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Application of Narrative Analysis in Studying Youth Mindsets from a Socio-Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

The developing world is experiencing a youth bulge, with the majority of this youthful population in sub-Saharan Africa. In Uganda, youth account for more than 70% of the population. It is vital to empower this population of youth to gain the demographic dividend. The effect of a positive mindset on empowerment outcomes has been demonstrated, and the concept of mindset has been part of Ugandan youth empowerment ediscourse in the last decade but without clearly operationalising it. Several contemporary theories on mindset exist in the field of psychology; they view the mind and, therefore, mindset as the interior processes of a single individual. At the root of these theories is the assumption that the human "mind" can be measured and explained through experimental psychology, which emphasises the use of natural science principles applied to humans, to the exclusion of cultural influences. I argue that these conceptualisations of mindset do not provide an appropriate approach to understanding mindsets in an African context like Uganda, whose socio-cultural fabric upholds the aspects of community and "*Ubuntu"*. I propose a conceptualisation of youth mindsets from a socio-cultural perspective based on Bakhtin's dialogical view of the mind, which explains the mind as emerging from narratives within the socio-cultural context. In this paper, I describe the methods I used to carry out a narrative exploration of youth mindsets using both structural and dialogical narrative approaches, thus operationalising the term mindset in context.

Keywords: Mindset, Youth, Narrative Analysis, Dialogism, Socio-Cultural Psychology

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Background

The developing world is going through a youth bulge (World Bank, 2017) with about 1.2 billion people under the age of 25 and, 90% youthful population which is struggling with formidable challenges is in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2023). In Uganda, youth account for more than 70% of the population (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). It is vital to empower this population of youth to gain the demographic dividend, as described by Lefko-Everett (2012), who otherwise describes them as a ticking time bomb. Indeed, empowering this youthful population has been at the forefront of the country's agenda, as explained in the Uganda Youth Policy (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development [MGLSD], 2001, 2016). The literature on international youth empowerment programmes demonstrates the efficacy of empowerment interventions that target the cognitive processes of youth alongside providing funds and skills (Lerner & Lerner, 2016; Youth Power, 2018). The effect of a positive mindset on empowerment outcomes has also been demonstrated (Ojo, Abayomi & Odozi, 2014; Polirstok, 2017; Verberg, Fenneke & Overbreek; 2018), although none of these studies have been conducted in Uganda.

A search of literature on the mindsets of youth in the context of empowerment, using multiple indexed journals, did not reveal any studies specifically targeting the concept of mindset in the Ugandan Youth Empowerment context. Nonetheless, the concept of mindset has been part of Ugandan youth empowerment discourse over the last decade. The Ugandan 2016 youth policy, for example, was guided by the theme of "mindset change for national development" (Mukwaya, 2016), although the implementation strategies laid out in it are entirely economically focused. The mindset question was therefore only alluded to rather than operationalised. The youth's mindsets were not clearly explained or targeted for change, and therein lies the dilemma for youth empowerment programming in Uganda.

Recently, the Ugandan government took more concrete steps to address the issue of mindset among Ugandans through its National Development Plan (NDP) version III (National Planning Authority, 2020). The NDPIV Reference mindset fosters economic growth by shifting away from negative social norms and cultural practices. Although the NDP III and IV endeavour to describe what is wrong with the Ugandan mindset and lay out the steps that their architects believe would remedy this situation, the factors underlying and driving this mindset are not conceptualised with a local socio-cultural understanding in mind. Rather, they are premised on a view of mindset proposed by the Mind Education Programme based in South Korea and explained by the concept of "Who is not Me but in Me" (Park, 2017). Consequently, the

dilemma associated with not fully appreciating the nature of youth mindsets that need to be targeted for change persists.

Several contemporary theories on mindset exist in the field of psychology, which have been summarised by French (2016). These mainstream psychological views of mindset have long been criticised for undermining the contribution of the context within which the individual is operating (Cahan & White,1992; Cole, 1995; Hermans & Salgado, 2010). They include cognitive, social, and organisational and positive psychology (fixed versus growth mindset) (Dweck, 2008). These conceptualisations of mindset described by French all have one common underlying aspect: they view the mind and, therefore, mindset as the interior processes of a single individual. These contemporary psychology sub-disciplines evolved from the founding of experimental psychology after Wilhelm Wundt's work in 1879 (Cole, 1990). This wave of psychology proposed that the human "mind" could be measured and explained through experimental psychology, which emphasises the use of natural science principles applied to human psychology (Cole, 1990). As Cole (1990) noted, Wundt also emphasised that this experimental approach to studying the human mind was not sufficient to understand how culture influences cultural processes. Despite Wundt's warnings, however, all psychological functions came to be studied through a unified experimental methodology modelled after the natural sciences, complete with standardised questionnaires and psychometric tests (Cole, 1990).

I argue that these conceptualisations of mindset do not provide an appropriate approach to understanding mindsets in an African context like Uganda, whose social cultural fabric upholds the aspects of community (Kikooma, 2006; Mkhize, 2003; 2012). Therefore, I proceeded to propose a conceptualisation of youth mindsets from a socio-cultural perspective. I based my conceptualisation of mindset on Bakhtin's dialogical view of mind which explains the mind as emerging from the narratives within the socio-cultural context, and the individual constantly positions and repositions him/herself within these narratives. This paper describes a narrative exploration of youth mindsets in Buganda. I focus on the methods and approaches used to conduct the study and the rationale thereof. I start with the research approach, focusing on the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the study. This is followed by the research design, which is qualitative in nature, and specifically, a narrative approach is taken. In this paper, I also describe several methodological decisions made in line with the exploratory and narrative nature of the inquiry. I examine the participant selection and research procedure, detail the validity and reliability measures supporting the study, and the key

ethical considerations for the study. I follow this with a description of how data were collected, managed, and analysed, specifically using the structural analysis approach and the dialogical narrative approach to answer the two research questions for my research which were: 1. What are the salient narratives within the social cultural and historical contexts of youth empowerment in Uganda? 2. How do youth position themselves within salient societal narratives around youth empowerment? Finally, I provide a brief overview of the results obtained using this methodological approach.

Research Paradigm

This study adopts a relativist stance in which 'reality' is seen as dependent on the ways we come to know it (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Relativism is an ontological question; ontology deals with beliefs about the nature of reality, and reality from a relativistic ontology cannot be distinguished from the knower's experience of it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Levers, 2013). In essence, reality is subjective and dependent on how we come to know it (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Relativism as an ontological question contrasts with realism, the ontological assumption that reality exists independent of an observer or knower (Lyons & Coyle, 2016).

In this research I also take on a social constructionist perspective or framework, in which the world and ourselves is understood as built up through social processes, especially through linguistic interactions (Lyons & Coyle, 2016) and as a product of particular cultural and historical contexts, is not fixed or necessary (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). A social constructionist framework focuses on examining the ways of understanding social reality that is available within a particular cultural and historical context and the implications they hold for human experience (Willig, 2013).

The social constructionist framework used for this research runs counter to the positivistic worldview that underlies a lot of psychological research and indeed the extant theory on mindset.

Positivism holds that the relationship between the world and our perception of the world is straightforward as long as our perception is not distorted, for example, by our vested interests in the things we perceive (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Psychological approaches such as the ones that gave us cognitive views of mindset and the positive psychology views of mindset (French, 2016) assume that it is possible to obtain accurate knowledge of the world… "provided we can adopt an impartial, unbiased, objective viewpoint" (Lyons & Coyle, 2016, p. 26).

Research Design

To understand the broad patterns of youth mindsets, set as they are in their socio-cultural and historical context, I used a qualitative and specifically

a narrative inquiry approach (Durdella, 2018). Narrative inquiry is a relatively new design in qualitative research compared to ethnography, phenomenology, and discourse analysis (Butina, 2015). It is both a view of people's experiences and a qualitative design for studying these experiences over time and in context (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). The choice to use narrative inquiry is based on the contribution of this approach to research that seeks to appreciate people's complex interpretations of their experiences (Ospina & Dodge, 2005). This method captures the context of the research and allows the representation of various voices in the phenomenon of interest. As such, narrative inquiry is viewed as the appropriate method by which to explore the socio-cultural and historical narratives and processes that have influenced youths' mindsets, based on their youths' interpretation of their life circumstances.

The specific approach used in this study was narrative constructionism (Sparkes and Smith, 2014). This narrative approach conceptualises human beings as meaning makers who use narratives from their socio-cultural world to interpret their experiences, make sense of who they are, and communicate ideas (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). These narratives, consistent with Bakhtinian thinking, do not "belong" to the individuals who use them but are passed down from their social and cultural communities (Bakhtin, 1984; Lyons & Coyle, 2016).

A key characteristic of the narrative approach important to understand for the current study is that narratives are the resources available by culture and social relations from which people construct their personal stories and understand the stories they hear (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). Narratives provide people with templates or scaffolding to build and organise their own stories. Even when people tell stories that are seemingly very personal, these stories do not originate from inside their minds but are instead put together from the narratives that surround them (Lyons & Coyle, 2016).

The narrative constructionist approach used in the current study differs from another narrative approach, termed the narrative constructivist view. This is an individualistic approach that conceptualises narrative as a cognitive structure or process found inside the mind (Schiff, 2013). The narrative constructivist view is more similar in its underlying perspective to the cognitive psychological views of mindset that have already been rejected in the current study.

Participant Selection and Procedure

The sampling strategy I used to select participants was purposive (Byrne, 2004; Palys, 2008). Purposive sampling signifies that the researcher makes strategic choices about how, where, and with whom to conduct their research, based on the research objectives (Palys, 2008).

To obtain a wide variety of viewpoints on beneficiary experiences in the programme, participant selection within the selected empowerment programs was based on maximum variation sampling, as described by Palys (2008) as a type of purposive sampling. Maximum variation purposive sampling allows the researcher to access a variation in perspectives, ranging from experiences that are viewed as typical to those that are more extreme in nature. The maximum variation was considered at the level of respondents, as described in the data collection section below.

Data Collection

Three participants were selected from each of the three youth empowerment programmes in Buganda. These included i) Uganda Youth Livelihoods Programme, a Uganda Government initiative that started in 2015 to empower youth through livelihood support, skills development, and infrastructural support. Beneficiaries of this programme are generally older, out-of-school youth between the ages of 25 and 35. ii). The Mastercard Foundation scholars programme: This is an American-founded scholarship programme that offers financial aid to academically bright but economically disadvantaged youth in Uganda to obtain University Education. Beneficiaries of this programme are undergraduate students, usually between the ages of 18 and 23. iii) The CottonOn Foundation Education scholarship programme, an Australian based programme operating in the Rakai district of Uganda that seeks to empower youth through education. The programme targets children and youth in primary and secondary schools. This study focused on secondary school graduates above age 18.

From each of these, three participants who had completed the programme were selected: these included i) a beneficiary whose story is likely typical of the expected programme outcomes; ii) a beneficiary whose story represents remarkably good outcomes; and iii) remarkably poor outcomes on the empowerment programme.

Table 1: Study Participants

Cottonon Foundation (Rakai) All in S6 Vacation Ages 18-21	**MasterCard Foundation (Kampala) Graduates (2019-2020) Ages 23-25**	**Youth Livelihoods Program (Kalangala) Small business owners Ages 25- 30**
FGD* 5 female 5 Male	FGD* 5 female 4 Male	FGD* 4 Female 5 Male
KII 1: Male (Average performance at UACE	KII 1: Female (2nd Upper, steadily employed)	KII 1: Female (owns small salon, normal progress)
KII 2: Female (Excellent Performance at UACE)	KII2: Male (2nd class, unemployed)	KII2: Male (Boda Group chairman, both failure and success on programme)
KII 3: Female (Poor performance at UACE)**	KII3: Male (2nd class, many retakes, self-employed)	

*FGD's were used as a basis for selecting KII participants, Findings are not included in the final analysis

**This interview was removed from the final analysis for ethical reasons

Quality Control: Validity and Reliability

Since narrativisation assumes a narrator's point of view (Reissman, 1993), the "Historical truth" (Spence, 1982, p.30) of the individual narratives is not the primary concern is the current study. Nonetheless, Noble and Smith (2015) provide some methodological considerations that can ensure the trustworthiness of findings in qualitative research, and some of them were applied in the current study, as explained below:

Accounting for personal biases which may influence the findings, this was done through a continuous process of reflexivity to ensure that my reading of participants' narratives was not unduly influenced by my personal experiences and position. To further explain the possibility that my own background may influence my reading of the participants' stories, my personal story is summarised below, followed by an analysis of how this background may influence the analysis of participants' stories

I was raised as the youngest child of a single mother. My parents separated when I was in Primary Three, and this left my family and I with considerable financial

constraints. My mother struggled to provide the best education that her meagre resources could buy for her youngest child. This was ostensibly to empower me. As a result, I attended some of the most expensive primary and secondary schools in Uganda at the time. Despite my mother's efforts to empower me, I struggled with feelings of inferiority and feeling "Not good enough". This came as a result of constantly comparing myself to my peers at the expensive schools I attended. They seemed to be richer and had both parents as far as I was concerned that they were better than me. The effect of this negative self-view on my mother's empowerment efforts was disastrous. At its height, my negative self-view morphed into a full-blown depression during my advanced level of education. In Senior Five, I was constantly ill, but medical examinations could not find anything medically wrong with me. I also kept hearing a voice in my head that insisted that I should do things to make myself "worthy". This involved constant prayer and fasting. Due to my intensely Christian background, I named this voice "god" and continued to do whatever this voice ordered. This continued to the point where I was ready to drop out of school in Senior Five to become a street preacher; this is what "god" was ordering me to do so that I could be "worthy". Fortunately, a close friend started to counsel me and challenged my beliefs about myself and insisted that the voice I was hearing was not God. This is when I started to recover, and my health and grades improved. I went on to successfully complete my A-level education and obtain a successful university education, and I am currently a lecturer and psychologist who supports various youth empowerment programmes around Uganda.

In the story above, I explore my own experience with the concept of "voice", and how it can negatively affect the empowerment process. This experience put me at an advantage in that I am able to relate to the participants' stories. My position as a psychologist who supports various youth empowerment programmes also provides the advantage of being able to reflect on the participants' stories in juxtaposition with the objectives of various youth empowerment programmes.

By the same token, however, I had to constantly check that my position did not bias my reading and analysis of the participants' stories. Some of the factors that I had to keep in mind to ensure that they did not create bias were my background as a child from a poor economic background that could create over-identification with participants and reduce objectivity; my current power position as both a lecturer and psychologist that could reduce empathy with the young people's experiences; and the fact that I am female while some of the respondents were male could be grounds for some gender biases. Being aware of these potential biases helped me to constantly reflect

on my analysis and assumptions to reduce this bias. The fact that I am a Muganda who was studying Baganda also deserves mention in the assessment of my positionality. My understanding of language, culture, and idiomatic expressions was an asset rather than a hinderance to the analysis of the interview transcripts. Other methods to maximise validity and reliability in qualitative research have also been used as mentioned below.

Acknowledging biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection on methodological decisions to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis. The sampling in this case was purposive, based on which respondents were available and willing to share their life story; the research therefore makes no claims to generalisability.

Meticulous record keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail, and ensuring the interpretation of data are consistent and transparent. This was done by keeping a research journal of all ideas that came up during the course of data collection and decisions made along the way such as what to include as "data".

Including rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support the findings. This is clearly demonstrated by keeping the participants' verbatim accounts in the presentation of their life stories after the process of structural narrative analysis.

Respondents were invited to read and comment on the life stories developed from their interviews and to ascertain whether the final themes and concepts created adequately reflected what they shared.

Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis can be viewed as a process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of data collected (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, all recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. This process was aided by a research assistant that I trained, After the verbatim transcription was completed by the research assistant, I also reviewed the transcripts and edited them following the transcription conventions laid out by Silverman (1997).

Repetitions and comments were removed to obtain a free-flowing narrative from the participant. My field notes were used to clarify unclear sections. The full transcripts obtained through this process are presented in the appendix.

It should be noted here that the data management and analysis processes overlapped; for example, right from the process of reading the verbatim transcripts, I was taking note of the emerging ideas that formed the participant's narrative. In addition, structural narrative analysis (a process described as an analytic approach to storied data (Labov, 1982), where full, meaningful stories are obtained from what the respondent says) was

also used to make sense of the large volume of data obtained. Structural narrative analysis, as explained below, should therefore be understood as both a data management and data analysis process.

Structural Narrative Analysis

To obtain the participants' account understanding of the empowerment process and an account of their behaviour, I summarised the transcripts of each of the individual interviews into "narratives" according to Labov's (1982) structural approach. I also selected structural narrative analysis because it allowed me to obtain a broad overview of the stories and, therefore, identify emerging themes across stories (Smith, 2016).

According to Labov, a fully formed narrative contains an abstract (a summary of what the narrative is about), orientation (participants, setting, and time orientation), complicating action (turning points or crises in the story and what sense the participant makes of them), evaluation (significance or meaning of actions, or the attitude of the participant), resolution (the outcome of events), and coda (the end, and may mark a transition to another narrative). The evaluation is of key importance for this study because it focuses on the meanings and significances of actions and the attitude of the narrator (Labov, 1982) which can provide insight into the narrator's mindset.

It should also be noted that not all narratives contain all the elements, and the elements may occur in varying sequences in some narratives (Reismann, 2003). Within the stories included in this research, the reader will notice that some narratives contain sub-plots representing different periods in the respondent's life. I did not analyse these sub-plots separately, but kept them as part of the whole narrative of the respondent's life story. Below is an example of a narrative obtained through the above process, the story of Kalema (pseudonym).

The Chapatti-selling Graduate: Kalema's Story

Plot Summary Taken to a high-class secondary school after growing up in a poor, rural area, Kalema always compared himself with his rich peers. This comparison led him to give up on doing medicine at university and chose to do agribusiness so that he could employ himself and earn money faster. At the time of the interview, he had lost his entire tomato growing investment and was selling chapatis, but was confident that things would get better; he had no qualms about his current position because no one in his current neighbourhood knew about his university education.

Kalema (not real name) comes from a humble background; he was raised by his father after his parents separated because they were from the same clan. His mother left his younger sister and Kalema to take care of his grandmother and father. He went to a primary school in a small

town where his father was working and always obtained a good grade. This good performance continued into secondary school. Kalema and his father at first did not believe that the BRAC representative who asked Kalema to apply for a scholarship with BRAC was serious. Although sceptical, he applied and was called for an interview which he passed. BRAC offered to cover "everything" pertaining to Kalema's secondary education. From a humble school in a village in south western Buganda, BRAC enrolled Kalema in a high-class international school for his advanced level education.

Kalema wanted to do sciences for his 'A' level, but the school administrators and other teachers strongly encouraged him to do arts because sciences "were not for everyone". He insisted and did Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

… "when I joined (school name) they were admiring us that we're are doing sciences eeehh sciencers… you people you have brains because we found in the school they were only two biology students… seven were doing chemistry and physics and others were doing arts. Even the Director of Studies, when you would go to apply for PCM or PCB, they would say, "Aahhh people, will you manage these courses? Even teachers would ask, " Ehhh PCM?... You got 13 from (name of A level school) … where is it located?" Finally, the DOS said, "Okay let me give you your course with time never know you will change," and when things become hard, you come back to my office and I give you another course.

During his time at the expensive International school, he continuously compared himself to other "rich people's children" who did not seem to need to work hard in school because they already had businesses waiting for them at home. One of his friends was the manager of a water-bottling company in Kigali. He was also aware that other students looked down upon him because of his poor economic status. However, he took solace and pride in the fact that he was an "academic giant", who other students also admired.

"Then, students …they thought we were of the village… you know students could be on tablets on weekends tapping Wi-Fi … they could even look at us badly… we could go round in our poor clothes … we had one cloth for the week. But now these students started admiring us after term 1 when they pinned our points… I think the worst was 12 and others were in 17 points 18 "eeehhhhh!" They said, "You people! That is when the school woke up (laughs).

He was also comforted by the fact that his tuition and school needs were covered by a scholarship, and he never needed to go home for school fees. Although there was a temptation to behave in a layback manner concerning academics like his rich peers, the scholarship directors always reminded Kalema about his humble

background and why he had come to school.

"…they used to tell us know where you came from, the students were chiller but me as me

… they used to tell us know where you came from do not just come here and waste time and the environment takes you… they used to counsel us. They would say we are giving you everything but do not get spoilt and know where you came from, know your family… knowing what your parents go through and know why we have brought you here … that one I think helped us not to get taken away by the environment.

Kalema was also been assigned a mentor by the BRAC programme. This mentor kept Kalema straight and narrow, so to speak. He wanted to make sure they succeeded because he too was from a humble background. However, Kalema still compared himself to the rich kids, and this comparison led him to an agribusiness course at the university. He felt there was no need to struggle with biology and pursue a medical degree, yet he could do agriculture which to him was nearer to the experience of Uganda, and he could employ himself. As he explains,

"….I applied for agri-business because my biology was not good at A level and it could not enable me go for medical courses so I said now… ehhhhhh and that life at Hana changed me …I would see sons and daughters of big people they are just chilling and what they know is to run business at home… so now why should I suffer with books… medical course five years (laughs) there was that social life I think… so reaching Senior Six, Biology became hard for me and I could not change it… now I said people are here their families are rich and students are just chillaxing… me why should I go for heavy courses at campus?... let me just go for the one which is in the environment… as in Uganda as you know, our backbone is agriculture… that's when I started to like agriculture, at senior six when biology is becoming hard for me. I said, now let me just go for a course at Makerere which might be profitable in daily life… it's in the environment and you cannot suffer with the environment because also agriculture is where you can start business … other than other businesses where you need experience.

Kalema was accepted at Makerere University, and his education was once again paid for by a scholarship under the MasterCard Foundation Scholar's programme. As a "scholar" (as MasterCard beneficiaries are referred to at Makerere) Kalema received not only tuition and stipend, but also talks from different speakers about a number of issues that would better his academic and career journey.

Kalema eventually graduated with a second class degree. He decided to start his self- employment by growing tomatoes. He felt he did not need to look for a white collar or "Big" job

because many of his fellow scholars were also doing similar small ventures and were not ashamed. Moreover, he had been told in a number of the talks he received at Makerere that his career did not necessarily have to follow the path prescribed by his degree. He reasoned…

"I have seen people like even my fellow (MasterCard) scholars, someone is loading matooke from Isingiro and is moving on trucks at night and brings them here to this side like Busega market and Kalerwe, so I said if now this one is doing that. And other people during our training tell us what you studied is actually not what you do…

He therefore used the money he had saved from his MasterCard stipend to rent land and plant tomatoes. He rented land in an area far away from his home village, partly because that is where he was able to acquire fertile land, but also for his later reasons; nobody knew him. Thus, he started his agribusiness venture, but unfortunately, the rains did not come on time, and he lost his entire investment. He did not want to go home empty handed and he stayed around the area looking for something to do while waiting for the situation to improve.

"...I'd gotten some good land that side and had prepared land because I was going to do tomatoes… but now the season changed. It rained between February and May.

Many farmers faced constraints because the season changed, people prepared land and others planted, but things did not come up. So I got stuck from there…that's where I said, "Now what next?" I had gone there just to farm; the good land was there because around Kampala and my home area I could not get good land for cultivation. So when the season failed I said, "Now let me begin life…I can't go back home!"

He got a job with a man in the neighbourhood who was making and selling snacks like chapatis and eggrolls, and earned between six and twelve thousand a day which catered for his feeding and other living expenses. This was a stopgap measure for his survival while he waited for things to change, as he explained:

"During those times when I was preparing my land, there was a man around there… he did not have workers so he could tell me, "Please stay for me here as I first finish this… sell for me this…". Because I was not busy all the time, we were just there waiting for rain. Later, when the (agriculture) business collapsed, I had to learn what he did…because I saw I could do nothing else by that time other than just first helping this man to give me something to eat. That's how I joined, but originally it was not in my mind.

When asked about how he deals with people's attitudes towards his current work, Kalema said he did not mind this because he knows that it is temporary, but no one in that neighbourhood knows that he is a graduate.

"People did not know about my background although I'm a graduate or what they did not know about me… and me I did not want to over expose off my academic levels or what… because now I thought people now can start judging you saying, "Now you see this man is a degree holder now look at the business he's doing". I did not get many people talk about me because they did not know me… I was new in the area, so I just kept doing something to earn a living for that time."

"I did not get scared that aahhh the project had collapsed and what I was doing according to my academic level because by that time

I said, "Now what next, let me just earn a living things will work out with time... yeah, I did not mind about my academic levels with what I'm doing now."

Narratives with a similar structure were developed for all seven interview transcripts. Summaries of the other six stories are presented below. All names used are pseudonyms. The full stories are provided in Appendix 1.

Leave Mathematics immediately: Mukasa's story

Mukasa wanted to do sciences, specifically mathematics at 'A' level. When he did his first Mathematics test, the teacher returned his test script with the words "LEAVE MATH IMMEDIATELY". Although embarrassed, he persevered and went on to perform well in mathematics.

Needing a father's blessing: Nantaba's story

Nantaba was raised by her mother after her parents separated. Nantaba's father disliked her because she had taken mother's side and constantly embarrassed her at school. She worked hard to pass her senior six so that she does not shame her mother who worked so hard to support her, but believed she might never do well in life because she did not have her father's blessing

Choosing overalls over suits: Muwanguzi's story

Muwanguzi learned entrepreneurship at the tender age of twelve to support himself and his brother. He missed several years of school, but still performed well at the secondary level, earning him a place to pursue a mechanical engineering course at Makerere University. When he graduated, he first got a white-collar job but soon quit starting his own company, much to the disappointment of his mother and girlfriend.

Do not get married before we benefit from you: Namuddu's story

Namuddu was raised by her maternal relatives and learned to motivate herself despite the negative views that they had about her. After graduating from Makerere University with a second-class upper degree, she defied her relatives and mother to get married to a man who was working as a driver rather than work so that her relatives could benefit from what

they viewed as their "investment" in her or be independent, as her mother thought she would be.

Earning my father's approval: Nalunga's story

Nalunga got pregnant and dropped out of school in S4. Her boyfriend started for her a salon and introduced her to the Youth Livelihood Programme. Now relatively successful in her business and has earned the approval of her father who was disappointed that she had wasted his money when she dropped out of school.

Prepare the youth before you support them: Sebudde's story

Sebudde obtained Youth Livelihood funds twice. First, he bought a cow which died. Next, he started an association of boda boda riders and is now a successful association chairman who mentors other younger youth in life and business. He insists that youth must be prepared before they are empowered.

To obtain insight into the social cultural and historical narratives that respondents pick on to construct their own life stories (Objective 1); the positions that respondents took on in relation to these narratives (Objective 2); the actions respondents took based on the narratives that framed their experiences (Objective 3); and the participants' outcomes on their empowerment programmes (Objective 4); I critically reviewed and deconstructed relevant sections of the transcripts and participant life stories (now structured according to Labov's narrative structure).

This is in contrast to taking them at face values. In this process, my point of view and knowledge of the social and cultural context were brought to bear on analysis and interpretation.

To facilitate this process, I carried out another level and type of narrative analysis, the dialogical narrative analysis, as explained below.

Dialogical Narrative Analysis

A dialogical narrative analysis (DNA) examines how a story is combined in terms of the narrative resources used by the teller to construct their own story (Smith, 2016). DNA goes beyond the narrative resources that the teller uses and also focuses on the effects of telling the story or what the stories do for the narrator (Smith, 2016; Frank, 2010a, 2012). However, the latter part is not the focus of the current research. In this case, DNA was specifically used to tease out the broad narrative resources in the respondents' socio-cultural and historical settings that they drew on to frame their experiences and tell their stories. Narratives in this research focus on the language that respondents use to frame their experiences, as narrative as language is representative of the meanings that are shared within a particular society (Kikooma, 2006).

Carrying out DNA typically begins with obtaining the story from available sources such as interview transcripts, and "coming to grips with

the story" (Smith, 2016, pg 220). This process, which gave rise to a complete narrative, was achieved using Labov's structure, as described in the previous section. The next step in creating a DNA which opens up the analytical dialogue involves *asking questions* (Smith, 2016*)* of the narrative. The questions that the researcher will use depend on the research questions they seek to answer. In the current research, because the aim was to tease out the narrative resources that respondents use to construct their own stories, I used specific resource questions (Smith, 2016) to further analyse these narratives. The resource questions used in the current research were as follows:

a) What resources do storytellers draw on to shape their experiences?
b) What narrative resources shape how their story is told?
c) How does the story reiterate, borrow or counter these narratives?

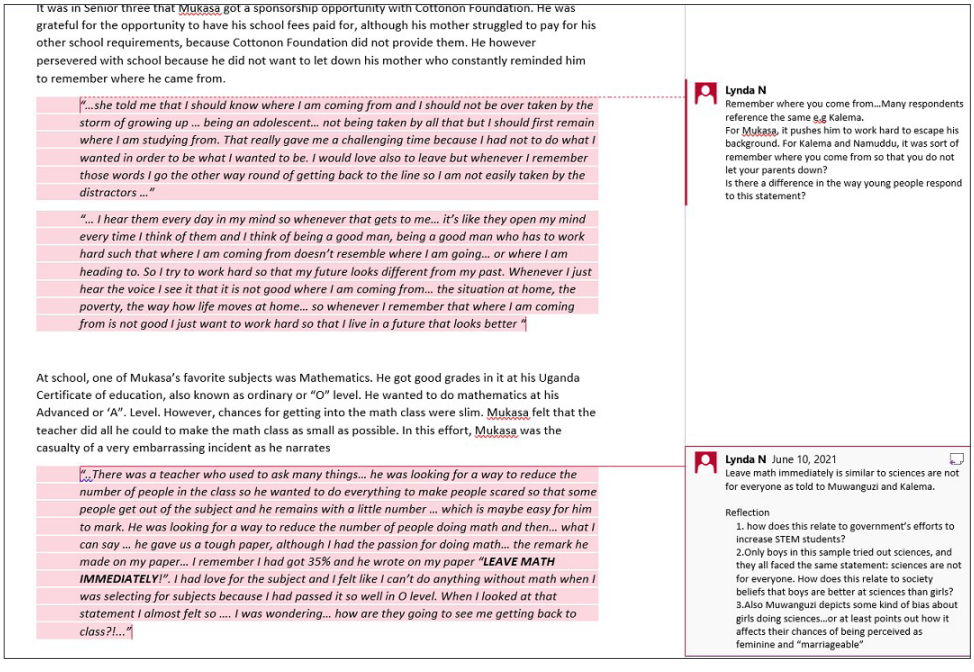
I used these questions to obtain responses to both research question one (What are the salient narratives within the social cultural and historical context of youth empowerment in Uganda?) and research question two (How do youth position themselves within these narratives?) of the current study.

The illustration in Figure 3 below is a screenshot showing the close reading and reflections done for each transcript while asking resource questions as per dialogical narrative analysis.

Based on the responses relevant to these research questions, I elicited themes from the participants' stories, as explained by Smith (2016). For example, in relation to the first research question on the narratives that participants used to frame their stories, multiple themes emerged, such as narratives of hope, resilience, success, and narratives related to validation.

According to the process described by Smith (2016), the next step would be to summarise the narrative trajectories that participants' stories took; were they stories of progression, decline, or stability? However, this summary does not meet the needs of the current research, which seeks to understand the narratives of participants at a deeper level.

Figure 3: Illustration: Asking resource questions



Instead of focusing on the narrative trajectories of the stories, I paid more attention to the themes emerging from the participants' stories. I subjected these multiple themes to what Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) refer to as "Subsuming particulars into the general" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 250). Miles et al. (2014) note that it is sometimes necessary to cluster together smaller themes into a more abstract and wider encompassing concept based on the research questions one is trying to answer. As such, I subsumed the multiple themes coming out of the narratives that participants used to frame their experiences and tell their stories into larger categories, including narratives of Resilience, Identity and Validation. Figure Four illustrates and summarises the analysis process from the structural narrative analysis, dialogical narrative analysis, and obtaining major themes subsuming particular subthemes into more general themes.

A summary of results obtained from the narrative inquiry

Figure 5 provides a visual summary of the major themes and subthemes that emerged from the narratives and stories presented by the respondents. The major themes were resilience, identity, and validation.

Figure 4: Data analysis summary

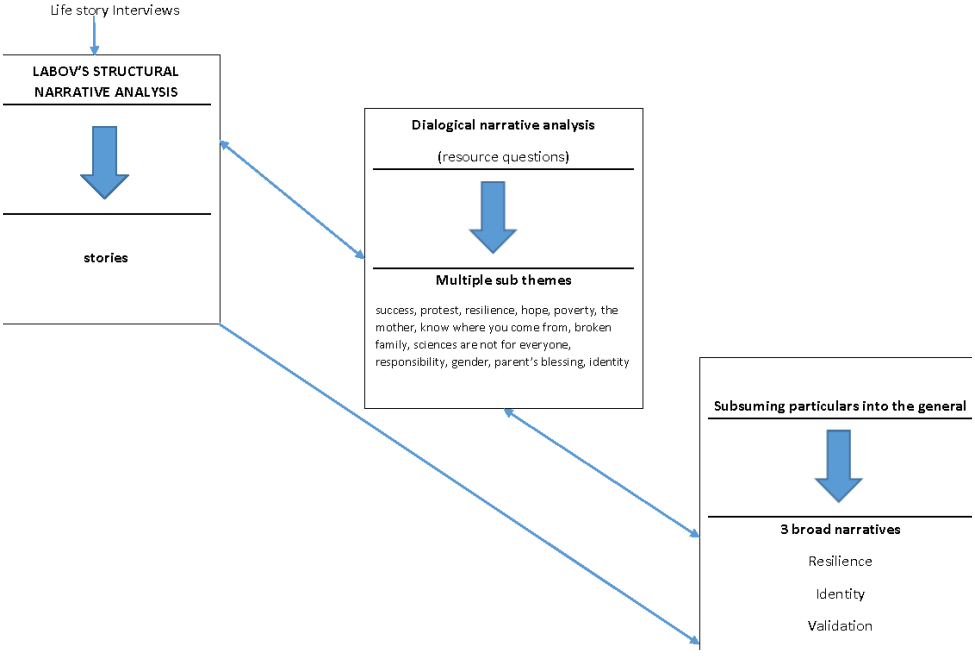
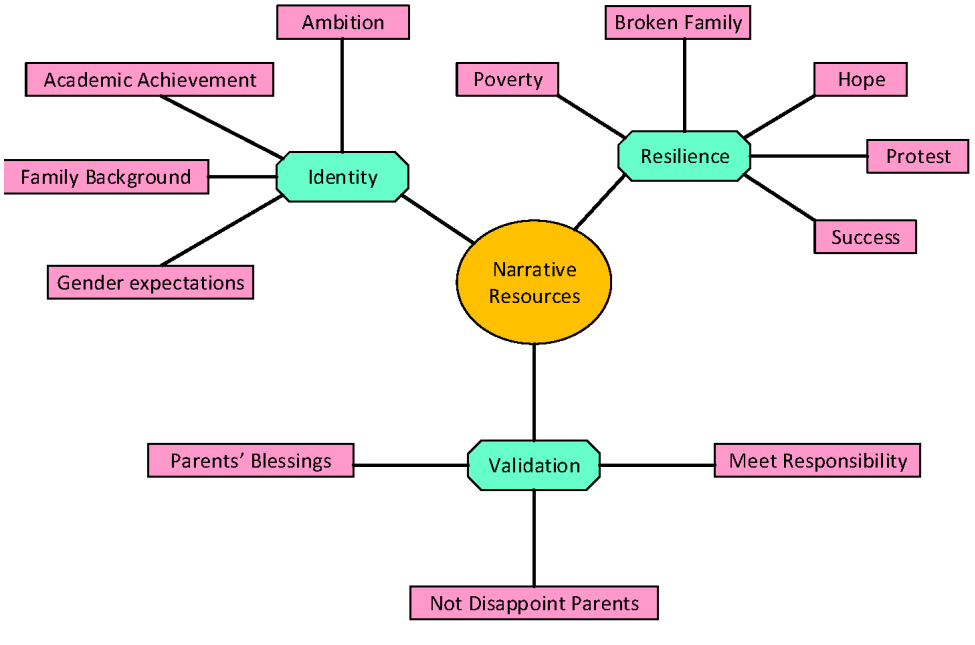


Figure 5: Themes and sub-themes of narratives resources that respondents use from the youth empowerment context in Uganda to tell their own stories



In the resilience theme, coming from difficult circumstances such as poverty and broken families, keeping up hope, and protesting against some negative voices in their communities, the participants finally tell stories of success from their point of view and from the point of view of significant others. It is important to remember that in looking at the youths' mindsets in Buganda, notions of resilience should not be discounted.

In the identity theme, participants used the identity narrative to construct their stories, picking on aspects such as their ambition, academic achievement, family background, and perceived gender expectations to describe their sense of self. The narratives were interlinked, and these four sub-themes were woven together in the participants' stories. This is consistent with Bakhtin's view that voices influence and make up the human mind. Bakhtin (1986) states that individuals, in all their thinking, are influenced by a multiplicity of voices that they are constantly in dialogue with. The concept of voice and voices runs counter to theories of mind and mindset that view the human mind as the domain of a single individual, such as the cognitive view of mind (Gollwitzer, 2012), the growth versus fixed mindset theory (Dweck, 2008), and the mind theory advanced by Park (2017) which underlies the Mind Education Programme in Uganda.

The theme of the narratives of validation in this study is how participants use narrative resources that portray their need for approval by the people around them, such as parents and the community. Validation, resilience, and identity are all narrative resources that participants picked on from the narratives available to them from the socio-cultural setting contained within the youth empowerment context. I now turn to how the participants positioned themselves within these narratives in the youth empowerment context.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described the methodological choices I made during a narrative inquiry into the question of mindset among youth, starting with the ontological and epistemological commitments I made. The qualitative research design procedures used for the study included participant selection and data collection procedures, validity and reliability measures, data management, and analysis. The analysis procedures I used were those specifically recommended for narrative analysis by Lyons and Coyle (2015), because I deemed them appropriate to the interpretivist nature of the study. However, in the data analysis procedure, I also borrowed from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) to help tease out the broader themes in the participants' narratives.

The broader level themes and their specific sub-themes are the narrative resources that the youth respondents used to tell their stories represent the narratives that exist within their society and are, in essence, a window

into the socio-cultural fabric of their society. The focus on language used by the youth is consistent with the theorisation that the language and words people choose to use mirror the socio-cultural fabric of their society. According to the Bakhtinian theory of mind (1986); the views that people present do not spring from their own minds but are instead adapted from existing narratives within their context. As such, it can be expected that when the participants told their stories, they were in effect ventriloquenting (Volosinov, 1986), those views or narrative resources that are available to them through their socio-cultural networks. The narratives presented by the participants, therefore, are by this logic the narratives that are strong within the socio-cultural context surrounding youth empowerment in Uganda. Smith (2016) explains the strengths of narrative inquiry and the use of stories as having the ability to honour the fidelity of human lives in and across time. Smith explained that stories help individuals make sense of, organise, rewrite, and communicate their past, present, and even their understanding of possible futures. The narrative analysis approach used in this study has the potential to explore and reveal the contextual fabric of society, culture, and other people that shape the lives and stories of individuals. It is this special understanding of people in the social and cultural context that distinguishes it from mainstream psychology (Schiff, 2013). In a similar manner, this understanding of youth mindsets from a narrative approach is a more contextually useful interrogation than existing theories of mindset in mainstream psychology because it situates youth mindsets within socially constructed narratives.

A useful working definition of the mindset emerges from this method of inquiry. Instead of looking at mindset as an individualised and essentially static mental frame, that guides the individual (Dweck, 2006), I describe mindset as

"A collection of socially constructed narratives that one calls upon to understand or engage with any given situation. The individual continuously positions and repositions himself or herself or is positioned by others within these narratives. They may protest or defy the narratives, internalise or modify these community narratives, with varying results on their decision-making and choices, behaviours and ultimately life outcomes" (Nakalawa, 2021).

As a recommendation for practice, it is vital that youth empowerment programmes take a step back and view their youth beneficiaries in context, taking into consideration their socio-cultural context and the narratives that exist within these contexts. In addition, mindset change programmes need to build in reflection sessions on salient narratives and voices within the youth's socio-cultural environment, to know which narratives need to be targeted for change, in order to promote "mind-set change".

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