picture. I couldn't get what I wanted to do. So I feel like I was **disillusioned** somehow. I was just paying for nothing. And **they can do nothing**. If you have to claim, it's another thing, it's a whole different picture... I **didn't feel valued**. I didn't feel **important** to the store. I didn't feel like they **even cared**. All they wanted was **my money**. It just felt like that. All they wanted was my money, they got my money, that's that, done. They didn't care about..." (emphasis added).

(Ms ZR) "they **don't care**. Because he couldn't even ask somebody did you see this things or anyone has done this, he didn't care and there was **no remorse, no sorry, no nothing**. I just stood there, after talking to him I stand about 15 minutes hoping that he will check or go to someone, a supervisor or somebody. He was **busy serving other customers**, I was **like a fool** there... They can't just **take other people's property** and don't care." (emphasis added)

(Ms JS) "even the **Customer Service of every Woolworths is the best** you can go wherever Woolworths is the best because I think maybe they **did train them** how to **care for other people**" (emphasis added)

(Ms SM) "they **don't treat people well**. They **don't treat them well**. Especially if the thing's outside their, your place, they **don't even care**, whether it's well or what, you know. They told you, only they say, you see, it's right, it's OK. Then they put that thing, they give you the paper and sign it and leave you alone." (emphasis added)

(Mr JP) "So she just **ignore me** and just left... so everybody in the **shop doesn't care**... It is like they just pack stuff and somebody will come and buy, so it means like they say **whether you buy or not they don't care** it sounded like that... maybe they don't even care **they will sell the expired milk**... I think that was neither good think or it is because they are **selling to lesser people who earn less**, maybe they **don't care**, I don't know. But I think Shoprite must give **good service** to them" (emphasis added)

(Mr JP) “**He cared about the customer** because he left and he **didn’t want to put much pressure** on me but again he left and come back again and see that I am still trying to find myself then he came back and say now let me help you...they care the shop ...when you come they **smile** they tried to **make you feel important** as a customer” (emphasis added).

(Mr MN) “asking a certain guy was working there but he **doesn’t co-operate with me**, and so I ended up cross about him and then I asked to tell him that I will ask for the managers for not having any **customer care**... he must be specific, about what attitude, be **careful what the customer is looking for**. In fact it is as if I was asking for the prices. **I was buying, and so I need the customer care**. Whereby I am buying, it’s like if I’m buying, **that’s where his pay is coming from**” (emphasis added).

LSM7-8:

(Ms IS) “Sometimes **being educated**, being given the right product and not just selling what you think. Because the other thing you’ll realise is when you go there they don’t say do you want small or whatever, they say do you want a large Coke, you know, **thinking of their own targets**, so they **don’t really care about the customer** much that is that the best for you, do you know?” (emphasis added)

(Ms IS) “...mostly it’s good people, **good service** and they **really care**, they actually even if you’re just going past, they know you, they’ll say Hi, are you not coming in today? You end up eating even when you’re full, because of the service, because of the people **really treat you like you matter** and **your money does something in their lives**, you know? ... every once in a while they will **come back and say** are you still okay, you know, do you need anything, do you need a few more minutes, things like that. And that you don’t just feel like in this place lost and really **no-one cares whether you leave or you come in**, you know?” (emphasis added)

(Ms NR) (when asked to personify the supplier): “A *kind* person... a person who would take care of people”.

LSM9-10:

(Ms LM) “we are saying “we want fresh fruit”. Another one said, “You, get away, get away, **we don’t care about you**. Some people, they want it like this.” ... then we just left there.” (emphasis added)

5.7.1.3. What respect / care means to participants

From the above quotes, it appears that, to the various participants, respect or care means:

- Treating people as if they are human, special, important, as if they matter, “a queen”, an adult (and not a child or younger sister), valued, care about them, have love, appreciation, ubuntu
- Politeness, approaching in a nice manner, pleasant tone of voice, pleasant facial expressions
- Listening to what the customer tells you or asks you, believing the customer, not blaming or making excuses
- Giving acknowledgement, greetings, service, time, attention, trying to help the customer, loving your job, checking on the customer every so often, educating the customer
- Serving promptly, willing to work
- Not pushing or forcing a customer, not putting pressure on a customer, no hard sell, not focusing only on sales targets
- Not stealing from customers
- Not treating customers as if they are thieves or criminals

This is set out in more detail in 5.7.5 and 5.7.6 below, where the respectful and disrespectful behaviours are discussed.

5.7.1.4. *Other issues that emerge from the concepts of respect and care*

Colour of money / we pay your salaries

The following quotes demonstrate the theme that customers are entitled to respectful or caring treatment on the basis that the money they spend is the same as any other customer (regardless of race or class), and that the relevant businesses and employees are able to earn a living because of the customer’s business:

(Ms IS) “*you’re actually bringing the same money*” and “*your money does something in their lives*” and “*somewhat don’t treat customers as if they’re customers, like they’re paying customers*”

(Ms LP) “*they must know that you are paying their salaries*”

(Mr JP) “*because customers buys there is were you get your salary from and yes so a person that pays your salary*”

(Mr MN) “*it's like if I'm buying, that's where his pay is coming from*”

5.7.2. Respect and the value proposition – deductive analysis

There were various specific questions that were posed to the participants, where the literature review had formed the background for the questions that would be asked, and where accordingly deductive analysis would be used. The results are set out as follows.

5.7.2.1. Unplanned purchase as a result of respectful treatment

There were 3 instances where participants had not planned to purchase the item which they ended up purchasing because of the respectful treatment:

- Mr LP said “*I wanted to buy a Nike shoe, actually, when I went to Woodmead. And then I went to a Nike shop, and then I didn't see something nice, and then I went to Adidas, just to browse, to check what's eh what's up, and then the way they, that lady treated me, then I thought, ah, let me buy this one, I think, yes.*”
- Ms LP said “*Actually I wanted a Nokia Asia phone I think and they didn't have that on stock. So what happened is the lady, the salesperson, she was the manager as well, you know she sat me down and she showed me different kinds of phones and she explained all the pros and cons of the phones that they had on stock and I ended up buying a Samsung Galaxy phone from there because of how she explained the product, and she spoke about, you know, all the benefits that you can get from buying that product, the phone, the Galaxy phone and she showed me how it works and all of that, so she explained that very well to me. So I thought no I ended up buying it anyway, and I was not looking for that anyway but I was looking for a Nokia. So but I ended up buying that phone because of how she explained how the phone works and how you can benefit from using that phone, yes.*”
- Ms IS said “*...mostly it's good people, good service and they really care, they actually even if you're just going past, they know you, they'll say Hi, are you not coming in today? You end up eating even when you're full, because of the service, because of*

the people really treat you like you matter and your money does something in their lives, you know?" (emphasis added)

5.7.2.2. Purchase at the supplier who demonstrated respect

Based on the existing quality, and on the assumption that the price of the product was the same across suppliers, 12 of the participants indicated a preference for buying the relevant good or service from the supplier who demonstrated respect, in answer to a specific question as to whether they prefer to buy from this supplier since the positive incident.

When looking at the reasoning behind the four participants who did not indicate a preference for buying from the relevant supplier, the following issues emerge:

- One of the participants (female, 44, LSM9-10) appeared to hold the belief that bad treatment in the marketplace is inevitable, and/or experienced a sense of helplessness as regards bad treatment: "*I will go, there is nothing I can do, I will go and buy there, there's nothing I can do, I will just go and buy.*" For this participant, the critical factor was fresh fruit, a criterion on which she was not prepared to waiver, but she appeared resigned to accepting rude, uncaring and disrespectful treatment as regards interpersonal interactions. This type of view was also expressed by another participant (male, 40, LSM5-6) who said "*but if there was a better shop in Alex, I would buy in it...but now you have three retailers that you have in the mall but the attitude is more or less the same... but if I had a car I think I would buy from Sandton I would drive to there*". This indicates his perception that Alexandra is an area where the suppliers have a negative or disrespectful attitude. The willingness of consumers to purchase from suppliers in these circumstances may be something that would change, with increased competition in the marketplace, and/or if the participant were to experience respectful marketplace interactions sufficiently to develop a sense of power or ability to prevent disrespectful treatment by using other suppliers.

- Another participant (female, 29, LSM1-4) shopped based on whether or not there were specific products she liked, at several stores that were all ones she liked to shop at. This may perhaps indicate that all of these acceptable stores are ones where she feels respected, so that respect is not in her specific situation a point of difference amongst these acceptable stores. This would of course have to be further investigated to verify the reasons behind her actions.
- Two participants (female, 29 LSM1-4; and female, 36, LSM5-6) prefer not to shop at the relevant supplier because they do not consider the goods to be of very high quality. It appears that the relevant purchases were opportunistic purchases based on price and limited importance / use of the items in question (the one item being pyjamas, and the other being shoes for a child to use indoors only and presumably for a short period since children's feet grow fast and unpredictably). It is noteworthy that these goods where the participant was willing to compromise by buying from a lower quality supplier are ones which are not visible to others, with the result that no social status or respect from others can be achieved through displaying or publicly using these products.

5.7.2.3. *Respect and willingness to pay more*

Eleven of the participants indicated that they would be willing to pay more for the good/service at the place where they felt well treated and respected, in answer to a specific question in this respect.

The comments from the participants who said they would not pay more, were as follows:

- Ms LM said “*Because these days, we compare shops and shops. Yes, we compare prices.*”

However, this is the participant who indicated a sense of powerlessness regarding bad treatment in the marketplace. It is therefore uncertain whether it is indeed the fact that price is the most important factor, for which the participant is willing to

compromise for fast moving consumer goods as was the case in the example in question, or whether, having resigned herself to poor treatment in the marketplace, the remaining factor for differentiation is price.

Affordability and aspiration

- Ms ZR said “*Because at this present moment I am not working and if they [prices] go high I won't manage.*”
- Ms LS said “*Expense. Yeah. Honestly, I would prefer something that is much lesser. Cost is actually a problem. So I would prefer something actually much lesser. But if I could afford to have that expensive thing at Queenspark, that would be my first thing to run to.*”

This demonstrates that affordability is a key feature, however aspiration features strongly, and where finances permit, the low income consumer prefers the more expensive product at the supplier who makes her feel “like a queen”.

Quality and financial risk

- Ms SM said “*I don't see myself two years buying credit with in Foschini because really I must be out in the credit. I'm too much in the credit. I must be out and think of budgeting for my kids to go to university... I love Foschini but it's too expensive... Because it doesn't mean that their things, that quality-quality. We like them but it's not like its quality-quality. No, I will go to other shops, cheaper shops.*”
- Ms S said “*You know what I just buy those shoes that my baby stay, she is not going with them anywhere she just wear it around here because their shoes is not strong that much... Yes, not that much good.*”

These participants prioritised quality, and mitigation of financial risk through quality items.

5.7.2.4. Respect and willingness to buy when inconvenient

Ten of the participants said that they would be willing to buy at the service provider who treated them well, even if this were more

inconvenient, for example further away, in answer to a specific question in this regard.

One interesting aspect was that a participant, Ms LP, said that she was willing to pay more for the goods or services, but not willing to pay more for taxi-fare if the store were further away.

5.7.3. Disrespect and the value proposition

5.7.3.1. Disrespect and the likelihood of purchasing the relevant good/service

It was interesting to note that, in every instance, the participant did not associate the disrespect with the **product** itself (eg. milk, McDonald's Deluxe burger, MTN cellular services), in other words there did not seem to be any blaming of the brand of the relevant good/service for not ensuring respectful treatment to potential purchasers. The answer to the research sub-question "*Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer less likely to purchase the good or service?*" is accordingly no. The participant would still purchase the relevant good or service, just in most instances at a different store (refer below). In some instances, the method of purchase would change, for example Ms LS was disillusioned with cellphone contracts and indicated that she would not purchase another cellphone contract, however she was prepared to carry on using the same service provider on a pay-as-you-go basis.

5.7.3.2. Outcome of complaints regarding disrespect, and the tendency to purchase at the relevant supplier

An interesting emergent aspect was the **tendency of low income consumers to complain**.

Thirteen of the 16 participants complained when faced with a situation they considered disrespectful, and one further participant, Ms MT, did not yet reach the point of complaining because the supervisor came to resolve the issue when hearing the dispute between Ms MT and the shop

assistant (and so this is also included as a complaint in the table below, which deals with the likelihood of purchase).

An important aspect of the finding that low income consumers, when faced with behaviour or situations which they feel is disrespectful, appear highly likely to complain, is that this gives the relevant business an opportunity to rectify the situation.

The outcome of the complaints (15 complaints by 14 participants) can be tabulated as follows:

Table 11: Outcome of complaints

Outcome	Count
Complained before buying, situation not rectified, and so did not buy	1
Complained before buying, situation was rectified, and so did buy	5
Complained before buying, situation not rectified, and still bought	1
Complained before buying, situation was rectified, but did not buy	1
Complained during purchase process, situation not rectified, and so did not buy	2
Complained after purchase, situation not rectified, supplier would not accept a cancellation, but participant did not go back	5

From this, it is clear that, apart from the two outliers (where the complaint was rectified but the participant did not buy the product, perhaps because there was no apology, and where the complaint was not rectified but the participant did buy the product, perhaps because the complaint was fairly general and not linked to his specific products), the

general rule is that if the complaint is rectified, the customer would buy the product, whereas if the complaint was not rectified, the customer would not buy the product.

This indicates that, whereas the low income consumers give the store a chance to rectify the disrespectful treatment, failure to do so will almost inevitably result in the customer not buying the product when the customer feels disrespected.

The outcome of complaints before and during the acquisition process can be tabulated as follows:

Table 12: Complaints of disrespectful behaviour before and during acquisition process – outcome

Outcome	Count
Situation rectified, transaction concluded	5
Situation rectified, transaction not concluded	1
Situation not rectified, transaction not concluded	3
Situation not rectified, transaction concluded	1

Apart from the two outliers, this table indicates that if the complaint is rectified, the customer would buy the product, whereas if the complaint was not rectified, the customer would not buy the product.

In relation to the outliers, the one was Ms JS who felt that she was followed around as if she were a shoplifter, and she experienced that the rectification took too long and there was no apology in relation to a very personally insulting incident; and the other was Mr JP, who complained not about his own items or direct treatment of him, but rather about milk packaging that he saw in the shop that was damaged, and which was accordingly not as personal an incident as most in the study. These are therefore understandable as outliers, since Ms JS may well perceive the

“rectification” of stopping following her as insufficient, and Mr JP may well not feel sufficiently personally offended to take the time and effort to leave his selected items and rather go to a different shop and re-select these. Also, Mr JP is one of the participants who expressed the view that, within Alex, the “attitude” amongst all of the retailers is the same, which indicates a sense of powerlessness to achieve better treatment within his area. An alternative explanation for him continuing to purchase at the relevant supplier is accordingly that he experienced a sense of powerlessness or lack of choice, where there was no perceived better alternative.

5.7.3.3. *Disrespect and willingness to purchase at the relevant supplier if cheaper or more convenient*

Table 13: Willingness to purchase in the future from a supplier who has demonstrated (unremedied) disrespect

Outcome	Count
Situation not rectified and transaction not concluded – unwilling to purchase in the future regardless of price or convenience	2
Situation not rectified and transaction not concluded – willing to purchase in the future if less expensive or more convenient	1
Disrespect after acquisition process, situation not rectified – unwilling to purchase in the future regardless of price or convenience	4
Disrespect after acquisition process, situation not rectified – willing to purchase in the future if less expensive or more convenient	1

This table shows that, in seven of the nine situations where either the participant did not purchase the item as a result of disrespect or the disrespect was unresolved after the item had already been purchased, the participant would not be prepared to purchase from the relevant disrespectful supplier, regardless of whether or not the item were cheaper or it was more convenient.

The two outliers here related to participants who appear to feel empowered to resolve any future disrespectful treatment, in other words the disrespect is unlikely to be re-experienced, because of a sense of empowerment and “knowing one’s rights”, as follows:

- Ms SM said: *“Let me tell you something, I will go back to them because I know my right. I know if something broke. I went to the legal what to help me custom. They say there's a, where they help customer when they've got a problem. I'll go there.”*
- Ms JS said: *“But other people don't know where to go to, but right now I do have that experience. If I had that problem again, I know where to go. What to do... Like when I feel uncomfortable in the shop, maybe a security is following me I had to ask for a manager. And ask the manager what is their problem.”*

In summary, therefore, in each of the instances where the participant purchased the relevant goods or services (as set out in 5.7.3.2 above), the participant would in principle be willing to purchase the item going forward; whereas in relation to the nine situations where either the participant did not purchase the item or the issue and complaint arose after the item had already been purchased, in seven of these instances, the participant would not be prepared to purchase from the relevant disrespectful supplier, regardless of whether or not the item were cheaper or it was more convenient.

In relation to the two participants who did not complain, one (Ms NR) indicated that she had not, and would not, go back to the supplier where she felt she had been badly treated. The other, Ms S, had experienced both a good and a bad incident at the same store at the same time, and whereas she indicated that she would be willing to purchase from the

relevant store in the future for cost reasons and only for home use, she had in fact not gone back and had rather bought the same type of item (shoes for her little girl) somewhere else since.

5.7.4. Other issues that emerged

5.7.4.1. Importance of quality/durability

While not necessarily indicative of respect or disrespect, a key theme that emerged from the discussions was the importance of quality/durability. Nine of the 16 participants mentioned this, for example:

- Ms JS said "*If you don't know you will never even differ them that this old this is new the same quality all of them like my son my older son T-shirt my younger sons wears that now the one that I bought at Woolworths and some people when I told them that this T-shirt was my older sons they say 'never how did you keep them like this', I said 'this is quality', sometimes don't be afraid to buy quality because you want a change. Buy something that will last you long and buying something cheap that will take you 3 months after that it's gone*", and in personifying Woolworths, Ms JS said "*I think he will treat me good because we appreciate me for who I am why I'm there know that I am there to put something in his or her pocket and I'm appreciating every quality they are making I'm happy about it that's why I think I will be grateful to meet Woolworths who ever it's she or he.*"
- Mr LP said "*I like to wear quality, so what happened before, I think their shoes ain't quality. So why should I go to buy something that I'll wear for only three months, or maybe a week, so I wasted that small amount of money, why don't I add a little bit more and get the quality shoe? So I won't go back to the store. Edgars has sales, I will go to Edgar when they have sales, because I know, boeti, for me they are good,*" and "*Yes, quality is more important than price.*"

5.7.4.2. Other factors associated with disrespect

In relation to the store, where the store is part of a group, that is a chain store, the participant may avoid the specific store, but still go to the other stores that are part of the chain. In other words, the response to disrespect appears to be store-specific and not brand-specific.

Research question 2: What types of actions, behaviours or incidents do low income consumers within South Africa experience as demonstrating respect, or disrespect, in the marketplace?

5.7.5. Actions, behaviour and incidents demonstrating respect

The primary identified behaviours, which based on the positive critical incidents all being service related, all relate to services rather than product characteristics, can be tabulated as follows:

Table 14: Respectful behaviours identified by participants

Behaviour	Count
Greeting in a friendly manner, smiles	8
Time and attention	15
Provision of information	7

The more detailed explanations are set out below.

5.7.5.1. Greeting in a friendly manner, smiles

Research participants viewed greeting a customer, and smiling, as a sign of respect, and the absence of greetings and a smile as a sign of disrespect, for example:

- Ms IS said “*they’re supposed to greet us in a certain way...”, “you see other people being treated properly, smiled at, and stuff like that*” and “*...even if you’re just going past, they know you, they’ll say Hi, are you not coming in today? You end up eating even when you’re full, because of the service, because of the people really treat you like you matter.*”
- Ms S said “*You must say hello how are you , what do you want, you know, just smile. I would be happy if I can see something like that.*”

- Ms PT said “*I want people to smile and talk. And when I go to Shoprite, it is like ‘hey, [Ms PT] come this side’.*”
- Mr JP said “*when you come they smile they tried to make you feel important as a customer*”.
- Ms JS said “*We have a super mark called Freedom, they welcome everyone there. Even when you get there, the owner got a smile*”.
- Ms MT said “*Oh that lady she’s a humble lady with a smile*”.
- Ms LP said in relation to her negative market experience “*they didn’t treat me like a customer, you know... A customer, you know when ... the minute a customer walks into a store they must be acknowledged. Number One, you must get the status that you deserve, nê? They must treat you with respect. And they must know that you are paying their salaries, so they must basically treat you like a queen when you walk in.*” And later, in relation to her positive market experience, “*once a person comes to me and says Hello, my name is Ms LP, I work in this store, how can I be of assistance to you, that makes me feel more important*”.

It arose that, if the shop assistants remember one's name, this is even more special:

- Ms IS said “*and then she just jumped and said, Hi, how are you Sissie, she actually knows her by name at that time, you know?*”
- Ms LP said “*And even if I come back, once the person remembers my name it makes me feel special as well*”.

5.7.5.2. Time / attention

Participants refer to receiving time and attention as factors that make them feel important, special, cared for and respected. This was a factor referred to in 15 of the 16 positive critical incidents accounts.

Examples of this are:

- Mr MN said “*she treated me in a good way, whereby she asked me first, to make it, to size it before taking it... Yah, she was*

advising me of that things. Because some of the things you make think is the best to take it for your size meanwhile it is a small cut."

- Mr LP said "*The salesperson there helped me to choose the shoe. He gave herself time to help me to find a shoe that would fit me, like the colour, telling me that eh, this one will be nice for you, this one will be nice for you. Check this one out, check this one. So he was kind at the same time, helping me to make a choice. Which was nice... I took about an hour in there, and she was with me all the time... So it was, it was kinda... you feel kinda important when someone working at the place treating you like that, you feel like "I'm the guy", you feel kinda important.*" And in response to the question of what specifically made him feel that he was treated well, Mr LP said "*I could say time, the time that she gave me. I could say time. Cos time is the most important thing.*"
- Ms LS said "*I was treated like a queen. Yoh. It felt good. The minute I went into the store, I was just looking around, and this lady comes up, and says are you looking for anything specific? Do you need help? Anything else, I'm over there. You know, that kind of thing. Two minutes after that, another lady comes up, proposes me, are you still okay? Like, I'm fine. It wasn't in the colour I wanted, and I went to the lady, and she explained blah blah blah, we can try to get something from another store, let's see if we have this in another colour. It was, it was, I was shocked. Even before I left I was like, you guys, you guys give wonderful service.... The salespeople...would approach you in a nice way. People who know how to talk to people. There's a level of respect.*"

5.7.5.3. Provision of information

Participants express that receiving information is important to feel like a customer, that one is treated properly, and that the supplier is engaging in fair dealings (contractual respect). Provision of information was referred to by seven participants. Examples are:

- Ms LS said "*I feel it wasn't explained enough, if this happens, especially to you, just to be aware, could I borrow product, if this happens, what I need to do exactly. I wasn't informed of that... I feel like a lot of things should have been explained when I actually bought the phone, so I know when it gets lost, this is what I need to do... Cos I think that when you go into a store and you buy a phone and so forth, they just give you the small details you want to hear, yeah, you got the phone, it's fine, you're insured, blah blah blah with R89 if it gets lost blah blah blah, they don't go into*

detail, of if this happens this is what you need to do, if that happens, this is what you need to do. Yah, so I wasn't informed... It's even worse. They even ignore or they care more about selling the product than what a person can benefit from the product. It was just a push and push sales. Let's push sales and forget about the person who is actually buying it."

- Ms LP said "So what happened is the lady, the salesperson, she was the manager as well, you know she sat me down and she showed me different kinds of phones and she explained all the pros and cons of the phones that they had on stock and I ended up buying a Samsung Galaxy phone from there because of how she explained the product, and she spoke about, you know, all the benefits that you can get from buying that product, the phone, the Galaxy phone and she showed me how it works and all of that, so she explained that very well to me."
- Ms IS said "*I remember the other time at Mc Donald's the same thing happened where we asked, you know sometimes you'll just say De Luxe and there's like two kinds, the person won't tell you that there's two kinds but they'll just give you what they think you want then they'll think you're fine but it's not that then they think no you were not specific. But I would expect them to educate me and say no actually there's two Ma'am, which one do you want, you know?... Sometimes being educated, being given the right product and not just selling what you think. Because the other thing you'll realise is when you go there they don't say do you want small or whatever, they say do you want a large Coke, you know, thinking of their own targets, so they don't really care about the customer much that is that the best for you, do you know?*"

5.7.6. Actions, behaviour and incidents demonstrating disrespect

The primary identified behaviours can be tabulated as follows:

Table 15: Disrespectful behaviours identified by participants

Behaviour	Count
Being ignored	8
Attitude (tone of voice, body language, looks)	12
Verbal abuse and/or criticism	7
Unfair dealings, excuses, "stories"	8

Waiting a long time	8
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The overlaps between these key disrespectful behaviour categories identified according to the inductive method, and the disrespectful behaviour categories identified by Miller (2001) and Kumar (2009) applied as a deductive method of analysis, can be tabulated as follows:

Table 16: Overlap between study identified behaviours and literature identified behaviours

Overlap in behaviours of disrespect					
Behaviours identified by Miller (2001)	Being ignored	Attitude (tone of voice, body language, looks)	Verbal abuse and/or criticism	Unfair dealings, excuses, "stories"	Waiting a long time
Denial of the right to be heard	X			X	
Lack of interpersonal sensitivity		X	X		
Impoliteness	X	X	X		X
Breach of agreement				X	
Breach of trust			X	X	
Failure to explain actions that have an impact on another person				X	

Other "unjust" actions	X		X		
Behaviours identified by Kumar (2009)					
General rudeness	X	X	X		
Negative expressions		X			
Unwillingness to help	X	X	X	X	
Actions of superiority	X	X	X		
Perceptions of inequality	X	X	X		
Uncaring behaviour	X	X	X	X	X

The more detailed explanations are set out below.

5.7.6.1. Being ignored

Whereas time and attention is viewed by participants as giving a person respect, ignoring a person or not giving them attention is considered disrespectful and treating the person as if they do not matter. This was mentioned by eight of the 16 participants. Examples are:

- Ms LM said “*Sometimes, some, they just ignore you.*”
- Mr MN said “*I was buying for my child a tracksuits, yeah, asking a certain guy was working there but he doesn't co-operate with me and so I ended up cross about him and then I asked to tell him that I will ask for the managers for not having any customer care.*”

- Ms IS said "*I think just treating someone as a human, and as they matter, you know? Because when I come and you're looking away or you're speaking to your colleague while I'm talking to you or I'm busy, I need your attention or your service, then you're just saying you don't matter, you can leave if you want type of thing, so that's just a bit disrespectful you know?*"
- Ms S said "*Even though I have waited for such a long time, they were busy talking, I don't know what they were doing that time, and I was waiting the, but when they finish whatever they were doing they did help me with no problem. But I was angry because I waited for such a long time not understanding what they were talking about, as those guys who are working there, so I feel bad... they ignore me very much... I mean there is no respect, I don't know what can I say but they are not treating me right*".
- Ms ZR said "*Yes, yes they don't care. Because he couldn't even ask somebody did you see this things or anyone has done this, he didn't care and there was no remorse, no sorry, no nothing. I just stood there, after talking to him I stand about 15 minutes hoping that he will check or go to someone, a supervisor or somebody. He was busy serving other customers, I was like a fool there.*"

5.7.6.2. Attitude (tone of voice / body language / looks)

Attitude, such as tone of voice, body language and the way a person would look at one, was discussed by 12 of the 16 participants as being behaviour that is frequently used to convey disrespect.

- Ms LM said "*Another one said, [angry tone of voice] 'You, get away, get away, we don't care about you'... The way she was talking to us, it was not nice, she was like very cross to us.*"
- Ms LS said "*Okay, finally you get through to the right person, and it becomes a problem. And then somebody else comes in with that tone, yeah, with no respect at all*".
- Ms MT said "*she tell me the way I am stupid I am the way I can't see the medicine like he treat me like I'm not a normal person... Yes like he was shouting at me like 'hey here's the medicine' like maybe I didn't go to school maybe I don't know how to read yes*" (emphasis added).

An interesting sub-theme is judgment based on appearance, language, ethnicity or class, which several participants mentioned, and particularly as being common "black-on-black" behaviour and within the townships.

Examples of judgment based on appearance, language, ethnicity or class include:

- Ms LS said “*the other shops when you go there, you feel like you, they value you according to your class, so how you look, and that's how they start treating you... you get judged, before any service you get*”.
- Ms PS said “*I would say I have been treated in an unfair manner, unfair that I feel that Mr Price is the kind of person that looks, sometimes it is all about the customer in the shop, they look at the customer before they sell to you, they judge a person from what they see. And I think Mr Price was very judgmental of me.*”
- Ms JS said “*I think they treated people unfairly especially like even Eastgate, Sandton the look a person by your colour or what you are wearing. They judge people before they can know them. That is their problem. They always judging people. Without knowing how much do I have in my pocket. And how much am I going to spend in the store. So it is unfairly to judge a person without knowing them, what they are here for, why did they leave their home to come there. Is unfairly, really.*” and “*Like when you entering the shop, a person is following you, you taking this he is following, he is there... It is like you are an suspect of something or they know that you are a shoplifter or something... just because maybe it is the colour of my skin or what, I don't know... I thought maybe because Eastgate most is white people, they thought maybe black are there to steal. The blacks that are there to shop. Maybe our money is not that valid as other people. I felt that they are unfair, really. Because our money is the same and the prices are the same. I am going to pay the same prices than the person that who has money to going to pay. **If the bread is R10, I am going to pay same R10***” (emphasis added).

Whereas Ms PT did not specifically mention judgment based on appearance, language or ethnicity, she spoke of being accused of stealing, even when she showed proof of purchase of the relevant items.

The two people who raised “black-on-black” judgment or judgment within townships had the following comments on this:

- Ms LP said “*I think it's a perspective that they have about Alex and about black people. You know?... it's black on black, you know, it won't be white on black, but it will be black on black. You know it's like Ah, you can't tell me anything.*”

Ms LP indicated that she thinks it does not happen in mixed-race areas such as Sandton because of two reasons, firstly that in mixed areas the management would not be friends with the staff, and so staff have to treat customers better for fear of losing their jobs; and secondly "*here the other reason why they treat people – I don't know how to say, like trash, here, is because they think okay the people that normally go there are the people that don't have money. So they don't matter.*"

- Ms IS said "*Mostly you experience it when you go to shops that are basically for, like the whole market is for black people, where when you arrive you don't get the hello and you know, so people just look at you funny and sometimes they don't even give you service until you ask them to... and I think also when you get followed around in the store like you're going to steal,...when people treat you like you're a kid, you know and things like that. So you don't get the same respect that they would give to some people and things like that, when you're actually bringing the same money... You know I felt as if like because you know sometimes it gets to that thing of race, that if they were not dealing with a black person they would do this, they wouldn't do this to me, you know? And because it's in Alex, because it's in our community then it doesn't matter whether you're a customer or not, they just talk to you as if they're talking to their younger sister and things like that [emphasis added]. So that's one thing, I felt disrespected and I felt like clearly I'm not needed in this environment... and it's not white people treating black people, it's black on black. When, because it's a black person, why do I need to respect them, why do I need to say hi and you know, be nice, give them service, good service, you know?*"

5.7.6.3. *Verbal abuse and/or criticism*

Whereas attitude related to tone of voice, body language and the way a person would look at one, the actual words used, and whether these were abusive, or blamed or criticised the participant, was another factor viewed by the participants as disrespectful. There were 7 incidents where participants mentioned wording that itself was abusive or aggressive, or blamed or criticised the participant for the relevant incident. Examples include:

- Mr LP said “*then I went back to the shop, had my sleep, told them Boetie, the rubber just came off, they told me no, maybe I did something with the sneaker, I was playing soccer with it, or stuff... I don't even want to go there, because I know they are treating people like dirt...They didn't treat me like a customer. No, they treated me like something else. That's why I feel like boetie, what they did was not good at all.*”
- Ms PS said “*I think that lady was in such a bad mood that day so I don't know if she meant the whole thing to me or if she was having a bad day but we ended up having an argument because of a particular clothing that I wanted and I could not get it. And she just told me to [expletive deleted] and then ja... Well it made me feel like I am not... Like it made me feel unworthy of myself, it made me feel like I am not human, not like other people, [emphasis added] I am just being treated like a bum on the street, that is how it made me feel and that is why I got [expletive deleted] about it.*”
- Ms ZR referred to the shop assistant denying responsibility and blaming her: “*They can't give me something, they can't give me short parcels if I have taken the other one, so how can I left the shop without my parcels... He is rude. He doesn't have respect of other people's stuff.*”

In an age where sayings like “the customer is always right” and “the customer is king” are clichés, it is jarring to find in a study of 16 participants that one customer (Ms PS) was sworn at, another (Ms LM) was told directly that the retailer did not care about her, and another five customers were directly blamed, accused or criticised for the situations in which they found themselves.

5.7.6.4. Unfair dealings, excuses, “stories”

Eight of the participants referred to unfair dealings, involving excuses and “stories”. Examples include:

- Ms LS said “*And they had stories. Apparently the insurance that I was insured with on that was not actually with MTN, it's a different source, but they go through MTN. That's when I found out, hey, I'm not actually insured with this one, it's something else, okay, fine, it's something else, then help me get my phone. They'd stories. You should have reported it, I don't know, within 24 hours, blah blah blah, things I didn't know, that I think should have been explained, like, getting the phone the first time... They gave me a certain number that I had to call, that's the insurance... First*

things first, it's a payable line. You have to pay for the line. It takes forever for you to get through, to even speak to one person. Okay, finally you get through to the right person, and it becomes a problem... No, it was like a push and shove, like, okay, you didn't do this, so we can't do anything. That kind of a thing. Yeah, and I felt that was really not right... I felt that nobody cared. Like my idea is I know the phone is insured, if anything were to happen to it, I was going to get another phone, have it replaced, but only to find out it's a different picture. I couldn't get what I wanted to do. So I feel like I was disillusioned somehow. I was just paying for nothing. And they can do nothing. If you have to claim, it's another thing, it's a whole different picture... I didn't feel valued. I didn't feel important to the store. I didn't feel like they even cared. All they wanted was my money. It just felt like that. All they wanted was my money, they got my money, that's that, done. They didn't care..."

- Ms SM said “OK, when they brought the room divide they didn’t bring it the same day. They brought it after a week, ne. That room divide, they put it to the house, they put some, like there is a shelf for glasses, ne. After one day, the next day, I went to the shop, like buying something. When I come back I don’t know, I don’t think it’s me because I think that guy didn’t put the screw in the proper way, and then I, when I opened the door the glass just break... they didn’t treat me well because I did pay cash, I gave them their money cash but I mean, the thing didn’t even last. I am like guaranteed like 6 or 3 months guarantee, you know. Then I ask that guy, say it’s not their fault, it is out to the shop, it’s on my hands. They can’t do anything... Hayi. They treat me bad, honestly. My heart was painful. When I think about my money. My heart was very painful. It’s like, I lost my money in the drain.”

5.7.6.5. Waiting a long time

Eight of the participants referred to waiting a long time, for example in queues or because the shop assistants were talking to one another or otherwise not serving customers. Examples include:

- Ms LP said “So I took a day off to wait for them and they never came. And 2 weeks passed without them coming to deliver the beds , and without a phone call from them. So what I did is I went to the store, I asked for a manager ... And she said no I was too busy . I said no but you can’t be too busy for a customer, I’m a client and I am a paying customer, it’s not like these things I’m getting them for free, I’m paying for these things.” And in relation to a different incident “So I stopped one of the ladies, please can I speak to the manager, it’s like why, I said no we’ve been waiting here for an hour and I can see that everybody is just walking

around , can't somebody be assisting the other tellers, because we can't be waiting for an hour, it doesn't make sense.”

- Ms IS said “*my perception of the one that is here in our community is that there's no respect. There's always a delay, there's always – you'll sometimes stand there and they're busy talking about their weekends, just like next to you, you know, it's an open plan thing where you can see the kitchen and the stuff, they'll just be standing there talking about something completely not related to their work and you're standing there, you know what, you somehow don't treat customers as if they're customers, like they're paying customers*”.
- Ms S said “*I have waited for such a long time, they were busy talking, I don't know what they were doing that time, and I was waiting the, but when they finish whatever they were doing they did help me with no problem. But I was angry because I waited for such a long time not understanding what they were talking about, as those guys who are working there, so I feel bad.*”

6. DISCUSSION

6.1. Introduction

Whereas Chapter 5 set out the results of the research, in terms of demographics, narrative and emerging themes supported by evidence reflected by means of quotations relevant to each of the research questions, Chapter 6 seeks to discuss these results in terms of the literature that is reflected in Chapter 2. This is done within the context of each research question.

6.2. Validity - triangulation

The findings of the study in Chapter 5, and the other literature sources that are consistent therewith, include the following:

- Apart from the objective categorisation of the relevant critical incidents according to types of Kantian respect (Garcia, 2012), the participants subjectively identified “respect” and “care” as featuring in the positive and negative critical incidents. Since Sawady & Tescher (2008) operationalised respect as “care” in the low income markets, and the descriptions of what care means to the low income participants is very aligned to the descriptions of what respect means to these same participants, this gives support to the validity of these findings.
- A central proposition of the findings is that respect is crucial in the value proposition, and forms a critical founding reason for success of businesses. Support for this proposition can be found in various case studies included in Prahalad (2010), where respect was identified as a critical feature: The ITC e-Choupal system worked very well at the BOP when it replaced the previous disrespectful and demeaning mandi system with the more respectful and inclusive e-Choupal; the ICICI Bank in India was very financially successful when it restored the dignity of potential BOP customers; and Aravind eye hospital, for which mutual respect is a core value, has been very financially and socially

successful, across BOP and higher income consumers (Prahalad, 2010).

The findings of chapter 5 are discussed in terms of the literature, both as discussed in chapter 2 above and potential competing explanations for the findings, in more detail below. This involves asking questions such as “What does this theme mean? What are the assumptions underpinning it? What are the implications of this theme?” (Braun & Clarke, 2008, p. 94).

6.3. How does respectful or disrespectful behaviour, actions or incidents impact on the customer value proposition and preparedness of a customer to buy, if at all?

6.3.1. Research question 1a) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of the purchasing decision in relation to the relevant good/service

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer more likely to purchase the good or service?

As set out in 5.7.2.1 above, in all 16 “positive” critical incidents, the purchase or exchange transaction was completed, and in all three incidents where the participant had not been planning to buy the relevant item, they did so following the experience of positive treatment (Kantian “moral respect” – Garcia, 2012).

Since value is experiential (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), and given the specific need of low-income consumers for respect (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011), it is not surprising that respectful behaviours make the consumer more likely to purchase the good or service.

However, one has to also consider the competing services literature concerning purchasing actions following positive incidents, for example customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and customer delight and outrage.

Arnold et al. (2005) identified various factors that related to delightful shopping experiences, the interpersonal factors being as follows (Arnold et

al., 2005, p. 1136): “*Interpersonal effort – helpful; interpersonal engagement – friendly/nice; Problem resolution (corrected a situation/willing to go outside of rules); Interpersonal distance (not too pushy); Time commitment (looked for product/took time)*”. The key factors identified by the participants in this study as being indicative of respect have some overlaps, as follows: “Greeting in a friendly manner, smiles” is similar to interpersonal engagement – friendly/nice; “Time and attention” and “provision of information” are similar to interpersonal effort – helpful. While the factors identified by Arnold et al. (2005) were empirically derived, the theoretical background was not certain between expectations theory, or needs theory (Schneider & Bowen, 1999), discussed in Chapter 2 above. Whereas needs theory supports the centrality of respect, as discussed in Chapter 2 above, expectations theory differs, and there is accordingly potentially another explanation for the participants’ behaviours in purchasing the relevant goods or services, not as a result of the centrality of respect, as theorised in this study, but potentially as a result of product and/or service expectations having been exceeded. However, while this possibility cannot be discounted, there are no specific reasons to believe that this explanation is any more compelling than the explanation of the centrality of respect in the value proposition.

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer less likely to purchase the good or service?

As discussed in chapter 5, in all cases the participants still purchased the relevant goods or services, although in most instances not from the relevant supplier who demonstrated disrespect. In every instance, therefore, the participant did not appear associate the disrespect with the **product** itself, in other words there did not seem to be any blaming of the brand of the relevant good/service for not ensuring respectful treatment to potential purchasers. This was the case even for franchises, such as McDonalds.

The reasons behind this behaviour are not certain. It may be to do with the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 5, in many instances the products were fast moving consumer goods or low value clothing for home (non-public)

use, and so the brand value of these goods is perhaps not high enough that the participants expected the relevant company to have taken steps to ensure good service from all retailers of its brand. In other words, if the met-expectations model applies, and dissatisfaction is as a result of unmet expectations, one explanation for the apparent lack of dissatisfaction is that the low brand value and/or context of the relevant goods and services was such that the participants had not developed expectations concerning the behaviours that the brand “should have” ensured during the acquisition process.

Another possible explanation may be linked to the sense of powerlessness experienced by certain participants. As discussed in Chapter 5, Ms LM and Mr JP each expressed a sense of inevitability of poor treatment or attitude within the marketplace in their communities. According to Bunker & Ball (2009), this is a sense of powerlessness, which often occurs where there is either lack of choice, or unrecoverable service failure. Mr JP specifically referred to a lack of choice, and both Ms LM and Mr JP experienced unrecovered service failure or “double deviation” (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007) in the specific negative incidents discussed in this study, therefore it would make sense according to the literature for Ms LM and Mr JP to be experiencing powerlessness. The emergent theme of “black on black” discrimination within the townships, in terms of which participants referred to lower service levels / poor treatment within township areas is also aligned to this. Whereas the participants concerned may not have expressed powerlessness, perhaps because of the perceived ability in relation to these incidents to shop elsewhere (Sandton), the incidents and perceived situation portrayed by Ms LP and Ms IS indicates an expectation that service levels will be lower within the townships. If other participants similarly feel this way, there may be a current preparedness to carry on buying certain “everyday” items within the townships, notwithstanding the lower expectations of service / good treatment, because of affordability, including the fact that buying closer to home avoids the “BOP penalty” experienced in relation to transport costs (Ismail & Kleyn, 2012).

It is important to note, however, that according to Bunker & Ball (2009), powerlessness may result in unexpected switching where feasible alternatives arise. These feasible alternatives could perhaps be owing to increased competition within the lower income markets, or as a result of the high social mobility in South Africa, the brands where disrespect was experienced in the past may be shunned by the upwardly mobile consumers. This should similarly be the case for any other compromises for affordability. In addition, whereas lack of dissatisfaction (or only moderate dissatisfaction) may currently be the case based on the current expectations, Schneider & Bowen (1999) highlight that meeting or exceeding expectations in terms of met expectations theory results in increased expectations going forward. This means that, as competition increases within the BOP market, and/or as the income levels of low income consumers increase, the meeting of expectations from higher service and more respectful businesses will have an effect on the expectations of the consumers going forward, and they may no longer be willing to accept the current negative treatment in the marketplace.

In conclusion, therefore, whereas the participants in this study did not indicate any reduced likelihood of acquiring the relevant good/service following a negative experience in the marketplace, the various theoretical explanations for this indicate that this should not be relied upon to remain the case, in situations where there is increased competition or social mobility.

6.3.2. Research question 1b) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of the supplier at which the relevant good/service will be purchased

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer more likely to purchase the good or service at the relevant supplier who demonstrates respect?

As discussed in chapter 5, twelve of the participants indicated a preference for buying the relevant good or service from the supplier where the positive experience occurred (classified as respect or care by all but three of the

participants as discussed in 5.7.1 above). This is consistent with the literature that finds that economic and functional value propositions provide points of parity amongst competitors, whereas emotional and symbolic value provides points of difference (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007), with the result that respectful behaviours appear to give businesses an opportunity to obtain a key “competitive edge” if they are able to provide higher service levels that meet low income consumers’ needs for respect / esteem.

As discussed in Chapter 5, two of the participants prefer not to purchase from the relevant suppliers because of perceived lack of quality, and only purchase items that are for private home use and where durability is less important. Since economic and functional value propositions typically provide points of parity amongst competitors (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007), where quality (durability) as a functional value proposition is missing, it makes sense that the participants would prefer not to purchase at the relevant suppliers since their basic requirements or points of parity are not met.

In conclusion, therefore, it appears from this study that respectful treatment is a strong causal factor for selection of suppliers for a given item, all else being equal, and the key situations where this is not the case appear to be:

- purchase from “disrespectful” suppliers - where the participant feels powerless as regards disrespectful treatment, feels that this is inevitable or has no feasible alternatives/competitors within the accessible area;
- failure to purchase from “respectful” suppliers - where the participant has other alternative service providers where she also feels respected and so respect is not a point of difference, or where the basic economic or functional value proposition (including quality or durability to mitigate financial risk) is not met by the relevant respectful supplier for the given item.

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer less likely to purchase the good or service at the relevant supplier who demonstrates disrespect?

Chapter 5 sets out very interesting findings concerning negative experiences in the marketplace and complaining behaviour. Contrary to Thupae's (2010) finding that low income consumers were unlikely to complain about a negative brand experience, and the literature regarding the low percentage of dissatisfied customers who actually complain to the service provider (Bunker & Ball, 2009; Huppertz, 2007), in this research 14 of the 16 participants complained when they felt that a situation in the marketplace was disrespectful (including one that was approached by a manager to investigate the situation, which facilitated her complaint). This may indicate that, as regards disrespectful behaviour, the psychological cost of leaving this disrespectful behaviour unchecked is severe enough to overcome other relevant factors in the complaint decision making process, and accordingly to prompt a complaint. This initial finding regarding likelihood to complain is very important, given the low percentage of complaints and the opportunity to rectify the problem (with that, and future, customers) that is afforded by a complaint (Huppertz, 2007).

Arnold et al. (2005) hypothesise that uncaring, rude or disinterested salespeople may violate a customer's need for self-esteem, resulting in a terrible shopping experience and customer outrage, in accordance with Schneider & Bowen's (1999) model of customer delight and customer outrage. In this respect, the services literature is consistent with the core proposition of this study that respect is a critical component of value, and violation of respect would have consequences as regards consumers' unwillingness to contract.

However, given the identified tendency of participants to complain, one has to consider the matter further in terms of the literature on customer complaints. According to Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper (2007), service recovery is possible following a service failure (for example through successful resolution of a complaint), however more often than not the

service recovery is unsuccessful and results in intensified negative perceptions, and this is referred to as “double deviation”.

Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper (2007) found that emotions have a greater impact on customer satisfaction levels and associated propensity to switch, than thoughts, in the case of double deviation situations, and that in many instances customers are looking for emotional redress, or psychological compensation, and not only the physical or practical resolution of the complaint. Applying this approach, one must assess the resolution of complaints from both a practical and emotional perspective.

When looking at the six resolutions (practical perspective) in this manner, the outlier changes. Whereas previously the outlier appeared to be Ms JS, who complained about being followed as if she were a criminal and where the situation was practically rectified, there was no apology and accordingly it makes sense that she would not purchase at this supplier. Of the five other situations that were practically rectified, three of them involved an apology and a fourth involved an “attitude change” demonstrating regret and willingness to assist. The new outlier is accordingly Ms TM, who was ignored at a bar, and whereas the manager later served her, she did not receive any apology or attitude change from the relevant bartender. In spite of this, she continues to frequent the relevant bar, on the basis that she “enjoy[s] being there”.

It does not appear that Ms TM’s actions can be explained by a lack of strong emotion or desire for psychological compensation (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007), because she refers to being very angry and feeling like perpetrating physical violence against the relevant employee. Her actions may perhaps be explained by theories on powerlessness (Bunker & Ball, 2009). One of the situations in which a sense of powerlessness develops is an unrecoverable service failure (Bunker & Ball, 2009), which Ms TM experienced in this critical incident. One of the secondary coping behaviours in this type of situation is secondary control, where the person adjusts their own perceptions or expectations in order to maintain self esteem in the face of a lack of primary control (the ineffective complaint)

(Bunker & Ball, 2009). This may explain Ms TM's behaviour, and justification that she professes to continue to have a good time at the relevant bar. As highlighted by Bunker & Ball (2009), however, there is a strong possibility of switching when other feasible alternatives arise.

The theory of powerlessness likewise explains the outlier, Mr JP, in relation to a transaction concluded where the situation was not rectified, as discussed in Chapter 5 above.

These findings, where there is a high correlation between unrectified complaints and failure to complete the acquisition at the relevant supplier, on the one hand, and between rectified complaints and completion of acquisition at the relevant supplier on the other hand, are consistent with the literature on the importance of respect to low income consumers (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Barki & Parente, 2010; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009), although the importance of respect does not necessarily explain these findings. In this respect, the service literature on "double deviation" proposes two key explanations of the strong response to unrectified complaints (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007). The first relates to justice theories (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007), which is aligned to respect given Miller's (2001) describes disrespect as being the denial of entitlements or any other "unjust" actions or behaviours. The second relates to strong emotional responses to the unresolved complaint itself (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007), which may be significantly divorced from the original cause for complaint.

It is therefore important to be aware that the core nature of respect is not the only potential explanation for the behaviours of the participants in this study.

The consistency of these responses across LSM levels also indicates that, to the extent that the participants' behaviours can be explained by the centrality of respect to the customer value proposition, this may not be particular to low income consumers.

6.3.3. Research question 1c) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of potential financial purchase price

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer prepared to pay more for the good or service?

Eleven of the participants indicated that they would be willing to pay more for the good/service at the place where they felt well treated and respected (refer to 5.7.2.3 above). Since these reactions appeared to be store specific, rather than brand specific, however, this does not appear to give rise to an opportunity to strengthen brand value.

These findings regarding potential purchase premium are contrary to the traditional “value in use” and “value in exchange” division (Kowalkowski, 2011; Smith 1776/2012), and supports the more modern approach to perceptual value and experiential value in terms of service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008) and customer-dominant logic (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013).

Whereas it has been identified that low income consumers frequently buy more expensive versions of products, this has typically been attributed in the literature to risk minimisation through using trusted brands (Broyles, Schumann & Leingpibul, 2009; Prahalad, 2010). Conversely, the participants in this study stated a willingness to pay more (a premium) for an identical item at a store where there was a positive experience (classified as respect or care by all but three of the participants as discussed in 5.7.1 above). In other words, this study has identified a potential alternative reasons for the selection of higher cost items by low income consumers, namely that there may be a premium paid by low income consumers for experiences of respect during the acquisition process.

This is not to say that respectful treatment will always give rise to a willingness to pay a premium. In the service literature, Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos (1994) highlight that service quality and customer satisfaction are not identical concepts, and that at times a customer may rate the service quality highly but be dissatisfied, perhaps because of price, or vice versa.

Similarly, the customer satisfaction or delight with respectful treatment does not automatically convert to willingness to spend more for this outcome, since there are a variety of relevant factors, and as discussed in Chapter 5 above, participants have expressed circumstances where affordability is a critical feature and areas in their lives where they are willing to compromise because of affordability concerns.

In relation to the willingness to pay more for goods or services but not for transport costs to access these goods or services as expressed by one of the participants, it appears that taxi fare may be considered “wasted”, whereas spending more on a higher value item may be considered “invested” (and perhaps able to provide the purchaser with status or respect from others by displaying the higher value item). This kind of transport cost to access goods or services is referred to by Ismail & Kleyn (2012) as part of the BoP penalty (additional costs borne by low income consumers compared to higher income consumers for the same items).

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer only prepared to purchase at a lower (financial) price for the good or service?

As discussed 5.7.3 above, this study has indicated a very strong unwillingness to re-engage with a disrespectful supplier, unless the participant feels empowered to prevent this potential future disrespect. This empowerment aspect is aligned to the theory on power and powerlessness (Bunker & Ball, 2009) as discussed in 6.3.2 above.

These findings are consistent with the literature on the importance of respect to low income consumers (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Barki & Parente, 2010; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009), and justice theory as applied to service recovery and double deviation situations (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007), which is aligned to respect given Miller's (2001) describes disrespect as being the denial of entitlements or any other “unjust” actions or behaviours. However, a competing explanation, as discussed in 6.3.2 above, is strong emotional responses to

the unresolved complaint itself (Casado-Díaz, Más-Ruiz & Kasper, 2007), which may be significantly divorced from the original cause for complaint. It is therefore important to be aware that the core nature of respect is not the only potential explanation for the behaviours of the participants in this study.

6.3.4. Research question 1d) Respectful/disrespectful actions as a predictor of potential non-financial purchase price

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel respected make the consumer prepared to endure inconvenience (eg. travel further) for the good or service?

As set out in Chapter 5, ten of the participants indicated that they would be willing to buy at the service provider who treated them with respect, even if this were more inconvenient.

However, as highlighted by Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos (1994), purchase intention shortly after a service episode is not necessarily strongly indicative of actual future purchases. In addition, only two of the positive experiences related to the fast moving consumer goods area (where one of these two participants indicated an intention to prefer the relevant supplier even if more inconvenient), and the rest of the incidents related to items that were needed less often, where inconveniently accessible suppliers would tend to be more practical (in comparison to items needed on a daily basis, where convenience is critical). For these reasons, the stated views of the participants as regards willingness to suffer a higher non-financial purchase price for respectful treatment should not be overemphasised.

Does an acquisition process that makes a consumer feel disrespected make the consumer only prepared to purchase at a lower inconvenience level for the good or service?

As discussed in 6.3.2 and 6.3.3 above, there is a very strong unwillingness to re-engage with a disrespectful supplier, unless the participant feels empowered to prevent this potential future disrespect. The potential explanations for this are discussed above. Increased convenience does not

appear to be a factor that addresses the issues experienced by participants, and this appears strongly unlikely to motivate re-engagement with a supplier where there has been double deviation.

6.4. Research question 2: What types of actions, behaviours or incidents do low income consumers within South Africa experience as demonstrating respect, or disrespect, in the marketplace?

6.4.1. Incidents categorised by type of respect or disrespect

All critical incidents were able to be objectively categorised as involving Kantian “moral respect” and/or “contractual respect” (Garcia, 2012) – refer 5.5 above. In other words, in each and every case where a participant was asked to discuss a critical incident, either positive or negative, this objectively involved an incident of respect or disrespect. While not conclusive, on the basis that the incidents foremost (or most critical – the incidents that participants chose to discuss) in the minds of each of the participants objectively related to respect or disrespect, it appears that respect is of high importance to low income consumers, consistent with the findings of various authors in this regard (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009, in relation to the importance of contractual respect to low income consumers; and Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Sawady & Tescher, 2008; and Thupae, 2010, in relation to the importance of moral respect to low income consumers).

This study also gave support to previous theorisation that respect could be operationalised for low-income consumers as “caring” (Sawady & Tescher, 2008), with 12 of the 16 participants mentioning care in a context indicating the operationalisation of positive or respectful treatment as “caring”, as discussed in Chapter 5 above.

6.4.2. Incidents categorised by behaviour category

6.4.2.1. Respectful behaviours

This study highlighted three key respectful behaviour categories, namely “greeting in a friendly manner, smiles”, “time / attention” and “provision of information”.

The behaviour categories “greeting in a friendly manner, smiles” and “time / attention” are consistent with the themes identified in the literature review, namely high interpersonal interaction or personal approach, high service levels (as opposed to low service level or self-service requirement), equal treatment of all customers, and acknowledging all customers who enter the business premises (Barki & Parente, 2010 - Brazil; Friend, Costley & Brown, 2010 – New Zealand).

As discussed in 6.3 above, the service literature on customer delight and outrage shows several parallels with the respectful and disrespectful behaviour categories identified in this study. Of the interpersonal factors identified by Arnold et al. (2005, p. 1136): “*Interpersonal effort – helpful; interpersonal engagement – friendly/nice; Problem resolution (corrected a situation/willing to go outside of rules); Interpersonal distance (not too pushy); Time commitment (looked for product/took time)*”, the key factors identified by the participants in this study as being indicative of respect have some overlaps, as follows: “Greeting in a friendly manner, smiles” is similar to interpersonal engagement – friendly/nice; “Time and attention” and “provision of information” are similar to interpersonal effort – helpful. To the extent that customer delight is based on needs theory, this supports the centrality of respect, as discussed in Chapter 2 above, however customer delight has an alternative explanation in the form of expectations theory, in which case the identified positive behaviours in this study may in fact not be indicative of respectful behaviours but rather areas where expectations are met or exceeded in accordance with expectations theory.

As indicated, the behaviour category “**provision of information**” could perhaps relate to interpersonal interaction and high service levels, although it appears that in some instances the relevant information either was or could have been provided in a form other than personally, for example the prices of tracksuits that Mr MN was looking for, the cellphone insurance information which could have been clearly displayed in written form in Ms LS’s case, and the written menu that Ms NR was given that provided her with the information she needed. It therefore appears that “**provision of information**” is a respectful behaviour that goes beyond the previously identified areas. This appears to be somewhat similar to the respectful action of explaining any actions that have a negative impact on another person (Miller, 2001). In addition, where the societal norms for consumption (Wang, 2011) involve selection amongst multiple options, the failure to provide information to low income consumers to enable them to consume in accordance with societal norms would be a form of consumer exclusion. Accordingly, one could anticipate that low income consumers’ increased need for status or respect (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011) would drive the need for information related to the market, to improve the richness of the consumption experience and meet societal norms for consumption.

6.4.2.2. Disrespectful behaviours

The overlaps between the key disrespectful behaviour categories identified according to the inductive method in Chapter 5, and the disrespectful behaviour categories identified by Miller (2001) and Kumar (2009) which were applied as a deductive method of analysis in Chapter 5, give some support as to the credibility of the findings as regards disrespectful behaviours.

As is the case with interpersonal factors giving rise to customer delight, there appears to be some overlap with the factors giving rise to customer outrage, as identified by Arnold et al. (2005, p. 1136) as follows: “*Lack of interpersonal effort (not at all helpful); Lack of interpersonal*

engagement (unfriendly/rude/ignore); Lack of problem resolution (would anot go outside of rules); Lack of interpersonal distance (very pushy); Lack of time commitment (took no time to look for product or help); Lack of ethics (dishonesty); Lack of skills or knowledge". The identified categories of being ignored, attitude (tone of voice, body language, looks) and verbal abuse and/or criticism appear to relate to lack of interpersonal engagement (unfriendly/rude/ignore); unfair dealings, excuses, "stories" appears to relate to lack of ethics (as well as the non-interpersonal category of "*lack of technical quality*" also identified by Arnold et al. (2005, p. 1136)); and waiting a long time appears to relate to lack of interpersonal effort and lack of time commitment.

As is the case with customer delight, to the extent that customer outrage is based on needs theory, this supports the centrality of respect, as discussed in Chapter 2 above, however customer outrage has an alternative explanation in the form of expectations theory, in which case the identified positive behaviours in this study may in fact not be indicative of respectful behaviours but rather areas where expectations were substantially not met in accordance with expectations theory.

As regards the sub-theme of attitude identified above, in Chapter 5, of judgment based on appearance, language, ethnicity, or class this is consistent with the literature on disrespect as discrimination between ethnic groups (Juul, 2012). The cited "black-on-black" behaviour and within the townships may be linked to the widespread jealousy within the black ethnic group as identified by Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi (2011) as being indicative of egoistic relative deprivation.

Whereas there may be numerous detailed and culturally specific actions or experiences that are considered disrespectful by South African low income consumers, this research showed that discrimination, verbal abuse and criticism, incivility or rudeness, negative attitudes, experiences of being ignored, and unfair dealings were all experiences to which various participants were exposed. In these circumstances, where the more severe behaviours that are universally considered

disrespectful appear highly prevalent, it is submitted that one cannot expect to identify the intricacies or specificities of culturally variable and lower severity forms of disrespect. In other words, when a participant is choosing one critical incident to share with the researcher, this will tend to be the most severe incident, and so lesser forms of negative treatment and disrespect are unlikely to be raised.

The form of disrespect of having to wait a long time, may be linked to discrimination between ethnic groups (Juul, 2012) or discrimination based on class. In this respect, of the 10 incidents involving eight participants, six specified the location of the long waiting period or lack thereof. Of these six, four experiences of waiting a long time occurred within the township, or “black area”, where the vast majority of consumers are low income consumers. The other two occurred in the discount shopping centres within Woodmead, where race may or may not be relevant, as may anticipated level of income given that the consumers who frequent discount shopping centres may have lower incomes than consumers who frequent traditional non-discount shopping malls. Accordingly, waiting a long time may be linked in the minds of the consumers to either race or socio-economic standing.

The incidents of verbal abuse, criticism and blame identified in Chapter 5 require further consideration. This type of customer response is extreme, as can be seen from the related customer services literature, where blame is highlighted as a “*patently negative response*” by Keaveney (1995, p. 77), and Arnold et al. (2005, p. 1140) refers to salespeople “*even go[ing] so far as to blame the customer*” (emphasis added). The question arises as to why certain employees appear to feel like they can treat customers in this manner. This may be partly related to egoistic relative deprivation, jealousy and trying to “pull other black people down” (Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011, p. 126).

Certain participants indicated some views on reasons behind poor customer treatment, including: having either no supervision, or friends as managers, so that there are no negative consequences to one’s

actions; not enjoying one's job, having had aspirations for something else that have not been met, and so doing the bare minimum and being angry and resentful; While not raised by the participants themselves, the potential argument concerning no negative consequences could perhaps be linked to the stringent labour laws in South Africa, where it is difficult to dismiss employees.

6.5. Conclusion

It is submitted that this research and its findings concerning respect and disrespect forms the basis for reconsidering the existing services literature on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction from a perspective of respect and disrespect, and the existing services literature on customer delight and outrage (as more intense forms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction) and reframing this against Schneider & Bowen's (1999) needs theory where the core needs of the person are seen as being more critical or of higher intensity of emotion than the needs or expectations as a consumer. In other words, it is submitted that the intense responses of customers have more to do with acknowledging the customer as a person and respecting her or his basic human rights and dignity, than meeting customer-level expectations.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the type of behaviours that low income consumers experienced as respectful or disrespectful, and the interaction between respect or disrespect and the customer value proposition, within the context of low income consumers. This chapter highlights the main results of the research (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 above), and the main conclusions of analysis (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 above). The implications for business and academics of these research findings are discussed, and finally this chapter gives recommendations regarding future research areas.

7.2. Highlights

- a) This study supported the findings in the literature (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Barki & Parente, 2010; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009) that respect is of high importance to low income consumers.
- b) Of Garcia's (2012) three identified categories of Kantian respect, the two that would relate to marketplace interactions are "moral respect" and "contractual respect". One or both of these categories of respect can be identified in each and every critical incident in this study.
- c) "Caring" appears to an indicator of respect, consistent with Sawady & Tescher's (2008) views in this regard.
- d) Key respectful behaviours identified in this study were "**greeting in a friendly manner, smiles**" and "**time / attention**", which were consistent with themes identified in the literature review (Barki & Parente, 2010 and Friend, Costley & Brown, 2010), as well as "**provision of information**". These respectful behaviours were consistent with the services literature on customer delight (Arnold et al., 2005).

- e) Key disrespectful behaviours identified in this study were “**being ignored**”, “**attitude (tone of voice, body language, looks)**”, “**verbal abuse and/or criticism/blame**” and “**unfair dealings, excuses, ‘stories’**”, which were consistent with themes identified in the literature review (Kumar, 2009 and Miller, 2001), as well as “**waiting a long time**”. These disrespectful behaviours were consistent with the services literature on customer outrage (Arnold et al., 2005).
- f) A minority of participants identified a theme of “black on black” discrimination, which may be aligned to egoistic relative deprivation and jealousy within the black ethnic group (Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011).
- g) Respectful behaviours appear to make the consumer more likely to purchase the relevant good or service, consistent with the literature indicating the specific need of low-income consumers for respect (Barki & Parente, 2010; Chipp, Kleyn, & Manzi, 2011; Thupae, 2010; Wang, 2011), the literature on experiential value (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), and the services literature on service as a differentiator.
- h) Respectful treatment is a strong causal factor for selection of suppliers, all else being equal, and may be a key source of store-specific competitive advantage, consistent with the literature that finds that economic and functional value propositions provide points of parity amongst competitors whereas emotional and symbolic value provides points of difference (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007).
- i) There is strong evidence that certain low income consumers are prepared to pay a “respect” premium, in line with the modern perceptual value and experiential value approaches in terms of service-dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008) and customer-dominant logic (Heinonen, Strandvik, & Voima, 2013).
- j) Disrespectful treatment does not appear to have a significant impact on the likelihood that the relevant goods or services will be purchased. In other words, it appears that the attribution of “blame” in relation to

disrespectful treatment is generally store specific, rather than being attributed to the product and/or the chain of stores.

- k) Complaining behaviour in response to disrespectful treatment is very high, contrary to past findings in response to dissatisfaction generally (Bunker & Ball, 2009; Huppertz, 2007; Thupae, 2010), which indicates that either low income consumers are more likely to complain, or consumers are more likely to complain where there are critical issues of disrespect. The complaining behaviour provides for opportunities to correct the service failure, and retain the customer.
- l) Unresolved complaints in relation to disrespectful treatment are highly correlated with failure to purchase the item at the relevant disrespectful supplier, and resolved complaints in relation to disrespectful treatment are highly correlated with completion of acquisition with the relevant supplier, which appears consistent with the literature on the importance of respect to low income consumers (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Barki & Parente, 2010; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009), and the literature on service failure and double deviation (Casado-Díaz et al., 2007).
- m) Low income consumers appear to be generally unwilling to purchase in the future from disrespectful suppliers, which appears consistent with the literature on the importance of respect to low income consumers (for example Arnold & Valentin, 2013; Barki & Parente, 2010; Harrison & Gray, 2010; and Karnani, 2009), and the literature on service failure and double deviation (Casado-Díaz et al., 2007).

7.3. Implications for business (implications for managers)

This research showed the extent of discrimination, verbal abuse and criticism, incivility or rudeness, negative attitudes, experiences of being ignored, and unfair dealings to which the participants were exposed. Whereas this research was not directed at identifying the prevalence of disrespectful behaviour in the low income consumer market, managers would do well to note these types of unacceptable behaviour that appear to be occurring on a

regular basis, particularly as regards negative treatment of the poor or minority language groups, and the apparent perception that this is acceptable. This may require appropriate training as regards diversity, and empowerment of customers especially where managers do not speak the language and so may not be in a position to identify this unacceptable behaviour even when present.

Since economic and functional value propositions provide points of parity amongst competitors, whereas emotional and symbolic value provides points of difference (Rintamäki, Kuusela, & Mitronen, 2007), the identified respectful behaviours appear to give managers an opportunity to obtain a key “competitive edge”, in that these are also aligned to the services literature on customer delight and customer loyalty. Furthermore, business would do well to note the findings of this study that there is a financial premium that many low income consumers are prepared to pay for respect, and that unremedied disrespectful behaviour typically excludes the relevant businesses from any repeat custom from the relevant disrespected persons, regardless of price or convenience (Casado-Díaz et al., 2007). This may indicate that a certain level of respect is considered a base level for any engagement with a business, and that higher levels of respect than this are something for which low income consumers are specifically willing to pay a premium.

7.4. Implications for academics

Although this research was exploratory in nature, and so cannot be extrapolated or relied upon as being representative of the population as a whole, it has added to the body of knowledge as regards consumer behaviour in low income markets. This research integrated the services literature on customer delight and outrage with the literature on respect and disrespect in the marketplace, and identified respectful experiences from good service as a component of “value in acquisition” in terms of the customer value proposition. Low income consumers’ actual and intended purchase behaviour was assessed against the background of positive (respectful/caring) and negative (disrespectful/uncaring) behaviours, to identify how these incidents impacted on the customer value proposition and what low income consumers would be willing to spend (financially and non-financially) in these situations. This study

highlighted an alternative rationale (to risk minimisation through trusted brands) behind low income consumers' selection of higher cost items, being a premium for experiences of respect.

The findings on the premium for respect, and the strong aversion identified in this study to dealing with disrespectful businesses, regardless of price or convenience, fill a gap in the literature on the customer value proposition, where respect as an emotional or psychological need during the acquisition process has not been specifically explored in the literature in the past.

7.5. Recommendations for future research

This research was exploratory and qualitative in nature. In order to take these initial findings further, future research should examine the types of behaviours that low income consumers find respectful or disrespectful, and how respect or disrespect features in the customer value proposition, using a quantitative tool.

Because the overwhelming majority ($n = 13$) of the participants were female, and similarly thirteen of the participants were aged below 40, there may be gender-based or age-based or cohort-related biases to these findings. Broader research, involving more male participants and a more even spread of ages of participants, should be considered to identify and eliminate any such biases.

Another interesting finding was regards the strong tendency of low income consumers to complain in relation to disrespectful treatment. This specific aspect of dissatisfaction, with a seemingly far higher tendency to complain than in relation to dissatisfaction more broadly, including as regards dissatisfaction of low income consumers, differs from general literature on this topic and should be explored further.

South Africa has a climate of racial tension based on its history of apartheid. Given the link between income inequality and poverty, on the one hand, and violence on the other (Crutchfield & Wadsworth, 2003; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark & Schafer, 2000), and the theory that violence may follow from

experiences of disrespect, there is an underlying threat of disrespectful experiences by low income black South Africans potentially sparking violence (for example violent crime), particularly against the privileged white minority. In contrast, this research identified an emergent theme of “black on black” discrimination within the marketplace, that should be explored further to identify if this is merely an anomaly of this study or if it is perhaps a more common and pervasive feature of low income markets.

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Annexe A

**Short-list of questions (Chipp & Corder, 2009) to classify “BOP” and “core”
households**

1. Do you have hot running water at home?
2. Do you have a working laptop/PC?
3. Do you have a working motor vehicle?
4. Do you have a working vacuum cleaner / floor polisher?
5. Do you have a working electric stove?
6. Do you have a working microwave?
7. Do you have a flush toilet (in your home or on the plot at home)?

Adapted from Breytenbach (2011, p.106-107).

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction and Background

- 1) Introduction of researchers (primary researcher and assistant/translator) by name; we are doing research for university studies, are you happy to help us by talking to us for an hour or more?
- 2) Interviewee is informed, and signs the consent form.
- 3) Demographic information about the participant (age, gender, race, education levels).
- 4) Questions to establish whether or not the potential participant falls within the desired sample group/s (“BOP” and “core” short form questions, Chipp & Corder, 2009):
 1. Do you have hot running water at home?
 2. Do you have a working laptop/PC?
 3. Do you have a working motor vehicle?
 4. Do you have a working vacuum cleaner / floor polisher?
 5. Do you have a working electric stove?
 6. Do you have a working microwave?
 7. Do you have a flush toilet (in your home or on the plot at home)?

Questions – negative experience

- 1) We would like to understand your experiences in the marketplace. Can you think of a time when you were treated badly in the marketplace? Can you tell me about this? When did this happen? Where did this happen? What were you going to buy? Who else was involved? (Richness of experience is necessary to determine quality of the data.)
- 2) Can you tell me what happened then? (Narrative story in the participant’s own words.)

- 3) What were the specific actions, behaviours or incidents that made you feel that you were badly treated?
- 4) What happened then? What was your response?
 - a. What did you think about the [insert good/service]? What did you think about the supplier? What did you think about the other person/s involved?
 - b. How did you feel about the [insert good/service]? How did you feel about the supplier? How did you feel about the other person/s involved?
 - c. Did you still buy the good/service at the same place, and if so, why? Or did you look for it somewhere else, and why/why not?
 - d. Was there a period of time after the incident when you did not buy this good/service (at all)?
 - e. Was there a period of time after the incident when you did not buy from this supplier?
 - f. Have you ever been back? Tell me more. What did you buy when you went back?
 - g. How much do you generally spend at this supplier, and on what?
 - h. Have you gone to buy the [insert good/service] again since the incident, at a different supplier? Tell me more.
- 5) If [insert good/service] were a person, tell me about the kind of person they would be. [Use car if the interviewee does not seem to be comfortable personifying]
- 6) What words come to mind when you think of this supplier? If this supplier were a person, tell me about the kind of person they would be?

- 7) How do you feel about buying this good/service, or other goods/services from this supplier in the future? **If this shows that the participant does not want to buy the relevant good/service, or does not want to buy it from the relevant supplier:**
- i. If [insert good/service] were cheaper than other similar goods/services, would you then buy this good/service? Why/why not?
 - j. If this supplier were cheaper (operationalise, based on actual cost) than other suppliers, for this same good/service or other goods/services, would you then buy from this supplier? Why/why not?
 - k. If it were easier to get [insert good/service] than to get other similar items, would you then buy this good/service? Why/why not?
 - l. If it were easier to get to this supplier than other suppliers, would you then buy from this supplier? Why/why not?

Questions – positive experience

- 1) We would now like to understand positive experiences in the marketplace.
Can you think of a time when you were treated well in the marketplace? How did this come about? When did this happen? Where did this happen? What were you going to buy? Who else was involved? (Richness of experience is necessary to determine quality of the data.)
- 2) Can you tell me what happened then? (Narrative story in the participant's own words.)
- 3) What were the specific actions, behaviours or incidents that made you feel that you were treated well?
- 4) What happened then? What was your response?
 - m. What did you think about the [insert good/service]? What did you think about the supplier? What did you think about the other person/s involved? Tell me about it.

- n. How did you feel about the [insert good/service]? How did you feel about the supplier? How did you feel about the other person/s involved? Tell me about it.
 - o. Did you buy the [insert good/service] and if so, had you been planning to do so or did the experience make you want to do so?
 - p. Did you go back? Why? What did you buy when you went back? How much do you generally spend at this supplier, and on what?
 - q. Have you gone to buy the [insert good/service] again since then, at a different supplier? Why?
- 5) What words come to mind when you think of [insert good/service]?
- 6) If [insert good/service] were a person, tell me about the kind of person they would be. [Use car if the interviewee does not seem to be comfortable personifying]
- 7) What words come to mind when you think of this supplier? If this supplier were a person, tell me about the kind of person they would be?
- 8) How do you feel about buying this good/service, or other goods/services from this supplier in the future?
- r. Do you think you would still buy from this supplier if they were more expensive than other suppliers? Why/why not?
 - s. Would you still go to this supplier if it were more difficult to get there? Why/why not?
 - t. Would you still buy [insert good/service] if it were more expensive than other similar items? Why/why not?
 - u. Would you still buy [insert good/service] if it were more difficult to get to it? Why/why not?

Annexe C

CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN NARRATIVE FORMAT

The specific experiences that each participant described as the relevant critical incidents, which assist one in understanding the context in which the participants experience respect and disrespect in the marketplace, are as follows:

1. Ms PS, LSM1-4, 25

Ms PS's negative experience in the marketplace was when she went to collect a lay-buy, and was told that the item had been sold, and the shop assistant denied that Ms PS had ever paid any money on this as a lay-buy, and used abusive language.

Ms PS's positive experience in the marketplace was when she went to purchase various clothes and the total was more than the funds she had available to buy, and the shop gave her the balance of the items for free, effectively giving her a 20% discount for buying large volumes.

2. Ms PT, LSM1-4, 29

Ms PT's negative experience in the marketplace was when she went to her bank to withdraw her investment at the end of a two-year investment period, and she was told that the investment period on the system was three years so she couldn't withdraw her money. After some negotiation, she was allowed to withdraw half, subject to an 18-day waiting period, numerous forms to be completed, and a significant penalty for "early" withdrawal.

Ms PT's positive experience in the marketplace was when, after being wrongly accused by a security guard of shoplifting, the security guard was sincerely apologetic at that time and each time afterwards when he sees her, and the manager also apologised sincerely at a later time when seeing her again.

3. Ms S, LSM1-4, 29

Ms S initially said that she could not recall any negative experience in the marketplace, although when she spoke about her positive experience it

contained negative aspects. Ms S's positive experience in the marketplace was when a clothing store allowed her to exchange shoes she had bought for her daughter that were too small. However, the negative aspects of this experience were that Ms S had been ignored for some time while waiting to be served, with the shop attendants talking to one another instead of helping her.

4. Ms MT, LSM1-4, 35

Ms MT's negative experience in the marketplace was when she asked a shop assistant to help her find a specific medicine, and the shop assistant was rude and complained that Ms MT has asked for help when Ms MT should have easily seen the medicine herself.

Ms MT's positive experience in the marketplace was when a cashier was polite and friendly when Ms MT's grant card was declined.

5. Ms TM, LSM5-6, 21

Ms TM's negative experience in the marketplace was when a bartender ignored her at length when Ms TM wanted to buy drinks. While the manager served Ms TM when she complained, she did not receive any apology.

Ms TM's positive experience in the marketplace was when she was served promptly and well at a hair salon.

6. Mr LP, LSM5-6, 21

Mr LP's negative experience in the marketplace related to sneakers that he had bought, where the rubber came off the first time he wore them, and when he went back to the supplier to return the sneakers, and the supplier refused to accept the return, accused him of having mistreated the sneakers in some manner, and informed him that the issues with the sneakers was "none of their problem".

Mr LP's positive experience in the marketplace was when a shop assistant stayed with him, assisting him with selecting and trying on shoes, for about an hour.

7. Ms LS, LSM5-6, 27

Ms LS's negative experience in the marketplace was when a phone she had bought on contract including insurance went missing, and she experienced significant difficulty in trying to get it replaced. She was informed that the insurance was not actually with the cellphone provider, was required to do various things and call a call centre repeatedly at her own cost, where she was spoken to in a disrespectful manner and was told "stories" as to why she could not claim. In the end she did not receive any compensation or a replacement phone.

Ms LS's positive experience in the marketplace was when two shop assistants each approached and offered to help her, in turn, and she was helped with getting the dress she wanted in the colour she wanted from another branch of the store, and in the process she felt that she was treated with respect, and "like a queen".

8. Ms LP, LSM5-6, 30

Ms LP's negative experience in the marketplace was when the beds that she ordered were not delivered when they were supposed to be, and not for another two weeks after that, without any communication. When Ms LP went in to the shop to find out what was going on, they were not apologetic.

Ms LP's positive experience in the marketplace was when she went to buy a new phone, and the shop assistant took time to explain properly the different phones and their features.

9. Ms ZR, LSM5-6, 33

Ms ZR's negative experience in the marketplace was when only three of her four packets that she handed in at a parcel counter were returned to her, and she only realized a while after she left the parcel counter. When she returned

to the parcel counter, the attendant argued with her and did not attempt to look for her missing packet.

Ms ZR's positive experience in the marketplace was when she asked a sales assistant to keep aside a hat for her until she could come a few days later with money to buy it, and even though she had not paid any deposit or lay-buy amount, the shop assistant reserved the hat for her.

10. Ms JS, LSM5-6, 36

Ms JS describes her negative experience in the marketplace as when she was followed around in a shop as if she were a shoplifter.

Ms JS's positive experience in the marketplace was when she went to a shop to buy some things for her young baby, who was crying, and a manager asked to help her, and took her into the office to sit down in a cool area for her baby to calm down, and then also gave her a gift for her baby.

11. Ms SM, LSM5-6, 36

Ms SM's negative experience in the marketplace was when the glass shelf on a newly purchased room divider fell and broke, breaking the glass shelf below it as well, one day after purchase; and the shop denied responsibility and blamed Ms SM for the damage.

Ms SM's positive experience in the marketplace was when a clothing shop accepted a return (exchange) of flawed goods that she had bought, without any complaints and after only a short waiting time.

12. Mr JP, LSM5-6, 40

Mr JP's negative experience in the marketplace was when two shop assistants, in turn, ignored him when he pointed out that the packaging on some milk was damaged and the milk should be taken away from the shop floor.

Mr JP's positive experience in the marketplace was when shop assistants offered help, and then returned later to see if he was still fine without assistants, when he was looking for jeans.

13. Mr MN, LSM5-6, 42

Mr MN's negative experience in the marketplace was being ignored by a shop assistant, even when asking for price information on a product.

Mr MN's positive experience in the marketplace was having a shop assistant engage with him, and suggest to him that he try on shoes before buying them, because the shoes may be a small cut or for some other reason not fit him properly.

14. Ms NR, LSM7-8, 21

Ms NR's negative experience in the marketplace was when, at a small shop in the township, the shop attendants would not speak to her or respond to her when she spoke her own language, Venda, and would not even speak to her in English. She felt she had to speak Zulu, or else they would not serve her.

Ms NR's positive experience in the marketplace was when the shop assistants at a restaurant answered her questions verbally, as well as giving her the written menu and showing her the items with the prices, for easier understanding.

15. Ms IS, LSM7-8, 23

Ms IS's negative experience in the marketplace was when she was given the wrong burger, and when she complained the cashier "gave her attitude", argued and blamed Ms IS for the mistake, and the manager also did not apologise. Ms IS had to argue at length to get her money back.

Ms IS's positive experience in the marketplace was when the waitress was apologetic and sympathetic when Ms IS's friend complained about her food.

16. Ms LM, LSM9-10, 44

Ms LM's negative experience in the marketplace related to "off" fruit, and aggressive and hostile responses from the staff when this was reported.

Ms LM's positive experience in the marketplace was being noticed and helped in a friendly manner by the security guard and then customer service

representative when eggs that she had purchased broke near the shop, and being given replacement eggs.