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The Cultural Construct of Stress in Luganda-Speaking Women in Uganda

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

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MA, East Tennessee State University, 2009

BS, King University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Luganda, the primary language spoken in Uganda has no word for *stress*, but this does not necessarily preclude the Luganda-speaking population from experiencing stress. There is currently no research that reveals the stress phenomenon from a Ugandan's perspective. The purpose of this study was to examine how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. Two theoretical foundations formed the basis of this study: the cognitive appraisal of stress theory and the coordinated management of meaning. Using a qualitative interpretive design, this study examined the conceptualization of stress by Luganda-speaking women in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon. Participants were 7 native Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who were fluent in English and moved to an English-speaking Western country. They provided stories via video conferencing which became the data that was analyzed using the LUUUUTT model. The main finding surrounding stress conceptualization showed that participants had no cultural construct of stress in Uganda even after cultural immersion in the West. Noting this lack of a stress construct within Uganda may help Luganda-speaking community workers better understand the lived experiences of difficulties from the Luganda-speakers' perception and could be an aid in creating culturally sensitive and helpful management strategies for promoting mental and emotional well-being in the face of hardship.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the incredible Ugandans I am privileged to know. Thank you for your resiliency, your culture, and your generosity. I hope this study honors you as it was intended to.

Acknowledgments

This has been an incredibly lengthy journey, and I am so thankful for those who have stuck with me through this. First, I'd like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Clark, the only faculty member I could find that was interested in this topic and who continued to remind me that this study was important enough to pursue. Thank you so much for both your patience and your urging; I would not have finished this without you. I'd like to thank my incredible husband who has this dissertation basically memorized at this point: darling, I've been working on this degree for our entire marriage, and you have been the biggest encouragement. I love you. For Amelia and Oliver, neither of whom were born when this process started, thanks for inspiring me to finish; I hope one day when you are old enough to know what this means that you'll be proud of me. I love you two to the moon and back. For my parents who have always supported my endeavors, I am so grateful for you! I would like to thank God just fullstop. And for the Ugandans who agreed to be interviewed for this, I am humbled and honored you would trust me with your stories. Without you, this study would not be a thing.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In 2012, the second year I was living in Uganda, I determined that the staff members of the organization I managed could benefit from a stress management workshop. We worked with rescuing and rehabilitating women and girls from sex trafficking. While I returned to my home in Kyanja after work every day, many staff members were live-in employees; they slept and lived in the safe house with upwards of twenty females ranging in age from ten to thirty. There was no escaping this environment full of acute and chronic trauma and the dynamics between teenagers and women living in the same house.

Most of the staff members were proficient in English and able to carry on full conversations with minimal confusion. But one lady, Auntie Mego, was less familiar with English and requested my seminar be translated into the vernacular language of Luo so she could more easily grasp the concepts we were discussing. I began with the typical greeting ritual common in many communal societies in this area of Uganda. I then launched into the beginning of the workshop with the introduction "Today, we're going to talk about stress." I paused for the translation I assumed would take a few seconds, but to my surprise, the interpreter kept speaking for almost 3 or 4 minutes. I laughed and asked what was taking so long for such a simple sentence. Auntie P, a program manager who was serving as the interpreter that day, turned to me and said, "We have no word for 'stress' in our language. I am having to explain what you mean by giving examples."

I was astonished. These women were living in what many would deem a stressful situation: operating in a very rural area with no access to clean water and limited electricity, residing in a country that had been torn apart by dictators, rebel armies, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic since the 1980s. These staff members were providing psychosocial support to girls and women who were navigating through some of the most difficult and traumatizing circumstances I could imagine. Just because they did not have a word for stress certainly did not preclude them from experiencing it.

Over the next few months, I asked many of my Ugandan friends what phrase they would use if they were attempting to communicate to someone who did not speak English that they were stressed. The answers ranged from "I have been bewitched" to "I cannot handle life" to "life is giving me a headache" to "I am going mad." Ugandans are not known for symbolic or hyperbolic language so these phrases would be meant and taken quite literally. While I have at one time or another probably uttered many of these phrases when I experienced stress (with the exception of the bewitchment statement), I never meant any literally.

I began to question how Ugandans conceptualize stress. How is this phenomenon communicated? How does the stress experience manifest in persons who do not have a word for this phenomenon? How do Luganda-speaking individuals think about stress? ? In this study, I sought to understand the conceptualization and experience of stress of a group of six to 10 Luganda-speaking Ugandan women.

Ugandans conceptualize stress differently than Westerners, as suggested by the lack of wording in their language and different cultural attitudes. If, as many Western

practitioners believe, chronic stress triggers a variety of health issues that can at least partly be alleviated through appropriate management of stress (Nabi et al., 2013), there needs to be a more specific understanding of how this population conceptualizes and experiences stress. Conversely, if there are adaptive measures that Ugandans use, Western practitioners could implement these strategies into the Western stress management repertoire. Exploring and understanding how another culture conceptualizes the stress phenomenon provides insight into the larger human experience.

In this chapter, I review the background, purpose, and nature of this study. I also outline the operational definitions I used for this study. I discuss assumptions and limitations that I bring to this study as the researcher, and I close the chapter with the outline of the design of the study.

Background

The Republic of Uganda is considered a part of Central East Africa along with Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. The Statehouse of Uganda (2015) reported the population of Uganda is approximately 32 million with 19.5% heads of house identified as living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2015). Only 10% of the population in Uganda have access to electricity, with most of that percentage living in urban areas (Saundry, 2013). Over 80% of the population live in rural areas with limited access to electricity, clean water, and viable medical facilities (World Bank, 2016). Uganda is known as "the pearl of Africa" due to its abundance of natural resources, yet the GDP is only $24.70 billion, less than half of its neighbor Kenya, and the average per capita income is $170

USD (World Bank, 2016). The World Bank (2015) considers Uganda one of the poorest countries in the world.

Uganda was first colonized by the British in 1888 and gained independence in October 1962 (Altinyelken, Moorcroft, & van der Draai, 2014). As a country, Uganda has faced challenges due to colonization, dictatorship, political strife, and violence that negatively affected Ugandan people as well as the country's economics. The United States Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (2014) rates Uganda in the critical tier regarding crime levels which includes murder, rape, assault, other violent crimes, and theft. The Bureau categorizes Uganda with high threat levels for terrorism and at medium levels of political unrest and violence (2014). With high HIV/AIDS rates and a national average age of 15 (the second lowest in the world), life expectancy is below 60 years and the deaths of children and young adults are common due to lack of medical access, violence, and malnutrition (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). High levels of crime, poverty, political mistrust, as well as a history of violent government regimes and rebel armies creates an environment that would lead both Western practitioners and laypersons to conclude that Uganda is a stressful place to reside.

Africa, specifically sub-Saharan Africa, is known to be economically impoverished. The African continent contains 74% of the countries in the world with a 35% or higher rate of malnourished populations (Asongu, 2014). Bove and Valeggia (2009), Garcia et al. (2013), Wittkowski, Gardner, Bunton, and Edge (2013), and Scott-Sheldon et al. (2013) described living conditions and cultural considerations in sub-Sahara Africa as stressful. Dryden-Peterson (2006) outlined the effects of poverty and

health considerations particular to Uganda. Asongu (2014) reported that in an average African nation, 43% of the population survive on less than $1USD daily. There is minimal literature regarding stress in Uganda. These articles help establish that though this population does not necessarily have the language for the phenomenon of stress, it does not preclude the experience of stressful events.

Language is used to create social realities. Gergen (2015), Cojocaru, Bragaru, and Ciuchi (2012) and Pearce (2004) discussed the importance of language within social constructionism. Similarly, Boroditsky (2011) as well as Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2013) explored how language influences the way a person conceptualizes and internalizes various phenomena. Hussein (2012), von Stutterheim, Andermann, Carroll, Flecken, and Schmiedtova (2012), and Mashal, Shen, Jospe, and Gil (2014) studied and demonstrated how specific languages affect one's perception, understanding, and meaning making by exploring responses to psychological tests. Without language or terminology for a phenomenon, the social reality or construct is necessarily different than cultures who do have appropriate language to describe and denote that phenomenon.

In this study, I used a social constructionist framework that included the idea that language influences one's conceptualization, experiences, and cognitions about the world. At the time of this writing, there have been no studies investigating how people in Uganda experience, think of, or communicate about stress. Because of the lack of literature examining how this population conceptualizes stress, it is important for not only Western practitioners but for Ugandans to gain an appropriate understanding of how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize the stress phenomenon. This study was

needed to increase communication between professionals. Professionals working in Uganda will be able to use this study when working with populations both during stressful experiences and in assisting victims in trauma recovery. This research also added to the conversation regarding how humans collectively and socially construct emotions, make meaning, and an understanding of other human experiences.

Problem Statement

Few studies have been conducted in Uganda about how the nationals experience life. The articles that have been written mainly document the posttraumatic stress symptoms displayed by Ugandans affected by the civil war that began in the early 1990s (see Annan Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2011; Bayer, Klasen, & Adam, 2007; Liebling-Kalifani, Marshall, Ojiambo-Ochieng, & Kakembo, 2013; Roberts, Ocaka, Browne, Oyok, & Sondorp, 2008). While there are studies on the psychopathology of trauma, none dealt specifically with the everyday, common stress experience. Studies in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa have explored issues of PTSD within specific populations (see Derluyn, Broekaert, Schuyten, & Temmerman, 2004; Rasmussen, Smith, & Keller, 2007) and mental disorders with an emphasis on depressive and anxiety disorders (see Stein et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2008). Other researchers who conducted studies in sub-Saharan Africa mentioned emotional, mental, or psychological stress within the researchers' conceptual framework (see Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Opie & Seedat, 2005; Phaladze et al., 2005). Both Garcia et al. (2013) and Scott-Sheldon (2013) used the term *stress* in their studies and measured perceived stress through Cohen's (1988) stress scale without discussing or exploring what *stress* meant to the population

they were studying. Though these researchers have established Cohen's (1988) scale as the primary assessment for generalizability, its reliability has only been assessed in industrialized or newly industrialized nations, not in the developing world.

There did not appear to be any study that provided an examination of how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. For the purpose of this study, *conceptualize stress* included how the participants understood, experienced, and communicated about stress. In this study, I examined the concept of stress from a social constructionism standpoint to provide a clearer understanding of how one sub-Saharan population conceptualizes stress.

Selye's (1973) seminal work explained that every biological organism experiences physically and psychologically stressful conditions, and Lazarus (1993) showed how cognition affects the human body's way of manifesting stress. Western societies have conducted research studying the physical and psychological detriments and the frequency of stress (Dhabha, 2014; Kim et al., 2013). Other research suggests different cultural exhibitions of stress (see Jacobs, Narayanasamy, & Hardani, 2015). For example, Asian populations reported higher stress levels on days considered unlucky when encountering the number four, or when hearing certain homophonic Taiwanese words (Lin, Lin, & Lee, 2014). In these cultures, there are statistically higher rates of cardiac mortality, anxiety, and depression in general (Lin, Lin, & Lee, 2014). In Malaysia, *running amok* describes extreme behavior including homicidal or suicidal tendencies and a propensity to cause destruction or wreak havoc on bystanders (Martin, 1999). While considered abnormal in traditional Malaysian culture, Martin explained that

Malaysians made sense of the phenomena in a spiritual sense as a coping strategy for

psychosocial stressors, an odd but short-lived incident that the community must tolerate.

Miller et al. (2006) found that in Afghanistan, a form of self-flagellation by females was

considered by Afghani nationals to be a natural expression of distress. However, there do

not appear to have been any studies on Ugandan responses to stress, creating a gap in the

literature regarding cultural understandings of stress.

There are between 40 and 60 vernacular languages in Uganda (Altinyelken et al.,

2014; Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2016), but most Ugandans speak Luganda. Yet in all

these languages, some of which are spoken in areas with high levels of reported trauma

exposure (Roberts et al., 2008), there is no translatable word for stress in Uganda.

Luganda is a Bantu language spoken by the Buganda tribe, the largest tribe in the

country, and thus by most nationals. The Luganda language is also often used by the

Ugandan federal government (Altinyelken, Moorcroft, & van der Draai, 2014). In

conversations with Luganda-speaking Ugandans, I observed when ak person is what

Westerners would call stressed, the national's descriptions include "being too weak at

life," "going mad," or even "having been witched [cursed]." Luganda speakers often

incorporate loanwords from other languages into their conversation. This creates a

complex composite of a variety of languages. In this study, I used the term *composite*

Luganda to indicate when English loanwords are used.

This study was intended to contribute towards filling a gap in the literature; there

had been no study to date examining how any sub-Saharan African population

conceptualized, experienced, or communicated about stress. Understanding how a set of

Luganda-speaking Ugandan women conceptualized stress could inform stress management workshops held in Uganda and future Uganda-specific counseling and therapy techniques for situations ranging from minor inconveniences to traumatic experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. By recruiting seven native Luganda-speaking Buganda women and evaluating the way in which these women experienced, thought, and spoke about stress, I hoped to gain insight into the way one sub-Saharan African population conceptualizes the stress phenomenon. I drew upon Selye's (1973) proposition that every living organism undergoes stressful conditions to determine how these participants considered, experienced, and described the stress phenomenon. Lazarus's (1993) cognitive appraisal theory of stress posited that to experience stress, people must first evaluate a situation as stressful. Without the exact wording for stress in the Luganda language, it is natural that Luganda-speaking Ugandans would think about stress and approach potentially stressful situations in a different manner than those who have the term in their vernacular.

Research Question

Due to the lack of research on stress in Uganda, practitioners who work with this population have been imposing Western conceptualizations of the stress phenomenon onto Ugandans. This practice informed the research question for this study:
How is stress conceptualized by Luganda-speaking Ugandans in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon?

Theoretical Framework

I framed the foundation for this study upon two distinct theories. The theory of coordinated management of meaning (CMM; Pearce, 2004) informed this research regarding culture and communication. CMM also informed the approach to data analysis. Lazarus's (1993) cognitive appraisal of stress theory informed the identification of the difference between stressful conditions that occur and the experience of stress during those conditions. I also used the cognitive appraisal of stress theory (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus, 1993) to understand and make sense of the psychological effects of stress on this population.

Coordinated Management of Meaning

Researchers who ascribe to a social constructionist worldview posit that reality and knowledge are created communally through language and that context is essential to understanding both personal and social experiences (Gergen, 2015; Pearce, 2004). Pearce (2004) discussed CMM theory by suggesting communication is the building block of meaning-making through interpersonal interaction and agreement about precise meaning. This interpersonal interaction could be as simple as an agreed upon definition of a phrase between two individuals, or as expansive as a cultural consensus as to what a symbol or word signifies. As this research was grounded in both language and culture, social constructionism was an appropriate framework for understanding the unique way Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualized, experienced, and communicated about stress.

The LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2007) is a CMM model that incorporates stories lived, unknown, untold, unheard, and untellable stories, stories told, and storytelling in examining how groups construct social worlds. Pearce (2009) also explained that humans think, live, and make meaning within the tension of stories told and untold, tellable and untellable, known and unknown. As the data for this research was primarily stories, I analyzed and interpreted the relationship between all these aspects of storytelling to unveil patterns that influenced the meaning-making and understanding of the participants' social world (see Neden, 2012; Pearce, 2009). Because of these stories, CMM constructs guided the analysis of the data to understand the conceptions and experiences of the participants.

Cognitive Appraisal of Stress

Lazarus's (1993) cognitive appraisal theory of stress also informed the analysis of this study. Using Selye's (1950) work to assume all living organisms experience the phenomenon of stress, Lazarus emphasized the cognitive component of experiencing stress. Stress, Lazarus theorized, does not necessarily produce stressful feelings or the experience of stress; those occur only following a cognitive assessment of the situation as stressful. This assessment can be made in a split-second evaluation, either consciously or unconsciously. If a person has appraised a situation as threatening in some way (physically or psychologically, for example) consciously or otherwise, that person will experience the phenomenon of being stressed. Lazarus theorized it is not the actual phenomenon of stress, but rather the subjective experience of stress that can be psychologically and physiologically detrimental to the individual. Lazarus stated that one

way people alleviate their stress experience is by using cognitive stress management techniques, such as reevaluating or reframing a situation as nonthreatening. To communicate about the experience of stress and stress management of Ugandans, there must first be an understanding of how this group assesses potentially stressful situations.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative. Qualitative research explores data that delves into the rich nature of personal experiences and the meaning-making processes of these experiences (Gough & Deatrick, 2015). I explored Ugandan women's personal experiences, and as an interpretive design in the qualitative research tradition was appropriate for studying personal experiences (see West, Stewart, Foster, & Usher, 2012), I used a qualitative interpretive design for this study. Precedent for using an interpretive design to identify and examine the participants' perceptions, conceptualizations, and meaning-making of their experiences (Clark, 2007; Hessel, 2015; Maxfield, 2010) supported this design to study how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress in this manner. I planned to recruit six to 10 Ugandan women, all of whom fluently spoke Luganda and were considered neither proficient nor fluent in English. I was to collect audio diaries from these women as well as conduct semistructured interviews, using an interpreter to assist me in gathering the data. Due to unforeseen circumstances preventing me from traveling to Uganda for data collection, there were modifications to this plan that are discussed in Chapter 4.

Yin (2013) discussed using a small number of participants for qualitative inquiry, and Crozier and Cassell (2015) reached data saturation using six participants to study the

stress experience, while both Posey (2013) and Gosnell (2015) reached saturation with 10 participants. Gosnell (2015) suggested that the more similarities participants share, the fewer participants are needed to reach saturation in a study. Due to the similarity in individuals' life experiences from a shared culture, I did not foresee needing more than 10 participants to reach saturation. Had I failed to reach saturation with 10 women, I would have used the snowball technique (see Bleich & Pekkanen, 2013) and asked the participants to suggest other participants I could have recruited who fit the criteria for this study.

Due to the patriarchal society in Uganda, as a female researcher, it was culturally appropriate for me to ask women rather than men to engage in conversations about sensitive topics and difficulties experienced in their lives. I foresaw these topics and difficulties possibly including rape or sexual assault, marital troubles, infertility, HIV/AIDS or other STIs, women's health, parenting, and so forth. The participants of this study were all adult females. Many Africans, including Ugandans, place a high emphasis on relationships (Rarick et al., 2013), so some of the participants were individuals whom I had either engaged with in a minor capacity or had mutual friends. We had not discussed this research or any stressful or difficult situations in their lives prior to this study. To minimize any potential power imbalances between the participants and myself, I ensured that I had not worked with any participants in a professional capacity.

Triangulation is an essential component of qualitative research. Therefore, I planned to collect data using audio diaries and interviews (see Crozier & Cassell, 2015;

Hinsliff-Smith & Spencer, 2016; Williamson, Leeming, Lyttle, & Johnson, 2012, 2015).

By collecting two sources of information from the participants, I would have been able to

gather richer data for analysis from each woman. I would have been present and engaged

with the participant during the interview but absent for the other data source, the audio

diaries. I was not to be present when the participants created their recorded entries. I was

to provide minitape recorders to all participants to record their daily experiences in

Luganda. These audio diaries and interviews were to provide stories that became the

source of data for this study. Two female graduates from a Ugandan university who were

fluent in both Luganda and English would interpret the participants' audio diaries.

I developed a series of questions to be used in semistructured interviews by

adapting Chirban's (1996) interactive-relational (I:R) approach. Using this approach, I

encouraged participants to answer open-ended questions conversationally, which

provided rich descriptions of their conceptions and experiences of the stress phenomenon.

The participants interpreted the questions from within their framework (see Chen, Benet-

Martinez, Wu, Lam, & Bond, 2012), and one of the interpreters was to be present during

the interview as I instructed them to answer however they deemed appropriate.

The data was coded iteratively to clarify how this population made meaning of the

stress in their lives. I used Pearce's (2007) models during the analysis phase of the study

as I saw what themes emerged. The models were variations of the communication

perspective and emphasized that each speech act is intertwined with relationships,

communication episodes, and the construct we hold of ourselves, others, and the world

(Pearce, 2007). The model that I used for analysis is the LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2007). See Figure 1.

Stories lived

Unheard stories   **Unknown stories**

Story telling

Untold stories   **Untellable stories**

Stories told
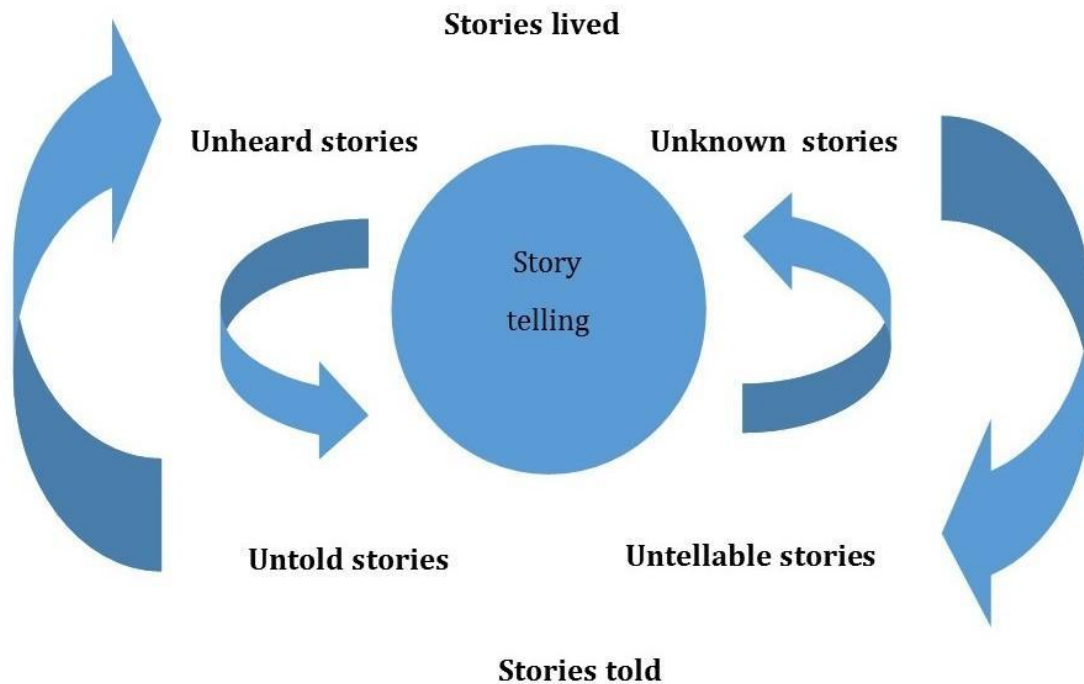
Figure 1. The LUUUUTT Model. Reprinted from *Theorizing communication and culture*, by W.B. Pearce, 2005, Thousand Oaks: Sage. Copyright 2005 by W.B. Pearce. Reprinted with permission.

Due to the lack of vocabulary specific to the stress experience, the stories that the participants told were assessed against what Engel (2013) called the inherent tension (p. 31) of the stories lived. Using the LUUUUTT model, I identified and differentiated between that which was known and that which was unknown in the stories of participants (see Wasserman, 2015) that were relevant to the interpretation of their conceptualization of stress.

If the LUUUUTT model had been limiting to where I was unable to explore the themes that emerged during the analysis by this model, an alternate model of Pearce's (2005) that I planned to use was the serpentine model. Not only does this model consider how one event or episode impacts the meaning-making of future episodes, but it also focuses on the tension between the stories lived and the stories that are told (Pearce, 2006). Because the participants would not be using the word *stress* in telling their anecdotes, both models would help me grasp the untellable aspect of how the participants make meaning of their experiences.

Definitions

The following terms are defined here to show the intended meaning for each word or term throughout this research study.

Composite Luganda: It is common in Uganda to borrow words from other languages if they are clearer or more concise in their meanings than the corresponding terms in the vernacular. There are often English, Swahili, or other words incorporated into an otherwise Lugandan discourse. For this study, I used the phrase *composite Luganda* to indicate when a person used Luganda with English loan words.

Conceptualizing Stress: In this study, *conceptualizing stress* is the phrase I used to denote how participants thought about, understood, experienced and communicated the stress phenomenon.

Fluent: Fluent is defined as "possessing the ability to read, write, and speak [the language] accurately and easily" (Merriam-Webster, 2015). In this study, a person was

considered fluent if they could read, write, and speak the language accurately and with limited difficulty.

Stress: According to Selye (1950), stress occurs to every person and that it affects people physiologically as well as psychologically. Stress included daily hardships but also incorporated physically, emotionally, or psychologically difficult situations such as chronic poverty, assault or abuse, illness of either oneself or a loved one, and any major upheaval or shift in life circumstances.

Stress Experience: Stress experience refers to the actual experiential episode of navigating through a stressful event (Lazarus 1993). The stress experience included but was not limited to cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions.

Assumptions

I conducted this research assuming that the way Luganda-speaking Ugandans think about stress is different than the Western conception of stress. I assumed this to be partially due to the culture and the lack of a Lugandan word for stress. Another assumption is that though I recruited a small number of women for this study, their responses would allow accurate understanding of other Luganda-speaking individuals regarding the concept of stress. I also worked under the assumption that the interpreters would provide accurate interpretations between participants and researcher. I was to ask the participants to dictate their diary entries without external assistance from friends, a family member, other villagers, the interpreter, or any other participant and would thus assume that the answers given by participants were candid and truthful and not framed a certain way to induce sympathy or favor from me.

I worked with those assumptions that were necessary for the context of this study, and it required a certain level of trust. The trust required to collect and analyze data from a group that the researcher is not a member of was not a barrier to examine the social constructs of such a group (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Without these assumptions, I would not have been able to use any collected data as I was neither a fluent speaker of Luganda nor a Ugandan citizen.

Scope and Delimitations

With a lack of exploring how sub-Saharan Africans conceptualize stress and hundreds of distinct African ethnicities (CIA, 2016), there was a need to establish boundaries for this study. I chose Uganda for this study due to my working knowledge of the country and the culture. More specifically, I chose Luganda-speakers as it is the most spoken language within the country, making the results of this study more transferable than if I had chosen a different language.

As previously discussed, all participants were female. Women were preferred for this study because researchers have documented that women experience stress more often and more severely than men (Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012; Wang et al., 2007). Women in Uganda are often responsible for child rearing, household chores, and financial contributions, all with minimal assistance from the men in their lives. I was able to gather personal and descriptive narratives from the females in the Luganda-speaking Ugandan population about potentially stressful conditions. This study provided rich and detailed descriptions of these women's experiences that could be meaningful to other Luganda-speaking women in similar situations. By choosing participants who have

histories and experiences common across Uganda, I factored transferability into this study.

The participants were to be from a specific rural village in the Mokono District of Uganda that I was familiar with from my time living in the country. This convenience sample was suitable for gathering data as there is a strong cultural construct of disclosing personal information only after a relationship is established (Rarick et al., 2013). I had already established a foundation for a relationship due to my reputation within the village from my time in the country.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the possibility of misinterpretation. Because I am not Ugandan nor do I speak fluent Luganda, my intent was to rely on interpreters to accurately interpret the words and nuances of the participants' responses. I was to address the importance of accuracy through training sessions with the interpreters before they met with participants in order to clarify expectations. I planned to meet with the interpreters for a briefing (see Matson, 2001) as well as hold a training session that would help establish inter-rater reliability amongst our interpreters (see Helle et al., 2009) prior to any data collection or interaction with the participants.

Another possible limitation is my bias towards the Ugandan people. Because I spent several years living and working in Uganda, I have a fondness for this country and, at times, a protective stance for Ugandans. I may have unintentionally reported the experiences of the women in a more favorable light than was justified. I minimized this potential limitation by member checking, having the participants check the transcript for

accuracy. I also kept a journal to cultivate reflexivity and to aid in awareness of any personal bias that may have arisen (see Anney, 2014). I also planned to discuss my findings with my American committee and the Ugandan interpreters. This ensured that I checked my interpretation of the participants' experiences with another lens. I also worked with my committee to ensure that I addressed any emergent bias.

The village is a popular Ugandan village to visit and volunteer for nonprofit and religious teams from the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Members of this village are very familiar with Westerners bringing gifts and free items. A few community members have also entered a long-term sponsorship with Western visitors. As a result, some members of the community have begun to display a sense of entitlement (Peter, personal communication, October 12, 2014). This trend of entitlement and expectation could have proven to be a limitation if the women in the village were participating solely out of expectation of gaining a long-term financial sponsorship. This issue was to be addressed in the initial recruitment of participants explaining that there would be no long-term financial assistance or sponsorship in exchange for participation.

Another possible limitation was that the participants may have had concerns that I would disclose their stories to their community. In a very private society like rural Uganda, this perception would be detrimental to the collection of authentic data as well as my future relationship with the community. To mitigate this, I planned on having trusted leaders of the community, the mayoral figure and local pastor, assist in the recruitment process. I would have addressed this concern in the recruitment phase and with the informed consent form. Confidentiality agreements communicated through

Ugandan interpreters would also have helped assuage any fears of gossip. The informed

consent form would have been verbally interpreted into Luganda from the English while

the interpreter and I were present as some participants might have been illiterate.

A final limitation was the possibility of a participant not being wholly truthful

with the researcher or interpreter. Deception could be due to a lack of relationship

between the participant, the researcher, and the interpreter. He and Van de Vijver (2015)

discussed the obtrusiveness of the presence of the researcher. Ugandans tend to be private

in their disclosures, and it was possible that there was still distrust when the data

collection took place. This reticence by participants could also have stemmed from the

remnants of colonialism and the cultural perception that all Westerners are rich and are

wanting to "save the poor, troubled African." With the plan to use Ugandan interpreters

and by inviting participants who had some knowledge of who I am, I hoped to minimize

this potential limitation.

Significance

In this research project, I focused on how Luganda speakers conceptualized stress.

Research has shown that stress is biologically universal (Selye, 1985), and those who live

with high levels of stress are more prone to illnesses: chronic and acute, physical and

psychological (Raposa, Bower, Hammen, Najman, & Brennan, 2014; Selye, 1985). There

are many factors common to life in sub-Saharan Africa that have been labeled stressful

by researchers using a Western lens (Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2013; Scott-

Sheldon et al., 2013; Wittkowski et al., 2013) including polygamous marriages, poverty,

and HIV/AIDS rates. The findings of this study could help Luganda-speaking community

workers better understand the stress experience from the Luganda-speakers' perception. The findings of this study could be an aid in offering culturally and verbally helpful stress management techniques for the psychological experience of stress. Community leaders might also use the findings of this study to facilitate dialog discussing the multiple and unique facets of stress from a Lugandan perspective.

There are nearly 2,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Uganda (Uganda National NGO Directory, 2014). Most of these NGOs work with orphaned children, human trafficking, and other trauma survivors, those in extreme poverty, refugees, and other vulnerable populations. This research could help those who work within the NGO sector provide better counseling to their clients. Understanding personal and cultural conceptualizations of stress can lead to having appropriate communicative and expressive coping strategies. This understanding, in turn, can assist Luganda-speaking Ugandans manage their stress in a culturally relevant way and encourage holistic wellness. This research was focused solely on Luganda-speaking Ugandans and was the first study towards filling the literature gap on sub-Saharan Africans' conceptualization of stress.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the study for researching how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. Through the background for this study I demonstrated the significant lack of literature that explores how sub-Saharan African ethnicities understand, experience, and communicate about the stress phenomenon. I also presented the nature of the study and showed that a qualitative interpretive approach using social

constructionism was a suitable framework. This chapter contained a basic summary of social constructionism and CMM as well as highlighting studies and theories relevant to the stress phenomenon. I defined the terminology and explored both the assumptions and limitations of this study.

Western research shows the detriments of stress on humans' health and wellbeing (Dhaba, 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Lin, Lin, & Lee, 2014; Selye, 1973). However, not all cultures share this belief so it is crucial to begin to understand how other cultures conceptualize stress in order to develop culturally appropriate ways to manage stress. In Chapter 2, I examined the literature on social constructionism, CMM, and stress.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Research addressing how sub-Saharan African populations conceptualize stress from within their cultural framework is quite limited and at the time of this writing, there were no studies that addressed how Ugandans, specifically Luganda-speaking Ugandans, conceptualized the stress phenomenon. With the dozens of languages spoken in Uganda, there are no vernacular words that translate into English as "stress." Living conditions in Uganda could be considered stressful by Westerners (Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2013; Scott-Sheldon et al., 2013; Wittkowski et al., 2013). Recognizing that every living organism experiences stress on a biological level (Selye, 1985) and that unhealthy coping with stress can lead to a variety of physical and emotional problems (Lazarus, 1993), it was important that a culturally informed exploration of the conceptualization of stress for Luganda-speaking Ugandans occurred.

This chapter encompasses several topics. First, I present the literature on social constructionism and Pearce's theory of CMM (Pearce & Pearce, 2000) and how it fits in the framework of social constructionism. I also review Selye's (1950) and Lazarus' (1993) work contributing to the literature on stress. There have been various studies on the impact of stress on an individual (see Dhaba, 2014; Kim et al., 2013), and some literature on cross-cultural studies of stress or experiencing emotion (see Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015; Thomas, 2008; Yang et al., 2014). I also discuss the literature on meaning-making from a social constructionism lens with a focus on language.

Literature Search Strategy

Sources from multiple databases were used to search for literature. I used Google

Scholar, ProQuest**,** EBSCOHost, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and Thoreau as the

primary databases for articles. I also searched the Walden University database for

dissertations and theses. Keywords included *social constructionism, CMM or*

coordinated management of meaning, audio diaries, Uganda AND/OR sub-Sahara,

culture AND stress, language OR communication AND experience, translators AND

interviews, language OR communication AND emotions, and *stress*.

This search process was iterative and constantly evolving. Early in the process of

searching for relevant literature, I found that many researchers use *language* and

communication interchangeably whereas social constructionists and linguists differentiate

the two. I adjusted by searching *language OR communication*. There was minimal

research specifically on Uganda, so I broadened the search to include research from all

sub-Sahara to help inform this study.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is an ontological worldview founded on the idea that

humans in groups create meaning in an attempt to understand the world. While there have

been contemporary academics who have used this worldview (see Andrews, 2012; Burr,

2015; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2012), much of the foundational thinking behind social

constructionism comes from the founders and is dated (Gergen, 2015; Wittgenstein,

2009). The focus in social constructionism is on the creation, as opposed to the discovery,

of reality and truth, making it different from more traditional ontologies (Raskin, 2002). Social constructionism is often considered a partner of postmodernism, as social constructionists state that every construct as proposed by a specific group in that specific sociohistorical timeframe is valid (Andrews, 2012). Raskin (2002) explained this worldview as "[stressing] the viability, as opposed to the validity, of knowledge" (p. 2). Reality is subjective, though not in the tradition of Schopenhauer (2010), who suggested each individual subjectively creates their own reality. Instead, constructs are created in relationship with self, others, and place (Clark, 2007). Social constructionists study the use of symbols (including language), social relationships, sociohistorical context, communicative practices, and communal behavior as these elements inform the creation of constructs (Starn, 1998). It is through this relational agreement about what constitutes norms, morality, fundamental beliefs, and ontology that constructs are created and can be examined.

From a social constructionism lens, people in groups assign meaning to "things" within their social worlds and then behave in a manner relevant to the assigned meaning (Andrews, 2012). For example, an ordinary plain circle of metal worn on the third finger of the left hand symbolizes marriage, love, and unity for some cultures. The circle of metal itself has not changed, but it now stands as a representation of ideas and meanings much greater than its actual value. Humans in groups allocate specific meaning to objects, events, and words that then become almost inseparable from the actual thing they symbolize.

Perhaps the most common symbolic system used around the world is language. Language is used exclusively in communication, and in this worldview, communication is not passive but a rather vigorous social ritual (Burr, 2003). This idea moves away from the more traditional notion of language and communication being instruments to transmit thoughts or ideas; social constructionism begins to expand upon the idea of communication being a social action, one that continually creates and adjusts society (Carey, 1975). Gergen (2015), Athens (2005), Pearce (2004), and Bruffee (1986) discussed the importance of language in social constructionism: that language is used to create social realities. Carey (1975) stated that all reality is, in fact, social reality, and that all reality is created solely and entirely through communication. Gergen (2003) described communication and dialogue as central to reality, but the words we employ are symbols that change meaning based on context. Ignoring the context of our words - historical, political, cultural, even interpersonal - will not provide an accurate portrayal of any event, conversation, or reality. Social constructionists place great emphasis on the role of communication in the creation of social constructs and as the key to understand them.

Context is mutable and can easily and quickly change what is accurate or appropriate within our social world. Historical and political experiences help shape the mindset and viewpoint of a group. Context is essential as I am using social constructionism as a lens for this study. The context of the central beliefs, taboos, sacred items, and structure of society are all collectively agreed upon and common to all in that group, which creates a culture (Leinaweaver, 2008).

Social and cultural psychologists (e.g., Burr, 2003; Morris, Hung, Chiu, & Liu, 2015) have shown how culture influences practices within that society; that cultural influence is a tenet of social constructionism. For example, what may be standard practice for women in Los Angeles, California to wear at a church service is not the same as what is considered appropriate and normal for a woman to wear to a church service in modern Uganda. Context informs accepted and appropriate practices as well as what is considered typical or deviant. This context is made by those living in a certain location at a certain point in history. There is no universal, objective reality of Appropriate Women's Clothing When Attending Church. What is considered the norm and appropriate versus what is odd, subversive, or even sinful and immoral is based on each culture or subculture's values, which inform each unique construct of the social world.

In a study to determine whether posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a valid construct in non-Western societies, Hinton and Lewis-Fernandez (2010) discussed the various somatic symptoms associated with posttrauma found in different cultures, which included shortness of breath in Rwanda and tinnitus in Cambodian trauma survivors. The editors of the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013) have taken great strides in acknowledging diverse cultural manifestations of emotional experiences, such as distress and depression. While acknowledging these differences, the global academic community has yet to offer either culturally tailored diagnostic manuals or a culturally inclusive framework for understanding non-Western cultures (see Gergen, 2015; Jacbos, Narayanasamy, & Hardani, 2015). This means that if either of the two populations studied in Rwanda or Cambodia were assessed strictly based on the DSM-5 (APA, 2013),

neither of the physical manifestations (shortness of breath or tinnitus) mentioned would

be categorized as symptomatic indicators of PTSD (Hinton & Lewis-Fernandez, 2010),

whereas Rwandese and Cambodian clinicians would likely disagree. It makes sense, then,

to study how another culture in a unique context constructs the stress experience.

Coordinated Management of Meaning

All language is symbolic and all communication is social. Athens (2005) and

Pearce (2009) considered language as the first building block of society. Pearce and

Pearce (2000) indicated that taking a communication perspective is aligned with a social

constructionist lens. Pearce (2000) in CMM suggested that meaning is being

coconstructed throughout a conversation. Words, which are symbols that represent an

idea, come to mean that which is actively produced and created during conversation.

Communication is an active and creative process, with meaning being freshly assembled

each time a new interaction, or episode, occurs (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). Language is

fundamentally relational and social. Words do not begin to hold meaning (or to

symbolize) until two or more persons agree to their meaning and usage. This means

words belong to a group, not an individual. Understood in this way, language and

communication are relational at their core (Gergen, 1985; Pinker, 2007). Communication

is not limited exclusively to language. The entire episode is a part of the communicative

process, including who is involved in the conversation, who is excluded, the tone of

voice, any cultural nuances, and body language. It is important to look at the full scope

of communication between individuals within groups.

In Pearce's CMM theory, speaking is an active rather than a passive event (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). An essential understanding of CMM is that communication is not a transmission of information, a common idea in other communication theories, but that communication is an interplay between two or more persons who establish meaning within the context of a conversation (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). In other words, a researcher should look at language rather than through language; the episode in which something was said is equally, if not more, important to the information relayed through that episode (Pearce, 2009). This process is about creating knowledge and social realities.

Selye and Universality of Stress

While psychologists have not classified it as an emotion, experiencing stress includes many of the components of emotion, including biological and physiological arousal, cognition, affect, and behavioral responses (see Kemeny et al., 2012; Kim, et al., 2013; Schachter & Singer, 1962). Hans Selye (1950) was the first researcher to study stress and its effect on the human body. Selye, an endocrinologist, focused primarily on physiological stress and proposed the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), a theory of how the human body reacts and adapts to physiological stress. He emphasized that every organism undergoes stress and that there are variations in response to stress on an individual basis. While Selye (1984) researched physiological stress and physiological reactions to it, it is important to note that he recognized a connection between physical and emotional stress:

Unfortunately, little attention has been given to the psychological disturbances

which may result from adaptation to systemic stress…. However, even the few

pertinent studies which have been undertaken up to now on the

'psychophysiology of stress', suffice to suggest that this is perhaps one of the

most promising fields for the clinical application for the General Adaptation

Syndrome concept. (p. 242).

Here Selye established that every living organism experiences stress and that there are

differences in the adaptation response. This indicates that Luganda-speaking Ugandans

also experience stress, but there remains a gap in the literature as to how they

conceptualize the stress phenomenon.

Lazarus's Cognitive Appraisal of Stress Theory

There are also differences in what situations or stimuli people consider stressful.

It is common for two people to view the same experience differently: one viewing the

situation as fundamentally stressful while the other considers it a challenge, but nothing

to be "stressed out" over. Even in cultures that are hyperaware of and vigilant against

stress, such as the United States (APA, 2011), there are significant individual differences

in what is categorized as stressful (Gallagher, Meaney, & Muldoon, 2014), how stress is

experienced, and how individuals cope with stress (see Al-Dubai, Al-Naggar, Alshagga,

& Rampal, 2013; Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012). There does not appear to be a

universal or objective standard for assessing a situation as stressful.

Within the appraisal theory of stress that Lazarus (1993) proposed, he indicated

that the key difference in experiencing a stimulus as stressful or nonstressful is due to the

cognitive assessment of the situation. In this assessment, individuals evaluate whether a situation or stimulus is threatening enough to evoke the response of the stress experience. This response includes emotions as well as physiological reactions (Lazarus, 1993). During one study (Koriat, Melkman, Averill, & Lazarus, 1972), researchers helped guide participants' assessment of a potential threat shown in a video by manipulating aspects of that video. These manipulations included creating two different soundtracks, one calming and the other more dramatic, and adding or deleting specific scenes that provided a greater context of the possible threat. The results of this quantitative study showed a significant difference in the self-reported strength and type of emotion experienced by the participants while viewing the video. The participants evaluated the identical final scene as either threatening or benign. Their answers appeared largely influenced by which video manipulations they had seen. There were differences between the groups in both cognitive appraisal of and emotional reaction to the final scene.

In cases when an individual has already assessed an event as stressful, it is possible to alleviate the stress experience by reframing one's thoughts concerning the event. Jamieson, Nock, and Mendes (2012) divided a group of 50 participants into three groups for their quantitative research study. The researchers taught the first group the technique and benefits of reframing a potentially stressful situation as a challenge rather than a threat. The second group learned that the best way to cope with stress was to ignore all external cues that were causing the stress experience. The third group was given no special instructions and acted as the control group. The researchers then placed all three groups into a potentially stressful public speaking situation for which they were

unprepared. They tested each participant's physiological responses as well as their emotional state and frame of mind. The first group that was taught how to reframe a situation from "threatening" or "stressful" into "challenging," fared better in all areas. Their physiological, emotional, and cognitive states were significantly calmer than the other two groups, leading the researchers to conclude that humans are capable of consciously reframing a situation to avoid or adapt to the stress experience when the initial appraisal is threatening. The way in which a person assess a situation can not only lead them to experience stress but can also help alleviate the stress experience after it has begun.

The theoretical foundation for this study includes social constructionism, CMM (Pearce & Pearce, 2000), the universality of stress (Selye, 1950), and how cognitive appraisals influence our stress response (Lazarus, 1993). These theories cover the importance of context and culture in communication, the act of looking *at* language *rather* than *through* it, as well as recognizing that while everyone experiences stress, there are individual differences that influence the stress response. For studying how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress when there is no vernacular term for *stress,* I believe the foundation outlined will ground this research in both a communications and a stress perspective.

Literature Review

At the time of this writing there is no study researching how Sub-Saharan African populations conceptualize stress from their unique, cultural framework. Though this gap in the literature exists, there are enough studies to form a structure for this research study.

Both historical and current research are reviewed on topics of language and communication, the impact of cognition on the subjective experience, and cross-cultural studies on emotion.

Language and Communication

Social constructionists recognize communication as a creative process between the speakers rather than a passive transmission of information. This idea about communication implies that the way we think influences the way in which we communicate. Research has also shown that the language we use impacts the way we think. For example, Burr (2003) explored the usage of the word "love." English speakers historically used the word love as a verb, but now, it is primarily used to express feelings. She wrote, "The social constructionist argument is that loving feelings don't give rise to a language which then describes them, but rather that the use of such language itself encourages us to identify and experience our feelings as loving" (p. 34). The way we experience the world is largely impacted by our language.

In a cross-cultural quantitative sensory experiment, researchers tested participants' abilities to describe odors (Majid & Burenhult, 2013). One group involved English speakers and the other, a subculture known as Jahai, a people group who live in the Asiatic rainforests. The English language has a limited number of indicator words to differentiate odors. The Jahai culture, however, places an emphasis on olfaction and have a variety of abstract words in their language to describe what they smell. After testing the participants on a group of scents familiar to the English speakers but unfamiliar to the Jahai, the results showed significant consistency in the Jahai classification of the scents

and significant inconsistency amongst the English participants. While 99% of the descriptions from the Jahai were abstract (like "floral"), the majority of the English categorization was source-based (like "Big Red Gum"). The researchers noted that while previous studies (see Yeshurun & Sobel, 2010) have declared an almost universal difficulty expressing olfactory sensations, Majid and Burenhult (2015) demonstrated that is neither factual nor empirical. Based on the results of this study, the researchers reported that the Jahai group thought differently than the English speakers about scent and thus categorized the phenomenon in a significantly different way than the English speakers. The complexity of the Jahai language and the lack of English abstract words describing odors is an indicator of both cultures' constructions and meaning-making of smells. Numerous words describe emotion in English but there is a lack of specific emotion words in Luganda. This indicates the value of researching the meaning-making and constructions of stress within this specific population.

Matsumoto and Assar's (1992) quantitative study documents the phenomenon of language influencing the speaker's perception. These researchers reported a statistically significant difference in bilingual participants' perceptions of another's emotional state based on the language spoken at the time of the assessment. The researchers suggested that the differences were due to the distinctive sociopsychological constructs that influenced participants' assessment and judgment based upon the language that the participant was speaking. Dewaele and Nakano (2012) concluded that frame-switching is commonly seen amongst those who speak more than one language, indicating a co-habitation of multiple frameworks rather than a single, blended one. The participants'

reactions were also different depending on the language being spoken at the time. Similarly, in a study utilizing performance as a research methodology, Dreyer-Lude (2013) acted in a play written in both German and English. The translations were accurate with parallel meanings, yet the four actors reported that they felt they were representing different characters when they performed the same role in German versus English. "The sounds of the words, the facial expressions required to articulate each line, the gestures that naturally accompany one language or another, and the cultural context from within each language exists were all having an effect on the cognitive/emotional/identity mechanisms…" (p. 198). Though the meanings of the lines were virtually identical, the character that emerged was different. These studies show that the specific language a person uses influences the way they experience the world in that moment.

Guttfreund (1990) studied the impact of language and emotion on bilingual speakers. Romance languages are commonly considered more emotional than Germanic based languages, and the researcher wished to quantify if the framework that was created from speaking an "emotional" language would differ in another language. Guttfreund recruited English-Spanish and Spanish-English speakers to study the difference in the number of emotional words, affect, and emoted feelings in the speakers' first language compared to their second language. What he found was that all participants, regardless of their first language, were much more emotional in Spanish than in English in all variables. He concluded that the language used in any conversation influenced the participants' construct of reality at that moment. The researcher inferred that the way the

participants understood the world was fluid, rather than constant, based on the language they were using at the time. Guttfreund's (1990) study helps emphasize the relationship between different languages and different constructs of the social world.

These researchers (Burr, 2003; Dryer-Lude, 2013; Guttfreund, 1990; Majid & Burenhult, 2013; Matsumoto & Assar, 1992) demonstrated the relationship between different languages and different constructs of the social world. The conclusions of these studies show the likelihood that Luganda-speaking Ugandans who are not bilingual in English interpret and make meaning of their world in a different way than English speakers. This shows the value of examining how Luganda-speaking Ugandans talk about and conceptualize stress.

Cognitive Aspects of the Subjective Experience

Lazarus (1990) claimed that the internal experience of stress is just as important as the external stimulus in the relationship between stress and physical and emotional illness. Dhabha (2014) and Kim et al. (2013) both reported that researchers have studied the frequency of and the physical and psychological detriments of stress in both Western and nonWestern societies. Appraisal must then affect people's health.

Social constructionists argue that there is a difference between the biological and the personal experience of the biological. For example, the biological, medical diagnosis of a disease is separate from the subjective experience of illness (Conrad & Barker, 2010). While there is certainly the influence of the actual diagnosis on the personal experience of illness and the way in which patients interact with their social world, there is an underlying cognitive appraisal within this process (Conrad & Barker, 2010). This

can be seen in how people with similar diagnoses evaluate and experience their lives postdiagnosis in different ways.

Karademas et al. (2018), differentiated between a disease and illness: a disease is the biological affliction while illness is the social and intrapersonal experience of having a disease. Medical practitioners who are also social constructionists speak of their patients creating meaning of their experience with the disease. This meaning-making becomes what the practitioners call illness. In the Whitehall II study, Nabi et al. (2013) studied coronary heart disease (CHD) in participants based on perceived stress levels and perceived impact of stress on health. Following over 7200 participants for eighteen years, these researchers used the collected data to study a range of phenomena, including how stress relates to CHD. In one portion of the Whitehall II study, researchers gave the participants a questionnaire that asked how significantly stress negatively impacted their health, regardless of the amount or degree of stress they currently experienced. The researchers compared those answers with each participant's rates of CHD. What Nabi and colleagues (2013) found was that those who believed stress to significantly impact their health adversely were more likely to experience CHD than those who perceived stress to have a limited impact on their health. This trend remained statistically significant even after accounting for the amount of stress an individual reported experiencing. There are many scholars who research stress levels on health, but Nabi and colleagues (2013) were the first to study the belief of stress on health through health records. This study implies that the way an individual conceptualizes stress will influence the way that person experiences stress and the long-term impact of stress. The Whitehall II researchers

recommended that medical practitioners should include perceptions of stress's impact on health in their analyses of their patients. Other researchers have built upon the Whitehall II findings, studying perceived stress impact including Bot and Kuiper (2017) and Laferton, Stenzel, and Fischer (2016) who created a metric to measure one's belief about stress.

The research on cognitive impact on the subjective experience (Bot & Kupier, 2017; Conrad & Barker, 2010; Laferton, Stenzel, & Fischer, 2016; Nabi et al., 2013) illustrates the importance that the way we think affects our emotional and physical health. Nabi et al. (2013) even suggested that the way one conceptualizes stress may play a larger role than the actual stressor. Examining how Luganda-speaking Ugandans think about stress is a key aspect in exploring how they understand, experience, and communicate the stress phenomenon.

Cross-Cultural Studies on Emotions and the Stress Experience

While Selye (1950) demonstrated the universality of biological stress, there have been no definitive studies demonstrating the universality of experiencing stress. Stress has an emotional component, and studies have been conducted on other emotions such as happiness and well-being. Diener, Oishi and Lucas (2015) outlined various factors that contribute to a culture's identification of "being happy" or of "well-being." Cantril (1965) indicated that happiness and well-being is universal and this has been historically recognized by researchers as such, but it is not as generalizable as previously thought. Diener et al. (2015) studied subjective reports from participants who reported experiences of personal happiness or well-being and found two equal factors: affective/emotional and

cognitive. What was essential for happiness in individualistic cultures was not the same as factors contributing to happiness in collective societies. This trend held true when comparing Asian and Western cultures, poorer countries and wealthier ones, and between genders.

A culture's unique construct of an emotion is influential in how people express, discuss, and conceptualize that emotion. For example, while patients in the United States describe depression with feelings of sadness, loss of pleasure, guilt, hopelessness, an inability to focus, and suicidal ideation, Nigerian patients do not associate guilt, hopelessness, or lack of pleasure with feeling depressed (Thomas, 2008). Some emotions, such as shame and guilt, are considered beneficial in some societies, while in others they are considered negative emotions or as a flaw in a person (Boiger, Deyne, & Mesquita, 2013). Individualistic societies place a high emphasis on the subjective personal psyche or "inner world" of an individual, whereas collectivist cultures see emotions as based in objective reality rather than personal perception (Koydemir, Şimşek, Schütz, & Tipandjan, 2013). In collectivist societies, an individual is more likely to assume another would have the same emotional experience when faced with a similar situation. In individualistic societies, a person is less likely to assume another person in an analogous situation would feel identically or similarly since that society perceives emotions as subjective and individual. The constructs of each society inform its members which emotions are acknowledged and expressed or repressed and ignored. Given these differences, while the stress experience could be universal, it is worth exploring how

Ugandans uniquely conceptualize the stress phenomenon from within their construct and how they make meaning of their stressful experiences.

Yang et al. (2012) studied performance at work and reactions to the workplace in 24 countries. These researchers categorized these countries as either individualist or collectivist cultures. One of the main differences between cultures found in this study was what contributed to the participants experiencing stress. In the individualistic populations, feelings of a heavy workload and job dissatisfaction created higher levels of reported stress and higher rates of turnover. In the collectivist group, there was a higher rate of stress when the workers reported strained professional relationships. These collectivist cultures placed interpersonal relationships higher than personal goals, which are more valued in individualistic societies like the United States. While all 6509 participants were employed in management positions within a local company and had similar work experiences, the two groups differed in their categorization of what was stressful and what created the stress experience.

Researchers have studied cross-cultural examples that have empirically demonstrated that disease remains biologically the same across the world (Jacobs, Narayanasamy, & Hardani, 2015; Levesque, Li, & Bohemier, 2013), but the illness experience differs dramatically across cultures. These differences seem largely based on social factors and cultural understanding of the disease. Garcia et al. (2013), Wittkowski, Gardner, Bunton, and Edge (2013), and Scott-Sheldon et al. (2013) cited stress as factors in their studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa. They labeled a positive HIV status, family conflict, personal concerns, and other factors as being stressful to their

participants. These research studies examined the emotional, mental, and psychological components of stress in Africa within the Western accepted framework. This means the findings were interpreted through a Western lens using an American construct of stress. Based on the differences in culture and typical life experiences, the Luganda-speaking Ugandan construct of stress should also differ from the American construct, which includes the way stress is considered and experienced. There has yet to be any study that provides an accurate examination of the way Sub-Saharan Africans, more specifically, Luganda-speaking Ugandans, conceptualize stress from within their unique framework.

Summary and Conclusions

A careful exploration of the literature reveals a gap exploring how individuals in Uganda conceptualize stress from within their cultural frames of reference. The research on social constructionism and more specifically, CMM (Pearce & Pearce, 2000), has demonstrated that different cultures and societies construct frameworks to understand their world in different ways. None are objectively accurate nor false, as these subjective constructs are created within the context of relationships in that social world. The way people make meaning of experiences and how they communicate their meaning frameworks is cocreated in a group through language. I also discussed in this chapter the phenomenon of language influencing the speaker's perception and aiding in the construction of his or her framework (Dewaele & Nakano, 2012; Majid & Burenhult, 2013).

This chapter included the literature surrounding stress. Selye (1950) and Lazarus (1990) were pioneers of how we currently understand stress. Building upon their

formative theories, other researchers continued studying the importance of cognition to the stress experience. The Whitehall II study (Nabi et al., 2013) demonstrated that the way a person perceives the stress experience can be more influential than the stress experience itself. Liu, Spector, and Shi (2007) explored how cultures place emphasis on different stressors, emphasizing that when stimuli are categorized as stressful, the person makes this assessment based on a combination of cultural and individual labels. The majority of these studies were quantitative; none examined the way the individual experienced the stress phenomena in a deeper way or how that individual made meaning of the stress experience.

Studying Luganda-speaking Ugandans' conceptualization of stress filled a gap in the literature on how Sub-Saharan Africans in Uganda experience, understand, and communicate about stress. In the following chapter, I discuss the interpretive design for this study. I also outline the protocol for collecting the data using audio diaries, semistructured interviews, and interpreters. I have included the participation recruitment process and the plan for analysis using the communication perspective (Pearce, 2005) in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research methodology I planned to use to study how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. I review the intended research design and rationale for this study's methodology, outlining previous studies that have used similar techniques. Using interpreters of both written and spoken data is challenging but not without precedent (Gonella, 2014; Levine, 1991; Matson, 2001). I discuss other studies that have successfully used this type of data collection to show the viability of my proposed methodology. I also present the details of using interpreters, semistructured interviews, and audio diaries, as well as present the components of participant selection. Finally, I have included how I coded, analyzed, and interpreted the data using Pearce's (2005) communication perspective.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question that was the foundation for this study was *How is stress conceptualized by Luganda-speaking Ugandans in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon*?

Qualitative research is used to explore data of a deeply personal nature and the meaning-making experiences of the participants (Gough & Deatrick, 2015). Qualitative researchers gain unique insight into the experiences of the participants (Gough & Deatrick, 2015). The purpose of this study was to understand how the participants conceptualized stress through their storytelling. An interpretive design in the qualitative

tradition was the most appropriate way to explore the stress experience through their cultural framework.

I planned to use semistructured interviews and audio diaries for data collection in this study which would have provided me with enough data to gain a rich understanding of the stress experience of the participants (see Gough & Deatrick, 2015; Hunter et al., 2004). By using both methods for data collection, I anticipated that I would collect more detail than if I were to use a single method. Two types of data collection are consistent with an interpretive qualitative design (Crozier & Cassell, 2015; Hinsliff-Smith & Spencer, 2016; Williamson et al., 2015). Using both interviews and audio diaries can be used for triangulation.

I explored how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress by looking at the participants' communications rather than through them (see Pearce, 2004) to gain deeper insight into the participants' experiences with the stress phenomena. Using multiple methods for data collection is advantageous when working between cultures (Hoffman, 2009). Gathering data strictly from interviews can often omit relevant information that the researcher could gather by using complementary collection methods (Hoffman, 2009). I believed stories from translated semistructured interviews as well as audio diaries would have provided the richest data for this particular study. These stories became the data I interpreted.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher for this study, I was an active member of this research while exploring how seven Luganda-speaking Ugandan women conceptualized stress. My role

was to choose an appropriate methodology for this research, one that fitted the framework

of the study while being relevant to the Buganda culture. I was going to select two

interpreters to assist me. I would have offered and ensured these interpreters had

completed the Research Ethics Training Curriculum (2nd ed.; Family Health International,

2009) and received their certification upon completion. This certification would have

proven they had received education on competency in the ethical treatment of

participants. I was going to work with local leaders in participation selection. Through

working with the interpreters and local leaders, my role would have included ensuring

that the participants fully understood the purpose and nature of this study, and to obtain

their written permission to participate in the study. Because the Buganda culture is a

collectivist society, it is the norm to highly respect people in positions of authority, and

try to avoid disappointing visitors (Rarick et al., 2013), my role would have been to

assure the participants that they were free to cease participation at any point with no

punishment or negative response, including disappointment on my part or the part of any

community leader. However, due to the change in data collection, my role as the

researcher was to adapt the data collection method to still reflect the research question

with the unforeseen limitations, recruit participants who fit these new requirements, and

conduct thorough interviews with the participants.

There were some unique aspects to researching a culture of which I am not a

member. However, Hawkins (2013) discussed the unique insight gained from living and

working within a particular culture which benefitted me throughout this study. While

social psychologists have historically touted that a researcher is unable to fully

understand the experience of someone outside of his or her group (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008), there have been recent studies investigating the benefits of being an outsider in qualitative research. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) researched the insider-outsider dichotomy and found that in insider qualitative research, in which the researcher is a member of the group he or she is studying, the participants may assume that shared or common experiences equal identical experiences. Assuming identical experiences can cause the participants' failure to fully describe their experiences. However, when the researcher fully acknowledges his or her lack of understanding, this can lead to fuller and richer detail and more in-depth discussion (Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). Because I relied on stories with detail to serve as the data to be interpreted, I hoped the participants would fully describe their experiences to me.

While it was a possibility that the participants were more hesitant accepting me as a researcher than if I were a Ugandan national conducting the study, the fact that I have lived and worked within the Buganda culture, and within the Kyampisi community specifically, may have provided me acceptance and access an outsider without this experience would not have. Tinker and Armstrong (2008) recommended that researchers should view the insider-outsider classification as more fluid than categorical. In personal communications with Ugandan friends, Naki said, "You are an outsider, but they will accept you more than the person [who has not lived in Uganda]" (personal communication, April 16, 2016). Kobugabe (personal communication, April 16, 2016) agreed that Ugandans view me differently than they would a person who had just arrived

in Uganda having never previously visited this country. Edith (personal communication, April 21, 2016), however, said,

> I think every situation is different. If you lived in Kyampisi like they did, meaning you either had a tiny shop or went to the garden every morning, you would be an insider. Even me as a Ugandan not living in their community and same lifestyle makes me an outsider.

She also mentioned that the genuine relationships I have amongst Ugandans, even within the village of Kyampisi, would go far in building insidership and acceptance as opposed to other members of the Western community who only engage with other expatriots. While I did not collect the data in Kyampisi, my familiarity with Uganda as well as the countries where the participants currently resided did assist in gaining the participants' trust and building that insidership relationship. As part of my role as researcher, I continually engaged in reflexivity, evaluating the research process and my assumptions, as well as conducted frequent self-examination (see Hsiung, 2008). These measures helped me maintain an appropriate role in this research process.

My role also included collecting and analyzing the data and reporting the results in a truthful, interpretive manner. By using an interpretive analysis design, I could acknowledge the intrinsic ability of human beings to analyze and understand other human beings' experiences in a way that researchers using statistical analysis are unable to replicate (see Anthony, 2013). I will never be a member of Ugandan society. Yet the interaction I have had with that culture and community for the past 10 years, including the three I lived there, informed my judgments, interpretations, and cultural

understandings in a way that a researcher with no experience in Uganda could not make (see Anthony, 2013). My outsider role did not need to be considered a hindrance. By acknowledging that I am an outsider from the rural Luganda-speaking Ugandan women being a white, educated, American woman, and recognizing that I cannot ever fully comprehend the nuances of the culture, I hoped to be able to draw more detailed stories for the interpretive analysis of the data.

Another role I had as researcher was to ensure that I minimized any power imbalance as best as possible. Both colonization and the long-term impact of assistance to Kyampisi could have contributed to this, so I did not include participants with whom I had worked in a professional capacity. I also engaged in reflexivity to minimize my bias for the Ugandan people through journal keeping throughout the data collection process.

Methodology

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the plan that I had originally for data collection was no longer a viable option due to unforeseen circumstances. Though I collected the data in a different manner that is thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4, I believe the original methodology for data collection would have yielded important findings. Therefore, below I describe the methodology that was originally approved in hopes that future researchers may examine how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. The semistructured interviews and data analysis plan remained the same as intended.

Participation Selection Logic

I had planned for the participants for this study to be six to 10 Luganda-speaking Ugandan women from a specific rural village in the Mokono District. Robinson (2014)

and Yin (2013) recommended a researcher work with a smaller number of participants when the researcher's objective is to gather deep and robust data from the participants. Crozier and Cassell (2015) used six participants in their study on stress using audio diaries. They reported that this number was enough to go in-depth with each participant while achieving saturation for analysis. Mason (2010) wrote that data saturation occurs when the researcher is unable to collect any new information by adding participants or cannot create new coding categories for the collected data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Posey (2013) found that 10 participants were enough to achieve data saturation in his qualitative study. Similarly, Gosnell (2015) reached data saturation with 10 interviews for her qualitative interpretive study using semistructured interviews. Gosnell (2015) also noted that the more homogeneity amongst the studied population, the lesser number of participants is required to reach data saturation. Many women in rural Uganda have similar life experiences (education level, remaining in the village, etc.), so I believed that six to 10 participants would be enough to achieve data saturation for this study. By collecting data through both audio diaries and semistructured interviews, I anticipated a "richness and thickness" (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1409) of the collected data that would assist in reaching data saturation with a small number of participants.

Many women living in urban areas of Uganda use composite Luganda and I believed this would not provide the best data for an appropriate analysis of how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress from within their cultural framework, due to their familiarity with a Western usage of the word *stress*. Therefore, the women for this study were to all have resided in this village in the Mukono district in the central region

of Uganda. This village had experienced stressful and traumatic situations including high levels of infant and maternal mortality, chronic poverty, lack of adequate healthcare, and the highest rate of human sacrifice cases in the country (Fellows, 2013; McCray, 2014).

The first criterion for participants to be in the study was the participants must be women over the age of 21. I did not plan to have an age cap, as I was willing to speak with any elderly women in the village to hear about their experiences. But as it often takes until the age of 21 to graduate from secondary (high) school and thus be considered a full-fledged adult in Uganda, I would have required the participants to be at least 21 years of age. I was more concerned with the participants being viewed as adults by their community rather than having completed secondary school. However, even though some students do not complete secondary school until 22 or even older, no participant would have been enrolled in any formal education program at the time of the data collection.

The second criterion was for the participant to have lived or be currently living hard lives. To anticipate what a Ugandan would qualify as a *hard life*; I asked some Luganda-speaking Ugandans to describe a *hard life*. One woman wrote "Someone [who] passed through many problems like someone without parents, or home, or food, etc. I think it means going through life full of misery, poverty, diseases, etc." (Beth, personal communication, April 22, 2016). The positions of chairman and pastor include an acute awareness of their community, and so I was going to ask the chairman and pastor which women in the village they thought would qualify as having had a hard life based on Beth's descriptions. The women they listed would have been the potential participants I invited for the study.

Instrumentation

In exploring how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress, I required instrumentation that allowed for the participants to describe, explain, and make meaning of their experiences. I was going to use both audio diaries and semistructured interviews for data collection to allow space for the participants to relay and examine their experiences. I would also have been using interpreters. In this section I explain the rationale behind the instrumentation I originally chose as well as provide the details for data collection.

Audio diaries. Studying stress through diary collections has precedents (Qian, Yarnal, & Almeida, 2014; Rickenbach, Almedia, Seeman, & Lachman, 2014). One of the benefits of using diaries for data collection is that this format allows participants to focus on what is important to them, rather than the researcher guiding focus onto what he or she believes should be important (Qian et al., 2014). Because of the subjective nature of the stress experience, diaries allow participants to focus on telling stories about their experiences and their meaning-making process of that experience. Crozier and Cassell (2015) suggested that audio diaries are more effective for collecting both emotional and cognitive aspects of one's experience of stress due to the storytelling quality, making this data collection method appropriate for this study.

Rickenbach et al. (2014) outlined the benefits of studying the stress experience through written diaries in their examination of the correlation between daily stress and cognitive decline in an elderly population. Qian et al. (2014) wrote about the importance of using diaries in data collection to study minor, daily stress that occurs. They reported

that daily stressors and the way that people cope with them have a larger impact on health than many acute episodes of stress. The researchers were able to collect relevant personal data about the participants' stress experience by collecting diaries in which participants reported stressors encountered, their behaviors in response to stress, coping skills, physical manifestations of stress, and their emotional affect based on their stressors. Using diaries allowed Qian et al. to explore the within-person phenomena rather than relying on data that compares between-person information.

Collecting diaries and journals has a rich history in East Africa. Chin-Quee et al. (2016) used journal entries of health workers in Rwanda to examine the effect of adding additional responsibilities to health workers. Bernays, Seely, Rhodes, and Mupambireyi (2015) used a combination of semistructured interviews along with diaries to explore what growing up with HIV was like for children in Uganda and Zimbabwe. Their qualitative study allowed the children to narrate their experiences as well as their understanding of their experiences.

In Bernays et al.'s (2015) study, the researchers used audio diaries to collect their data from children. The children were given minitape recorders and asked to create journal entries by recording their thoughts. Because the children were instructed to create verbal entries rather than written ones, the children were able to express themselves better as their verbal skills were more advanced than their writing skills. Worth (2009) collected data from blind and visually impaired youth by using audio diaries. She noted that illiterate populations would also benefit from this method of data collection. Audio diaries frequently have richer, fuller, and longer entries than traditional written diaries

and these entries often focus more on participants' interpretation of experiences rather than a chronological detailing of a specific episode (Worth, 2009). Based on these studies (Bernays et al., 2015; Worth, 2009), I believed audio diaries would have been the most appropriate method for gathering diary information from the participants in my study, many of whom I anticipated to be illiterate. It would also have provided data to explore the within-person phenomena of the stress experiences (Paulik & Waible, 2013) and provide a way for the participants to fully describe and make meaning of their experience.

Audio diaries, as opposed to the more traditional written diaries, would have helped me capture how these participants conceptualized stress because there is no written word for *stress* in Luganda, and verbal cues are often necessary for translation. Due to a lack of regulated spelling in Luganda, many words that sound similar are often written down and spelled interchangeably. Many Luganda words are phonetically the same, but the verbal emphasis is what differentiates the meanings. For example, amaazi (ah-MAH-zee) means water while amazzi (ah-mah-ZEE) is a rather rude expletive. I have seen both words written in both spellings. I believed that using written diaries could have caused confusion without the verbal cues. The entries from the audio diaries were to be translated and transcribed into English by the interpreters.

Interpreters. Due to neither of the anticipated participants being fluent in English nor this researcher being fluent in Luganda, I was going to require the use of interpreters to interpret both the audio diary entries as well as the interview answers. According to Paulik and Waibel (2013) it is important to be clear in the use of terminology:

Translation refers to the transfer of meaning from source language text to target language text, with time and access to resources such as dictionaries, phrase books, etc. *Interpretation* (of speech) refers to the transfer from source language speech to target language speech, either simultaneously...or consecutively. (p. 456)

While using interpreters provided an additional layer of complexity to the methodology, there was precedence to use interpreters and translators in cultural studies. I was to exclusively be requiring the use of interpreters due to the likely illiteracy of the participants, but it is worth examining research that has used both interpreters and translators as the transfer of meaning from one language to another is consistent within both.

Gonella's (2014) study on the impact of blindness in Mexican immigrant men used interpreters. The participants in Gonella's study (2014) were instructed to answer in their preferred language for written questionnaires as well as verbal interviews over the course of two sessions. These sessions were tape recorded and the interpreter simultaneously translated during the interchanges.

Matson (2001) studied cultural coping strategies through interviews in a Vietnamese population interred in a reeducation camp. The focus of Matson's study aligned closely with this proposed study, as Matson dealt with meaning-making of emotional experiences using a language that has a limited vocabulary of emotion words. To mitigate any potential confusion, Matson held briefing sessions with his three interpreters before collecting data to clearly communicate the purpose and focus of the

study as well as the interpreters' role. Matson was studying key emotion words that did

not have an equivalent in Vietnamese, so Matson and the interpreters agreed upon

phrases that would be used to communicate a meaning comparable to the emotion words

he was studying. I was going to hold similar briefing sessions with the two interpreters

prior to collecting data to discuss the purpose of this proposed study.

Interpreters are not used solely for direct verbal translation and informed

consents. Translators will often work with written answers and journals as well. Levine

(1991) conducted a cross-cultural study of dreams with three international populations.

The child participants were asked to keep a dream journal. The translator translated the

entries and then simultaneously verbally interpreted all interactions between the

interviewer and her participants for clarification.

There are two techniques to verbal interpretation (Paulik & Waibel 2013).

Simultaneous interpretation occurs when the interpreter speaks at the same time as the

participant. Consecutive interpretation occurs when the interpreter waits for the

participant to complete a thought before interpreting. The interpreters were going to use

consecutive interpretation during each interview with the participants in the study. The

rationale for choosing consecutive interpretation is cultural. I have observed that in

Uganda, consecutive interpretations are more the norm than simultaneous interpretations.

When I questioned Ugandan friends, who are frequently called upon to interpret, which

style they prefer, one said, "[It] is not so easy to interpret as a person is speaking. [It] is

better if you allow the person to finish a sentence [before] you interpret because it will

allow you to understand the point the person is bringing out. But you shouldn't allow the

person to finish their thought if it is long because you may miss out on things" (Tolit, personal communication, February 28, 2016). Another friend said, "The reason for [consecutive interpretation] is because it sometimes takes to hearing the end [of the sentence] to understand what they are saying" (Edith, personal communication, February 26, 2016). Altinyelken et al. (2014) quoted a Luganda-speaking Ugandan teacher: "Sometimes the way a word is used in English is slightly different than how it is used in Luganda. I do not explain word by word, but I explain the idea" (p. 92). Because Luganda is comprised of many context-specific words, Luganda interpreters often find it challenging to simultaneously interpret due to not fully understanding the context until the end of the sentence or thought.

While interpreters add a unique challenge to a study, interpreters would have helped provide nuanced data to the researcher which could otherwise have been unavailable. The previously mentioned studies acknowledged the existence of cultural subtleties that the researcher may not fully understand through verbal transmission of meaning alone. All interpreters in these studies also acted as cultural translators. Cultural translators provide more than simply administrative translation or direct word-for-word translation (Qiu, 2016). Due to the Eurocentric framework of the Western researchers, without proper cultural understanding, researchers may miss rich data about the participants' experiences. Wang (2010) outlined three main categories of information that a cultural translator will likely encounter: cultural, conceptual, and structural incommensurability. These categories cover sociohistorical information, contextual data, any differences in value or foundational ideas in the culture, even subtle body language

movements. As I am not a member of the Luganda culture, I was planning on having two Buganda nationals acting as both verbal interpreters and cultural translators for this study.

Both interpreters were to be Uganda university-educated graduates, fluent in both their mother-tongue Luganda and English, and well-briefed on the purpose of this study. Before assisting me in the recruitment and data collection stage, the interpreters were going to complete the Research Ethics Training Curriculum (2nd ed.; Family Health International, 2009) course. This course follows the guidelines laid out by the Belmont Report's (1979) ethical guidelines and is recommended by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The interpreters would also have signed the confidentiality agreement that stated they would not disclose nor discuss the data or the participants' identity with anyone.

Training interpreters. While there was no formal training for interpreters for a study like this, there were precedents that established validity and reliability in interpretations. Matson (2001) conducted briefing sessions with interpreters as a training session before collecting data. Helle and colleagues (2009) worked with occupational therapists from five countries, each with a unique language, to create an appropriate assessment across all five Nordic cultures. The researchers took an original Swedish document and worked on translating and comparison checks. The research included two panels, one of which translated forward (from Swedish to another language) and the other which translated backward (from the translated document back into Swedish). This process created inter-rater reliability as everyone worked towards agreeing upon exact wording and concepts included within each translated document.

Before recruitment and data collection, the interpreters and I were going to have a briefing session to agree upon phrases and words that we would use during the recruitment stage, interviews, instructions for the audio diary, and in their interpretations of the participants' contributions during the interviews. Similar to the process used in Matson's (2001) study on emotional experiences without equivalent Vietnamese words, this briefing would ensure that all parties were aware of and agreed to the phrases we were going to use throughout the study. I anticipated these phrases to include *difficulties in life* and *feeling bad* instead of the word *stress*. The session would also contain instructions on all aspects of the conversation they would be interpreting including external cues such as language and body language, internal cues such as cultural beliefs, and products such as folklore (Katan, 2014). This list encompassed the duties of being both a verbal and cultural translator.

To establish inter-rater reliability for the transmission from source language to the target language (Helle et al., 2009), I was going to invite a third-party Ugandan fluent in both English and Luganda with whom I would have discussed this research with at length. This person was going to act as the trainer. The trainer and I would have had a brief scenario that she and I would have printed in English. The trainer would also have had a copy of the same scenario translated into Luganda. We would have invited the interpreters in separately for training. During these training sessions, the trainer was to read the scenario verbatim from the page in Luganda after which the interpreter would have interpreted the scenario into English to me. I would have compared each interpreter's interpretation of the story to the English scenario I would be holding to

analyze if there was reliability in the way the interpreters were interpreting the phrases. I would then have read the English scenario while the interpreters interpreted the story into Luganda. The trainer would compare the interpretation with the written copy. This forward and backward interpretation is similar to the way that Helle et al. (2009) established inter-rater reliability in the words and concepts used in their study.

Interviews. Interviews are a common way for researchers to collect data for interpretive qualitative studies (Wahyuni, 2012). Gergen and Gergen (2003) stated that when researching from a social constructionism lens, the data collection method will influence the way the researcher understands the social worlds of their participants. Interviews provide a real-time interaction that provides insight into the experiences and subjective understanding of the world from the participant's view (Wahyuni, 2012; Gergen & Gergen, 2003). Through interviews, I hoped to gather such insight.

The I:R approach (Chirban, 1996) is a conversational interviewing technique that incorporates the emerging relationship between interviewer and interviewee as a tool in the interview process. Chirban's (1996) rationale for this approach is that interviewees are more likely to disclose more in an authentic conversational setting than in a formal, scientific, dispassionate conversation consisting of a set of questions posed by the researcher and answers from the participants. I used semistructured questions during the interview that followed a conversational design in the model of the I: R approach. This included appropriate responsiveness to what the participant said.

Pearce (2004) based CMM on the idea that individuals co-create meaning within the context of interacting and communicating, so the I: R approach for this study was

appropriate when interviewing participants due to its back-and-forth conversational

structure. While Chirban (1996) used limited structure in his interviews, I modified his

method by having a list of questions appropriate for a semistructured interview format.

By modifying the I: R approach into a semistructured mode, I was able to capture data

while maintaining the relational power of Chirban's method (see Suwankhong &

Liamputtong, 2015) because I did not follow my questions in order, but rather asked them

in the context of what the participant offered. Chirban (1996) stated that the interviewer

is invited into the experience as the discussion flows into a conversation rather than being

a cold transaction of information. The interviewer's thoughts and impressions were as

valuable as those of the interviewee. The idea of the interviewer being a part of the

research and having a place in the process other than as objective observer is an integral

part of the researcher's role in an interpretive design (Anthony, 2013). Because of the

importance placed upon relationships and conversation in the Ugandan culture (Rarick et

al., 2013), interviews conducted in the modified I:R approach should be accepted by the

participants as this approach involves face-to-face relational interaction, touching,

genuine responsiveness, and emoting during conversation (Chirban, 1996).

Interviews were key in exploring how the participants conceptualized stress.

There are many meanings for a single word in Luganda; the phrase "I feel bad" ("Mpulira

bubi") could be intended to mean sad, upset, jealous, emotionally hurt, regretful,

distressed, or almost any negative emotion (Edith & Naki, personal communications,

February 28, 2016). The way to differentiate if a Luganda-speaking Ugandan intends to

relay regret as opposed to distress is through a combination of context and nonverbal

communication. Facial expressions and hand gestures are crucial in understanding what a Luganda-speaker means. In a personal conversation with a Luganda-speaking Ugandan counselor, she relayed that it is easier to express emotions in Luganda than in English because you have to emote and physically demonstrate through facial expressions and body language how one is feeling when speaking Luganda (Naki, personal communication, October 12, 2014).

Interviews are considered "an inner view of the interviewed person" (Chirban, 1996, p. xi), and the data collected from the interviews helped me interpret how the participants conceptualized stress. I arranged with each participant to meet at a location and time most convenient to her (Liamputtong, 2010), presumably her home. While there was no guarantee for a completely silent environment during the interviews, it is customary in Uganda to have children and others outside while privately entertaining a visitor.

I used a modified I:R approach (Chirban, 1996), tailored to a semistructured interview format to ensure that I addressed certain points while still allowing for a natural flow of conversation (Menichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008). I used my own set of questions that I created in collaboration with my committee as at the time of this writing there was currently no instrumentation in the literature that was suitable for this study. The questions pertained to the participants' experiences. All questions were open-ended to invite as much detail as possible. The scope of questions included how the participant thought about difficult times, how she communicated to others about difficulties, and questions that served as invitations to discuss those difficult times with me. I invited

storytelling through these questions. These stories became the data I analyzed for how these Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualized stress.

Procedures

  Recruitment. I planned on coordinating with the Ugandan version of a mayor, called a chairman, and the local pastor, both of whom I had worked closely with previously. These two men have relationships with nearly everyone in the village. I was to coordinate with these men in the recruitment phase by having one of these men accompany the interpreters and me to the homes of potential participants as I invited them to participate in this study. These potential participants were to be women over the age of 21 who were considered by these village leaders to have had a "hard life." Working with the chairman and pastor would have helped prove my legitimacy and establish trust for potential participants. Both the chairman and pastor act as confidantes to and champions for the community members, so it was unlikely that a potential participant would feel pressured to participate or too uncomfortable to voice concerns to one of these men.

  For the initial interaction with participants, I was going to approach the women with either the pastor or chairman and one of the interpreters to ask the women if they would be interested in participating in this study. The presence of the pastor or chairman during the recruitment phase was important as these men are respected leaders within the community structure. Their presence would have assisted in building rapport, and trust, and provide comfort; both men are well known and protective of the community members and would not allow anyone to exploit potential participants. I was to explain

the informed consent form, answer any questions, have the informed consent form signed, and provide the minirecorders for the audio diaries. I would have explained the audio diary process. I would also include a tutorial on how to use the recorders along with requesting each participant to create a trial entry by stating her name and saying a few sentences into the recorder and stopping it when she was finished. If a participant accepted, I was to schedule a time in the following week to return to the participant's home that was convenient for the participant for the interview. For that second meeting, I would have returned with one of the interpreters, and we would have conducted the interviews.

Data collection. I was planning to meet with each participant along with the interpreter and the chairman or pastor to have the informed consent form verbally translated to the participant, answer any questions, and require that each participant sign the informed consent form. Having the participant sign the informed consent form while the researcher is present may be unorthodox due to concerns regarding potential power imbalance, but in Uganda I anticipated some participants to be semiliterate or illiterate in Uganda, making the verbal translation necessary. Their signature could have been a symbol or a thumbprint, a common way of signing in Uganda. I would have had an inkpad on hand if this was the method the participant was most comfortable using. I did not foresee that my presence would pressure anyone into agreeing to be participants because the pastor or chairman would have been present during this initial meeting. I was to keep one copy of the consent form and provide each participant with a copy. When I explained confidentiality, I was going to ask each participant what pseudonym she would

prefer for this study. This is a common practice amongst nonprofits in Uganda when gathering personal stories about an individual. Thus, they would have been accustomed to choosing an alternate name.

I was going to give minitape recorders to each participant and ask her to record her daily experiences and any feelings associated with these situations. Each participant would have recorded entries in Luganda into the recorder that would comprise the audio diary. Each audio diary would have been interpreted and transcribed into English by one of the interpreters after the interviews occurred. The women would have had seven days to create the audio diaries before the interviews took place. A seven-day diary has precedence in health psychological studies (Van Straten et al., 2014; Williamson, Leeming, Lyttle, & Johnson, 2012; Williamson et al., 2015) and provides sufficient time for the participant to be comfortable with the process but not so long as to create burnout.

At the end of the seven-day period with the audio diaries, I was to return to conduct the interviews. I would not have had the audio diaries translated before my interview so the audio diary entries would not have informed the interviews. I anticipated the interviews to be between two and three hours in length. This is culturally appropriate as many conversations begin with asking how the person's life is, how their family is faring, how they slept the previous night, and so forth. Only after these pleasantries do intentional conversations take place. In a relational society such as Uganda, it would be considered rude or obtrusive to begin asking pointed questions without first establishing a foundation within the conversation. This timeframe of two or three hours also allowed for the time it takes to translate each person's contribution to the conversation. The

interpreters would have been verbally interpreting the participant's comments, which I

would be recording on the minirecorder. I would have had those recordings transcribed

later. I would have conducted the interviews at the participants' convenience. I would

have recorded these interviews on a minitape recorder, and I would take notes after

explaining to the participants the purpose of notetaking. Following Chirban's (1996)

model, I would respond and ask follow-up questions with empathy and genuineness.

Uganda is a relational culture (Rarick et al., 2013), and this method of interviewing was a

culturally relevant method of data collection. In developing the questions, it was

important that I remained consistent with the vocabulary of the culture, using idiomatic

phrases specific to the Luganda culture. I planned to periodically ask the participants if

they needed a break or if they were comfortable continuing so as to guard against fatigue.

Due to emotiveness of the Luganda language, I anticipated the participants to display

physical signs if they were becoming distressed, such as crying. Due to the lack of word

for *stress* or *distress* in the Luganda language, I was going to have to be aware of body

language and tone to gauge if a participant was becoming uncomfortable. I would also

have relied on the interpreters to pick up any subtle cultural display of discomfort of

which I may have been unaware.

If the recruitment with the pastor and chairman failed to bring the needed six to

10 participants, I would have asked the women for other potential participants they knew

who fit the criteria of a *hard life*, were over the age of 21, and spoke Luganda without

being fluent in English. This referral recruitment process, often referred to as the

snowball technique (Bleich & Pekkanen, 2013), would have been appropriate if there

were people further in the bush who had limited interaction with the rest of the village. While those potential participants who were more isolated may not have had the same close relationship with the chairman or pastor that the initial participants have, the positions of village chairman and pastor would still have induced trust.

If there was a need for follow-up interviews, I was going to have the chairman or pastor communicate with the participant, and I would have returned to the village with the same interpreter at a time the participant found most convenient. I would request a follow-up interview if there was muffled audio from the interview recording and I was unable to clearly understand what either the participant or interpreter had said, or if I needed clarification on comments from the interviewee.

Each participant would have exited the study through a debriefing session conducted by the interpreter and myself. I would have sincerely thanked her for her involvement in this research and explained that the participant could contact me if she had any questions pertaining to the study. Participants would have been able to contact me through the the chairman or pastor. Each participant could have asked any questions, asked for clarification, or provided any other communication they felt was necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

Poortman and Schildkamp (2012) stated that "qualitative research is based on interpretivism and constructivism….; findings are created within the context of the situation which shapes the inquiry" (p. 1728). Before analysis, I was to have the recordings from the interviews and the audio diaries transcribed by an available professional transcription service. I asked the agency to sign the confidentiality

agreement prior to beginning the transcriptions. Once the agency had completed the transcriptions, I read through them thoroughly while listening to the recordings to familiarize myself with the data. To ensure confidentiality, I was to use the pseudonym chosen by each participant as I coded her data. I checked the transcription against the interview recording to assure accuracy. The transcription was verbatim, including any side comments. After transcribing, I was to further familiarize myself with each interview and audio diary entry by listening to each again for nuances and themes as Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood (2013) recommended. The stories from the participants were the data to be interpreted and analyzed.

I coded the data iteratively as I identified emerging themes and patterns and compared the data against itself (Wahyuni, 2012). I also created subcategories as warranted. Some of the data was coded in multiple categories (Clark, 2007) if it was necessary to maintain the richness of the information. I needed to study, analyze, and code the data multiple times using emergent categories (Cho, 2013). Elements of the stories that were inconsistent with any emerging theory I placed under the category of *Other*. If upon further analysis, a theme emerged that fit data categorized as *Other*, I moved that data into the appropriate category. If no such emergent theme arose, I kept that data in the *Other* category.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described analysis as

working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable bits, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns. Interpretation involves explaining and framing your ideas in relation to theory, other

scholarship, and action, as well as showing why your findings are important and making them understandable (p. 159).

For analysis, I used Pearce's (2007) communication theory. Several models that are all variations on this perspective are often used interchangeably or substituted based upon the emerging data collected from practitioners. I used Pearce's (2004) LUUUUTT model to analyze how these women have made meaning through their experiences. LUUUUTT stands for *stories lived*, *unknown stories*, *untold stories, unheard stories, untellable stories*, *stories told*, and *storytelling*. I looked at the tension within each of the participants' stories. I anticipated the lack of word for *stress* may indicate some stories that were untellable and unknowable. The participants' stories allowed me to identify and examine the known and unknown elements relevant to the interpretation (Wasserman, 2015) of their conceptualization of stress.

If the LUUUUTT model had proven restrictive for the analysis of the themes that emerge, I was planning on substituting with the serpentine model (2005). I used the LUUUUTT model to understand the tension between what was told and what was untellable. Every story, interaction, event, or episode influenced all future stories, interactions, events, and episodes both in communication and meaning-making.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

One factor in establishing trustworthiness is credibility. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) suggested that the more immersed researchers are in the field they are studying, the more credible the study. I lived in rural Uganda for three years and have worked

within the culture sporadically for eight years, primarily amongst Luganda-speaking

Ugandans. My living and interactions there helped establish this aspect of credibility. In

addition, having two Luganda-speaking Ugandan interpreters would have made me

confident that the findings of this study would align with the socially constructed reality

of the participants. Having the interpreters act as cultural translators would also be

beneficial in establishing credibility, because I would have been less likely to miss a

nuance or other relevant data that I am unfamiliar with as an American. Another way of

establishing credibility was through the rigor of the literature review. I thoroughly

reviewed the literature for this study before planning the methodology, and I discussed

the literature review at length in this proposal. My search of the literature was exhaustive,

and I used multiple databases as well as working with Walden University librarians.

International journals were also included in the search so I could be as thorough as

possible.

Dependability

Outlining data collection and analysis procedures thoroughly, describing any

changes made during the research, and why those changes were made are ways

researchers demonstrate dependability in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are

aware that situations and relationships can alter in a way that directly or indirectly

influences the collection and interpretation of data. For this study, I outlined my

originally intended methodology in as detailed a manner as possible. Collecting multiple

sources of data is a solid way of triangulating the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007),

and establishing dependability as triangulation shows that multiple sources of data

collected similar information. By gathering two sources of data, audio diaries and interviews, I would have had a way to explore a richer understanding of the participants' experiences.

Confirmability

Qualitative studies with interpretive designs are not "objective" in the manner statistical studies are, yet confirmability and transferability help establish components of trustworthiness. Confirmability helps ensure that I have based the findings of this study on the data rather than any bias. I kept a journal throughout the data collection and data analysis process which highlighted any biases that arose during the research process. By keeping a record of events during the research collection process as well as any emotions or thoughts that arose, I was able to assess what were reflections based on my personal history or bias and what were reflections that were more objective and observational. Anney (2014) advised journal-keeping to cultivate reflexivity in a researcher. Keeping a journal helped me to acknowledge and minimize personal bias.

Transferability

To demonstrate transferability, I collected and reported rich and detailed descriptions of the life experiences of individual participants, which provide readers with sufficient information to comprehend the data and make connections to their own personal experiences (Hinds, 2015). I anticipated there would be a level of transferability for other Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who live in rural areas.

Dependability and Reliability

During the training with the interpreters, we would be discussing the ways in which they would be translating for inter-rater reliability. The exercise of interpreting a story from Luganda into English and from English into Luganda would have also assisted in achieving inter-rater reliability. As the interpreters were to be interpreting the audio diaries, the interviews, as well as serve as cultural translators, ensuring that the interpreters and I were all using the agreed upon precise phrasing and wording would be key for reliability.

Throughout the data analysis stage, I used the code-recode technique (Chilisa & Preece, 2005) to promote dependability and reliability. After the initial coding of the data, I ignored all data for at least three days. Some researchers step back from the data in order to recode with fresh insight; I then recoded the data without looking at the initial coding so as not to influence the second round of coding. I returned to the data multiple times after the first two times, but this pause between the first two coding sessions promoted consistency in my coding procedure (Anney, 2014). I continued revisiting the data and recoding until I reached saturation and no new themes emerged.

Ethical Procedures

As I intended to be collecting data in another country, Uganda, I took the appropriate steps to ensure that my research followed international ethical protocol. I designed this study to follow the Nuremberg Code (1949), the Belmont Report's Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research, 1979), and Uganda's National Guidelines for Research Involving

Humans as Research Participants (Ugandan National Council for Science and

Technology, 2014). Walden University's IRB required all of these for international data

collection.

I was going to ensure the two interpreters had completed the human subjects'

protection training provided by Family Health International, entitled Research Ethics

Training Curriculum (RETC, 2nd ed., 2009). This training was recommended by Walden

University's IRB Board and followed the regulations of the Belmont Report (1979).

Upon completion of the training, there is a certificate awarded for passing the

competency test. Both interpreters were to be required to possess this certificate before

assisting me in data collection. They would also have signed the Confidentiality

Agreement that stated they would not disclose nor discuss any of the data or the

participants' identities with anyone.

Before collecting data, I submitted my proposal to the IRB for approval. The IRB

approves ethical research studies and methodologies. They approve only after the

researcher has proven that he or she has taken all precautions to avoid potential harm for

the participants. I submitted the proposal with the original data collection plan before

unforeseen circumstances prevented me from collecting the data in the way I had

intended. When it became clear I could not travel to Uganda to interview participants I

worked with the IRB and my committee to establish a credible alternative to the data

collection plan I outlined above. The IRB approval number was 04-25-19-0240616. Once

the IRB gave its approval to the modifications made to the original data collection plan, I

followed the amended procedure for data collection, which is detailed in Chapter 4. I

maintained the approved protocol and did not deviate from it as it had been approved by

the IRB as being ethically sound. As I did not deviate from the approved methodology or

data collection, it helped me safeguard against unethical actions. I explained the research

process to all participants prior to any data collection. This initial interaction was when I

stated that there was no pressure to participate nor would there be any punishment or

disapproval if a participant decided to withdraw at any point within the process. I had

planned to give an informed consent form in written hard copy as well as review it

verbally into Luganda for each participant to consent. I asked each participant if she

clearly understood the language and concepts in the form. I kept the participants'

identities confidential by assigning each participant a number for all data.

During the time I collected the data, I wrote in a reflexive journal. I included my

emotions during the process as well as any observations of the participants, the

environment, or the setting (Anney, 2014). This journal-keeping helped me acknowledge

any bias I may have had, so I could be aware and minimize bias as an influence during

the interpretive analysis. I treated all participants of the study with respect and clearly

communicated that if they were feeling uncomfortable and wished to leave the study,

they were free to do so.

All data, including the recordings of the interviews, the paper transcriptions for

the interviews, the digital files saved to a flash-drive, and my journal are kept locked in

my home office in the United States. The keys to the cabinet are hidden as well. Per

Walden University's (2016) and the UNCST's (2014) guidelines, all collected data will remain locked until five years has passed and then will be destroyed.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodology for this study the way it was originally proposed and designed. I detailed the precedence for using interpreters, and I presented my rationale for audio diaries and interviews. I discussed participation selection and data collection methodology using audio diaries and semistructured interviews. I discussed the culturally relevant interview questions that I created. Another important component of Chapter 3 is my coverage of the role of the researcher as well as the role of the interpreter and the protocol for including interpreters. I described the plan for data analysis and interpretation as well as the ethical procedures and matters of trustworthiness. In Chapter 4, I describe the changes made to the data collection I outlined in this chapter, the reason and rationale for these changes, and discuss the results from this research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress. With so many Western practitioners leading stress management workshops, providing counseling services in Uganda to Ugandan nationals, and teaching local organizations about mental health, best practice is for professionals to understand how life is experienced by the group they are assisting. To act otherwise is unethical and could even be detrimental to the population being served. If an individual or group of people do not experience a situation as stressful, it could prove harmful for a professional to categorize that situation as such (Wendt, Gone, & Nagata, 2014), forcing both the label and expectation of a specific conceptualization of that experience. I examined the research question *How is stress conceptualized by Luganda-speaking Ugandans in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon?*

In this chapter, I describe the conditions around collecting the data, the setting, and the logistics of the data collection. I include the demographics of the participants and explain changes I made to the methodology. I also discuss the analysis process and the results of the data as well as outline the evidence for trustworthiness in this study.

Settings

I conducted all the interviews via video conference calls. The fact that I was unable to interact with the participants in person did impact the way the data was collected. Rather than the video conference call hindering the openness of the participants, it seems to have had the opposite effect; two participants mentioned the

distance between us allowed each of them to be more open with me in their storytelling.

Participant 5 said, "I'd rather talk to you because I know you don't know Ugandans

[here]. You're not going to say what I've shared with you." As we spoke on a video

conference call, participants had the freedom to be comfortable in their home (including

one participant wearing pajamas and lying down for most of the conversation). Not being

face to face provided more comfort and more openness in the data collection process for

at least some of the participants which played a factor in the storytelling model I used in

interpretation.

While video conferencing influenced at least two participants to be more open and

vulnerable, there were a few technological issues. At times there was a lag in the

communication, delaying the real-time video and audio. While this did not hinder

capturing the words that the participants said in the transcripts, within an I: R interview

approach (Chirban, 1996) and the CMM (Pearce, 2004) perspective of cocreating

meaning within interactions and communications, these technical issues did influence the

data collection and interpretation. Lags in video prevented me from seeing facial

expressions in real time and prolonged silences due to technology affecting the rhythm

that the participant and I had created earlier on in the interview. As nonverbal cues are a

significant form of communication (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013), it is important to

note that while I was able to capture the words and tone of voice for everything said, I did

occasionally miss facial expressions or other body language that a participant may have

used as emphasis.

Another condition that influenced at least one of the participants in their answers would be culture shock. Participant 2 had only recently moved in with her husband and in-laws in a previously unvisited country. She appeared overwhelmed at how different her life had become in 6 months. She was extremely positive about Uganda, saying she had never experienced a bad situation in Uganda and spoke negatively about England. While this reaction could have been an extreme reframing, the intense descriptions of the dichotomy between Uganda and England suggests her observations more likely stemmed from recent immersion in the Western culture. Her generalizations affected my interpretation of her stories lived and stories told. I frequently asked myself if she truly had never experienced anything negative in Uganda or if she was currently so homesick that her perspective would be different in a year. However, I was confident that her participation was appropriate as her stories specifically surrounding the stress concept in Uganda aligned with what other participants said.

The questions in the semistructured interview centered around hard or bad experiences participants had lived. Thinking and speaking about distressing times influenced some participants; I noted at what point in the interview Participant 5 became emotional as displayed through crying, specific body language, and intensity in tone of voice. Noting an interviewee's nonverbal communication as emphasis on a point is consistent with qualitative research (Ezzy, 2010). The potential trauma and distress participants displayed during our interviews did affect my interpretation of those stories, placing emphasis and weight on these parts of the stories.

Demographics

I interviewed seven Ugandan women for this research. Upon conducting the seventh interview, I determined that I had reached saturation and concluded recruitment and data collection. As I was unable to travel to Uganda, participation criteria were impacted as well as the data gathering strategy. The new criteria were Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who had moved to an English-speaking Western country within the last 4 years. While the term "Western" is not universally accepted, as Lee (2013) stated, "the term 'Western' offers a convenient common platform for discussion;" (p. 469) therefore, the term was used to encompass North America, Western Europe, and Australia. Table 1 below indicates the criteria that informed the eligibility of the participants.

Table 1

Participant Eligibility Criteria

	Length of time in new country	Country of Residence	Luganda as mother tongue	Employed	Living with other Ugandan Immigrants
Participant 1	3+ years	Australia	Yes	Part time	No
Participant 2	6 months	England	Yes	Yes, but not in field of choice	Yes
Participant 3	2 years	United States	No	Yes	No
Participant 4	2 years	United States	Yes	Yes, working multiple jobs	Yes
Participant 5	3 years	United States	Yes	Yes, working multiple jobs	Yes
Participant 6	4 years	England	Yes	Yes, and also studying	Yes
Participant 7	11 months	Ireland	Yes	No, but studying	No

Each participant was in her thirties and no participant had emigrated longer than 4 years previous. Every participant lived in Uganda for at least 25 years, grounding her formative years in the Ugandan culture, which was a crucial consideration for this study.

In this study, I drew upon a communications perspective, including how language plays a crucial role in our understanding of the world, so it is important to note that all but one participant had Luganda as her mother tongue, though she self-reported proficiency in Luganda. It was important for me to understand how living in another culture affected the way the participants conceptualized stress, therefore I considered both where they lived and how long they had lived there. One woman had emigrated only 6 months prior to her interview, one nearly a year previously, and the other five had lived in the West between 2-4 years. Four were living in the United States, two in the United Kingdom, one in the Republic of Ireland, and one in Australia at the time of the interviews.

Because work can often contribute to stress, I considered employment status of participants. Six were employed, though not all in their desired career; two participants worked multiple jobs, one worked part-time, and two were studying for graduate degrees. Uganda is a religious country and as spirituality has shown to play a part in stress management (Yadav, Khanna, & Singh, 2016), I was curious how participants told stories about their involvement with their religion. One participant was a practicing Muslim, one a cultural Muslim but practicing Christian, three practicing Christians, and two did not offer this information during our interviews.

Data Collection

I collected data through semistructured interviews from seven participants. I asked each of the seven participants to choose a day and time that was best for her, and I made myself available at each woman's convenience. I was in my home office for each call, and every participant began her interview at her residence. I conducted all interviews via WhatsApp, a popular, free, encrypted cellphone application that participants were familiar with which allowed for video conference calls. I anticipated 1-2 hours for each interview. The shortest interview was 72 minutes while the two longest were just over 110 minutes. I interviewed each participant one time during the data collection phase. I captured each interview using a digital recording program on my laptop. Due to interviews being conducted through video calls on our cellphones, there were a few times that the cell service became unreliable, resulting in dropped calls, a few moments of silence, or a lag in the video transmission. When I sent participants the transcripts of our interview for member checking, I mentioned all instances of faulty technology which I asked them to take into consideration when reviewing the transcripts. None of these technical difficulties were serious enough to hinder capturing the words the participant was saying, but it did influence capturing the full scope of communication including the rapidity of the turns (or the back and forth in the conversation) and seeing facial expressions or body language.

The data collection process was different than what I outlined in Chapter 3. Due to unforeseen health issues and a subsequent travel ban to Uganda because of the Zika virus, I was not allowed to travel to Uganda to collect the data as proposed. Instead, I

requested approval from the IRB to change the participant pool from being Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who were not English proficient, to Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who have emigrated or moved to English-speaking Western countries in the last 4 years who are proficient or fluent in English. This change was approved, and I recruited participants from the new approved criteria by contacting people I knew who had emigrated to Western countries and asked them for contact information of women who might be interested in participating in this study.

The village where I was originally going to recruit participants and gather data, has limited electricity and even less reliable internet connectivity, making the scheduling and actualization of interviews via video conferencing problematic. Even if there was a way to ensure connectivity on that specific day, I foresaw many cultural nuances being lost in the video call to Uganda. Secondly, Chirban (1996)'s I:R approach to interviewing uses the emergent relationship between the interviewer and the participant as a tool in the data collection process. Introducing a form of communication (i.e. video call) for the first time within the interview would have created a less organic form of conversation, potentially with high levels of distrust. Developing trust is critical in qualitative data collection to capture the most authentic and full narrative as possible (Suwankhong & Liamputtong, 2015). In order to get richly textured data, there needs to be an element of trust between the researcher and the participant. By interviewing Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who had moved to the West, the strangeness of video conferencing was eliminated. I ensured the women who were interviewed had lived away from Uganda less

than 4 years (see Browne et al., 2017), meaning they had a relatively recent past speaking Luganda on a daily basis and still maintained close cultural ties.

I recruited through word of mouth, contacting Ugandan friends who referred me to people they knew who had emigrated to the West within the last 4 years. During the recruitment phase, I became aware that many Ugandans granted visas were from ethnic tribes that do not have Luganda as their mother tongue. The IRB granted approval to broaden the participant criteria to include women who did not have Luganda as their first language but were nonetheless proficient or fluent. Participant 3 did not have Luganda as her first language but had another Bantu language as her mother tongue; the language is closely related to Luganda. She did not disclose experiences that were markedly different than the other participants. When I asked her to clarify if she was referring to the culture of her specific tribe or Uganda as a whole, she responded "I think it's Uganda because I've been in several districts in the country, and it's the same." The fact that her mother tongue is a closely related Bantu language to Luganda, she speaks Luganda proficiently, and her observations expanded outside of her own clan, I was confident including her interview in this study.

One participant became agitated during the interview and requested to move from her apartment and take a walk outside to continue. She paused the conversation until she was outside, strolling around her apartment complex, eventually sitting on a park bench for the remainder of the interview. It was unclear if her roommates were in her apartment, but she appeared more open after being in the fresh air though there were other people I could hear at the park. Three interviews had to be rescheduled from the initial

appointment due to unexpected work conflicts such as picking up additional shifts. One interview was split into two sessions as the participant's cell phone was out of battery and she did not have her phone charger with her. This interruption to that interview occurred early in the conversation; she had only given a cursory description of her job which I asked her to repeat when we continued the interview the second day.

Data Analysis

Once each interview was completed, I contacted a transcription agency who had experience transcribing doctoral research interviews. Once the agency signed the confidentiality agreement, I sent the audio files electronically for transcription. After receiving the transcript but before immersing myself in the data, I listened to the audio file while following along in the transcript. Because of the participants' accents and use of composite Luganda and English, there were times the transcriptionist typed "unintelligible," and I did my best to correct these instances with my familiarity of the Ugandan accent prior to sending the transcripts to each participant for member checking (DeCino & Waalkes, 2019). I also made notes in the transcript where there were significant pauses, a participant began to cry, someone laughed, there was a specific tone or something emphasized, and any other addition to the communication that would aid me in my analysis.

After correcting the transcripts due to accents, I proceeded to member checking. Member checking is a process to guard against inaccuracy of the data collection and interpretation of it (DeCino & Waalkes, 2019; Krefting, 1991). I sent each participant her respective transcript, asking her to review it and ensure that I had accurately captured

what she was meaning to convey throughout the conversation. I asked for any edits, changes, revisions, or additional information to supplement what the transcript said. Every participant approved the transcript as it was which is common in interviewee transcript review (see Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009). The only comments from the participants were in relation to the experience of reading her own answers.

After completing member checking, I immersed myself in the data (see Gale et al., 2013). Using the LUUUUTT model within CMM (Pearce, 2000), I considered what was told to me in these interviews and how it was told; I examined what meaning had been cocreated with participants and other Ugandans as well as participants and myself. Using CMM meant looking at each turn within the conversational episode. Because of the lack of terminology in the Luganda language surrounding the stress phenomenon, I anticipated there would be stories that were untellable or perhaps unknown in the Ugandan culture pertaining to the stress experience. I used the LUUUUTT model (see Pearce, 2004) as the lens to analyze the gathered data (see Wasserman, 2015). Pearce (2009) explained how humans exist within the tension of stories told and untold, tellable and untellable, known and unknown. Thus, using CMM was consistent with the interpretive design I chose for this study as I looked at the stories relayed to me through the lens of the LUUUUTT model to gain insight into how the participants made meaning of their social world.

After analyzing the data, I worked inductively, following processes used by other CMM researchers (see Clark, 2007; Wasserman, 2015). I began highlighting and underlining specific phrases or words in each interview that seemed important, such as

"People die because they don't have people to talk to." In CMM, each full conversation is considered an episode with each back and forth considered a turn, with each turn affecting the subsequent turns (Pearce, 2000). After going through each transcript and underlining significant turns in the episode, I began a coding system. This coding was based on concepts that continued to emerge from the data. For example, in the first read-through of the first transcript, there emerged a lot of concepts pertaining to interaction with others. Sometimes data was coded into two different categories to accurately capture the depth of the data (see Clark, 2007). For example, when Participant 1 said "when I'm stressed, I just want to hang out with people so I can forget about my stresses," I coded this under both stress management and friendships. After reading through each transcript, I collected all the emergent concepts and placed them into overarching themes (see Wahyuni, 2012). The stories of friends, family, isolation, and community became the theme of relationships. These themes were color-coded with highlighters and Post-It notes.

After the initial coding of the transcripts, I put the data away, removing myself from it and resting before recoding (see Anney, 2014). I had originally planned on this resting phase being a minimum of 3 days but after my first immersion in the data, I believed I needed longer to approach it with fresh eyes. During this time, I engaged in reflexivity, reviewing my journal to remind myself of my impressions throughout each interview. I rested from the transcript data for a week before I began the coding-recoding technique (see Chilisa & Preece, 2005), seeing what important stories and quotes emerged and categorizing them into themes. I revisited the data multiple times (see Cho,

2013) over the course of 2 months, sometimes listening to the audio and occasionally looking strictly at the transcripts without the audio files. There were also subthemes that emerged under some themes. The data that was extraneous and irrelevant to my research question, I coded as *other* because this seemed like valuable information albeit outside the scope of this study. For example, a section of Participant 7's transcript I coded as *other* was when she and I were discussing the postcolonial political similarities of Ireland and Uganda. While these were interesting insights, it did not include exploration of how she nor other Ugandans conceptualized stress. Three overarching themes emerged from this data: relationships, difficulties, and opportunities.

Relationships was a major overarching theme that encompassed interactions with others, comradery, friendships, family, and feeling of belongingness. One participant said that there was "a lot of togetherness in our country...we see that as a part of us," and this idea of connectedness was prevalent throughout the interviews. Feelings of loneliness and isolation, results of the absence of relationships, I also included under this theme. The idea of community, spoken about by the participants as a collective of relationships, was also placed under the theme of relationships.

Difficulties was a broad theme that included not only what the participants considered hard, difficult, bad, or stressful, but also the situations that the participant did not identify as hard, difficult, bad, or stressful. This theme included the language the participants used to describe difficulties, both in English and in Luganda. There were three subthemes that arose from the data. The first was the concept of mental health, most often depression and anxiety. The second subtheme was stressful conditions, what a

person labeled or appraised as stressful and what they did not. For example, one participant discussed how "Ugandans and Americans have different problems" and what that means in terms of resiliency. The third subtheme was stress management which captured how the participants dealt with difficulties they experienced in their lives.

The third theme was opportunity. When dealing with countries very different in politics, wealth, and job opportunities, I needed this theme to include the freedom of choice, the availability of resources, and the ability to obtain those resources. Economy was one subtheme that arose that included job options, poverty and wealth, and situations dealing with finances. The economic disparity between countries frequently arose such as one participant stating that she was "happy to see [a fellow Ugandan emigrant] get a work permit and start working because she came here for survival." Five of seven participants spoke about the philosophy behind the amount of time and energy one puts into their job, which became the subtheme of work. The work subtheme was different than economy as participants differentiated between the presence of jobs (economy) and the act of working. The final subtheme that emerged was freedom; I coded narratives and ideas that included the terms "freedom," "restrictive," "bondage," and "free."

After I initially coded and then engaged in second level coding, I began analyzing the data and emerging themes through the LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2004). Revisiting the data multiple times, I considered how emergent themes and subthemes fit within this model to give my results structure. I looked at emergent themes and subthemes under the categories of *stories **l**ived, **u**nknown stories, **u**ntold stories, **u**nheard stories, **u**ntellable stories, stories **t**old,* and *story**t**elling.* For instance, one participant said, "we don't have

words for that" when discussing depression and anxiety which I had coded under the mental health subtheme of the difficulties theme. I categorized that phrase under *unknown stories* because the participant discussed the lack of phraseology surrounding mental health in Uganda, which she felt directly precluded medical professionals from fully understanding a person's mental distress. Because the data that I collected was narrative and story-based, this model of exploring *stories lived, unknown stories, untold stories, unheard stories, untellable stories, stories told,* and *storytelling* was poignant (Pearce, 2004). For clarity, I refer to each of the seven sections of the LUUUUTT model as a category under which I placed the emergent themes and subthemes. Each theme is present in more than one category as I explored the participants' conceptualization of stress.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Though I did not collect data in Uganda on the participant's own land, the time I spent living and working in Uganda does still help establish credibility. As I was immersed in the Ugandan culture for three years and have continued with frequent interaction with Ugandans, both in Uganda and those who have emigrated abroad, these experiences help establish credibility in a field where I am still an outsider (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). For example, in the United States, using the term "ok" means adequate at best or possibly subpar; "ok" for Ugandans denotes good or better than expected. This helped me interpret the participants' narratives.

Another way credibility was established was by thoroughly comparing the audio files with the transcripts once I received them from the transcription agency. As no participant spoke English as their first language, there were times when their accented English was misunderstood by the transcriber. I went through each transcript upon receiving it. Because of my familiarity with the Ugandan accent and the Ugandan English idioms, I was able to clarify most sections that were referenced in the transcript as "unintelligible" by the transcriber.

One particular threat to credibility was the possibility of misunderstanding what a participant meant or said. To eliminate this threat, I used member checking to establish credibility (Cope, 2014). After going through the audio and transcripts, correcting any mistakes due to the Ugandan accent, I sent each transcript to the participant, asking her to review our conversation to ensure accuracy and that I had correctly captured what they intended to convey.

Transferability

Hinds (2015) determined that for qualitative studies, researchers should report the life experiences of the participants as richly and detailed as possible. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), readers and other scholars will then have sufficient information to compare, contrast, and connect their own lived experiences with those reported by participants. I outlined in detail my data collection process, as well as the way I conducted analysis, so other researchers could emulate this study and determine if this study is transferable to their lives.

Dependability

The data collection process for this research study had to be altered from the originally intent. I have thoroughly detailed both the initial methodology and the modified version, outlining the recruitment process, the protocol for interviews, the questions I asked each participant, as well as the data analysis plans. I have also outlined the limitations of this study so as to make it as easily replicated as possible for future researchers. By thoroughly describing the process used in data collection and analysis, I have established this study as repeatable for future researchers.

Confirmability

Establishing confirmability in qualitative studies is not an objective science. I maintained a journal throughout my data collection and analysis process to help establish confirmability, noting how I brought myself to each interview and the exploration of the transcripts. Journal keeping was recommended by Anney (2014) to help keep researcher bias and reflexivity during qualitative research.

Reliability

It is vital for researchers to be reliable in the analysis and interpretation of the data they collect from individuals. For qualitative research with narrative data, ensuring reliability is not only crucial for scholarship but also to honor the lived experiences of the participants who were willing to be a part of the study. For reliability, I conducted member checking with all participants prior to beginning analysis. Once I began the analysis process, I used the code-recode technique (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). I recoded a

week after the initial coding, which was a sufficient amount of time to return to the data with fresh eyes. I continued to revisit the data until no new themes emerged.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine how seven Luganda-speaking Ugandan women conceptualized stress through the research question: *How is stress conceptualized by Luganda-speaking Ugandan women in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon?*

I gathered data through semistructured interviews, looking at both stories relayed to me and communication itself within each episode. Through participants sharing stories of difficulties and hardships in Uganda as well as the West, exploring cultural philosophies, and the language and storytelling used to make sense of their lived, unknown, untold, unheard, untellable and told stories, there were three major themes that emerged: relationships, difficulties, and opportunity. These themes were analyzed in terms of the categories within the LUUUUTT (Pearce, 2004) model: *stories lived, unknown stories, untold stories, unheard stories, untellable stories, stories told,* and *storytelling*. In Table 2, I provide the results in a chart with key phrases from participants' responses prior to reporting the full quotes of the results. The purpose of the chart in Table 2 is to show how participants' comments led to the codes I used that became the themes that emerged. The data in Table 2 is the foundation of the interpretive analysis that is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 2

Results

LUUUUTT	Conceptual Theme & Supporting Subthemes	Description of Codes
Stories Lived	Relationships	know your neighbors in Uganda
		always people around in Uganda
		take care of each other in Uganda
	Difficulties	
	Stressful Conditions	stress-free in Uganda
		all the good things in Uganda
		don't actually feel stress in Uganda
		America is stressful
		people in Uganda are happier
		different problems in the West and Uganda
		maybe life in Uganda is more difficult
		your bad may not be my bad
		I wouldn't consider that bad
	Stress Management	people are your support in Uganda
		call your friends in Uganda
		spend nine days in prayer in Uganda
	Opportunity	
	Economy	financially hard in Uganda
		so much poverty in Uganda
		Ugandan paycheck was a quarter of my US paycheck
		finances are the main thing that causes stress in Uganda
		pay is good in the West
	Work	life is too busy in the West
		too busy working in the West
		life is all about working in the West
		if you're not working, you're no one in the West
		lazy in Uganda
		life day by day in Uganda
	Freedom	no democracy in Uganda
		can't say there's press freedom in Uganda

Unknown Stories	Difficulties	
	Mental Health	had no idea what mental health is in Uganda
		they won't know and they won't help you
		might be in Uganda but very very low
		people understand stress differently in Uganda
	Stressful Conditions	can't comprehend certain Western situations as difficult
		I can't sympathize with Western problems
	Stress Management	question God to understand
		why is God letting this happen
Untold Stories	Relationships	I stopped telling people in Uganda what was happening
		no one will understand in Uganda; keep it to yourself
		never had any difficult time in Uganda
		don't want to speak badly about Uganda
		no real engagement with Ugandan community in the West
		spend a week without seeing other Ugandans in the same home in the West
	Difficulties	don't remember sharing with anyone
		you don't talk about things in your life in Uganda
		talking versus communicating
		people die because they don't have people to talk to
		you just keep piling things, piling things…and break down
		I didn't talk about it…I kept it inside…it will come back and you break down
	Stress Management	let it be
		can't just sit there and just sulk
		pushing…avoiding…keeping this pain inside me
		work until too exhausted to remember
Unheard Stories	Difficulties	

	Stressful Conditions	how can you be depressed in the US?
		isn't easy to talk to him, doesn't hear
Untellable Stories	Relationships	can't discuss things because people are looking up to me in Uganda
		hide it away from my family
		if you speak about such things, you're showing weakness in Uganda
		don't grow up free to talk…fear our parents in Uganda
		Ugandan humor doesn't translate into the West
	Difficulties	It's supposed to be like that, speaking about it is weakness in Uganda
	Opportunity	
	Freedom	illegal abortion in Uganda
		fear of reprisal from elders
		if it threatens the ruling party in Uganda, you have a problem
Stories Told	Relationships	no one cares in the West
		love and unity in Uganda
		so rare to be by yourself and be depressed in Uganda
		togetherness as a part of us in Uganda
		have to make plans to see people in the West
		people have pets in the West because they are lonely
		Uganda is people focused; West is individual focused
	Difficulties	comparing the struggle I thought I had in Uganda and think 'those weren't struggles'
		hard things mean you have to be proactive
		hard things mean it's difficult but you find a solution
		bad things are feeling helpless
		bad things are scary
		bad things cannot be reversed
		bad things would give me shame, feel belittled

		communicating stress in Luganda
		hardest time ever, struggle, pain, overwhelmed
Mental Health		not depressed but felt really low, quite isolated in the West
		can't get out of bed, feeling withdrawn and alone, not caring what happens in the West
	Stressful Conditions	mental health is celebrated in the UK and realizing I'm experiencing anxiety
		in Uganda there is no word for depression and I wouldn't think about it, in the West, you become depressed
		more opportunities in the West but there is more stress
		Uganda is more difficult but there is more joy
		we live day by day in Uganda making it less stressful
		my mind wasn't thinking the same way as when I got into the Western culture
		in the West, exposed to a culture where stress is a big deal and think "ok, I'm stressed!"
		thankful for how I was raised in Uganda despite hardships
	Stress Management	learn to be resilient in Uganda
		Westerners isolate
		Westerners medicate
		pray for peace
		bad things happen for a reason
		ask God what do I have to learn from this
		in Uganda, people try to make sense of hardships through spirituality "oh the demon"
	Opportunity	people move to the West for survival; stay in Uganda for fun and enjoying life
		create images in your mind from stories you've been stories, books, and media
		what I expected in Europe is not what it is

	Work	everyone is too busy working to have time for you
		goals and plans for every day otherwise you've wasted your day in Australian culture
		shocked that businesses are open on Christmas
		employees required to stand and not socialize with friends
	Freedom	free entry and exit of people in Uganda
		feel very restricted in the UK
		constant policing of your children in UK
		laws everywhere in the West, Uganda is free and relaxed
		Americans in bondage, no freedom in relation to Western standards of beauty
StoryTelling	Relationships	disclose personal stories to researcher because of confidentiality
		disclose stories to medical professionals
		opened up to researcher after researcher disclosed her experiences in Uganda
		don't want to talk bad about my people
		feels as if she has to carry the burden of all Africa in the West

Stories Lived

This category showed the stories of participants while residing both in Uganda and in their new country of residence. This category encompassed participants' performed actions (Neden, 2012) or their lived experiences.

Theme: Relationships. There was a significant difference in the way that participants experienced relationships in Uganda versus in the West. This trend extended to the way participants interacted with other Ugandan emigrants in their Western country of residence.

Participants spoke of relationships in Uganda as an accepted, expected fact which was different in the West. When I asked Participant 2 how she would describe the overall culture of Uganda, she spoke of relationships:

Well, like I said, the culture is more communal, more warmer. … You know your neighbors. I don't know my neighbors here. I've been here for how long, for all this while, but I only know one neighbor, I think… At home you … know the whole street and your friends.

Participant 6 spoke of Uganda as having "always people around you." Participant 4 emphasized that in Uganda "we take care of ourselves, of each other. We take care of each other. People here don't take care of each other." What is most striking about that statement is that Americans would most likely understand the phrase "we take care of ourselves" to mean "we individually take care of our own selves" whereas her usage of "ourselves" extended to an entire tribe.

Theme: Difficulties. All participants except Participant 7 described difficulties they had experienced after having emigrated. When asked to tell me a difficult thing they had lived through in Uganda, all but Participant 2 shared. (Participant 2 said she had not had any lived difficult experience in Uganda.)

Subtheme: Stressful conditions. Every participant described problematic living conditions in Uganda such as shortage of jobs, poor healthcare, high rates of poverty, and the lack of democratic rights of freedom of speech and press. Yet their responses about life in Uganda were unanimously characterized as good. Participants used phrases such as "the good life," "fun," "laid-back," "lively," "normal," "free," and "all the good things."

Participant 1 described her life in Uganda as "it was good. It was – overall, it was fun….
It was really laid back and it was, I guess, stress-free in a way, like mentally.
Emotionally, it was- it was easy in that way." Participant 3 said, "yeah, I can't say that
people in Uganda are going through a hard life."

Though participants acknowledged high rates of poverty, high maternal death
rates, lack of political freedom, government and relationship issues, no participant
equated overall quality of life with chronic stress. Participant 6 spoke of her professional
life in Uganda:

So even if it's stressful, in a way you don't actually feel that…So there were

aspects in my job back in Uganda that would be quite stressful for me… But …

life is moving on. And it's okay. Whereas here, if it did happen, I'd come back

home stressed and sleep with my stress, then wake up the following morning, and

I'm still stressed.

Participants spoke about how good life in the West was due to high quality of
living, but they also told stories of how life in the West was troublesome. Participant 5
said "America is already stressful…you don't have to stress yourself." Participant 4
contrasted life in Uganda and America like this:

People [in the United States] are supposed to be so much happier than people over

there [in Uganda]. But people in Uganda are happier…. they're more happier than

we are who are here who are earning more. What they are earning is a little, a

pinch maybe, what I'm earning but – they're much happier there than we are up

here.

Over half the participants made note that what one considers difficult may not be what citizens of another country considers difficult. Participant 3 spoke about how "[Ugandans and Americans] have different problems, you know, so we have – we have different approaches… This is what [Americans] have and they – they haven't seen things, you know, maybe they'll never go through the things in Africa we go through." This comment came shortly after she contrasted situations of anxiety in the United States and Africa, describing an American coworker who had anxiety if she missed a day at the gym and Sudanese women who suffered anxiety when the rebel army forced them to decapitate their husbands. Participant 4 said

> Maybe [Americans] would also go [to Uganda] and feel like our life is [more] difficult than their life. Feel like, in Uganda, our life is difficult… Maybe they would say our culture is more complicated than theirs. Maybe they're comfortable with this because … that's just the way they grew up.

> Participant 6 said, "Obviously the bad or the difficulties will be experienced differently because what will be your bad would perhaps not be my bad," and described at length the difficulty of navigating the management of people in her job in the United Kingdom, trying to empathize from that person's cultural construct. Participant 7 looked at problems amongst her Irish coworkers and said, "Their issues, I mean, things that I wouldn't consider…bad. But I think they are important to them."

Subtheme: Stress management*. While no participant mentioned an intentional or conscious strategy for managing stress when living in Uganda, each time the idea of stress or difficulties arose, all seven participants began speaking about other people. Participant

1 explained, "In Uganda, you live in a community … They are still there with you. They walk with you through it. They are your support." Participant 5 spoke about the cultural differences in maneuvering through difficulties:

> Here, people who are stressed, people who are depressed, they're off to see a doctor. But in Uganda, no. You're stressed? Pick up the phone and call your sister… Go to your mother's spend a night… Call your friends up and go out, have fun, talk about everything. The next day you're going to feel better, but here, you're stressed, you're in your bed, you're in your apartment, you don't have anybody to talk to. It's eating you up.

> Participant 7 said in Uganda religious institutions helped women in her life manage difficulties: "Fellowships [where] they go and spend nine days in prayer…It has been a strategy…But even then, they don't talk about in detail what they're going through." It was never stated that personal relationships alleviated their distress, but the fact of being a member of a community did.

Theme: Opportunity. There was significant discussion about the lived experiences of opportunities available in Uganda and in the West. Three participants emigrated for continuing education purposes. All seven participants were employed in Uganda prior to emigrating, and all but Participant 7 (on a student visa only) had some sort of employment in their new country of residence.

Subtheme: Economy. Every participant spoke about high rates of poverty in Uganda. Participant 1 said "Financially…it was hard." Later she expounded and said life in Uganda is more difficult to live in because

There's so much suffering. There's so much poverty. The health care is pathetic. There's no hope really in that sense. Like, if you're not well and they can't figure out why, chances of dying are very high, you know. And just that alone is hard because just to think about it in that way… There's not much opportunities open for people in low – low socioeconomic status makes it really difficult as well….There's more poor people than rich people and yet the rich people are really rich and the poor people are really poor, so there's no middle-class generally.

Participant 4 contrasted living salaries in Uganda and the United States like this: "The money I used to earn a month [in Uganda] can be - it's not even my full paycheck [in the United States]. It's like a quarter of mine; quarter or not even a quarter! It may be hours of my paycheck was the money I would earn at the end of the month in Uganda." She also said that "In Uganda, the main thing that causes people stress, the main reason is our economic situation." Participant 5 said, "I like it here [in the U.S]. First and foremost, it's beautiful, I'll say, compared to Uganda. Like, the standards of living are okay. Expensive, but ok. The roads are good. Everything is good. The pay is good."

Some participants spoke about financial hardships in their new countries as well. Participant 6 spoke of the perception of the West having endless possibility, but in reality, she was unable to afford luxuries: "I can't afford it… I think what excited me when I first moved is, looking at my pay…but then I realized… the bills I have to pay in the UK, no. Does not make sense at all." Participant 2 became emotional talking about the difficulty she has had:

It's hard, it's really hard… It makes life really difficult here because at the end of the day you have to pay the bills…The cost of living is really high and if you can't get a job that can afford to meet your bills, you find yourself strained and your account is actually negative because you have to pay the bills.

The *stories lived* surrounding opportunities in the West were at times at odds with the participants' expectations or the stories they were telling about life in the West prior to moving.

Subtheme: Work. While every participant spoke positively about more economic opportunities in the West, this did not necessarily equal a better life lived overall. In fact, most participants expressed bewilderment at what they considered a hyper-focus on working. Participant 1 said

If you're not doing something productive then you're wasting time…If you're sitting outside on the porch …that means you're not doing something to advance your life. It is you're wasting time. And so sitting down and having a conversation with someone and not doing something with them you're wasting time, whereas in Uganda giving people time and sitting there with them and not necessarily doing something, you're not wasting time, you're hanging out. You're socializing and that's normal. And I feel like because there's just so much of that, people [in Australia] don't have time to joke or laugh or live life, you know?

Similarly, Participant 2 explained, "It's difficult here. Everyone is too busy working and working and working and working, working, working… Every time they sit

down, they think, 'oh, I'm losing money.' No one has spare time for you to [sit and be with] you."

Participant 4 said, "In the United States, life is all about working." Further on in the interview, she said "[if] you're not working here, if you're not, you're no one." She contrasted that to Ugandan culture saying, "Uganda culture, we are lazy" and later "we don't have the culture of what will happen in the future. We live, it's like we live by day."

Subtheme: Freedom. The *stories lived* regarding freedom were centered around lack of political freedoms within Uganda. Several participants spoke about the political oppression in their country. For instance, Participant 1 said "There is no democracy in Uganda. Like, there's no freedom of speech…. Education is for the rich." Participant 7 spoke of similarities between Uganda and Ireland as post-colonized countries but noted the key differences as Uganda having

> been under the same reign for the last 30 years. People here can say they've experienced democracy. I can't say the same for my country….I don't know if it counts as democracy …you can't say there's press freedom in its real sense. But you could say there is a *semblance* of press freedom.

She emphasized the word "semblance" which I deduced to mean she wanted to relay the appearance of freedom without the actuality of it. The participants provided a range of *stories lived* between experiences in Uganda as well as in their current Western country of residence.

Unknown Stories

The stories that were categorized under this heading often surrounded emotional, mental, and psychological concepts. Other ***unknown stories*** dealt with participants admitting not fully being able to navigate the nuances and constructs of the West. This section also included situations where a participant was unable to make meaning of a particular story in her life.

Theme: Difficulties. There are limited words in Luganda for describing difficulties which made this a rich section.

Subtheme: Mental health. Five participants noted the shortage of vernacular terms around mental health issues in Luganda. Participant 6 spoke at length about her lack of knowledge surrounding depression, stress, and other psychological conditions of a psychological nature. She said, "I had never got across something to do with mental health" and "at the time I left Uganda, I had no idea what mental health is…and that's because it's something that has never been talked about." Participant 3 works with a nonprofit that does aid work in South Sudan where women and children are forced by the rebels to participate in war crimes and violence against their loved ones. She spoke of the inability of Ugandan and Sudanese professionals to properly diagnose and treat survivors:

> People don't know because if [the rebels] tell you to kill your husband, cut off his head, and you don't get counseling …that will bother you. And so people lose their minds because of that… People go through a lot there, but they don't get even counseling, we don't have those, we don't even have depression medication,

you know... We don't have the words for [depression], and so they won't know

and they won't help you.

Participant 2 spoke of mental health and stress in Uganda as rumors she's heard

about but didn't know personally: "It might be there, but it – it might be only very, very

low. No, you can't compare it to these Western cultures. You cannot at all. It might be

there. I can't say it's absolutely not there." Participant 7 spoke about how in Uganda

there is nothing written specifically about stress , that it is not discussed, and that she

believes that it is likely that Ugandans have historically understood stress differently than

they currently do after being exposed to Western culture.

Subtheme: Stressful conditions. Two participants spoke specifically of being

unable to understand or know the experiences of Western citizens. Participant 1 spoke of

Australians complaining about what their perceived difficulties, "I can't seem to

comprehend their situation." Participant 3 described how often she is confused by the

experiences of Americans around her: "There're some things that I see that bother people

here, and I'm like 'that's bothering you?' You know, I'm like that can't bother me at all,

you know, so I feel bad because I can't sympathize because I'm like I can live with that,

you know?" She spoke of trying to understand her American husband's anxiety and

feeling like a bad wife for not fully understanding. Three participants described

bewilderment at Westerners mourning the loss of a pet. While participants understood

there is a cultural difference in what one considers stressful, that acknowledgment does

not mean they are able to fully know these stories.

Subtheme: Stress management*.* When faced with a situation participants considered hard or bad, it was common for participants to attempt an explanation of why they were going through that particular experience. Often, these questions of "why" were directed towards God. Two participants discussed being unable to know or understand the meaning. Participant 3 spoke of questioning God: "Sometime I'll get mad at God, you know? Why? Why am I going through this, you know?". Another person who asked questions of God was Participant 1: "It comes down to why – why is God letting this happen? You know, those sorts of questions, obviously, have to cross your mind. Why would God let something like this happen?" Even with the answers remaining unknown, participants attempted to manage their feelings surrounding difficult things with religion and faith.

Untold Stories

This category was mainly comprised of stories the participants intentionally left untold to others and to me, as well as what they perceived the effects of untold stories were.

Theme: Relationships*.* All participants acknowledged personal stories left untold in Uganda. While everyone spoke of the community and togetherness of Ugandan society, this did not mean a particularly open culture; six participants told me they often kept stories of struggles untold to friends or family in Uganda. In speaking of a personally distressing time, Participant 3 said, "I stopped telling people what was going on." This deliberate switch occurred when she failed to receive financial support she needed after telling her story to her church community. Participant 6 likewise alluded to a

pointlessness of telling her stories: "Perhaps no one will understand; just keep it to yourself."

There were also *untold stories* within my interactions with participants through the course of our interviews. Participant 2 said she never had any difficult time while living in Uganda. It could be a reframing of her experiences to no longer consider a situation as difficult or it could be a deliberate decision to not tell her story of difficulties. Participant 7 was more cautious in speaking about certain topics because she did not want to speak badly about her home country and give a negative impression of Uganda.

Five participants discussed their relationships within the Ugandan emigrant community in their new countries of residence; only one spoke favorably of it. It appears as if there are even more untold stories amongst this community of Ugandans living abroad than within Ugandans residing in Uganda. Participant 6 discussed the interactions she has had with other Ugandan emigrants in London:

There's no real engagement in the sense of "Okay, let's talk!" or "Let's do this!"… When I was still living in Uganda, I had my best friend that grew up with, right from the time when we were about five years old. She came to the UK before me. And we don't even talk now.

Participant 3 lives in a household with six other Ugandan emigrants, but said she only speaks to her husband about her struggles: "We all stay in one house, but we can spend a week without seeing each other."

Theme: Difficulties. Three participants mentioned that Ugandans culturally do not disclose personal hardships. When I asked Participant 7 how a difficult time she

experienced in Uganda made her feel, she said, "I'm glad you asked that. I actually don't remember sharing that with anyone." Participant 3 said "the fact [is] you're not supposed to, you don't talk about things going on in your life." Participant 6 differentiated between transmitting information and engaging in storytelling: "It's funny because even the talking couldn't be translated into a talk…it's not a matter of a talk, like a serious talk about how I feel about it…There's no serious talk really. It's about a matter of mentioning just to let somebody know." She continued to say while she had told family and colleagues the facts of a trying ordeal, she did not feel as if she had told them the full story.

One idea that emerged was that there could be negative, even fatal, consequences for too many ***untold stories*** of difficulties. Participant 5 said not sharing one's story could have devastating consequences: "People die because they don't have people to talk to." Participant 4 spoke of the effect of speaking about hardships: "You grow up just – you just keep piling things, piling things. That's why a person can just wake up one day and break down." Participant 4 said she has personally experienced the negative impact of ***untold*** stories:

> I didn't talk about it to anyone…I kept it inside and then … things go off your mind. But they stay in your unconscious…but if there's a trigger that triggers it to come back – if it didn't heal, it will come back… and you just break down.

Throughout this conversational turn, she repeatedly pointed to her chest and gestured inside her body when she spoke about stories that remained untold for herself.

Subtheme: Stress management*.* Four participants reported refraining from telling oneself difficult stories. Participant 2 evaluated the strategy in this way: "Sometimes I don't want to think about it…. The more you think about it, the more difficult it becomes and depressing it becomes and it becomes a part of you. So, the best thing to do is let it be." Participant 1 spoke of refusing to tell herself her own difficult stories: "It's just very hard to dwell on the hard times. I find that you can't sit there and just sulk about what's going on in your life." She later insinuated the problem would eventually go away. Participant 4 used the term *avoidance*: "I've been a victim of such things, a lot of things that... I end up avoiding … so I'm keeping these, this pain and everything inside me."

I asked Participant 7 how she dealt with difficult things and she said she "just works and works and works. So it was, just work…you're too exhausted to even remember it." No participant made any judgement calls on if this was a beneficial, harmful, or neutral strategy. In each of these episodic turns, the participants were specifically referring to *untold stories*, not stories that couldn't be told or were untellable.

Unheard Stories

Unheard stories reflect when the participants tried to convey depth and meaning but the listener either did not acknowledge or accept the importance of the story.

Theme: Difficulties*.* The participants described instances in which they had attempted to convey something difficult but it was neither heard nor accepted the way the participants intended.

Subtheme: Stressful conditions*.* Confidants' lack of empathy when told about a distressing time in participants' lives was the foundation of stories that, while told,

remained unheard. Participant 5 described telling her friends in Uganda about how difficult life in the United States can be and they not believing her: "And people at home [in Uganda], when you tell them, 'oh, I'm depressed,' they're like, 'how can you be depressed when you're in America…like when you're in the States? I mean, you have everything!'" Similarly, Participant 2 said she spoke with her husband about her difficulties but that "....it isn't easy to talk to him. He has his own job, and he has to work." He did not fully register the distress she was trying to describe to him. This categorization was different than *unknown stories;* the distinction being the inability to comprehend (*unknown*) versus dismissing the story entirely or the importance of the story (*unheard*).

Untellable Stories

This category encompassed stories that were known and even accepted by the participants, but in which an *oughtness* to remain silent about certain things made it unacceptable to tell. This oughtness stemmed primarily from cultural expectations.

Theme: Relationships. Four participants relayed not being able to tell stories due an imbalanced relational dynamic with the other person. Participant 7 said, "This is my… unfortunate state. I have people that are usually around me, are usually looking up to me. So it becomes tricky." She expressed an inability to tell her stories to coworkers or friends who admired her or were in a position below her professionally. Participant 5 mentioned her mother being unable to tell her certain things as her mother did not want to cause worry. Similarly, Participant 6 described a time where she avoided speaking with her family because she did not want to accidentally reveal that anything was wrong: "So

it was really hard, like, having to experience that. But also hide it away from my family because of being – speaking to your parents and obviously they would know something is not right."

Participant 7 also stated that there were stories untellable to her elders. She explained that generational gaps precluded her from speaking with older family members about certain topics: "If you speak about such things then you're actually showing weakness." Participants 4 said fear was the primary reason stories were untellable within her community. She said, "We don't grow up with parents or old people you're free to talk with or open like the way the culture here. Like you grow up – you grow up fearing our parents."

Participant 1 was the only participant who spoke about untellable stories in the West. She laughed about the cultural differences amongst her Australian friends and in-laws that made it nearly impossible to tell a joke. She said that what is culturally funny in Uganda does not culturally translate in English and that she has to decide whether to make the joke and risk offending others or keep her hilarious insights to herself.

Theme: Difficulties. Participant 3 spoke about cultural expectations disallowing an individual from disclosing difficulties in their life:

Because of the culture, they think, "Oh, it's supposed to be like that", you know? So there's nothing I can do about it, you know? So you just live with it.… Some of it is pride, you know? … So it's a sign of weakness on your side, so that's why many people [would] rather live with it, you know, than show it.… But your heart, you know, is breaking inside. And so, because all the people believe that

you don't know how to take care of it, you know, they carry on and you won't be
a happy person.

The cultural expectations and oughtness created the expectation that certain situations should not be discussed.

Theme: Opportunities. Three women disclosed instances that they were unable to tell in Uganda due to political and cultural regulations.

Subtheme: Freedom. Three stories highlighted **u**ntellable stories in Uganda due to potential repercussions. One participant said she could not tell anyone of having undergone an illegal abortion in Uganda; fear of reprisal from the authorities as well as shame on her family made this story untellable in her culture. She also mentioned that though there were school counselors and mentors, no one took advantage of speaking with them because "how are you going to go to, to let me say a senior woman, and tell her there's a boyfriend or something?" Participant 7 described the delicacy of working as a journalist in Uganda. After dismissing the idea of press freedom in Uganda, she said "if what you're going after threatens like, this sense of the ruling party, then, you know, you have a problem." With the exemption of Participant's 1's observation about comedy, there were no other instances of stories the participants felt were untellable in the West.

Stories Told

This category is different than *stories lived*. Neden (2012) said, "the distinction between 'stories lived' [is] the 'co-constructed patterns of join action that we perform' and 'stories told' as 'the explanatory narratives that we use to make sense of the stories lived'" (p. 86). *Stories told* holds the stories the participants told themselves and others

about their lived experiences. It also included the rationale behind what stories they opted to tell.

    Theme: Relationships*. A common thread in the interviews was the individualistic culture of the West creating isolation. Uganda, in contrast, was described as communal and warmer and, by extension, the participants felt they inherently had people who cared for them. The loneliness of the Western culture was a thread that ran through every interview but one. Participant 2 said "no one cares here [in London]. It's about you and fighting your way through." Later she also stated, "At home we had values like love, unity. You love each other. You have to do everything together…. It's more warmer. It's more of we're a family. It's more of unity." I asked Participant 5 to describe a time when she saw a friend in Uganda depressed and she responded like this:

        It's so rare to be by yourself and be depressed. There's a lot to do and a lot of people to talk to… There you don't go to a counselor. [In the United States] you say you're not feeling well and they tell you, you need to make an appointment with somebody, but in Uganda, you can talk to your siblings, your friends, your family.

    Participant 6 said that in Uganda there was "a lot of togetherness in our country… So for some reason, we see that as a part of us. It's not something that is – that sometimes we actually appreciate. Because we think it's got to be there." These participants emphasized that relationships are what made life in Uganda easier and happier. Participants 2 and 6 said this difference was one of the most difficult things about maintaining relationships in the West; spontaneity in seeing friends was the norm in

Uganda but in the United Kingdom and the United States, they had to schedule an appointment three weeks in advance and had to keep to the allotted timeframe in order to see a friend instead of seizing the moment.

Participant 3 said the biggest cultural difference between the United States and Uganda was the pet culture. When I asked her to elaborate, she said she believed it is due to the loneliness of the American culture that people find company in animals. Participant 1 described the difference between Australia and the United States as "two different worlds, really. The Ugandan culture is very people focused, community focused. The Australian culture is very individual focused….not so much about people."

Theme: Difficulties. While six participants described a difficult situation they had experienced in Uganda, two made the caveat that they had in the moment considered that experience difficult but had reframed that specific experience and no longer considered it a hardship in light of their new life in the West. Participant 6 said "now after living here, I'm comparing the struggle I thought I had while in Uganda with what's happening here, and I'm thinking, 'oh, those weren't struggles,' you understand?" No participants recategorized experiences from Uganda they had originally considered good or neutral to bad or stressful.

Because of the Luganda language, when I created the Interview Protocol, I asked two questions identical except for changing the word "hard" to "bad" as I had noted from my time in Uganda that Luganda-speakers often seemed to be deliberate in which word they used to describe a specific situation. The question asked how they thought about

when life gets hard or bad. There was a differentiation in all but one's responses as nearly

everyone considered the two different.

Six of the participants thought of hard situations or seasons as something that

could be resolved through dedication and intentionality; it was very action focused.

Participant 1 said "I have to do something; I'll have to be proactive to get past it."

Participant 5 said "Hard is – how am I going to maneuver over this situation? Hard - you

find a way to make the situation a lot better. It can be difficult to – to handle, but you can

find a solution."

"Bad," however, seemed to be associated with helplessness or even hopelessness.

When I asked Participant 3 how she thinks about life when it is bad, she responded with

"It's hard to feel helpless." Participant 7 described her thoughts around bad things like

this: "You just have to go through with it, and then sight at the end of the day like

okay…ahhhh. That's done. Because you just can't undo it. Yeah, you have to go through

it. Bad things are a bit scary." Participant 5 said "You cannot reverse it, cannot

like…how can I say? You cannot mend it…. You're helpless…You're not going to

change the situation. You're not going to do nothing. It's already bad." Participant 6 said

"A bad situation would be something that would – that creates a barrier between me and

where I want to be…That would be my bad. Something that will give me shame.

Something that will make me feel belittled. That would be bad."

If a participant used the English word "stress" to describe a difficult time, I asked

if they had spoken about that situation in Luganda to anyone and, if they had, what

Luganda word they used. I then asked them to translate that Luganda word back into

English for me. These words included "hardest time ever," "struggle," "pain," and "something like 'overwhelmed'."

Subtheme: Mental health. None of the participants told stories of depression or anxiety experienced in Uganda. However, five spoke of mental health issues after moving to the West. While some used Western diagnostic terms for what they had experienced, others described episodes that sounded like depression but were not labeled as such. Participant 1 told the story of how she experienced this troublesome time but emphasized that it was not depression:

> There were days when I didn't feel like coming out of bed because there was nothing for me to do… so I just - just stayed in bed because I did not feel like getting up… I cannot say that I was depressed, but I would say I felt really low in that way because I missed my family… my friends… the familiarity of things in general… I felt quite isolated and…and it was hard.

Participant 6 similarly described "[feeling] like I can't get myself out of bed," "feeling withdrawn and just feeling like I'm on my own," and not caring "what happens around me." She said that she did not immediately characterize her experiences as depression or anxiety but that after being introduced to the mental health culture in the United Kingdom, "seeing how it's a very big celebrated thing…I just realized, 'oh my God, I'm experiencing anxiety! Oh my God!'" When describing the stress she experienced in her job in Uganda, she admitted there were stressful aspects but said she would not experience either the stress phenomenon or depression.

If the issue is not dealt with… before I know it, you get into depression and that's

because maybe there's a word for depression… Because in Uganda… maybe

there's not even opportunity for you be get depressed.….So even if I were very

upset about something, I would see no window for me to actually get depressed

… one, because I did not know depression, and two, I wouldn't think about it.

Subtheme: Stressful conditions. The participants noted great differences between

the West and Uganda. While acknowledging the standard of living and amount of

opportunities are higher in the West, they also noted that stress levels were higher as

well. All seven participants spoke of the philosophical differences between the two

countries which created the stressful conditions in the West; namely, that the West

focuses primarily on material goods and the future whereas Ugandans live in the present

moment and place high value on relationships. Participant 1 explained that though life in

Uganda is more difficult, there's more joy because

The biggest thing is people live every day as it comes… Even though you don't

have much, you're very appreciative of the little that you've got. Whereas here in

Australia, you want the next big thing, and you're making goals and plan and this

and that and you forget to live today because you're working towards tomorrow.

Participant 4 contrasted the West with Uganda: "Like, we don't have the culture

of what will happen in the future. We live, like we live by day." They determined that

being in the present versus being preoccupied with the future was the distinction between

a nonstressful culture and a stressful one.

The concept of reframing one's experiences and telling a new story about experiences based on new cultural frameworks emerged several times through the data collection process. Participant 4 said, "Then my mind wasn't thinking the same way I think when I got into this culture." Participant 6 explained "…now after living here, I'm comparing the struggle I thought I had while in Uganda with what's happening here, and I'm thinking, 'oh, those weren't struggles.'" Participant 7 mentioned the Western influence within Uganda in relation to stress: "Traditionally no one even mentioned about stress…But now…we're exposed to a culture where stress is a big deal. I start looking at my own situation and think, 'okay, I'm stressed!'" Participant 3 early in her interview spoke about how her family disowned her and refused to speak with her for years after her conversion to Christianity. As a result, she became homeless and spent a significant period with food insecurity. Yet she says

> Sometimes I feel like, oh, I am really happy with the way I was raised, you know? I'm so thankful for that. I am. And you know, that's one of the things … that is making me okay, like feel better here…like, my parents raised me with some standards.

While reframing and telling a new version of one's story was common, these were not the only *stories **told***.

Subtheme: Stress management*.* The stories told about how Ugandans deal with stress differed from the stories the participants told about how Westerners manage their stress. Participant 1 said that in Uganda, "You learn to be resilient. And I think that's like the big thing that gets people through the emotional part because there's no one to sit and

talk to about your problems so much…. Once you talk about it, you've got to move on."

Three participants spoke of Western stress management as "me-time" and isolation.

Participant 5 said, "I think Americans here depend on – like, if they're stressed, they go

to hospitals…[They] go to the doctors to ask for maybe a prescription or something."

There were definitive ideas about Western stress management techniques, with three

saying medication or alcohol for numbing, but there was not a specific description of

Ugandan stress management techniques; only generalized ideas about people and

community.

When I asked each participant how they think about when things get hard or bad,

God played a large part in the stories they told. As Participant 3 spoke of her struggles

with infertility, she weaved a narrative of God's divine plan:

> The problem is, I know the answer. I know what God requires of me, you know?
>
> But I still, you know, complain and it's – you know, so I repent and I just – as a
>
> Christian, I know I want to trust God with every problem, you know? There will
>
> be different problems in life. I just want to have faith in God and to trust him to
>
> know that he's sending his best… I need to worship him. I need to, you know, to
>
> serve him with all my heart and with a cheerful heart. I don't need to walk around
>
> so sad because I don't have a child, you know? That's not why God created me,
>
> so as a Christian, I - I that's how I can - face my problems, you know?

Participant 5 spoke about how God assisted her in her difficulties: "And I think

God saw me, that I was going through a hard time, like a hard situation, and they granted

J a visa. I think it happened for a reason." Participant 1 mentioned asking God to reveal

what she should learn: "What – what do I have to learn from it? Why – why is it happening in this time?" Spiritual forces were also mentioned in attempting to understand horrific experiences and their aftermath. Participant 3 described her communication with Ugandan workers on the ground in South Sudan working with survivors of war crimes and the psychological effect:

> Sometimes we have a pastor who sends prayer requests to the office. It's like – like even when I go to visit, they'll say, 'Oh, the demon', you know, 'the demon-possessed' or things like that. 'Someone is crazy', you know, and I was thinking – I was saying to people at the office, I was like, "I know demons exist, but its not, most of the time, demons.'

The participants attempted to understand why something had happened, even if it was outside one's control such as demons or God, as a way to cope with that distress.

Theme: Opportunities. Every participant agreed that there were more opportunities in the West, but this did not necessarily equate with a better life. Participant 5 said when she saw another Ugandan woman move to the United States, it made her "happy to see somebody get a work permit and start working because she came here for survival. She didn't come here to have fun and to enjoy it and everything. She would stay in Uganda because it's more fun there." Emigrating for provision rather than holistic wellbeing was a common thread in six interviews.

While many episodes in the interviews dealt with *stories lived* preceding *stories told*, two participants spoke of the inverse in relation to traveling and moving to the West.

Participant 7 described the story she had been told about living in Ireland being different

than how she found reality:

> You create images in your mind, basically maybe your own stories. You've been
>
> told or books you've read, or the media you consume. So all that gives you an
>
> image of what other people or another place or whatever, so but then when you
>
> actually interact personally with this person or with this place – you realize that,
>
> maybe that wasn't it, you know?

Participant 6 said something similar about how "people tend to think that actually

traveling to Europe means you have…made it…But then after coming to Europe, then I

realized, hmm, actually what I expected is not what it is, you know?" Through their

experiences, they were able to reframe stories they had been told to reflect their actual

experiences in the West.

Subtheme: Work. The stories participants told of work culture in the West was

markedly different than the way they spoke of the approach to work in Uganda.

Participant 2 said, "Everyone is too busy working and working and working and working,

working, working…. Every time they sit down, they think 'Oh, I'm losing money.' No

one has spare time for you." In fact, Participant 2 used the word "work" or "working" 48

times in our interview. Participant 1 told the story of how she sees Australian life: "It's

goals and goals and what have I done today? Oh, I have to do something every day…

You have to accomplish every day. If you don't, then you've wasted your day that you

could never have back." Participant 5 described astonishment that businesses choose to

operate on Christmas. Three participants described employers being stricter in the West

in terms of having friends visit during work hours or demanding the appearance of work even in slow times. Two participants mentioned how different it was when employees were required to stand, even if the employee was elderly.

Subtheme: Freedom. While *stories lived* described the lack of political freedoms the participants had experienced, the stories they told about personal feelings of freedom I placed under *stories told*. There was a consensus that life in the West, while experiencing political freedoms, felt restrictive on a personal level whereas life in Uganda felt freer. Participant 6 used the phrase "free entry and exit of people" in reference to everyday life in Uganda. When I asked her to elaborate on this idea, she said, "I think, my experience - for example living in the UK is I feel very restricted in a lot of things I can do. And that's in the sense of time, space, and maybe my social wellbeing." She also spoke of parenting in the United Kingdom being a "constant policing of your child, restricting them from what they want to do because of the way the country is, anything might happen to them." Participant 2 also spoke of the difference between living in an industrialized nation versus Uganda: "[In the United Kingdom] there are laws everywhere, cameras everywhere. Different than Uganda….It's a free-style. You've seen it. Everything is free and relaxed. It's not so strange and with the laws." Participant 3 discussed the pressure of American culture to look and eat a certain way as being the opposite of free: "They're somehow, you know, in bondage….There's no freedom at all. There's always pressure…I'm not against looking healthy, but you don't make it extreme where, you know, you don't have the freedom to do things you like to do." Participants did not seem to equate political freedoms with a sense of personal freedom.

Storytelling

CMM is a communications theory (Pearce, 2006). I used this theory to look at communication rather than through it, including the primary characters within an episode. In this section I categorized the relationship between myself and the participant in the context of our interview. I also included when and why a person chose to engage in *storytelling* behaviors. I analyzed to whom the participants told their stories as well as the circumstances surrounding it.

Theme: Relationships. Four participants told me stories during their interviews that they chose to not disclose to others in their lives. One said she was fine speaking to me about these difficulties because she knew I did not know anyone else in her physical community to whom I could reveal her stories. Two participants said they had never told anyone else that specific story before, and one had only told one other confidant.

Three participants spoke of visiting a professional in order to tell their stories. They explained their reason for this decision was because there was ensured confidentiality. Participant 5 spoke to the chaplain at her work, Participants 5 and 6 both described *storytelling* to medical doctors and also briefly attended counseling services.

Because CMM and I:R interviewing (Chirban, 2004) both include the researcher as a part of the data collection process and analysis, I reviewed the journal that I had kept throughout the data collection process, looking at the way I personally did *storytelling*. I noted five participants seemed more comfortable and subsequently more forthcoming after I told them I had lived in Uganda for three years; this commonality seemed to allow more freedom in discussing Uganda. After three interviews, I journaled that I felt strong

empathy for the participants, once writing, "I wish I lived near her, I'd be her friend. She's so lonely." I realized that in that interview specifically, I was much more encouraging than in other interviews. During member checking, Participant 7 apologized and said she now sees what it must feel like when she interviews people as she felt she did not give clear or robust enough answers. I had journaled that she was the most reticent participant in the interviews I conducted for this study.

Within the interviews, three participants specifically emphasized how much they love their country. These exclamations typically came after a comment that could have been perceived as negative or critical of Uganda. At one point, Participant 7 said as an adult she's rethinking some things she learned as a child about Ugandan culture and when I asked for an example, she hesitated and said, "Oh – (long pause) – well (pause) – I don't want to talk bad about my people." At the end of the conversation with Participant 3, I asked if she wanted to add anything to the conversation and she spoke of how grateful she is that she grew up in Uganda. Participant 6 mentioned how she is often the only African in her graduate classes and that it almost feels as if she must carry the burden of all Africa. I made a note in my journal wondering if this feeling influenced the way she engaged in *storytelling* within our interview. These instances showed a desire to tell stories of Uganda in a favorable light.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the manner in which I collected the data as well as discussed alterations to the original data collection plan and the rationale behind those specific changes. I described the data collection setting as well as my approach to data

analysis through coding and categorizing. This chapter also detailed the steps I took

towards ensuring trustworthiness. Finally, I presented the results of this study through the

LUUUUTT model with the emergent themes of relationships, difficulties, and

opportunity. In the next and final chapter, I discuss how I interpreted the results and

explain the implications of these findings and how they can be used to promote social

change.

Chapter 5: Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualized stress. There are many known psychological and physiological health effects of acute and chronic stress (Hostinar, Nusslock, & Miller, 2018; Raposa et al., 2014; Selye, 1985), so it is important for practitioners to be able to provide services and assistance to help individuals manage their stress and practice resiliency. However, there is a gap in the literature involving how a specific culture conceptualizes the stress phenomenon. In Uganda, there are zero words or phrases for stress. Since language helps form social constructs, understanding how Luganda-speaking Ugandans think about, talk about, and experiences stress is vital for providing appropriate and effective resources.

I wanted to explore Luganda-speaking Ugandan women's experiences through their stories involving the phenomenon of stress; I used Lazarus's cognitive appraisal of stress theory as the theoretical framework for this study, thereby assuming that an individual needs to assess a situation as potentially threatening or stressful before experiencing the phenomenon of being stressed. Through a qualitative interpretive design grounded in CMM (Pearce, 2004), I conducted semistructured interviews with seven female Ugandan emigrants in the West who had moved less than four years prior to our interview. For analysis, I used the LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2004) to look at interactions through the lens of *stories **l**ived, **u**nknown stories, **u**ntold stories, **u**nheard stories, **u**ntellable stories, stories **t**old,* and *story**t**elling.* Emergent themes from the data were relationships, difficulties, and opportunities.

In this chapter, I discuss the two main findings surrounding how the participants conceptualized stress. The first finding was that the cultural construct of stress does not exist in Uganda. Ugandans did not have a different categorization of what was considered stressful but stated that there was no stress experience in Uganda. The second finding was that there was a reframing of constructs regarding difficulties and hard times after being immersed in a different culture. It was unclear whether this reframing process was necessary for participants to cope with new types of difficulties or it emerged from Western constructs, but there was a difference in terms of participants' understanding of culture, stress, and difficulties. I discuss the limitations of this study as well as recommendations for future research in this area. I provide the implications regarding what these findings mean and how they can practically be used for positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study was conducted to explore the research question *how is stress conceptualized by Luganda-speaking Ugandans in terms of understanding, experiencing, and communicating the stress phenomenon?* I chose the LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2004) to gain a deeper understanding of the tension between stories that are told and stories that are not as well as to explore whether the untold stories were the result of conscious decisions to not disclose or if the stories are untellable or even unknowable. The analysis considered not only what participants said but how they expressed themselves, looking at the communication as well as through it to explore how stress is conceptualized for Luganda-speaking Ugandans. As explained in Chapter 4, I changed the participant criteria from being Luganda-speaking Ugandan women unfamiliar with

English to Luganda-speaking Ugandan women who were fluent in English and had emigrated to English-speaking Western countries within the last 4 years. Due to this change in participation criteria, participants' stories were rich in discussing their cultural constructs of stress and what they experienced and perceived both in Uganda and in the West.

Finding #1: No Cultural Construct of Stress in Uganda

In this study, I intended to explore the social construct of stress in Ugandans using Lazarus' cognitive appraisal of stress theory. Lazarus (1993) posited that it was not the actual stress that was detrimental to individuals but rather their subjective experiences involving stress; in order for a person to feel stressed, they first had to assess a situation as stressful. I had anticipated participants having a different reference point for what they considered stressful whilst living in Uganda, but what I found was that the participants reported there was essentially no stress experience within Uganda at all.

An impetus for this study was how often practitioners, researchers, and laypeople assumed life in Uganda was difficult and stressful (see Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2013; Scott-Shelden et al., 2013; Wittkowski et al., 2013). The participants expressed agreement that life was difficult, but they did not report that life in Uganda was stressful. The ontology of CMM (Pearce, 2004), the other theoretical framework for this study, involves subjective understanding and creation of meaning by individuals or groups rather than objective reality (Raskin, 2002). Using CMM's LUUUUTT model (Pearce, 2004), I determined that the *stories told* by non-Ugandans about life in Uganda is at tension with the *stories lived* by Ugandan citizens. Many emigrants reflected upon their

home country with fondness, and while the participants in this study spoke favorably about Uganda, they were not silent about what was problematic about life there. Several participants discussed lack of political freedoms, high rates of poverty and illiteracy, and lack of access to quality education and healthcare. Yet unlike other researchers who have categorized Ugandan life as a stressful existence (see Bove & Valeggia, 2009; Garcia et al., 2013; Scott-Sheldon et al., 2013; Wittkowski, et al., 2013), participants maintained that life in Uganda was "good," "normal," and "fun" even while acknowledging many difficulties.

Participants spoke about stress being very temporary or even nonexistent in Uganda. One participant described life in Uganda overall as "stress-free." Participant 1 stated that life in Uganda was harder than in Australia but also maintained that people do not have the stress experience in Uganda. Several participants said that if they were confronted with potentially stressful conditions, the feelings of the stress experience would be fleeting and gone the following day. This is not because the participants had never dealt with difficult things; some participants had experienced extremely distressing circumstances in their lives. One participant was disowned by her family resulting in months of homelessness and going hungry. Another participant had grown up wealthy until her father was scammed and defrauded of his wealth, upending her social standing. Her family had to move into her grandparents' home, which culturally meant that they could no longer live with their father. Within a matter of months, she went from attending a private boarding school to a public day school and living in her own home with both parents to being guests of family members and not living with her father, not because he

left her but because cultural values dictated that a man cannot sleep where his in-laws live. Neither of these two participants said that life during that time was stressful. Leontyev (1972) stated that mental functions need to be relayed to another in order to survive and thrive within a culture and in order to "transmit [it] can only be done in external form – in the form of action or in the form of external speech" (p. 19). With no construct of stress for assessing a situation as stressful, the participants did not have the stress experience.

While the Luganda language has one word for all negative connotations, the participants did differentiate in English the ideas of *hard*, *bad*, and *stressful*. Experiences that were hard were conceptualized differently than experiences that were bad or ones that were stressful. I received clarity from participants regarding their definitions of *hard* which meant that they needed to work harder at something in order to fix a situation. *Bad* intimated being helpless, that there was nothing they could do to assuage a situation or even know if they would survive it. Yet only one could clearly communicate how they distinguished *stress* from either *bad* or *hard*. Participant 7 defined *stress* as the feeling of being "overwhelmed" which is what she would attempt to convey in Luganda if she was experiencing those feelings.

While Luganda has one word to describe overall negative experiences (which would include *bad*, *hard*, and potentially *stressful*), the participants did not ascribe the English term *stressful* to any of their experiences in Uganda but did differentiate between *hard* and *bad* in English. Carey (1975) suggested that communication is crucial for creating and adjusting society. The words that a group uses are symbolic in terms of their

culture, and it is necessary to look at language rather than through it (Pearce, 2009). It is meaningful to note that even with the vocabulary to describe stress, they were deliberate in choosing different words.

Participants did not differentiate between depression, anxiety, and the stress experience. Participants would use all three of these terms but almost interchangeably. They did not speak about experiencing or witnessing any of those mental health conditions in Uganda except for Participant 3 who described how South Sudanese women acted posttrauma. Alhurani et al. (2018) found a positive correlation between cognitively appraising a situation as negative with higher levels of depression and anxiety in patients with heart failure. However, participants in the study who appraised the situation more positively were more likely to display active emotional coping strategies and experience neither depression nor anxiety. It follows logic for the Ugandan participants to report no feelings of stress, depression, or anxiety. If the cognitive appraisal of a situation is not negative, there is no feeling of stress, depression, or anxiety.

Participants reasoned that there are no depressive, anxious, or stressful experiences in Uganda because there is a lack of words in Luganda for these phenomena. Pearce (2000), in CMM, stated that people cocreate their realities, or social constructs, through communication. Yeshurun and Sobel (2010) stated there was a universal difficulty in describing olfaction, yet Majid and Burenhult (2013) demonstrated that if a culture had the appropriate language it was possible to describe and explain the olfaction experience. They showed cultures without olfaction descriptive words did not experience the sense of smell in the same way as the cultures who did have the vocabulary,

concluding that language helps drive conscious experience (Majid & Burenhult, 2013).

With no communication surrounding mental health, participants' realities or constructs

surrounding mental health were also nonexistent or extremely limited. Participant 6

expressed that "[in Uganda] even if I were upset about something, I would see no

window for me to actually get depressed…one, I did not know depression, and two, I

wouldn't think about it." She also said that on days in Uganda that were particularly

difficult, she would go home and sleep, waking up refreshed both physically and

emotionally the next day. When asked how she would describe that experience in

Luganda, she said

> Hmm. I don't think I even have the word. Hmmm. I could perhaps say *nkooye*
>
> which literally means *I'm tired*. So I can't - I can't really and that's really
>
> interesting actually.…   I don't tell her I'm stressed, I tell her *nkooye*…But
>
> actually tired and being stressed are two different things.

Participant 7 said that Ugandans have neither written nor spoken about stress. She

guessed that Ugandans most likely have culturally understood the idea of stress

differently though she was unable to communicate what that construct has historically

been. The participants explained their lack of the stress experience to be because of the

lack of language for the phenomenon.

What is particularly valuable to note is that once participants were exposed to the

Western construct of stress, both terminology and experience, each could clearly

articulate a situation in the West that she labeled stressful and experienced the stress

phenomenon. Yet, not a single participant reframed any experiences from life in Uganda

as stressful. Some participants have returned to Uganda to visit family and remained confident they had not nor would experience stress in Uganda even with a framework for understanding the stress phenomenon. Participants agreed if there was stress in Uganda, which was doubtful, that it was a fleeting experience only lasting until the day was over, but no one would definitively say that there is stress experienced within Uganda.

Lazarus (1993) noted that only when an individual assesses a situation as threatening or stressful will he or she experience the emotional and physiological effects of stress. Participants in this study had no construct of stress while living in Uganda which contributed to the lack of the stress experience even while living in situations that many Westerners would deem stressful. Yet, once they emigrated and were inundated with the Western construct of stress and the assumed detriments of it, six of the seven participants reported having both emotional and physiological experiences of stress.

I attest the relationship between lack of language for the stress phenomenon and lack of the stress experience creates an environment in which stress is not conceptualized nor experienced in a way comparable to the Western experience, conceptualization, or manifestation of stress. As Pearce and Pearce (2000) expressed that words do not begin to signify meaning until two or more individuals determine an agreed upon definition. Once a group has determined meaning, this meaning then becomes the compass that people align their behaviors to (Andrews, 2012). This is how the participants largely made meaning of the lack of stress in Uganda: without a vernacular word for stress, there was no appraisal of a situation as stressful nor an alignment of one's emotions or behaviors with the stress phenomenon, therefore there was no experience of stress.

Finding #2: Reframing of Constructs on Difficulties and Hard Times After Being Immersed in a Different Culture

One key element of social constructionism is studying language as it is foundational to creating the social constructs through which people view reality (Starn, 1998). Starn's idea was confirmed in my study as many participants discussed not having experienced stress, depression, or anxiety in Uganda due to the lack of language and knowledge about these conditions. Six of the seven participants described experiencing stress, depression, or anxiety while living in the West. All participants had been living in the West for at least 6 months when the data for this study was collected and had been thoroughly immersed within two cultures, Ugandan and Western. There was an emotional assimilation of experiencing stress without assimilation of values. The primary language used in a specific instance mediated the individual's experience of that instance (Burkitt, 2019) both in Uganda and in the West. Cultural constructs dictated largely by language (Burr, 2003) played a significant role in how the participants navigated meaning-making of their experiences in the West.

Four participants discussed the implications of engaging with the Luganda language as opposed to the English language. Dewaele and Nakano (2012) reported that bilingual participants have two separate frameworks from each language as opposed to a single integrated one. Participant 1 spoke about how she was clever and funny in the Luganda language but that she was not humorous in the English language. Participant 4 said the content of her dreams dictated whether she dreamt in Luganda or English. Participant 6 discussed how when she hears a story in English, she translates it in her head back into Luganda to see how she could "unpack" it from her Ugandan framework:

> When faced with particular situations, I always want to consider people's
>
> perceptions in a way [where I am not] trying to unpack that in my own
>
> perspective of my culture and perhaps on the side of someone else's culture….
>
> The tone of their language. And the tone of their speech as well. And the manner
>
> in which they said it…. So, I'm able to link their tone, and if I have to translate
>
> that into my language, how that tone actually gives me the meaning of exactly
>
> what they mean to say.

All participants were fluent in both Luganda and English and saw value in choosing

which language to express oneself in based not solely on the immediate situation but also

the content of what needed to be communicated. This behavior aligned with Guttfreund's

(1990) discussion of a relationship between languages and constructs of the social world

based on which language was spoken at the time of the event and at the recall of the

event.

Research has shown individual differences in what is considered stressful

(Gallagher et al., 2014), and this finding expands the idea to include cultural differences.

Participants articulated stressful situations in the West which contrasted with their lack of

the stress experience in Uganda. One participant categorized the experience of American

life as stressful: "America is already stressful… you don't have to stress yourself." Five

of seven participants described the Western work ethic as being inherently stressful,

always thinking about the future rather than the present, and placing a higher emphasis on

personal or career goals than on relationships. According to Beiter et al. (2014), in the

United States, university students consider stress surrounding academic performance,

relationships, and even their sleep schedule to contribute to their depression and anxiety. Participants of this study did not report any effects of stress, including depression and anxiety, when living in Uganda even with experiencing such difficulties as food insecurity, lack of political freedoms, homelessness, and war crimes. Yet participants did report stress, depression, and anxiety in the West due to circumstances such as a romantic break-up, being lied to, or a job with no career satisfaction. With no discussions in Uganda about how stress affects health and with the participants' perception that mental health issues are celebrated in the West, this finding aligns with Nabi et al. (2013) which reported the way one believes stress will affect a person is more significant than the actual stressors in that person's life.

Over half of participants spoke of differences for what Ugandans think of as difficult and what their perception of what Westerners consider difficult. Participant 3 compared situations in the United States and Uganda. Once she spoke about a friend upset over wearing the wrong outfit in America versus not having enough money to go to the doctor when a family member is dying in Uganda. In another instance she described a coworker having anxiety because she missed a day at the gym which she compared to the war widows in South Sudan. She also explained how her husband suffered from social anxiety in reference to speaking about his troubled past whereas she was comfortable speaking about her ostracization from her community and former homelessness. Other participants spoke about deaths of pets in the West being considered difficult while Ugandans are desperate to find the financial resources for their children's education. Another participant discussed an American coworker stressed due to her

husband's failure in contributing to household chores while the story she described as difficult revolved around the death of very close family members in Uganda. The situations Ugandans considered difficult were more intense than their perception of what Westerners considered difficult. There was a consensus amongst participants in this, showing appraisal differences may not be exclusively individual but broader and cultural differences. It is important to note that even with different thresholds for appraisal, participants assigned the term *difficult* rather than *stressful*.

It is crucial within CMM theory to not negate or reframe participants' stories. Pearce (1999) emphasized the importance of the individual's experiences and storytelling: if a person explained a situation as *x*, it would be untrue to represent that situation in another way. There is an important distinction between ***unknown stories*** and ***stories lived*** that do not include a specific phenomenon. Participants' stories involving mental health diagnoses were ***unknown stories***; Participant 6 spoke of not understanding her cousin's mental health crisis when her cousin went "mad" and was hospitalized until Participant 6 learned the language and Western construct to understand, and Participant 3 spoke of not understanding anxiety and depression in women who had undergone trauma, explaining it as demon possession until she came to the United States. These stories on mental health were, in fact, ***unknown stories*** which is indicated in participants' reframing the meaning-making of those experiences. But even with Western terminology and construct of stress, no participant reframed or made a different meaning of her experiences in Uganda as stressful. The only reframing of Ugandan experiences occurred in the opposite direction. Multiple participants expressed that what they had once

considered difficult while they were living in Uganda, they no longer would categorize it as hard or bad after having lived in the West. They no longer considered the situation as distressing after being exposed to the Western constructs of stress. Despite being introduced to the construct and language of stress, the participants continued to deny the stress experience in Uganda. This indicates that the stress experience is not an ***unknown story*** but rather the lack of stress in Uganda is a *story **lived***.

The reframing of constructs was the most surprising to me as I anticipated the participants would have different thresholds of stress than Westerners or would reassess life in Uganda as stressful in light of Western quality of life. Neither of those happened. In actuality, the participants described troubles being transitory in Uganda while in the West, similar or less intense situations would develop into severe stress or clinical levels of depression or anxiety.

Limitations of the Study

The original intent in interviewing Ugandans in Uganda was to learn about their cultural perception of stress. With changes in the participation criteria, interviewing participants who had the influence of the Western country they were living in shifted this study from a purely Ugandan experience to participants explaining life in Uganda and life in the West. This could be seen as a limitation of this study because it was not from a Luganda perspective alone. Similarly to composite Luganda, this dual immersion creates a composite culture which alters what would otherwise have been strictly and purely Ugandan.

The change in participation criteria necessitated amending data collection from in person interviews to interviews conducted via video conference call. Chirban (1996) discussed the importance of relationship between the interview parties. A limitation of interviewing via video conference call was the technical issues that arose in a few of the interviews. These technical difficulties affected the organic flow of the conversation. One participant had her interview take place over two sessions and four other interviews had lags in the transmission of video which created unnatural pauses or breaks. These issues did impact the relationship we were creating within the conversation.

From the beginning to the end of this dissertation process, I experienced several major life changes including two moves (one intercontinental and, later, one across the United States) as well as having two children, which dictated leaves of absence that I had not previously foreseen. With the travel ban due to Zika making it impossible for me to travel to Uganda to collect the data, I had to take additional time off. The lengthy process limited my constant investment in the study as I would be immersed for a time, then be in retreat several times over.

Recommendations

Selye (1950) proved that every living organism on earth undergoes stress. It is well documented what physiologically occurs when an individual is confronted with stress. This study examined the stress phenomenon in Ugandans through qualitative narratives alone. It would be well worth conducting a quantitative study with biometric data on Ugandans living in Uganda when faced with potentially stressful situations. Cortisol levels, an indicator of stress levels, are higher in Western individuals who live in

chronic poverty (Johnson, 2019), and I recommend a future study comparing cortisol levels of Ugandans living in similar conditions with studies already conducted in the West. There are also conversations surrounding the cultural-historical formation of emotion influencing neurobiology which suggests that in societies that lack language for specific emotions, the biology works differently in comparable situations (Burkitt, 2019). Biometric studies could provide further insight to investigate if the presence of physiological manifestations of stress align with the presence or absence of the emotional aspects of the stress experience as seen in the West.

Koydemir, Şimşek, Schütz, and Tipandjan (2013) reported that those in collectivist societies view emotions as stated fact rather than subjective experiences. Yet participants in my study had a different expression. They implied their personal reticence was unique to their personality even while acknowledging that culturally Ugandan people do not engage in disclosure. Participant 2 spoke of Ugandans not talking about personal difficulties, but later said it was an individual trait of hers that made her avoid telling others about her personal troubles. It was unclear whether this individual assessment was made after moving to the West or if they had similar feelings while still living in the Ugandan culture. In the future, a researcher could travel to Ugandans communities to examine why Ugandans who do not discuss difficulties do so. A future researcher could also investigate whether or to what extent Ugandans residing in noncollectivist cultures have infused individualistic portions of the Western culture.

The way Ugandan emigrants interacted with other Ugandan emigrants was different than how they reported interacting with others in Uganda. It was as if the

participants retained the Ugandan value of relationships, but the individualism of the Western culture influenced the way relationships were maintained in the West. The importance of relationships in Uganda was expressed by every participant yet only one maintained strong relational ties with other Ugandan emigrants after moving. All but two participants had other Ugandan emigrants in their lives or immediate social spheres. In Uganda it seemed as if simply being Ugandan was reason enough to stay connected, and that reasoning was not reflected within the Ugandan emigrant community. One participant said that the longer a Ugandan lives in America, the less likely she is to help other Ugandans out. She spoke of several Ugandans committing suicide in the United States, even though there were many other Ugandans in close proximity to these people. Future researchers could examine the construct of relationships on individuals from collectivist cultures after moving to an individualistic society.

Fernando (2004) explained how Western psychologists in Sri Lanka may attempt to "cure" individuals of certain behaviors that were actually healthy coping mechanisms within the Sri Lankan culture. Talk therapy is a common treatment in the West, but in my experiences living and working in Uganda, it was not always appropriate in the Ugandan culture. As the results of this study show even with a bustling, vibrant community and support system, there remains a cultural expectation to not disclose personal struggles. Pressuring an individual to talk to a professional or friend could potentially be more harmful than helpful. Future researchers should examine types of therapy and treatment that is culturally sensitive, comfortable for Ugandans, and effective to their situations.

Implications

The findings for this study show the need to properly understand the cultural constructs and language of a group of people before providing counseling or psychological services entrenched in Western constructs. For instance, food insecurity is associated with chronic stress in America even amongst emigrants to the United States (Distel, Egbert, Bohnert, & Santiago, 2019), so it would be natural to assume this same phenomenon would occur in Uganda. Yet participants in this study did not report any stress due to food insecurity while living in Uganda. Therefore, therapies and counseling techniques that work for individuals in the West who are experiencing chronic stress due to food insecurity will not be effective or appropriate for those in Uganda who are living with food insecurity.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest in the transactional model of stress and coping there is a two-tiered system of appraisal: the first is that the person sees a situation as threatening and the second tier is if the person has the resources available to cope. Participants did not report the stress experience while living in Uganda, even when dealing with long-term food shortages, limited political freedoms, or lack of financial resources, which could be explained by the second tier of the transaction model. It appears as if Ugandans relied on their relationships within their culture to prevent distressing situations from becoming the stress experience. It is essential to understand the coping mechanisms ingrained within a culture which could preclude a situation from being appraised or classified as stressful which would then make the experience of stress nonexistent. There are clearly coping factors in Uganda, and future practice should

include celebrating and focusing on these cultural resiliencies rather than exclusively focusing on the vulnerabilities of this population.

These findings lay the groundwork for exploring how other people groups experience stress or trauma. Understanding the perceptions of a culture are foundational for practitioners to provide effective care. Shifting from an exclusively empirical biomedical model to incorporating social and cultural nuances is one way in which practitioners could create social change. By studying how other cultures construct the idea of stress, practitioners could gain insight into creating culture-specific care as well as potentially learning new coping strategies from these cultures that could benefit the West as well. Rather than continuing to think of other cultures from a purely Western viewpoint, researchers should continue to humbly approach nonWestern cultures for a better understanding of their social world from their situated place in time and history. Approaching other cultures with curiosity and questions about their experiences rather than assuming Western strategies are the most effective could be of value in developing interventions that are culturally poignant, appropriate, and significant. Exploring the resiliency factors as well as the specific, unique manifestations and conceptualizations of stress in various cultures prior to offering any psychological assistance could be of immense value as it would be culturally effective, appropriate, and significant.

It is important to note that historically there have been perceptions that Africans or people of color do not experience grief, sadness, suffering, or mourning as significantly as Caucasians (Lukhele, 2016), which has contributed to lack of resources for these underserved populations. It is vital to remember that negative emotions or one's

response to bad, difficult, hard, or traumatic situations should not be dismissed due to a misunderstanding of the cultural constructs of these experiences. Practitioners should not disregard displays of grief, suffering, stress, or trauma because a client or patient is not presenting the way they "should." While this study showed the resiliency of Luganda-speaking Ugandan women, it should never be used as an excuse to deny appropriate aid by explaining that Ugandans can "just deal with it" and reallocating resources towards communities who display the stress phenomenon the way the West is comfortable or familiar with.

This study can be used by practitioners who work with those from other cultures to understand that there are different understandings of a phenomena that Western practitioners assumed were universal. Social change is integral to the field of psychology as those who study and practice psychology are committed to helping individuals and communities live emotionally healthy lives. It is imperative that practitioners first understand the definition of the phenomena experienced by clients from their perspective. All practitioners should take a stance of curiosity when first engaging with clients rather than assuming cultural understanding or social constructs. If practitioners involve their clientele from a posture of humility and curiosity, they could work together on how best to help clients with the cultural coping mechanisms already available to them

Conclusion

This qualitative interpretive study was conducted to examine how Luganda-speaking Ugandans conceptualize stress in terms of thinking about, communicating, and experiencing the stress phenomenon. During a conversation with one my Ugandan

coworkers whom I referenced in Chapter 1 not too long after I had held the stress management workshop in Uganda, I was struck trying to understand her construct of how war had personally affected her. She is Acholi, from the north of Uganda where the civil war was the harshest and most violent. While helping prepare dinner one evening, I asked her how the war had affected her life. She proceeded to tell me about how her village was burned, forcing her family to live in an IDP camp for years, how her brother was forced to be a child solider, how her father was kidnapped, how her aunts and cousins died, and how her education was interrupted. I sat in silence as she told me all these things before finishing with, "I'm so blessed that I was not very much affected."

As the world remains in conflict and becoming increasingly more connected, it is vital that we do not homogenize the assistance being offered but that we provide the best, most ethical and culturally sound treatments to aid those whose backgrounds and experiences are different than the providers' backgrounds. The results and findings of this study show that stress is not conceptualized the same in Uganda as it is in the West. This remains the case even when Ugandans are fully immersed in Western culture for a significant time. Rather than assuming how others make meaning in their social worlds, those of us in the helping profession need to be curious and ask questions while working collaboratively with clients to understand the cultural constructs of a different people group. By first examining the language of a different culture and then understanding the stories lived and told by those in that culture, we can begin to celebrate and be surprised by the meaning-making of others around the world.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Assigned participant number: _____

Script

Hi (use participants name). Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my study. As we discussed when you were invited to participate in my study, I am Courtney Skiera, and I am attending Walden University as a doctoral student in the school of Health Psychology. I want to learn more about how Luganda-speaking Ugandan women handle life through their experiences, their understanding of difficult times and how they talk about when life gets hard through. I want to begin by thanking you for returning the signed consent form and now I will briefly review that before we start the interview. Participation in this research involves one to two hours for an interview. I will send you a copy of your transcript of this interview for you to review to ensure your responses were captured as intended. During this interview, I may be taking some notes and checking the recorder periodically so everything you say is captured.

How old were you when you moved from Uganda?

Who else lived with you in Uganda?

Who else lives with you currently?

How many languages do you speak?

What are they?

How do you spend your day?

How did you spend your day in Uganda?

How would you describe your life overall?

How would you describe your life back in Uganda?

Please describe a time when you were feeling like life was particularly hard or bad in Uganda.

How did that make you feel? In your body? In your heart? In your spirit?

Did you speak with anyone about how you were feeling?

Who?

Why did you choose this person to speak with?

What words did you say?

What were you thinking?

Please describe a time when you were feeling like life was hard or bad in {name of country of new home}.

How did that make you feel? In your body? In your heart? In your spirit?

Did you speak with anyone about how you were feeling?

Who?

Why did you choose this person to speak with?

Which language did you communicate these thoughts and feelings?

Please tell me about another time that life was bad or stressful?

What words did you say then?

What were you thinking and feeling then?

How do you think someone else would feel in their body, their heart, and their spirit if they went through these same experiences?

When something in life is hard, how do you think about it?

When something in life is bad, how do you think about it?

When your heart and body are feeling like life is bad, why do you think you feel that way?

Thank you again, so much (name of participant) for participating in this study with me. If you need to get into contact with me, you can reach me through email at *** or by phone number at ***. If you have any questions at all, please let me know, and I will answer as quickly as I can.