Identifying empowering organizational characteristics from Uweza's Art Gallery

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Abstract

A case study on an empowering art program in Nairobi was undertaken to specifically examine perceived empowering aspects of organizations in developing contexts. This research applies a theoretical model of empowering organizational characteristics by studying a sample of members of a Kenyan art gallery. Through semi-structured written and telephone interviews, the empowering organizational characteristics were discussed by nine members of the organization. Data were analyzed deductively and in three phases. Results suggest that the majority of the participants perceived most of the empowering organizational characteristics as applicable on the Art Gallery. Moreover, the findings imply that additional empowering organizational characteristics, such as providing materials and support from the office, might be applicable for an organization in developing contexts. Future research should test the current findings on large samples of Uweza program participants in order to confirm the applicability of the empowering characteristics and provide with generalizable results.

Keywords: qualitative research, empowering organizational characteristics, perceived psychological empowerment, urban slum youth, art program.

Samenvatting

Een casusonderzoek naar een empowerende kunstinterventie in Nairobi werd uitgevoerd om specifiek de empowerment-aspecten van organisaties in ontwikkelingscontexten te onderzoeken. Dit onderzoek past het theoretische model van empowering organizational characteristics toe door een steekproef van leden van een Keniaanse kunstinterventie te bestuderen. Door middel van semigestructureerde schriftelijke en telefonische interviews werden de empowering organizational characteristics besproken door negen leden van de organisatie. Gegevens werden deductief en in drie fasen geanalyseerd. De resultaten suggereren dat de meerderheid van de deelnemers het merendeel van de empowering organizational characteristics herkende en als van toepassing beschouwde op de Art Gallery. Daarnaast impliceren de bevindingen dat aanvullende empowering organizational characteristics, zoals het verstrekken van materiaal en ondersteuning vanuit het kantoor, van toepassing kunnen zijn op een organisatie in het ontwikkelingscontexten. Toekomstig onderzoek zou de huidige bevindingen moeten testen onder grote steekproeven van deelnemers van de Uweza-programma's, om de toepasbaarheid van de empowering organizational characteristics te bevestigen en om generaliseerbare resultaten te verschaffen.

Trefwoorden: kwalitatief onderzoek, empowering organizational characteristics, waargenomen psychologische empowerment, urban slum youth, kunstinterventie.

Introduction

Kibera, an area located in the south of Nairobi, is an illegal settlement and one of the largest slums in Africa, with a population of around 170,070 people (Government of Kenya, 2009). Even though the land upon which Kibera stands is owned by the Kenyan government, the government does not officially acknowledge the settlement. As a consequence, no basic services, school, clinics, running water or lavatories are publicly provided (Majale, 2008; Mutisya & Yarime, 2011; Zulu et al., 2011). The majority of the Kibera population live in poverty and earn less than 1 dollar per day (People of Kibera, 2010). One study showed that Kibera residents see income generation as the most desired development (Cronin & Guthrie, 2010). Despite these living conditions, the people of Kibera make the most of their lives and experience a strong sense of community (Uweza Foundation, n.d.).

Besides the inherently present resilience and social coherence within the Kiberan community, multiple Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are active in the area. One such a NGO is the Uweza Foundation, which provides opportunities for empowerment for local children and youth (Uweza Foundation, 2019a). The relevance of Uweza's mission becomes clear when taking into account a meta-analysis of house-hold economy studies in African communities. It found that increasing poverty and conflict are related to a decrease in social coherence and social capital, which in turn leads to increasing vulnerability and food insecurity (Misselhorn, 2005). As Uweza aims to guide Kiberan youth to paths that might lead to earning their own income, it fills the gap a lot of Kibera residents face.

One of the programs Uweza offers, is the Uweza Art Gallery. Its goal is to empower Kiberan youth through providing them with the possibility and the materials to create their own art. The art becomes available for purchase and, once sold, 60% of the sales goes directly to the artist and 40% goes to sustainment of the Art Gallery. When artists are younger than eighteen, the money goes to their educational fees. Older artists have become self-sufficient thanks to the profits of their sold art (Uweza Foundation, 2019b).

Regarding empowerment, a distinction is made in literature between psychological empowerment and organizational empowerment. Psychological empowerment refers to empowerment at an individual basis, whereas organizational empowerment refers to an organization that empowers the larger community (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). The definition of psychological empowerment is the process through which individuals achieve control over their lives (Zimmerman et al., 1992). This kind of empowerment can further be characterized by an intrapersonal dimension, which refers to: motivation to exert control,

perceived competence and control and self-efficacy (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992). In 2019, a study was undertaken on the definition of psychological empowerment according to participants of several Uweza Foundation programs. According to these participants, empowerment can be defined as "a process of development and actualization of goals" (Alajaji, 2019, p. 2). When connecting this definition of empowerment to literature, it seems to correspond with the intrapersonal dimension of psychological empowerment as defined by Zimmerman et al. (1992).

As the definition of empowerment is established, other questions rise. One of them concerns the effective empowerment aspects of the Uweza programs. As stated before, when referring to empowerment in the context of organizations, the concept of organizational empowerment comes into frame. Organizational empowerment can be further divided into two kinds: an organization that is empowered or an organization that is empowering. Respectively, this means that an organization is externally focused and aims to empower a community as a whole, by (amongst others) improving quality of life and promoting citizen participation (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). On the contrary, an empowering organization aims to bring about psychological empowerment among its members and thus underlines internal development (Hardiman & Segal, 2003; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). As Uweza's Art Gallery is a community organization and aims to empower its participants, it can be categorized as an empowering organization. Subsequently, it is relevant to examine more precisely which factors lead to empowerment, as perceived by the members of the Art Gallery themselves. In a study undertaken in Zimbabwe, marginalized youth stated that showcasing their artwork in a gallery and marketing it, has empowered them (Chiwara, 2016). Since the Art Gallery is an art program and Kiberan youth can be considered a marginalized group (Kyobutungi, Ziraba, Ezeh, & Yé, 2008), this case study may find similarities.

The relevance and value of this study consists of multiple facets. First, the Uweza Foundation will benefit from the study, in the sense that it might provide the NGO with new insights, as well as with outlines for creating effective programs. This in turn could benefit the Kiberan community, as earning income is one of their highest priorities (Cronrin & Guthrie, 2010) and the programs are aimed at income generation. Second, as extensive research hasn't been done on this population so far, this study will provide insights into the empowerment experiences of Kiberan youth. This will result in an expansion of knowledge about this population. Finally, the results might also be of use for the design or improvement of other empowerment programs in similar contexts.

In order to pinpoint organizational characteristics of empowering community organizations, Maton and Salem's (1995a) framework can be applied. In this framework four empowering organizational characteristics (EOC) are distinguished. The EOC framework is displayed schematically in Table 1 (Maton & Salem, 1995b).

Table 1

Empowering organizational characteristics

Group-based belief system	Opportunity role structure	Support system	Leadership
Inspires growth	Pervasive	Encompassing	Inspirational
Salient goals	Many roles	Multiple domains	Vision
Clear means	Multiple levels	Multiple sources	Role model
Strengths-based	Highly accessible	Peer-based	Talented
All have capability	Varying demands	Provide & receive	Interpersonally
Member-as-resource	Encouraged	Peer models	Organizationally
Beyond self	Multifunctional	Sense of community	Shared
Group mission	Use and develop skills	Within setting	Multiple leaders
Beyond group	Varying responsibility	Beyond setting	Open to expansion
			Committed
			To setting
			To members

Note. Reprinted from "Organizational Characteristics of Empowering Community Settings: A Multiple Case Study Approach," by K. I. Maton and D. A. Salem, 1995, *American Journal of Community Psychology, 23,* p. 638.

The first characteristic of the EOC framework is a group-based belief system, which is defined by an ideology and values that are shared by members of an organization. A group-based belief system is supported by other studies examining empowerment in organizations. They found that, amongst others, a shared philosophy is a supportive factor for empowerment (Gutierrez, GlenMaye, & DeLois, 1995) and that there is a strong positive association between empowerment and perceiving oneself part of an inclusive and focused group effort with which one identifies and to which one commits (McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman, & Mitchell, 1995; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990). A group-based belief system consists of three dimensions: the community organization is inspiring of growth, strengths-based and based beyond the self. The growth-inspiring dimension challenges and motivates members to improve their skills. Such a belief system is supported by clearly defined goals and means that motivate members to achieve those goals. The strengths-based

dimension refers to the encouragement of people to feel and use their own strength to resolve problems (Maton & Salem, 1995a; Suler, 1984). On the one hand, it emphasizes that all members are inherently capable of achieving their goals and on the other hand, it refers to each member embodying a valuable resource. Lastly, the third dimension, based beyond the self, concerns the encouragement of members to view themselves as part of a larger humanity-based group mission. It holds that the group has a mission and that the members are part of something larger than the group itself (Maton & Salem, 1995a).

The second characteristic refers to an opportunity role structure. This is defined as the availability and configuration of roles within a setting which provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to develop, grow and participate. Several recent studies found that individuals who perceive a stronger opportunity role structure tended to have higher perceived effectiveness with regard to coping with life challenges (Hughey, Peterson, Lowe, & Oprescu, 2008; Gilmore Powell & Peterson, 2014). This characteristic is split into three dimensions: pervasiveness, high accessibility and multi-functionality. Pervasiveness of the role structure refers to the availability of a large number of roles on multiple levels of the organization (Maton & Salem, 1995a). The availability of multiple, rotating roles for members is associated with greater levels of psychological empowerment (Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams-Leavitt, 1995). By exercising different roles, individuals learn how to achieve their goals by using their skills (Peterson & Reid, 2003). The high accessibility of the role structure is defined by the varying levels of skill, responsibility and self-confidence they require. It is also defined by the encouragement given off by the organization in order to make the members take on other roles. Finally, the third dimension, multi-functionality, touches upon the possibilities for members to learn, use and develop their skills (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990), as well as learn from the exercise of varying responsibility (Maton & Salem, 1995a).

Support system, the third empowering organizational characteristic, refers to social support resources within an organization that improve members' quality of life and their coping skills when confronted with stressful life events. Poor functioning with regard to life skills can be seen as a result of social structure and lack of resources which make it impossible for the existing competencies to operate (Rappaport, 1981). The support system contributes to empowerment in two ways. First, people lacking power in society gain support to deal with current disempowering conditions in their lives (Maton & Salem, 1995a; Speer, et al., 1995). Second, individuals are provided with the essential support to handle challenges and stress that accompany the process of increasing control over one's life and of achieving

life goals (Kroeker, 1995; Maton & Salem, 1995a; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990). The support system characteristic is split up in three dimensions, with the first being encompassing. A support system is defined as encompassing when there are many sources of support for multiple domains available. The second dimension, peer-based, concerns the given support of members of the organization to their peers as well as the received support from their peers. Besides, it refers to the notion that other members can serve as peer models. Lastly, a sense of community is described as the psychological experience of feeling connected to other individuals both within and beyond the setting (Maton & Salem, 1995a).

Finally, the fourth characteristic is leadership. This refers to inspirational, talented, and committed individuals (Maton, 2008; Maton & Salem, 1995a), who have achieved goals which motivates members to take control over their lives and thus, leads to empowerment (Peterson & Speer, 2000; Maton, 1988; Maton & Salem, 1995a; Minkler, Thompson, Bell and Rose, 2001; Mok, 2004). Having a leader may come across as an aspect that increases inequality, yet one study showed that a leader should be in control to rule out influences that bring inequality naturally (Gruber & Trickett, 1987). This characteristic is divided into four dimensions: inspirational, talented, shared and committed. A leader is inspirational when they are able to motivate through their vision and serve as a role model. Talented refers to the skills of leaders on an interpersonal and organizational level. Shared leadership can be defined as leadership that is open to expansion and does not lie solely with one person. Lastly, a committed leader alludes to a leader who is devoted to the growth of the members and the organization (Maton & Salem, 1995a).

Though substantive, the EOC framework is based on community interventions situated solely in at the United States of America (USA) (Maton & Salem, 1995a; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). The USA could be classified as a WEIRD country (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). This refers to a Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic country. Kenya is not a western or rich country (The World Bank, 2019), and thus, is currently not considered a WEIRD country. This makes it is interesting to examine to what extent the Art Gallery members perceive the empowering organizational characteristics as relevant in their specific context. Moreover, by undertaking the current research a broader extent of human diversity and not only the Western world, is recognized (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). In order to determine to what extent the characteristics are relevant in the setting of a slum in a developing country, a case study will be undertaken on the Art Gallery in Kibera.

Current research

The current study examined the Art Gallery's empowering organizational characteristics as perceived by the members. The research question is: "To what extent do the Art Gallery members perceive the Art Gallery to contain empowering organizational characteristics?" Based on Maton and Salem's (1995a) framework, the following sub-questions were formulated: (1) "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery facilitate a group-based belief system?" (2) "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery provide its members with the opportunity to take on different roles?" (3) "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery promote social a support system that is encompassing, peer-based and provide them with a sense of community?" (4) "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery cater its participants with inspirational, talented, shared and committed leadership?" To ensure a broad comprehension of all the empowerment (organizational) aspects according to the members, the fifth research question was formulated as follows: "What are other aspects about the Art Gallery that make its members feel empowered?"

Method

The current research is an exploratory case study aimed to document and interpret the attitudes of Art Gallery participants. As the main goal is to find meaning and provide qualitative findings regarding the effective organizational characteristics of the Art Gallery, individual interviews were conducted.

Participants

The population ($n = 57$) consists of individuals who are a member from the Uweza Art Gallery. Because of the data collection from a distance, getting consent from the minor individuals and their parents was not feasible. Therefore, of the population, fourteen individuals were purposively sampled because they had reached adulthood and could give their informed consent. The respondents were recruited through personal contact via a mobile application. After fourteen individuals were approached multiple times, five of them did not participate and did not give a statement of reason. The final sample consisted of nine individuals aged 18 - 24. The researcher was familiar with six of the nine participants prior to the research but assumes that this did not influence the findings of the current research. The participants had been affiliated with the Art Gallery for different lengths of periods: two of them for eight years, four of them for four years and two of them for one year. The data was collected via a telephone connection, a mobile application and word processing software in

April and May 2020, in Utrecht, the Netherlands. All participants have signed an informed consent form, agreeing to save and utilize data anonymously.

Materials and Procedure

In total, nine respondents were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of open questions only. The questions were based on the empowering organizational characteristics framework (Maton & Salem, 1995a). Not all interviews were per telephone because of internet connection issues. Seven interviews were conducted per phone call and three interviews were conducted through written means. The interviews via phone were held for 20 to 35 minutes, with an average interview time of 30 minutes. The written interviews were employed through Word. Once filled in, the written interviews were followed up by in-depth questions via a mobile application. The interviews were audio recorded using QuickTime Player and transcribed using Pages. The audio files, transcripts and consent forms were saved in a secured storage.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed deductively, with Maton and Salem's (1995a) empowering organizational characteristics as backdrop. The data were analyzed in three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During the first stage, all statements that were regarded as associated with the EOC and statements that referred to empowering (organizational) characteristics that fell outside of the EOC were given a code. In the second stage, a code tree based on the EOC was employed and a separate branch for other organizational empowerment characteristics was set up. In the third stage, the codes were selected and appointed to their respective branch, based on items of previous studies on empowering organizational characteristics (Gilmore Powell & Peterson, 2014; Maton & Salem, 1995a).

Results

The results of the subquestions are subsequently presented in this section. To ensure clarity of the results, they will be presented in summation in line with the empowering organizational characteristics (Maton & Salem, 1995a). Table 2 displays the number of participants that commented on each characteristic, followed by the number of statements made about the characteristic.

Table 2

Empowering Organizational Characteristics

Characteristics	n	Count
Group-based belief system		
Inspires growth	6	9
Strengths-based	6	12
Beyond self	4	5
Total		26
Opportunity role structure		
Pervasive	6	8
Highly accessible	3	6
Multifunctional	7	8
Total		22
Support system		
Encompassing	1	1
Peer-based	9	12
Sense of community	9	12
Total		25
Leadership		
Inspirational	7	9
Talented	7	11
Shared	4	5
Committed	3	3
Total		28

The additional empowering organizational characteristics as formulated by the participants are displayed in Table 3. Again, the n refers to the number of participants that talked about the aspect and Total refers to the amount of statements made about the aspect.

Table 3

Additional Empowering Organizational Characteristics

Characteristics	n	Total
Providing materials	4	2
Giving back to the community	1	2
Getting support from the head of the office	1	1
Flexible opening hours	1	2

Group based belief system

The following section entails the analysis of responses that are connected to the first sub-question: "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery facilitate a group-based belief system?" Most of the respondents found that attending the Art Gallery improved their skills, which is an assertation that belongs to the first dimension, '*inspires-growth*'. With regard to salient goals, a couple of respondents stated that the goal of the Art Gallery is sharpening artistic skills and nurturing talent. None of the respondents commented on the clear means aspect. Moving on to the second dimension, the *all-have-capability* aspect, one respondent stated that every artist at the gallery has their own niche. This notion was endorsed by a few other respondents. The other aspect, member as resource, was affirmed by all respondents. As one respondent explained: "It's always about learning and others learning from you". This respondent demonstrated how learning is an interactive process and utilizes other artists as resource. Finally, the third dimension refers to a belief system *beyond self.* The first aspect, beyond group, was not elaborated on by the respondents. The presence of a group mission was endorsed by the majority of the respondents. To illustrate, one respondent commented: "We share a mission of having a better and a brighter future by nurturing our talents".

Opportunity role structure

In this section the results of the second sub-question: "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery provide its members with the opportunity to take on different roles?" are presented. The first dimension is *pervasive*, with the first aspect many roles. The response to this aspect was equivocal, as it had varied statements from the respondents. Some respondents stated there are no specific roles in the Art Gallery, while others argued that everyone played a different role every day. Regarding the second aspect, multiple levels, the

minority of the respondents commented on roles being available on different levels. One respondent stated: "At any time, I can take the role and perform all the duties as expected". Regarding the *high accessibility* of the different roles, one respondent stated that he was challenged to correct children in their behavior, which is associated with roles with varying demands. On the second aspect, encouraged, contradictory notions were expressed, as one respondent found it hard to take on different roles because of the Gallery's schedule, while another respondent found it easy to transition between different roles. Continuing with *multifunctionality*, the majority of the respondents affirmed the use and development of skills - aspect. One respondent remarked: "You practice a lot of patience skills when it comes to teaching children." One respondent reflected on the exercise of responsibility and explained that taking on different roles helped him as an artist to grow responsible.

Support system

The third subquestion, "According to its members, to what extent does the Art Gallery promote social a support system that is encompassing, peer-based and provides them with a sense of community?", will be explored in this section. Regarding *encompassing* social support resources, one respondent explained that when she needed it, her peers gave her support in several domains. She stated: "They played a role in comforting me and helping me with financial aid". This statement relates to the multiple domains-aspect. The other aspect, multiple sources, did not emerge from the data. Concerning *peer-based* social support resources, the respondents' experiences were not straightforward. Most respondents saw their peers as role models, yet one respondent explained that others may not be behaving like role models outside of the art gallery. In relation to *providing and receiving support* from peers, the majority of respondents stated that they both felt supported by and gave support to their peers at the Art Gallery. Lastly, some of the respondents stated they experienced a *sense of community* within the Art Gallery, as they share a lot with each other. Concerning a sense of community beyond the Art Gallery, most of the respondents felt this aspect was extended to Kibera, the geographical area the Art Gallery is located in. One respondent supported this by stating: "The community gives full support to art, because it is a good direction to the young, to youth and upcoming artists".

Leadership

The fourth subquestion "According to its (former) participants, to what extent does the Art Gallery cater its participants with inspirational and committed leadership?" will be discussed in the following section. This subquestion contains four dimensions, with the first being *inspirational* leadership. Most of the respondents stated that the Art Gallery's leader is

an inspiration to them and could lead as an example. Besides, some respondents stated that the leader acts as an example to the members, which relates to the aspect of role model. On the other aspect, vision, one respondent stated the leader of The Art Gallery as someone with focus and a strong mission. Continuing with *talented* leadership, the majority of the respondents felt like the leader was interpersonally talented. As one respondent explained: "You have to understand someone else who isn't able to learn, first... Take him slowly. Others learn very fast, so you have to understand people". Organizational talent was not discussed by the participants. The third dimension entails *shared* leadership in the Art Gallery. One respondent commented on the openness to expansion, stating that the leadership roles are divided among the members. Touching on the multiple leaders aspect, one respondent argued that there are two leaders at the Art Gallery, whereas three respondents remarked that there is one individual in charge with leading the Art Gallery. Lastly, concerning *committed* leadership, one respondent remarked that the leader is hard-working and brave. Another respondent stated that the Art Gallery leader is transparent in his actions, something that touches upon the commitment to members - aspect. Considering the commitment to setting, one respondent stated that the leader is familiar with the materials used at the Art Gallery.

Other empowering organizational characteristics

The following section entails the last sub-question "What are other aspects about the Art Gallery that make its members feel empowered?" and comprises of other organizational characteristics that the respondents perceive as empowering. Multiple respondents expressed that the Art Gallery provided them with materials, which enabled them to learn and develop themselves. Some of the respondents felt that giving back to the community empowered them. One respondent felt empowered by the Art Gallery flexible opening's hours, allowing him to work on art at the time of his choice. Finally, one respondent felt empowered by the support and supply he gets from the head of the (Uweza) office.

Discussion

The objective of this research was to examine Uweza's Art Gallery with respect to its empowering organizational characteristics, as described in Maton and Salem's framework (1995a). In order to take into account cultural differences and to create a holistic view of the empowering characteristics of the Art Gallery, additional characteristics (outside of the EOC framework), as perceived by the respondents, were identified. The current research focused on an organization located in a developing country, in a context very different to the ones studied before. These differences lie in (amongst others) a higher crime rate, a lower average

income of the members and a lack of material resources (Kyobutungi et al., 2008). These factors make the findings from the current research a valuable expansion to academic knowledge on the topic. Looking back at the distinction between psychological empowerment, empowered organizations and empowering organizations as discussed in the introduction, it is evident that based on the current findings, the Art Gallery is an empowering organization. Subsequently, its goal is to empower individuals psychologically.

In summary, all four empowering organizational characteristics surfaced from the data, to a greater or lesser extent. With regards to the first subquestion, concerning the group-based belief system characteristic, it appears that the majority of the respondents found attending the Art Gallery growth-inspiring. Moreover, this characteristic was also confirmed by respondents in the sense that they expressed that the Art Gallery can be characterized by its strengths-based focus. The second subquestion, which refers to the presence of an opportunity role structure, was also confirmed by the respondents, though less extensively than the other characteristics. The pervasiveness and multifunctionality of the Art Gallery's opportunity role structure were the two dimensions that emerged the from the data most frequently. Pertaining to the third characteristic, the support system, two of the dimensions were strongly referred to by the majority of the respondents. These were the peers-based support system and the sense of community within the setting of the Art Gallery. The last subquestion was reflected on the most frequently by the respondents. It was stated that they found their leader inspirational, a role model and talented both interpersonally and organizationally. Shared leadership was less contemplated on. According to Maton and Salem (1995a), shared leadership is a dimension of an empowering organizational characteristic and is defined by openness to expansion. However, as the leaders at Uweza receive salary for their work, it would make sense that this role isn't easily transmitted, as this would require shifts in payment regulations.

The aspects *clear means, a belief system beyond group* and *multiple sources of support system* did not emerge from the data. This means that these aspects were not explicitly commented on by the participants in the current research. However, because these aspects were not discussed, that does not necessarily imply that these aspects are not present at the Art Gallery. The findings call for a more thorough examination of the aspects that were not reflected on by the respondents.

The first additional empowering characteristic that emerged from the data was *providing materials*. Some respondents argued that the fact that the Art Gallery provided them with materials, enabled them to create art. Thus, through providing materials, some participants perceived empowerment. Providing materials is not mentioned in the EOC

framework. This could be explained through the fact that art requires more (expensive) materials than the organizations analyzed by Maton and Salem (1995a). Another explanation could be found in the context of the Art Gallery. It's located in the slum Kibera, where the majority of the residents earn less than one dollar per day (People of Kibera, 2010). Providing individuals with material support has been associated with empowerment (Sousa & Rodriques, 2012). Providing members with materials is aligned with psychological empowerment, as it leads to an empowered individual (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). As *providing materials* is a physical and tangible aspect, it is argued that it does not fit within the EOC framework. After all, the framework focuses solely on intra- and interpersonal aspects. If the EOC framework would be expanded with a fifth characteristic that focusses on material and practical aspects, *providing materials* could be ranked under this characteristic.

Another empowering characteristic that emerged from the data, was *support of the head of the office*. Maton and Salem's (1995a) framework does not mention such an un-egalitarian role structure. This might be related to the less egalitarian community that it's a cultural aspect of the Art Gallery's context. Since this aspect refers to received support from a higher level of the organization, it could be added to the support system characteristic.

Furthermore, *giving back to the community* was named by several respondents as an empowering aspect of the Art Gallery. It seems this aspect could be added to the group-based belief system characteristic, as it involves a goal that extends beyond the group. However, this aspect could also be associated with the empowered organizational characteristics (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), as the aspect is an example of an *extraorganizational* characteristic. This term refers to actions taken by an organization to affect the larger environment of which an organization is a component. In this case, the Art Gallery affects the Kiberan community.

The last additional aspect that emerged from the data are the Art Gallery's *flexible opening hours*. Again, this aspect does not fall under inter- or intrapersonal aspects and thus does not belong within the EOC framework in its current form. However, as discussed earlier, if the framework would be expanded with a fifth characteristic that concentrates on physical and practical aspects of an empowering organization, this aspect could also be added to it. In general, these aspects should be studied more precisely by designing a research question that quantitatively tests the validity of *providing materials*, *support of the head of the office*, *giving back to the community* and *flexible opening hours*, among a bigger sample of Uweza Art Gallery members.

This study also explored to what extent a theoretical framework based on organizations located in a different context was applicable to the context of the Uweza Art

Gallery. Despite the fact that some of the EOC aspects where not discussed by the respondents and some additional characteristics surfaced, it appears that Maton and Salem's (1995) framework is largely applicable. When taking into account the current findings, most of the empowering organizational characteristics were applicable on the Art Gallery as an organization. However, the findings do call for a more precise identification of the characteristics that did not fit the EOC framework. The assumption that this case study would find similarities to a study undertaken in Zimbabwe, was not affirmed by the data. In that study marginalized youth stated that they felt empowered through showcasing their artwork in a gallery and marketing it (Chiwara, 2016).

This research knows several strengths. First, it focused on a population in a context that has barely been studied before. It therefore provides new insights and fills a knowledge gap. Second, this research has generated findings regarding the empowering aspects of an art intervention. These findings could form the base for new interventions and further development of existing interventions. There were some limitations tied to this research. First, because of the small sample size, the results may not be generalized to a larger group. Thus, the results should be interpreted with care. However, because the participants were never before interviewed on the topic of empowering organizational characteristics, the results did generate important leads for future research. Second, the interviews were not undertaken in real life, but orally, via phone call and written, via a mobile application. The research was supposed to take place in physical world, in the context of the Art Gallery. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the investigator was forced to leave the location and to resort to taking interviews written or via phone calls. As a consequence, three of the nine interviews were written, which did not facilitate a fluent dialogue. The written interviews led to more compact, superficial responses and did not allow for the investigator to go deeply into the experiences of the respondents. Afterwards, several follow-up questions were posed by the investigator on a later point in time, which did not provide a lot of data. This could be explained through the loss of momentum. Third, a qualitative method was employed. However, it could be argued that it could have also been combined with a survey. This would be justifiable, as the research is deductive of nature. Then again, a sample of nine respondents would not have put much weight in the scale and might have been difficult to deduct conclusions of. Also, undertaking qualitative research allowed the respondents to respond elaborately and as broadly as they desired, leading to a more richness of data. Lastly, based on the considerable amount of time the researcher has spent at the Art Gallery, it can be argued that some aspects are present in the Art Gallery, but that these did not emerge from the data.

In future research, observations made by the researcher could be utilized in the topic list, in order to obtain a more holistic image of The Art Gallery's empowering organizational characteristics.

The findings of the current research hold several tentative implications for professional practice. First, because the leader of the Art Gallery was highly viewed as inspirational and talented, it seems evident that this aspect should be given attention when aiming to improve an empowering intervention or designing one. When selecting a leader, it is thus recommended that an organization pays attention to the qualities (i.e. inspirational and talented) of the potential candidates. Second, the support system emerged as a characteristic that was prominently present in the Art Gallery. Thus, when designing or improving an empowering intervention, organizations should attempt to introduce a peer-based support system and strengthening the sense of community among the members. This could be facilitated by encouraging members to exchange contact details and stay in contact between meetings (Maton & Salem, 1995a). Third, the Art Gallery was characterized by a group-based belief system that inspires members to grow and is strengths-based. Again, this characteristic should be incorporated into the improvement and design of empowering interventions. Organizations could go about this by emphasizing the program's goals and approaching each member as a powerful individual (Spreitzer, 1995). Lastly, providing materials which enable individuals to undertake action (Sousa & Rodriques, 2012), seems to be a suitable strategy to empower people who have little resources themselves. This aspect is especially relevant in the context of an (urban) slum, where financial standards are low.

Regarding future research, it is recommended that the necessity of material support for an empowering organization are studied through a survey conducted of a larger sample of the Art Gallery members. Furthermore, the findings of this study with regard to Maton and Salem's (1995a) framework should also be tested through conducting a survey of a bigger sample of Art Gallery members. As psychological empowerment is a process and involves individual development (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), a longitudinal research design would also be suitable as it allows researchers to examine development in the area of psychological empowerment more directly. Another suggestion is to conduct a survey involving all the individuals that participate in Uweza programs, as all programs are aimed at psychological empowerment. Finally, more case studies with a quantitative design should be undertaken on organizations situated in contexts similar to the Art Gallery's in order to test the applicability of the EOC and the additional characteristics found in this study. Based on the results of such

studies, implications for the EOC framework in the context of an urban slum could be generalized.

In conclusion, even though the framework might require some expansion, all four empowering organizational characteristics were, to a greater or lesser extent, applicable on the Art Gallery. Apparently, an empowering organization in a Kenyan urban slum and empowering organizations in Western countries have more in common than they differ from each other.

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