

Young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people

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PREFACE

The candidate chose to write an article for submission to the **Journal of Intergenerational Relationships (JIR)** as the chosen research topic accords with the aim and scope of the journal. **The Journal of Intergenerational Relationships** acts as a forum for scholars, practitioners, policy makers, educators, and advocates, who aim to remain up-to-date with the latest research on intergenerational relationships, practice methods and policy initiatives.

JIR typically publishes articles whose content addresses intergenerational relationships evidenced in intergenerational practice, policy and research. Intergenerational relationships occur in familial and non-familial settings and involve interaction that demonstrates positive and negative interactions. The journal was selected for publication as this article focuses on young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people. In an effort to acquire an in-depth understanding of interactions in intergenerational relationships, young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people was explored.

INTENDED JOURNAL AND GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

This dissertation will be submitted to the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* for possible publication.

Instruction to Authors

Research-Based Papers

- Include relevant literature, research question(s), methodology, and results.
- Discuss implications for practice, policy, and further research in an emerging multidisciplinary field of study.
- Include conceptual, theoretical, and/or empirical content.

Manuscript Length: The manuscript may be approximately **15-20 typed pages** double-spaced (approximately **5000 words including references and abstract**). Under special conditions, a paper with 6000 words could be considered.

Manuscript Style: References, citations, and general style of manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the APA Publication Manual, 6th ed. Cite in the text by author and date (Smith, 1983) and include an alphabetical list at the end of the article.

Manuscript Preparation: All parts of the manuscript should be typewritten, double-spaced, with margins of at least one inch on all sides. Number the manuscript pages consecutively throughout the paper. Authors should also supply a shortened version of the title suitable for the running head, not exceeding 50 character spaces. Each article should be summarized in an abstract of not more than 100 words. Avoid abbreviations, diagrams, and reference to the text in the abstract.

Cover Page: *Important* - indicating the article title plus:

- an introductory footnote with authors' academic degrees, professional titles, affiliations, mailing addresses, and any desired acknowledgment of research support or other credit.

Second "title page": Enclose an additional title page. Include the title again plus:

- an ABSTRACT not longer than 100 words. Below the abstract, provide 3-5 key words for bibliographic access, indexing, and abstracting purposes.

Preparation of Tables, Figures, and Illustrations: Illustrations submitted (line drawings, halftones, photos, photomicrographs, etc.) should be clean originals or digital files. Digital files are recommended for highest quality reproduction and should follow these guidelines.

- 300 dpi or higher
- Sized to fit on journal page
- EPS, TIFF, or PSD format only
- Submitted as separate files

Tables and Figures: Tables and figures (illustrations) should not be embedded in the text, but should be included as separate sheets or files. A short descriptive title should appear above each table with a clear legend and any footnotes suitably identified below. All units must be included. Figures should be completely labeled, taking into account necessary size reduction. Captions should be typed, double-spaced, on a separate sheet.

More direct information concerning the proposed submission can be retrieved from the website (<http://jir.ucsur.pitt.edu/submissions.php>).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I wish to praise my Heavenly Father for all the love, grace and blessings every day as well as the ability and opportunity to study and showing me the way to the future he has planned for me.

Second, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor **Prof. Vera Roos** for all her input, motivation and knowledge throughout my entire dissertation journey. I am grateful for the many hours that she invested looking over countless drafts.

Third, I would like to thank all the participants who took part in this study, their honesty and contribution is greatly appreciated as the study would not have been possible without their willingness to share their experiences.

I offer my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my husband, **Kruger Greyvenstein**, for all his patience, support, love and motivation. I also want to say a special thank you to my parent and parents' in-law **Harm and Rehta Müller and Bennie and Magdaleen Greyvenstein**, for all their love and support throughout this journey. I also thank the rest of my family, friends and colleagues for their understanding and motivation during the completion of this dissertation.

I dedicate this study to my great-grandmother **Elsie Müller**, who was an inspiration to me and so many other people. She died earlier this year at the age 101 and was a blessing to our family until the very end. Thank you for teaching me so much in life.

SUMMARY

This research formed part of a broader research project that explored respect in relationships between young female adults and older people (60+ years) in a South African context. Different themes emerged from this research such as the motivation younger people have for respecting older persons; as well as different forms of giving and receiving respect. This research will specifically focus on themes that emerged inductively about the relational context in which the experiences of respect were expressed and the challenges of respect in the interpersonal experiences.

It has been recorded in literature on intergenerational relationships that respect is not only an essential element in these relationships but also that it contributes to constructive relationships. Most of the research about respect has been conducted in Asian and Western countries, while some research has also been done in Ghana, Africa. The above mentioned research findings identified specific behavioural forms of respect, and attitudes and/or emotions associated with respect. Furthermore it has been found that respect can either be earned or deserved, or not, depending on whether and to what extent the person concerned is considered to have met certain requirements. Little research has been done on how people, especially young female adults in South Africa, experience respect in intergenerational relationships.

Experiences of respect between people from different generations always take place in an interpersonal context and therefore the Self-Interaction Group Theory (SIGT) was used to understand young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people. Following SIGT, for the purposes of this study respect is defined as the subjective experience of the relational interactions between people. The focus in this study falls on the experience of respect in relationships with older people from young female adults' perspective. Traditionally female gender roles have been associated with care. However, these roles

changed to more flexible gendered roles and today women are not able to adopt many different roles. The past generations' women took care of their older parents, whereas in the present women also pursue careers and this may have an influence on their interactions with older people as they may not necessarily be able to take care of the older people anymore.

The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University. A qualitative research method informed by an exploratory and descriptive approach was used in an attempt to describe the participants' subjective experiences of respect in the relationships they have with older people. A purposive sample was used and 26 women (between 21 and 28 years old) who are post-graduate psychology university students in the North West, South Africa, participated in the study. The study used a homogenous group of participants in order to get a detailed picture of their experiences. Young adults are in a transitory phase of their lives and research indicated that it is important to investigate their attitudes towards older people because they are likely to form new values, because their lives and behaviours are more influenced by their peers and because they have less parental supervision.

Data was collected in three data-gathering sessions over the period of three days. Textual and visual data was collected through the use of the Mmogo- method®, a projective visual research method which uses a focus group approach. The Mmogo- method® material consists of a lump of malleable clay, different sizes and colours of beads and dried grass stalks of different lengths. Participants are provided with the open-ended materials and based on an open-ended prompt, they are requested to create a visual representation, which in this research was: *Please use the material provided and create anything that can tell us more about how you perceive respect in relation to a person, or persons older than 60 years of age.* After the exercise participants were asked to explain what they have created. A collaborative effort of co-constructed meanings took place as the visual representation of

each participant became the stimulus material for group discussions. The visual representations of participants were photographed and analysed using visual analysis, while the digital recordings of the individuals' explanations of their visual representations as well as the group discussions were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis. Trustworthiness was ensured by applying four strategies, including: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the research findings.

The findings revealed that the relationship with older persons is subjectively described in terms of emotional or cognitive experiences and associated with specific relational contexts. In the familial and social context the experience of respect were linked with care and most of these relationships were described as affectionate/emotional. In the familial and social contexts, older persons were placed in a one-up position with the young adults, since the young adults want to obey and/or honour them. Some described the relationship as a relationship where they interacted as equals. In different contexts, work related, educational and familial, young adults expressed ambivalent emotions: some expressed admiration and love, while others expressed frustration and anger. In the work-related and educational relational contexts, the relationships were experienced as being formal and described in cognitive terms. In these relationships young adults expressed frustration and anger if their needs were not addressed based on how the relational context defined the relationship. For example in the educational contexts, the needs of the young adults were to get clarity on learning content, to receive support to reach their goals, and to reach emotional safety. Young female adults indicated that respect towards older persons is no longer based on the age of older persons. It rather depends on the reciprocal actions and reactions between young adults and older persons; and that it depends on how the relationship between the generational members develops over time, as well as the ability of generational

members to bridge the distance between them and to adopt each other's life worlds, whilst refraining from judgemental and stereotypical assessment of older persons.

This study hence holds important implications for the creation of intergenerational programmes in order to enhance relationships between young adults and older people. A specific contribution of the findings is that when planning interventions intergenerational programmes should be designed to take into consideration the specific interpersonal context. Furthermore, the definitions of respect as held by both of the generational members should be considered in planning intergenerational interventions in specific interpersonal contexts.

Keywords: Intergenerational relationship, Mmogo-method®, Respect, Young female adults.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing was deel van 'n breër navorsingsprojek wat jong vroulike volwassenes se respek in verhoudings met ouer mense (60+ jaar) binne 'n Suid-Afrikaanse konteks verken het. Verskillende temas het uit die navorsing na vore gekom, soos jonger mense se motivering om ouer mense te respekteer, asook verskillende vorme van die gee en ontvang van respek. Hierdie navorsing het spesifiek gefokus op temas wat induktief na vore gekom het oor die verhoudingskonteks waarin die ervarings van respek uitgespreek is, asook die uitdagings van respek in die interpersoonlike ervarings.

Literatuur oor intergenerasionele verhoudings dui aan dat respek nie net 'n belangrike element in hierdie verhoudings is nie, maar ook dat dit bydra tot konstruktiewe verhoudings. Meeste van die navorsing wat oor respek gedoen is, is uitgevoer in Asiatiese en Westerse lande, en 'n paar navorsingsprojekte is ook in Ghana, Afrika, uitgevoer. Die bogenoemde navorsing bevindinge het spesifieke gedragsvorme van respek, asook houdings en/of emosies wat verband hou met respek, geïdentifiseer. Verder is gevind dat of respek verdien kan word, al dan nie, afhang daarvan of, en tot watter, mate die persoon (betrokke in die verhouding) beskou word dat sy/hy aan sekere standaarde voldoen. Min navorsing is al gedoen oor hoe mense, veral jong volwassenes in Suid-Afrika, respek ervaar ten opsigte van intergenerasionele verhoudings.

Ervarings van respek vind altyd plaas binne 'n interpersoonlike konteks tussen mense van verskillende generasies en daarom is daar van die Self-Interaksie Groepteorie (*Self-Interaction Group Theory*, SIGT) gebruik gemaak om jong vroulike volwassenes se ervaring van respek in verhoudings met ouer mense te verstaan. Na aanleiding van SIGT, is respek gedefinieer as die subjektiewe ervarings van die verhoudingsinteraksies tussen mense. Die fokus is geplaas op die ervaring van respek in verhoudings met ouer mense, vanuit die persepektief van vroulike jong volwassenes. Die tradisionele geslagrolle wat aan vrouens

toegeken is, is geassosieer met versorging. Hierdie rolle het egter verander na meer buigsame sienings van vrouens se geslagsrolle en vandag kan vrouens nie aanpas by al die verskillende rolle nie. Vrouens uit vorige generasies het hulle ouer ouers versorg, terwyl eietydse generasies vroue ook loopbane volg – iets wat 'n invloed kan hê op hulle interaksie met ouer mense, aangesien hulle nie noodwendig meer in staat is om die ouer mense te versorg nie.

Die navorsingsprojek is goedgekeur deur die Etiekkomitee van die Noordwes-Universiteit. 'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetode, gerig deur 'n ondersoekende en beskrywende benadering, is gebruik in 'n poging om die deelnemers se subjektiewe ervarings van respek in verhoudings met ouer mense te beskryf. 'n Doelgerigte steekproef is gebruik en 26 vrouens (tussen 21 en 28 jaar oud) wat nagraadse universiteitstudente in die sielkunde is, in die Noord-Wes, Suid Afrika, het aan die studie deelgeneem. Die studie het 'n homogene groep deelnemers gebruik om 'n gedetailleerde beeld van hulle ervarings te kan verkry. Jong volwassenes is in 'n verkenningsfase van hulle lewens en navorsing het aangedui dat dit belangrik is om hulle houdings teenoor ouer mense te ondersoek, omdat hulle geneig is om nuwe waardes te vorm, omdat hul lewens en gedrag meer beïnvloed word deur hul portuurgroep en omdat hulle minder onder toesig van hulle ouers staan.

Die data is ingesamel in drie data-insamelingssessies oor die periode van drie dae. Tekstuele en visuele data is ingesamel deur gebruik te maak van die Mmogo- method®, 'n projektiewe visuele navorsingsmetode wat gebruik maak van 'n fokusgroepbenadering. Die materiaal vir die Mmogo-metode® bestaan uit 'n stuk speelklei, verskillende groottes en kleure krale en gedroogte grasstingels van verskillende lengtes. Deelnemers word voorsien van die oop-einde materiaal en word met 'n oop-einde versoek gevra om 'n visuele voorstelling te maak. In hierdie navorsing het dit soos volg gelui: *Gebruik asseblief die materiaal wat verskaf is en maak enigiets wat ons meer kan vertel oor wat jou ervaring/belewing van respek is in wat betref 'n ouer persoon, of persone, wat ouer as 60 jaar*

is. Hierna is die deelnemers gevra om te verduidelik wat hulle gemaak het. 'n Gesamentlike poging het plaasgevind om die betekenis saam te stel, soos wat elke deelnemer se visuele voorstelling die stimulus-materiaal vir die groepsbespreking geword het. Betroubaarheid is verseker deur die toepassing van vier strategieë, naamlik: geloofwaardigheid, oordraagbaarheid, betroubaarheid en konformiteit van die navorsingsresultate.

Die bevindinge toon dat die verhouding met ouer persone subjektief beskryf word in terme van emosionele of kognitiewe ervarings en dat dit verband hou met spesifieke verhoudingskontekste. Binne familiële, sosiale en geestelike konteks word die ervaring van respek gekoppel aan sorg en die meeste van hierdie verhoudings is beskryf as liefdevol of emosioneel. Binne familiële en sosiale konteks, is ouer persone in 'n een-op posisie geplaas teenoor die jong volwassenes aangesien jong volwassenes hulle gehoorsaam en/of vereer. Sommige beskryf die verhouding as 'n verhouding waar hulle kommunikeer as gelykes. In verskillendekontekste, byvoorbeeld werkverwant, opvoedkundig en familieel, het die jong volwassenes ambivalente emosies uitgedruk. Sommige het uitdrukking gegee aan hulle bewondering en liefde, terwyl ander uitdrukking gegee het aan frustrasie en woede. In werkverwante en opvoedkundige verhoudingskontekste, is die verhoudings ervaar as formeel en in kognitiewe terme beskryf. In hierdie verhoudings het jong volwassenes frustrasie en woede uitgedruk wanneer hulle behoeftes nie aangespreek is nie – iets wat gebaseer is op hoe die verhoudingskonteks die verhouding definieer. Byvoorbeeld: binne opvoedkundige konteks is die behoeftes van die jong volwassenes om duidelikheid te kry oor die leerinhoud en ondersteuning te ontvang om hul doelwitte te bereik, asook 'n behoefte na emosionele veiligheid. Respek teenoor ouer persone is nie meer noodwendig uitsluitlik verkry op grond van die ouderdom van ouer persone nie. Dit is eerder beskryf as iets wat plaasvind in wedersydse interaksies (aksie en reaksie) tussen jong volwassenes en ouer persone, en ook hoe die verhouding tussen die lede in die generasies ontwikkel met verloop van tyd en die

vermoë om die afstand tussen die lede in die generasies nader te kry. Respek tussen generasie hang ook af van die vermoë van die lede van die twee generasies om by mekaar se leefwêreld aan te pas; en om hulle te weerhou van die veroordelende en stereotiperende evaluering van ouer persone.

Hierdie studie hou dus belangrike implikasies in vir die skep van intergenerasionele programme met die doel om verhoudings tussen jong volwassenes en ouer mense te verbeter. 'n Spesifieke bydrae van die bevinding is dat wanneer intervensies beplan word, intergenerasionele programme ontwerp moet word om die spesifieke interpersoonlike konteks in ag te neem. Verder moet die lede van beide generasies se definisies van respek oorweeg word in die beplanning van intergenerasie intervensies binne spesifieke interpersoonlike kontekste.

Sleutelwoorde: Intergenerasionele verhoudings, jong volwasse vrouens, Mmogo-metode®, respek.

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT ARTICLE FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

The candidate opted to write an article, with the support of her supervisor. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination purposes in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Research Psychology.

Prof. V. Roos

DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I hereby declare that this research manuscript, **Young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people**, is my own work. I also declare that all sources used have been referenced and acknowledged.

Furthermore I declare that this dissertation was edited by a qualified language editor as prescribed.

Finally I declare that this research was submitted to Turn-it-in and a satisfactory report was received stating that plagiarism had not been committed.



Lazya Greyvenstein

DECLARATION BY THE LANGUAGE EDITOR

I hereby declare that I have language edited the thesis **Young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people** by L. Greyvenstein for the degree of MA in Research Psychology.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is part of a broader project on respect in intergenerational relationships. The larger project was led by the question: How do young adults experience respect in relation to older people? Different themes emerged from the data in the broader study, namely: younger people's motivations for respecting older persons (Jansen van Rensburg, 2013) and different forms of giving and receiving respect (Van Aardt, 2014). This study focuses specifically on themes that emerged inductively concerning the subjective experiences of respect of young female adults in relation to older persons (aged + 60), in specific relational contexts and what, from the perspective of these young adults (aged 18-35), are regarded as the challenges of respect. The literature review addresses and offers discussion on: Self-Interactional Group Theory as a theoretical framework to explain respect as an interpersonal phenomenon; defining constructs (respect, generation and intergenerational relations); research on respect in intergenerational relationships; motivation for research on respect from the perspective of young female adults and the importance of the research for intergenerational relationships.

Theoretical Framework and Definition of Constructs

Respect is described by researchers as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. For example, it is said to consist of dimensions such as 1) affective (emotion and/or attitude of positive sentiments towards each other); 2) cognitive (a reflection of the affective positive sentiments) and 3) behavioural (actions that reflect positive cognitions and affection) (Buss, 1999; Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Dillon (2010) further indicated the interpersonal dimension of respect by emphasising that respect may be deserved or earned (or not).

Research into respect was found to be focused largely on the specific behavioural dimension (Lysaught, 2004; Sung, 2001, 2004). Respect is associated with fostering courteous behaviour towards older people (Damon-Rodriguez, 1998; Sung, 2001) while, in

Van der Geest's (1997, 2004) research in Africa, it was largely influenced by social behaviour in the form of etiquette and courtesy. In this research, respect is regarded as a relational phenomenon and therefore the Self-Interactional Group Theory was utilised as the theoretical framework to explain respect in intergenerational relations.

The Self-Interaction Group Theory

The Self-Interaction Group Theory (SIGT) is suggested as a theoretical framework because it takes experiences of respect on an intra-individual, inter-individual and group level into account. Roos (in press) noted that the three levels need to be viewed as different perspectives on the same process of intergenerational interactions. According to Roos (in press) intergenerational relationships consist of endless, complex processes of non-verbal and/or verbal actions and reactions that take place between members of various generations regardless of their relatedness. The relationships between members of different generations are seen as the interaction established through communication between people (Roos, in press).

SIGT uses three levels to describe intergenerational relations/interactions: the intra-individual, the inter-individual and the-group level (Roos, in press). The intra-individual level consists of the subjective experiences of members (emotions and perceptions). These indicators, on the first level of interaction, give direction for describing what occurs between people (Lazarus, 2006; Roos, in press). The inter-individual level investigates the following:

- 1) interpersonal context, referring to the specific interpersonal context in which the interactions take place;

- 2) definition of the relationship, indicating how members of different generations define the relationship between them and which may include a complementary definition with a generational member in the leading position and the person from the other generation in a following position, as well as a parallel-defined relationship with both generational members'

interaction as equal, or a symmetrically defined relationship where the two generational members question the relational definition between them (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 2011);

3) relational qualities which comprise the observable behaviour of how people relate to one another, such as perspective taking, empathy, unconditional acceptance, congruency, presentation of the self, rigidity/flexibility, locus of control and emotional closeness/distance (See Vorster, Roos, & Beukes (2013) and Roos (in press) for a comprehensive discussion of the different relational qualities);

4) motivation for the intergenerational interactions in terms of the fulfilment of social goals and psychological needs; and the strategies applied to address the social goals and psychological needs; and

5) the interactional process (Roos, in press).

The group level focuses on the intra and inter-group dynamics in the intergenerational relationships. The behaviours at the group level are driven by individual behaviour during situations, various categories and/or social groups as well as by the attitudes and beliefs regarding a person's own group and different groups relevant to an individual (Roos, in press; Tajfel, 2010). SIGT also advocates that intergenerational relations should always be contextualised against the broader environments in which they take place such as the social, cultural, political and economic environments.

Definition of Constructs

Following the SIGT approach, respect will therefore be defined as young female adults' subjective experience of their relationship (interactions) with older persons in particular interpersonal contexts in which the motivations for the interactions are to address social goals and psychological needs. A generation refers to a cluster of people who are approximately the same age and who share similar historical experiences and characteristics

(Rogler, 2002; Scabini & Marta, 2006). The interactions between members of different generations are referred to as intergenerational relationships (Pilcher, 1994; Roos, in press; Scabini & Marta, 2006; Wadensten & Carlson, 2003). Intergenerational relations signify relationships/interactions among members of different generations who are either familial or unrelated members of different age groups and who experience the same historical problems or events (Pilcher, 1994; Scabini & Marta, 2006). Familial, intergenerational relationships are based on the biological and historical age in combination with the relationships of offspring and ascendancy (Scabini & Marta, 2006). On the other hand, unrelated members of a generation are referred to as being in social intergenerational relationships and part of a historical generation (Scabini & Marta, 2006). In this study, the participants are socially or familiarly related.

Respect in Intergenerational relationships

Research on respect in intergenerational relationships has mostly been conducted in Asian and Western countries among familiarly related younger and older generations. Sung's (2001, 2004) research into respect among older people in East Asia revealed that, overall, there are 14 forms of respect for such people. These different forms of respect from younger to older people are based on traditional Asian literature and research and include: *care respect*, attending to the latter's physical, emotional and other needs; *victual respect*, which refers to serving such people with food and drinks; *gift respect*, associated with bestowing material- and nonmaterial gifts on them (for example, making speeches, praying for older people etc.); *linguistic respect*, which includes addressing them appropriately; *presentational respect*, whereby young people look neat and respectful in the company of older people; *spatial respect*, that includes bestowing on the latter the most important seats, a key role to play as well as involving them in activities; *celebrative respect*, celebrating older people's birthdays by visiting them, calling or sending them a card; *public respect*, respecting and

serving such people in general; *acquiescent respect*, associated with obeying them; *salutatory respect*, which consists of greeting older people to show respect; *precedential respect*, allowing them to have precedence over favourite things; *funeral respect*, that entails mourning and burying deceased older people respectfully as well as holding solemn funeral rites for them; *ancestor respect*, honouring a person's ancestors' death anniversaries, while *consulting respect* requires a younger person to consult older people about personal and family matters and ask them for advice (Sung, 2001, 2004). After Sung (2001) identified the 14 forms of respect, he conducted research on respect in cross-cultural contexts. Sung (2004) contributes to his previous study (Sung, 2001) by taking cross-cultural differences of respect in intergenerational relationships into account through comparing Asian (Korean) young adults' specific behavioural forms of elder respect with those of Western (American) young adults (Sung, 2004). Sung (2004) found that the specific behavioural forms of respect towards older persons that were included in these two groups were those most frequently practised and the most significant types of respect according to young persons. These two groups identified the following forms of respect: 1) engaging behaviours of elder respect which includes care respect (caring and serving) and consultative respect (asking for advice); 2) respect that may be displayed symbolically, such as linguistic respect (lingual expression of respect), acquiescent respect (demonstrating obedience), salutatory respect (greeting) and precedential respect (courtesy).

In the African context, Van der Geest (1997) an anthropologist, conducted research on respect among older people in Ghana. Van der Geest (1997) established that respect is one of the core values for the Akan culture of Ghana. The participants described part of their experiences of respect, in intergenerational relationships, as honouring and caring for one another. Van der Geest (1997) specifically drew attention to the construct of reciprocity in intergenerational relations, referring to the giving and receiving of respect.

In a subsequent study, Van der Geest (2004) conducted research among people of the Akan culture in Ghana concerning the performance of respect in intergenerational relationships between adolescent and adult grandchildren and their grandparents. In this study, Van der Geest (2004) found that older persons felt that they deserved respect and attention from their grandchildren, since they had lived longer and have acquired substantial experience. The research also highlighted that in Ghana, respect is part of tradition; thus, there is an expectation that respect will be offered to older persons. In addition, it seemed as if caring, serving and consulting were important aspects of respect for older people (Van der Geest, 2004).

Thus far, most of the research on respect in intergenerational relations has been conducted within familiarly related intergenerational relationships among people from different contexts, culture and demographic (Asia and Western countries). However, Hargie (2011) and Honneth (1990) emphasised that people from different contexts, cultural and demographic backgrounds have different methods of displaying and defining respect as well as of attaching different meanings to respect. Since there is a lack of clarity regarding the way(s) in which respect is experienced in different intergenerational contexts in South Africa as well as with regard to the challenges of respect which young female adults face in intergenerational relationships, this became the focus of this study.

Motivation for Research from the Perspective of Young female Adults

The worldwide phenomena of the increase in life expectancy have seen a drastic increase in the number of older people (60+ years) who are surviving longer than their predecessors did (Adler, 2010; Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009; Sheng & Settles, 2006). This increase in the longevity of older people in the population has an impact on the emotional and physical resources available to all the other generations, because more people will most probably need to share the same social and physical areas for a greater duration

than before. Furthermore, the different generations will likely need to compete even harder for physical and emotional resources (Adler, 2010; Harwood & Lin, 2000; Roos, in press; Sheng & Settles, 2006). The situation in South Africa is comparable to the global condition. According to the mid-year population statistics of 2013, an estimated 7.8% (about 4.15 million people) of the total population of South Africa were older than 60 years (Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2013). Thus, if these statistics are compared to the mid-year population of South Africa in 2011, it may be observed that there was an increase of 250 000 older people in the space of a mere 2 years (StatsSA, 2011, 2013). These statistics support Harwood and Lin's (2000) statement that long-term relationships between different generations who share the same historical events are likely to increase because of the longer life expectancy of older people (Harwood & Lin, 2000).

Research on respect is important since intergenerational relationships have proven to have numerous advantages for both older people and young adults. Members of both generations provide support and in addition, grandparents are also able to provide guidance for their young adult grandchildren (Block, 2002). According to MacCallum et al. (2010), intergenerational relationships lead to a heightened sense of social responsibility and better health for younger people while increasing self-esteem and a sense of worth for both older and younger people (MacCallum et al., 2010). More than this, intergenerational relationships may help with the deconstruction of barriers and stereotypes between generations in the broader community (MacCallum et al., 2010). Not only are relationships important but intergenerational relationships, in particular, are also considered to increase the life expectancy of older people. For young female adults, building close relationships with others has been found to be an important part of these young female adults' development (Collins & Miller, 1994; Erikson, 1965; Gilligan, 1993).

Developmental Phase of Young Adulthood

Papalia et al. (2009) suggest a systematic life-span development of eight stages. This development is described in three spheres: physical, cognitive and psychosocial development. According to Petry (2002), young adulthood is generally defined as the developmental period between the ages of approximately 18 to 35 years. Arnett (2000) and Mills (1999) consider young adulthood to be an exploratory period as these individuals have not yet settled into their adult roles but are no longer adolescents. According to Papalia et al.(2009), young adults typically experience major changes in their physical, cognitive and psychosocial development during this stage.

Following Erikson's (1965) sixth stage of psychosocial development: intimacy versus isolation, young adults have to build close relationships with others, enter the world of work and develop their own frame of reference. Furthermore, establishing relationships with other people enables young adults to build reciprocal, intimate relationships which include self-disclosure as well as a willingness to make compromises and sacrifices for the sake of relationships (Collins & Miller, 1994; Erikson, 1965). In effect, researchers found that young adults have a number of people that are significant in their social networks while older adults are part of these and are regularly viewed as role models (Arnon, Shamai, & Ilatov, 2008).

Sung (2004) maintains that it is essential to look at young adults' attitudes toward older persons, because respect is also informed by a person's attitude (Dillon, 2010). Furthermore, Sung (2004) noted that research into the relationships between tertiary students and older people are especially needed as students are exposed to a liberal atmosphere, have less parental supervision and their lives and behaviours are more influenced by their peers. As a result, they tend to adopt new values that are different to those they were taught; to question their earlier moral views and tend to be less supportive of traditional norms that guide them as to the manner in which older people should be treated (Kohlberg, 1973; Sung,

2004). This could result in changes in behaviour and attitude towards older people, which may lead to disrespect, based on the premise that research describes respect as consisting of behavioural cues and/or an attitude (Dillon, 2010; Sung, 2001). Arnett (2000) also indicated that young adults have opportunities to experiment with new and different lifestyles. Despite this, Sung (2004) maintains that young adults will form an important part of the support system for older people, and thus the relationship between young adults and older persons and how young adults treat older people is critical, not only to older people, but also to their societies. Since young adults are in a transitional phase of their lives, they may tend to focus more on relationships with their peer group, romantic partner and on vocational goals (Papalia et al., 2009); owing to this, they may be spending less time with older people. This may be the reason why older people experience their relationships with those of a younger generation as ambivalent and disconnected (Mabaso, 2012; Makiwane, 2010).

Perspective of Young Female Adults

According to Cranor (1975) respect is part of moral consideration and therefore important to consider young female adults moral reasoning in exploring young female adult's experiences of respect in relationships with older people. Gilligan (1993) found that moral reasoning of women are more concerned with their responsibility towards caring for others and not causing others harm than about justice. Furthermore according to Gilligan (1987), women develop their sense of self more through establishing relationships than through achieving a separate identity. However women in particular have experienced various changes concerning their gender roles which may have an influence on their moral reasoning, sense of self and relationships. Since in the past, women were expected to give their time to care and nurture others (Papalia et al., 2009). However these gendered roles have become more flexible and women currently adopt diverse roles (Papalia et al., 2009). Previously they were frequently responsible for taking care of older parents, which is not necessarily the case

now. Therefore, young females who are postgraduate students pursuing their career goals were made use of in the research to provide an understanding of how they experience respect in relationships with older people.

It was clear from the literature study that little research has been undertaken concerning respect in intergenerational relationships in South Africa. This study thus focussed on the experience of respect in different contexts and the challenges experienced in relationships regarding respect. Furthermore, the research was conducted with female post-graduate students in a tertiary educational context in South Africa in order to obtain a detailed picture of this particular phenomenon as these young female adults are in a transitional phase. Thus far, insufficient data exists regarding the context in which people experience respect in intergenerational relationships and the challenges of respect in such relationships and it was the intention of this study to contribute to this knowledge.

Article Proceedings

The research that was conducted is presented in article format. The context within which the research is situated is illustrated by the literature background. The aim of this article is to understand young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people in a South African context. The results are discussed in the form of a typology. In conclusion, critical reflection provides an explanation on how the study contributes to the field of intergenerational research.

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Young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people

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Research article

Abstract

This study aims to explore young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people (+60 years). The report will focus on themes that emerged inductively regarding specific relational contexts in intrapersonal experiences. The main focus was the expression of the experiences of respect and the challenges experiences of respect. A purposive sample was used; 26 female post-graduate students (21-28 years) at a University setting in South Africa participated. The Mmogo-method®, a projective visual data collection method, was used to collect textual and visual data. Textual data were analysed using thematic analysis whereas the visual data were analysed by means of visual analysis. The findings indicated that intergenerational experiences of respect differ in different interpersonal contexts. In the relational contexts, different relational definitions, needs, subjective experiences and reactions were related to experiences of respect. Various challenges were also found regarding respect in the intergenerational relationships. It is recommended that interpersonal contexts and the needs of both generations in interpersonal contact are considered when planning intergenerational interventions.

Keywords: Intergenerational relationship, Mmogo-method®, Respect, Young female adults

Introduction

This study formed part of a broader research project that explored the issue of respect in intergenerational relationships. Different themes developed from the research into young adults' experiences of respect in relation to older persons, such as young adults' motivations for respecting older persons (Jansen van Rensburg, 2013) and different forms of giving and receiving respect (Van Aardt, 2014). This study focused on themes that developed inductively concerning the specific relational contexts in which the participants' experiences of respect were expressed and the challenges of respect experienced in intergenerational relationships.

These relationships can take place between people who are familially or socially related (Pilcher, 1994; Scabini & Marta, 2006). Familially related intergenerational relations refer to the biological or familial lineage that links people, while social relatedness refers to people who do not necessarily share a familial bond, but who interact with each other in different contexts (Scabini & Marta, 2006). In this study, intergenerational relationships included both types of relationships while the two generational members refer to young female adults and older people (60 years and older, following the Older Persons Act (Act 13, 2006, p3)).

Research into respect between members of two generations has indicated that respect is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon that includes an affective (attitude and/or emotion of positive sentiments), cognitive (reflecting positive sentiments) and behavioural (actions reflecting positive emotions and cognitions) dimension (Buss, 1999; Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Most of the research on respect between generational members has focused on the behavioural dimension (Lysaught, 2004; Sung, 2001, 2004). For example, Damon-Rodriguez (1998) and Sung (2001) found that respect promotes polite behaviour towards older people while Van der Geest (1997) established that social behaviour mainly influenced respect in the

form of courtesy and etiquette in an African context. However, despite the emphasis on the behavioural dimension, respect is always described in relation to the interactions that take place between people and is thus regarded as a relational phenomenon (Dillon, 2010).

Therefore, the SIGT as the theoretical framework was decided on in order to describe respect in terms of intergenerational relations. Following SIGT, these relations are regarded as the complex and endless processes of non-verbal and/or verbal actions and reactions that take place between people from different generations. Generational members act according to their subjective experiences (the impact) of the other person's actions (behaviour) (Vorster, 2011). According to the SIGT framework, the subjective experiences on the intra-individual level are used to describe the inter-individual and the group level. The inter-individual level consists of the 1) interpersonal contexts in which the interactions between generational members take place; 2) definition of the intergenerational relationship; 3) relational qualities that arise in the interaction; 4) needs in and the motivation of the interaction; and 5) interactional process between generational members (Roos, in press). The group level includes group theory and group dynamics (Roos, in press). SIGT also argues that intergenerational interactions are embedded in broader socio-cultural, political and economic environments and should therefore be included in the analysis of intergenerational relations. Following SIGT, respect was therefore defined as the subjective experience of young female adults in their interpersonal interactions with older persons that take place in particular interpersonal contexts, in which the motivations for the interactions are intended to address social goals and psychological needs.

Research on respect has mostly been conducted among familiarly-related younger and older generations in Asian and Western countries. Sung's (2001, 2004) research is applicable as it has identified 14 ways in which people respect older people, which mainly involve behavioural cues. Sung's (2001) research on respect for older people in East Asia indicated

that older persons are respected (1) when activities such as caring, serving or giving support are carried out, or (2) in symbolic ways such as linguistic, presentational, acquiescent, spatial, precedential, and celebrative forms. Sung (2004) compared American and Korean young adults and identified six types of cross-culturally applicable forms of respect for older people: engaging behaviours of respect for elders, which include care respect and consultative respect, as well as respect that can be displayed symbolically such as linguistic respect, acquiescent respect, salutatory respect and precedential respect. Apart from Sung's (2001, 2004) research, Van der Geest (1997) conducted extensive research on respect for older people among the people of Ghana. According to Van der Geest (1997) respect in intergenerational relationships is experienced as honouring and caring for one another, as is the notion of reciprocity.

The research has mainly been conducted in Asian and Western countries within familiarly related intergenerational relationships. Research on intergenerational relationships in South Africa describes relationships among older people and young adults as strained (Hoffman, 2003; Mabaso, 2012; Roos, 2011). In South Africa's multicultural and multi-generational contexts, close relationships are an important source of emotional support, especially since the people in these contexts are exposed to severe poverty, high numbers of HIV/AIDS positive individuals and migration that causes structural changes in intergenerational relationships (Bohman, van Wyk, & Ekman, 2009; Hoffman, 2014; Oldewage-Theron & Slabbert, 2010). In Mabaso's (2012) research in a South African rural community, the intergenerational relations between young adults and older people were described in this way. Young adults were more likely to have very negative perceptions of older people whereas the latter view their relationships with young adults as ambivalent and disconnected (Mabaso, 2012). Furthermore, research indicates that strained intergenerational

relationships between older persons and young adults are linked to older persons' experiences of disrespect (Roos, 2011).

Research however, indicated numerous benefits of meaningful intergenerational relations for both older people and young adults. According to Block (2002), grandparents receive support from their grandchildren and also provide emotional support and guidance to their grandchildren, as well as influencing young adult grandchildren's beliefs and values (Block, 2002). MacCallum and colleagues (2010) established that intergenerational relationships enhanced young people's health and sense of social responsibility and contributed to an increased sense of worth and self-esteem for both younger and older generations. According to Noelker and Harel (2001), respect is a contributory factor in shaping the quality of life of older people. Furthermore, intergenerational relationships are able to contribute to the deconstruction of barriers and stereotypes in the broader community (McCann, Dailey, Giles, & Ota, 2005). The findings of this study could contribute to the exploration of how respect is experienced in intergenerational relationship, with emphasis on young female adults, and may potentially contribute in promoting healthy and positive relationships between generations.

Research focusing on respect from the perspective of young adults, and in particular from the perspective of young female adults from a relational perspective, is scant; therefore this study is guided by the question: What are the experiences of respect of young female adults in particular relational contexts and what challenges are identified in their experiences of respect in relation to older persons?

Young females are not only in a transitional phase of their lives but have also experienced various changes in their gender roles over the past decade (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009). Young female adults find themselves in the sixth stage of their psychosocial development, according to Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory (1965). In this life

phase, they have to build close relationships with others, enter the world of work and develop their own frame of reference (Mills, 1999). Young female adults strive towards achieving their vocational goals and may tend to pay more attention to peer- and romantic relationships than to their relationships with older persons (Papalia et al., 2009). In addition Gilligan (1987; 1993) reports that an important part of a woman's sense of self is linked to caring for others and building strong relationships.

Sung (2001) considers that it is essential to explore young adult tertiary students' experiences. As indicated, young adult students are exposed to a liberal atmosphere, their lives and behaviours are more influenced by their peers and they receive less parental supervision (Arnett, 2000; Papalia et al., 2009). In addition, as noted above, today, women's gender roles are more flexible so that more young females are studying and entering the working sector (Papalia et al., 2009). This may have an impact on women's relationships and self-development as caring for others are an important part of women's development (Gilligan, 1993). The aim of this study is therefore to understand young female adults' experiences of respect relationships with older people in a South African context.

Research Methodology

Research Method and Design.

This research was informed by an explorative and descriptive research paradigm that was qualitative in nature because of its interest in the subjective experiences of human encounters, understandings, motivations and actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2008; Clissett, 2008). An interpretive descriptive design was used, since the study aimed to understand the experiences of young female adults in relation to older persons in terms of the relational context and the challenges of respect between the two generations, situating the discussion from the perspective of the young female adults (Thorne, Kirkham, & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004).

Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted at a University in the North West Province of South Africa. A purposive sample was selected, consisting of 26 young female adults (21-28years), to obtain a detailed picture of their experiences of respect in relation to older persons (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). The participants had all studied human behaviour and were considered a group of people who could provide a detailed description of their experiences of respect with older persons (Babbie, Mouton, Voster, & Prozesky, 2001; Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2009). The 26 female participants, of which 20 were Afrikaans speaking and 6 were English speaking Psychology Honours students between the ages of 21 and 28 are, as stated above, from a University context. The tertiary context to which these female participants are exposed is a liberal environment in which they are confronted with new ideas and become more independent (Sung, 2004). Consequently, they tend to change the way in which they view the traditional norms they were brought up with as well as acquire new values (Kohlberg, 1973; Sung, 2004).

Data Gathering and Procedure

Ethical approval to conduct the study has been obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (reference NWU-00053-10-S1). The young female adults were informed of the research through their lecturers and invited to participate in the research. Willing participants were informed regarding arrangements of the date and time for the study. The same type of data-gathering sessions was followed to gather data from three separate groups of participants. Each group had their data-gathering session a different day. Before the study began, the participants were informed of the objectives of the research and thereafter signed informed consent forms.

The participants took part in the Mmogo-method® (Roos, 2008, 2012) a visual projective data gathering tool in order to collect in-depth, rich, descriptive data, thus

contributing to the trustworthiness of the research (Ellingson, 2009). The Mmogo-method® (Roos, 2008, 2012) was used since it enables the researcher to analyse young females' subjective experiences of respect and to understand respect within the group context. The said method requires participants to create a visual presentation, by using open-ended materials (clay, different sizes and colours of beads and dried grass stalks) to visibly illustrate how they experience respect in their relationship with older people (Roos, 2008, 2012). The participants in the study were asked to construct visual representations, based on the following statement: *Please use the material provided in front of you and make anything that can to tell us more about how you experience respect in relation to a person/s older than 60 years of age.*

Once the visual presentation had been completed, the researcher requested individual participants to explain what they had made to the group. Researchers listened attentively to the explanation in terms of what exactly had been created with regard to the actions as well as the relationship between the objects and the relevance of the objects, in terms of the research question. It was important to determine whether the specific shape, colour or position of the visual representations had any significance for the participant. After the individual explanation in terms of the manifest and latent content of the visual representation, other group members were invited to add their views. These members augmented the individual's explanation, which was regarded as an on-going process of member checking. The visual representation of the individual became the stimulus material for the group discussion, which was a collaborative effort of co-constructed meanings. The visual data were acquired by photographically capturing the participants' visual representations. All the conversations were digitally voice recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis. Visual representations were photographed and served as visual data.

Data Analysis

Digital recordings of the Mmogo-method® conversations were made, transcribed verbatim and investigated by means of thematic analysis. Furthermore, the photographs of the visual representations of the participants were examined in terms of visual analysis.

Thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) and Clarke and Braun (2013), thematic analysis may be used within qualitative data to identify and analyse patterns (themes) as well as report findings. Braun and Clarke's (2006) and Clarke and Braun's (2013) six phases of thematic analysis involve: (a) *Becoming familiar with the data*: with the aim of gaining a better understanding of all the data; (b) *Generating initial codes*: reading the data thoroughly and systematically coding the data; (c) *Searching for themes*: by categorising the data into specific themes and labelling the accordingly; (d) *Reviewing themes*: revising the themes in relation to the data and corresponding labels; (e) *Defining and naming themes*: requires thorough elaboration and outlining of each theme; and (f) *Writing up*: entails reporting on the findings by putting together the narrative and vivid quotes of the data to give the reader a compelling and coherent description of the data. By analysing the participants' feelings, experiences and perceptions of intergenerational relationships in which they experience respect, the aim was to explore the relational contexts in which they experienced respect, as well as the challenges present in relationships in which respect is experienced.

Visual analysis. The visual data obtained with the Mmogo-method® were analysed by: observing the photographs taken of the particular object each of the participants had made, and understanding the purpose of each object and its detail by referring back to the transcribed data of the participant's references of their visual representation, as well as the symbolic meaning of the different aspects of the visual representation. The last part of the analysis was used to link the themes found in the thematic content analysis, in order to promote the trustworthiness of the data (Roos, 2008).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to ensuring the credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Krefting, 1991) of research findings. Each of the four strategies was applied in the research process:

Credibility. In order to ensure credibility of the data, a method called crystallisation (Ellingson, 2009) was employed. Using this method, the data is interpreted by numerous researchers, who will all have different viewpoints, in order to discover corresponding themes (Ellingson, 2009). Over the course of three days, multiple qualitative researchers were involved in interacting with the participants, data gathering, data analysis and interpretation processes of this research study, which ensured that peer examinations took place and bias was restricted (Krefting, 1991; Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, the accuracy of the data gathered was validated by member checking between the various sources, verifying the thematic analysis and confirming the findings that were reported. From this data, recurring viewpoints were detected. Participation checks and member reflections were conducted, after the discussion of a participant's visual projection, so that the participants could comment and provide feedback, concerning the accurate capturing of their perceptions (Roos, 2008, 2012; Tracy, 2010).

Transferability. This strategy indicates whether the results may be applied to other contexts and different participants. Comprehensive descriptions of the research context and participants were given to improve transferability and allow other researchers to assess the transferability of the findings (Ellingson, 2009). By paying careful attention to the descriptive, factual detail of their realities and the unique stories of participants, the researcher improved the trustworthiness of the findings (Krefting, 1991; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Tracy, 2010).

Dependability. Refers to whether the data will remain stable over time: for instance, if the study were repeated, the results would be the same (Shenton, 2004). The researcher ensured that the findings had an elaborate description of the data gathering, data analysis and interpretation methods in order to ensure dependability. During the research process, multi-vocality was addressed, in order to prevent the researcher from putting words into participants' mouths by, rather, paying attention to participants with a different view from that of the majority, which could indicate unique findings (Krefting, 1991; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The researcher improved dependability by conducting the code-recode procedure on the emerging themes (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991). She also peer-examined the findings with colleagues who had experience in the field of qualitative research (Guba, 1981) and who worked on the same data, but with a slightly different focus (Krefting, 1991).

Confirmability. Refers to the extent to which findings are unbiased and fair. A form of confirmability was established by using a projective technique (Mmogo-method ®) which creates in-depth data, proving that the findings are not fictional nor fabricated by the researcher (Krefting, 1991; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Trustworthiness was further established by using multiple data sources and two methods of analysis, including visual and textual analysis as well as using a team of researchers rather than a single one (Ellingson, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

The project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. This study forms part of a larger project based on respect in intergenerational relationship. Numerous researchers were involved in the data collection process, however each researcher focused on different themes that emerged from the data. Guidelines provided by the Health Professions Council of South Africa for psychologists

(Health Professions Act 56 of 1974) were followed. The following actions were taken to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner:

(a) the nature and purpose of the study were clearly and thoroughly explained to the participants by one of the qualitative researchers before the data gathering process, after which a written and signed informed consent form was sought from all the participants. Participants were informed that they would not be penalised or rewarded with any academic marks for participating (or not) in the study and that the researchers were not involved in any of their academic evaluations. Furthermore, the participants were informed on all issues of privacy, consent and justice, together with their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalties. Ethical considerations were fundamental to the way in which the study was presented to the participants, the impact of taking part in the study, the sampling strategies and engaging with the researcher (Barbour, 2008);

(b) according to the researcher, there were more benefits than perceived risks in this study. The participants were able to share deeply personal experiences and feelings and interact with other participants. The possible risks were those of emotional turmoil since participants shared personal experiences and feelings. Therefore they were informed that should any participant feel affected by the study or experience trauma, debriefing would be available from a clinical psychologist;

(c) information obtained would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of the study by the research team. Participant identities were kept anonymous by using only participant numbers for identification. The researcher team collected data personally (partial confidentiality, as the research team worked with the participants and knew the participants' names) to ensure data security and safety; a sole access password was used to protect electronic data; and

(d) the study findings are available to the participants by direct verbal and written communication, after publication.

Findings

An inductive approach was used to discover four broad themes such as younger people's motivations for respecting older persons (Jansen van Rensburg, 2013); and different forms of giving and receiving respect (Van Aardt, 2014). Read Van Aardt (2014) for in depth discussion of what respect mean to the young adults. Since Van Aardt (2014) focused on the young adults' attitudes, giving and receiving of respect in their relationships with older people. In addition this study reports on experiences of respect in specific relational contexts and the challenges of respect in intrapersonal experiences.

Table 1 records the themes and sub-themes identified during data analysis.

Table 1

Themes Generated from the Data

Main themes	Sub-themes
Relational contexts	Educational context
	Family context
	Social context
	Work-related context
Challenges of respect in relationships	Expectation of respect because of older person's age
	Different life worlds
	Changes in the value of respect
	Judgemental and stereotypical assessment of older persons

Disrespectful behaviour by an older person

Development of relationship over time

Emotional distance

Intergenerational Interactions in Relational Contexts and Subjective Experiences

The experiences of respect were expressed in relation to older persons in different contexts, including an educational, familial, social, and work-related context.

Educational context. In this context, the young female participants described a relationship in which the older persons (lecturers) educate the younger persons (students). In this interpersonal context, the expectation is that the lecturer will facilitate a learning context in which subject matter is transferred to assist students to satisfy their need to pass the subject.

From the perspective of the students, they experienced frustration in response to the unclear communication of the older lecturer “because no one understood the subject”. In the interactional process between the student and the lecturer, the student requested the lecturer to provide help, “Listen here help me, I don’t understand the work. Can you explain it in a different way?” [Participant 5], to which the lecturer responded by maintaining her role as a lecturer: “She yelled at us the whole time”. In this interpersonal context, the subjective impact of the interaction was experienced as disrespectful and eventually a loss of respect was described. This was linked to specific ‘disrespectful’ behaviour on the part of the lecturer: “I do my part but then she [lecturer] just always shouted at us” [Participant 5].

Family context. In the family relational context, two types of relational interactions were described, namely between grandparents and grandchildren and between in-laws. Most of the participants referred to the relationship between them (as grandchildren) and their grandparents. Grandchildren described their grandparents with admiration, which they linked

to the wisdom of their grandparents: “I also made myself [grandchild] smaller because I look up to them [grandmother] and she has the crown on and then the book for all their [grandmother] knowledge and experience” [Participant 12] [Figure 1], as well as to their ability to deal with life. Participant 6 expressed how she admires her grandmother because, “she could have handled that so much worse. She did it really wow!”

In this relational context, grandchildren put themselves in a submissive learning position in relation to grandparents, so as to receive guidance and to learn from them. A participant used ‘Life lessons’ to explain that she has made herself small to leave room to grow: “, I drew myself small because I have a lot of room to grow... [I respect the] life lessons [of my grandmother] because there’s so much to learn from my gran” [Participant 12].



Figure 1. Grandchild looks up to her grandmother.

In the familial intergenerational context, the young female participants also described a friendship type of relationship with their grandparents. Grandchildren and grandparents participate in activities together or have similar interests. For example, Participant 13 said, “with my grandmother and grandfather it was more like a friendship. In the evening when I got home, then I would [go] sit by him [grandfather] and watch TV and we always watched cowboy movies together [and] we [also] bought books together”. In this relationship there is

a greater likelihood that young people will confide in older people and the relationship is described as “very special”: “She [grandmother] [is] not [a] very open person with everybody and I feel I’m like one of the people in the family that this [she] tells everything to, she share[s] everything she open[s] up to me” [Participant 16].

The actions and interactions between grandparents and their grandchildren were illustrated by Participant 6’s description of her relationship with her grandmother: “For me it is definitely reciprocal love that I experience from her [grandmother’s] side and also I that behave loving towards her”. Another participant explained how reciprocity has a positive impact on showing respect: “It is easier to have respect for someone who also has respect for you” [Participant 10]. In a reciprocal relationship, when people understand each other, they can learn from one another: “[We are on] the same level of conversation, of understanding, of reciprocity, of learning from each other and not only one-way.” [Participant 25] [Figure 2].



Figure 2. Relationship between a father-in-law and daughter-in-law

In this kind of relationship the interaction is described as a give and take, and younger family members have a place in the interaction to share their views. In this mutual relationship, both the older and the younger family members experience safety, which enables them to become more visible in the relationship: “There is no pretending. There doesn’t have to be pretending, and I don’t have to, I am safe; I feel safe in the relationship and I believe he [father in-law] as well’ [Participant 25] [Figure 2]. .

In this reciprocal relationship love, care and support are exchanged. In Figure 3, the participant [Participant 6] made two figurines (grandchild and the grandmother) that are hugging and a heart to illustrate the significance of the supporting relationship between her and her grandmother: “The figurants I built on the side are like someone they are giving each other hugs. A lot of care I think is also important and definitely support also” [Figure 3].



Figure 3. Grandmother and her grandchild offer support

Social context: In the social context, the participants referred to their relationships with older people in general. In these relationships participants explained that they look up to older people and that they (younger adults) may learn from older people’s mistakes, life experiences and their wisdom: “you can always learn from them [older people] or learn from their mistakes” [Participant 26]. Participant 11 referred to her illustration to explain how making her figurine smaller than the figurant of the older person symbolises respect: “[A person] always in a way make yourself [young people] a bit smaller than the bigger person [older person]’.

In this relational context, young female adults described the relationship between them and the group of older persons. The description is provided in general terms; older people and younger people are specifically positioned in their different groups as old and young people: “I feel like they [older people] have a lot of love to give, you know, and we

[young people] should give them [older people] a lot of love too, and I feel like they [older people] really have, you know, really need it.” [Participant 4].

In another social context a participant 21 described the respecting relationship between herself and older women at her church. Participant 21 explained how she respects, cares for and loves the older ladies as a group: ‘I’ll respect them and I will feel some sense of caring for them”. The participant [Participant 21] mentions a sense of openness in the interaction that takes place in the relationship: “I can speak to each and every single one of them the way I do”. The participant feels in this relationship that the love and respect accompany each other: “respect and love goes hand in hand”.

Work-related context. In the work-related context two kinds of relational interactions were described: that between an employer and employee and between an employee and a customer. In the relational interaction between the employer and the employee, respect emanates in a professional capacity: “I have respect for my boss of last year at [a psychiatric facility]. He is an unbelievably good doctor, but I don’t love him. But I do have respect for him”.

Another participant [Participant 3] talked about her experience of respect in relation to older clients she serves at the restaurant where she works. In this relationship the employee attends to customers’ needs. The participant (a waitress) described how she often listened to advice the older customers gave her. She [Participant 3] explained that it was as if the older customers were educating her through telling her their life lessons: “They [older people] try and give you [young people] motivation. They try sort of to warn you [young people]” [Participant 3] [Figure 5]. From the description by the younger participant (Participant 3) it is evident that she is also receptive to learning from older people: “they [older people] try to

give [tell] [young adults] the mistakes that they [older people] made, so that you [young adults] can learn from it [their mistakes]”.

Challenges of Respect in Relationships

Challenges to experiences of respect in relation to older people include: older persons' expectations of respect because of their age; different life worlds; changes in the value of respect; judgemental and stereotypical assessment of older persons; disrespectful behaviour of an older person; development of relationships over time and emotional distance.

Expectation of respect because of older person's age. A participant mentioned that she feels that respect needs to be earned, no matter a person's age, and that some older people just expect respect: “I think, like older people expect that you must respect them.”

[Participant 20]. Another participant also expressed that she felt that a person needs to deserve respect: “Just because he is older than 60 doesn't necessary mean that what he says is the ‘Alpha and Omega’. You must still deserve respect” [Participant 24]. According to Participant (5), who described the relationship between herself as a student and a lecturer, respect should be deserved: “So, I feel that respect must be deserved”. Furthermore, it seems as if respect in this relationship is not static and does change during the course of the interactions between older and younger persons: “I later on lost respect for her”. This loss of respect was a consequence of the disrespectful behaviour of the lecturer.

Different life worlds. Young adults' life worlds differ from older people as they do not share the same perspectives or attach the same meanings to their reality. A participant [Participant 18] mentioned how she experienced her grandparents as firmly set in their ways because of their failure to grasp how she uses social media: “I have tried several times to explain what Facebook is to my grandmother but she doesn't understand it. So our whole, my whole sphere in which I move. They don't understand it and they are conservative and still set in their ways. Because I respect them, I just say yes. I just go with it instead of

turning their world upside down” [Participant 18]. She complies with how they see and understand the world, because she respects them. Therefore respect can be expressed by not trying to change the older people.

Changes in the value of respect. A participant [Participant 12] explained that she thinks that the value of respect has declined through the years as she feels that previous generations had more respect for each other than today’s generations: “I think it [respect] comes naturally for their [older] generation. It [respect] just becomes less valuable, like my grandmother has a lot of respect and my mother probably has more respect than our generation. As I have seen that there is no more value attached to respect. It feels to me that it [respect] is just going to get less and less.”

Judgemental and stereotypical assessment of older persons. Respect in relation to older persons is jeopardised by judgement and stereotypical assessment of older persons: “I think like a lot of people don’t have respect for older people in terms of helping them or if they care then everyone is like ‘can’t the person just walk faster, they are in my way’. A lot of people say old people are grumpy” [Participant 5].

Disrespectful behaviour of an older person. The participant [Participant 5] felt that certain behaviours of an older lecturer, such as shouting and being rude towards others, were not worthy of respect and caused her (the student) not to respect her lecturer. Furthermore, participant 5 mentioned that the latter’s lack of respect towards them (students) made having respect for the lecturer in return even harder: “she is so much older than us but she can’t like show the basic human respect towards us.” [Participant 5].

Development of relationship over time. A participant [Participant 21] mentioned how a relationship with a stranger develops slowly over time but that as they have more opportunities to interact, the relationship grows. Since the development of the relationship is

described as slow, it has an impact on their increase in respect for each other. Therefore this is a challenge since if people don't interact often the likelihood of respect in the relationship may be slim. A participant said, for example: "It's like a slow starting relationship... and then it goes rapidly back quickly to being strictly bonded and being able to relate what I can relate to this is that for suppose the older person, is not your family and it's somebody you know from your community, you [are] going to take time before you can warm up to that person" [Participant 21].

Emotional distance. One participant [Participant 8] explained how the lack of emotional intimacy in her relationship with her grandmother caused the relationship to be strained. The participant referred to her visual representation to illustrate the challenges it caused for respect in their relationship: "[I] put the little figurants far apart cos we're [participant and her grandmother] not really that close."



Figure 4. Illustration of a challenging intergenerational relationship

She continued to explain the distance between her and her grandmother: "That's why there's one hand reaching out and one hand that's away because I feel that, it's frustrating' as well as 'like we don't just sit down and have a normal conversation it's very, it's a very strained relationship, it doesn't come naturally and [it] is [a]very forced thing." [Participant 8] [Figure 4].

Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that when describing respect as a relational phenomenon, the different interpersonal contexts in which respect is experienced should be taken into consideration. These contexts provide the frame for the interactions and supply the meaning for the interactions (Vorster, Roos, & Beukes, 2013; Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 2011). In this study, young female adults indicated that interactions between them and older persons take place in educational, family, social and work-related contexts.

The educational context in which intergenerational relations between older lecturers and students takes place, provides the frame as a context in which students wish to address their needs to interact with lecturers in a learning context, which will enable them to master subject content and to achieve their goal, namely to pass the subject. In the family context, intergenerational relationships between grandparents and an example of a father-in-law were described with the older persons in a leading and knowledgeable position and the younger adults in a learning and submissive position, therefore constituting a complementary type of relationship. According to Sung (2001, 2004) this form of respect that the young females experienced is labelled as acquiescent respect and regarded as listening to older people's advice. In a manner similar to Van der Geest's (1997, 2004) findings, the young females in this study also expressed subjective experiences of admiration for the older people's wisdom, life experience and knowledge.

However, the relationship with familiarly related older persons was also described by the female young adults as a friendship or parallel-defined relationship whereby the members of both generations participated in activities that satisfied their need to share interests. Van der Geest (2004) mentions the importance of having things in common, as it is the basis for relatedness. In a parallel-defined relationship, a reciprocal relationship between older persons and young adults is described, in which both members give and receive, referring to Van der

Geest's (2004) concept of reciprocity. This mutual exchange was identified in Harwood and Lin's (2000) study as older people giving their young adults advice as well as receiving advice from the latter. The needs that people satisfy in this kind of relationship are love, care and support. Care respect refers to people caring for another person in order to show respect; this can be done by spending time with them and keeping in contact with them (Sung, 2004). Dillon's (1992) explanation of care respect applies as people are actively involved by being sympathetic, concerned and participating in each other's life. The young adults' subjective experience is safety, which is, according to Vorster and colleagues (2013), an important requirement for effective relationships.

In one of the social contexts, the relational qualities between young adults and older persons are described as behaviour that is informed by religious values learned at church. The findings seem to support research that suggests that contextual and cultural backgrounds have an impact on the way people experience respect in different relationships (La Caze, 2005; Lysaught, 2004; McCann et al., 2005; Metz, 2001; Sung, 2004; Van der Geest, 1997).

In the work-related context, the young females described the relational qualities in cognitive terms and experienced the relationships as formal. This relational context is framed in a professional capacity; hence younger adults describe respect in relation to their subjective evaluation of the work-related performance of older employers. It is however, interesting that, in the same professional capacity where young adults find themselves in a serving relationship towards older customers, the latter offer advice to the young adults on how to deal with life issues, irrespective of how the relational context is defined.

In all the interpersonal contexts, it was confirmed that relationships between older persons and young adults have a reciprocal nature (in terms of actions and reactions) (Frei & Shaver, 2002; Van der Geest, 2004). In a reciprocal relationship, in which participating members interacted by revealing themselves and in which the members responded to the

openness in a person-centred manner, respect was subjectively experienced. This may support Van der Geest's (1997) statement that reciprocity either holds relationships together or separates them.

Challenges to the experiences of respect were also confirmed by McCann and colleagues (2005) and Van der Geest (2004), establishing that negative stereotypes towards older persons and a lack of perspective on the life world of older persons can challenge the experience of respect in relationships. In Van der Geest's (2004) research, he found that the older and younger generations have little in common. A similar challenge was experienced in this study, as some young females mentioned that they do not share the same perspective as older people and do not attach the same meanings to realities, which causes frustration. This reported challenge also supports findings of Harwood and Lin (2000) who reported that generational distance may be experienced in intergenerational relationships because the different generations do not always understand each other's realities.

A further challenge was that young female participants were concerned that the value of respect has declined over the years. Sung (2004) voiced the same concern, since he mentioned that the shift in respect may cause the value of respect to change. Another challenge that was experienced is that young females feel that relationships with older people develop slowly.

Implications of the Findings

This research has important implications for understanding respect in interpersonal contexts. Since context provides the frame in which interactions take place, the context determines the relational definition between people and how they should interact to satisfy their needs for the interaction. If people do not act according to the way in which the context frames their interaction, the subjective experience is frustration, to which they respond through a continuous process of actions and reactions; the escalating patterns of which may

develop, eventually leading to the dissolution of the relationship, with a prolonged impact of disrespect. By contrast, if the relationship context between older persons and young female adults is defined as either a complementary relationship (older persons educating or learning the young adults) or as a parallel defined relationship (a friendship in which older persons and young adults give and receive), but the generational members display effective relational qualities (openness, clear communication, closeness, perspective taking and so on), then the subjective experience is one of respect. In this type of intergenerational relationship, people are able to address their needs. Considering the developmental phase of younger people who are becoming independent, the traditional value that older persons should be respected, just because they are older, is challenged by a new social norm that the relational interactions, not only age, determine respect. Respect-worthy behaviour/attitudes, emotional intimacy and the ability to understand each other's life worlds were some of the concepts described that could determine respect or cause challenges in the experience of respect.

Limitations and Recommendations

Studying a group of female post-graduate students from only a single tertiary institution enabled the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the participants' subjective experiences of respect in relationships with older people. However, this limits the generalizability of the findings, since this context is unique in terms of its socio-cultural embeddedness (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). It is recommended that a wider range of sample representatives is used in future research, by including young female students from different tertiary institutions and from different cultural backgrounds, so that a broader understanding may be obtained concerning young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people. Further research is recommended, with the focus on the needs that are expressed and the challenges experienced in a specific intergenerational context in which

respect is experienced. This may assist the development of intergenerational interventions in order to enhance the satisfaction of the relational interaction between generations.

Conclusion

In sum, the findings of this study further add to the understanding and knowledge base of the concept of respect. In particular, the research offers insight regarding the challenges experienced by intergenerational relationships and furthermore, into the interpersonal context in which subjective experiences and needs were expressed in intergenerational relationships, where respect is experienced. The findings may be used to conduct interventions in different intergenerational contexts regarding the issue of respect. The findings may be used to create an intervention to address the challenges experienced in the intergenerational relationships as well as to focus attention on the needs expressed in different contexts in order to improve the satisfaction gained from the relational interactions.

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CRITICAL REFLECTION

The aim of the study was to understand young female adults' experiences of respect in relationships with older people (60+ years) in a South African context. The themes that developed from this study contribute to the understanding of the different contexts in which respect is experienced, as well as of the challenges that are experienced in these relationships with older people. Previous studies on respect in intergenerational relationships have been conducted in Asian and Western countries (Sung, 2001, 2004) among familially related younger and older generations with the aim of understanding the particular behavioural forms of respect, as well as how people define respect. Therefore, this study focused on the experiences of respect from the perspective of young female adults regarding their relationships with older people, since this is a knowledge gap that has not previously been filled. The following two themes emerged inductively from the data: The specific relational contexts in which they experienced respect were expressed, as were the challenges of respect in intrapersonal experiences.

The research addressed different gaps in the literature by exploring experiences of respect, and specifically by focusing on the contexts and challenges described in these different intergenerational relationships: a first in intergenerational research regarding respect. Various challenges were identified that are experienced in young female adults' relationships with older people. These include young females feeling obliged to respect older people because of their age, which is perceived as a negative constraint (Dillon, 2010; Mabaso, 2012; Van der Geest, 1997, 2004), as well as negative stereotypes and certain characteristics linked with older people (McCann, Dailey, Giles, & Ota, 2005; Van der Geest, 2004). Furthermore, distance in relationships between generations is another challenge, produced by the different perspectives and different realities of the generations which cause frustration for the young females (Harwood & Lin, 2000; Van der Geest, 2004). Apart from

this emotional distance, other issues mentioned were a strained relationship because of the lack of emotional intimacy (Harwood & Lin, 2000); concern about the decline in value of respect for younger generations (Sung, 2004) and the slow development of intergenerational relationships that may bring about a limited repertoire between generations. Participants in further research can contribute to the enhancement of intervention programmes by asking the participants to give possible solutions for the challenges experienced in intergenerational relationships. In addition intergenerational intervention programmes may be used to establish these findings regarding the challenges experienced in intergenerational relationships to enhance respect in intergenerational relationships. . This research finds its rationale in the fact that respect may contribute to creating constructive and close intergenerational relationships (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Furthermore, this study identified a few contexts in which respect was experienced; these must be taken into consideration by researchers, as they highlight the differences that contexts may create in the experience of respect and the needs that are expressed. Thus, intervention programmes must be created with a specific relational context in mind, as the relational definitions, the needs expressed, the subjective experiences and reactions to these subjective experiences differ in different relational contexts.

The Mmogo-method®

The Mmogo-method® consists of visual presentations created by participants in order to gain understanding of the participants' personal and collective experiences (Roos, 2008, 2012). According to Roos (2008, 2012), visual projective data enables researchers to gain insight into participants' subjective meanings and lived experiences as well as to be able to observe the interaction between members of different generations. The Mmogo-method® enabled the researcher to acquire a better understanding of young females' subjective experiences and experiences in the group context of respect; specifically between young

females and older people, in intergenerational relationships. The Mmogo-method® is based on a theory, the premise of which is that people are relational beings and that visual representations are a projection of a person's self and social context (Roos, 2008). Thus the Mmogo-method® made it possible to understand young females' experiences of respect in different relational contexts, including the subjective experiences, reactions to subjective experience and needs in the interaction, as well as the challenges experienced in these relationships.

Conclusion

It is clear that respect is a factor that is able to contribute to constructive intergenerational relationships in different contexts and that there are certain challenges that need to be addressed to improve intergenerational relationships in which respect is an issue, particularly considering that the intergenerational relationships have been described as ambivalent (Mabaso, 2012; Peters, Hooker, & Zvonkovic, 2006). Therefore, it is recommended that the same methods and approach are used in an environment with participants from a more diverse group by including men and women from different cultural backgrounds and ages, so as to contribute to a deeper understanding of the different contexts and challenges experienced in intergenerational relationships in regard to the topic under discussion. This study therefore holds important implications for creating intergenerational programmes to enhance relationships between young adults and older people, by enhancing respect in their relationships in order to build more unified communities.

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