



Exploring the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change

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DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I, Onkgopotse Refentse Khaole, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Exploring the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change**, which I herewith submit to the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, is my own work and that all references used or quoted are indicated and acknowledged in the relevant reference list.

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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examination. All front matter and addenda were excluded from the
commission. Changes were suggested in track changes and implementation
was left up to the author.

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SUMMARY

Keywords: Behaviour change; Community research; Decision-making; Identity; Self-configuration

Our personal identity is more than just our names and the roles we play on a day-to-day basis or our personalities but is rather more intricate. Defining our own identity is a lifelong process and becomes more complicated as time goes on as it continuously changes. Our identity plays a significant role in the decisions we make every day, so it is worthwhile to understand exactly how this process takes place.

The study explored how identity configuration informs decision-making to bring about behavioural change related to the depositing of used cooking oil within specific communities in the Tlokwe and Castello municipal areas in the North West province, South Africa. The study was conducted within the context of the Demand Renewable Oil Programme (DROP) project, which is a household bio-fuel project in South Africa that aims to collect used cooking oil to convert it to bio-fuel. However, the Tlokwe and Castello communities have been reluctant to partake in this project. This reluctance was subsequently explored.

The study entailed a qualitative investigation as this provided the opportunity to gain in-depth, rich data for the exploration of decision-making related to depositing used cooking oil in a specific community. The researcher specifically wanted to know how the individuals within the community make decisions with regards to who they are; how they view themselves and the community; how they view the role of cooking oil in the community; and what it will take for them to partake in the project where household bio-fuel is produced.

The participants for the study were selected by means of purposive sampling. Four focus group discussions lasting an hour to an hour-and-a-half were conducted with fourteen participants, who were all female. The participants lived in the Tlokwe and Castello local municipalities in the North West province. Thirteen of the participants were first language Setswana speakers, with only one being a second language Setswana speaker. All of the participants could read and write in English and Setswana and were aware of the bio-oil project set out by the DROP project. The focus group discussions focused on the topic of identity, decision-making and behaviour change. Once informed consent had been obtained, the participants were asked a series of seven pre-selected questions.

Data were transcribed and inductive analysis was used, starting with reading and re-reading the transcripts. The findings of this study revealed six main themes. The six main themes were: Theme 1: identity formation through social interactions; Theme 2: participation in community groups/gatherings; Theme 3: prioritizing and planning when making a decision; Theme 4: providing knowledge to allow decision-making and bringing about changes in behaviour; Theme 5: accessibility of containers when depositing cooking oil; and 6: Employer training.

The participants in the study defined who they are in relation to everyone else in the community by referring to notions such as “Being a people’s person” and “Getting along with everyone.” These references are aligned with the principle of *ubuntu*. It is thus imperative that the DROP project organizes community gatherings/information sessions to mobilize the community and to inform them about the project and its benefits. Both the Tlokwe and Castello communities adhere to communal values and they achieve tasks by working together. The study found that re-using cooking oil has been a custom for many families in the communities and is it

entrenched in their identity. The Tlokwe and Castello communities may change their current behaviour if there is thorough education regarding the DROP project and its benefits (through community workshops).

To determine the effectiveness of the recommendations proposed by the study, follow-up research would have to be conducted to determine if the recommendations did indeed bring about behaviour change (getting more community members to partake in the DROP project and subsequently reducing the number of times individuals/families re-use cooking oil).

OPSOMMING

Sleutelwoorde: Gedragsverandering; Gemeenskapsnavorsing; Besluitneming; Identiteit; Self-konfigurasie

Ons persoonlike identiteit is meer as net ons naam, die rol wat ons van dag tot dag speel of ons persoonlikhede. Die definisie van mens se eie identiteit is 'n lewenslange proses en raak meer ingewikkeld soos die tyd aangaan omdat dit aanhoudend verander. Ons identiteit speel 'n belangrike rol in die besluite wat ons elke dag neem en daarom is dit die moeite werd om presies te verstaan hoe die proses werk.

Die studie het verken hoe identiteitskonfigurasie besluitneming sal inlig om gedragsverandering mee te bring wat verband hou met die deponering van gebruikte kookolie in spesifieke gemeenskappe in die Tlokwe en Castello munisipale areas in die Noordwesprovinsie, Suid-Afrika. Die studie is gedoen binne die konteks van die *Demand Renewable Oil Programme* (DROP), wat 'n huishoudelike bio-brandstofprojek in Suid-Afrika is wat daarop fokus om gebruikte kookolie te versamel en om te skakel na bio-brandstof. Die Tlokwe en Castello gemeenskappe was tot dusver huiwerig om aan die projek deel te neem en hierdie huiwering is gevolglik ondersoek.

Die studie het 'n kwalitatiewe ondersoek behels aangesien die metode aan die navorser die geleentheid bied om in-diepte, ryk data in te samel, in hierdie geval met betrekking tot die ondersoek van besluitneming wat verband hou met die deponering van gebruikte kookolie in 'n spesifieke gemeenskap. Die navorser wou spesifiek weet hoe die individue in die gemeenskap besluite neem aangaande wie hulle is; hoe hulle hulleself en die gemeenskap sien; hoe hulle die

rol van kookolie in die gemeenskap sien; en wat deelname aan die projek waar huishoudelike bio-brandstof vervaardig word vir hulle sal behels.

Die deelnemers van die studie is gekies deur middel van doelgerigte steekproefneming. Vier fokusgroepgesprekke van 'n uur tot 'n uur-en-'n-half is gehou met veertien deelnemers wat almal vroulik was. Die deelnemers bly in die Tlokwe en Castello plaaslike gemeenskappe in die Noordwesprovinsie. Dertien van die deelnemers gebruik Setswana as hulle eerste taal, en een gebruik Setswana as tweede taal. Al die deelnemers kan lees en skryf in Engels en Setswana en was bewus van die bio-brandstofprojek soos uiteengesit deur die DROP-projek. Die fokusgroepgesprekke het gefokus op die onderwerp van identiteit, besluitneming en gedragsverandering. Nadat ingeligte toestemming verkry is, is die deelnemers 'n reeks van sewe vooraf gekose vrae gevra.

Data is getranskribeer en induktiewe analise is gebruik deur te begin met die lees en herlees van transkripsies. Die resultate van die studie het ses hooftemas onthul. Die ses hooftemas was: Tema 1: Identiteitsformulering deur sosiale interaksies; Tema 2: Deelname aan gemeenskapsgroepe/byeenkomste; Tema 3: Prioritisering en beplanning wanneer 'n besluit gemaak word; Tema 4: Verskaffing van inligting vir besluitneming en gedragsverandering; Tema 5: Toeganklikheid van houer vir die deponering van kookolie; en 6: Werkgewer opleiding.

Die deelnemers aan die studie het getoon dat hulle definieer wie hulle is in verhouding tot al die ander mense in die gemeenskap deur stellings te maak soos “Ek is 'n mens-mens” en “Ek kom oor die weg met almal.” Hierdie stellings is in lyn met die beginsel van *ubuntu*. Dit is dus noodsaaklik dat die DROP-projek gemeenskap byeenkomste/inligting sessies reël om die gemeenskap te mobiliseer en om hulle in te lig oor die projek en die voordele. Beide die Tlokwe

en Castello gemeenskappe heg waarde aan gemeenskapswaardes en hulle bereik take deur saam te werk. Die studie het gevind dat die hergebruik van kookolie 'n gewoonte is vir baie gesinne in die gemeenskappe en dat dit verskans is in hulle identiteit. Die Tlokwe en Castello gemeenskappe mag dalk hulle huidige gedrag verander indien daar deeglike opvoeding is aangaande die DROP-projek en sy voordele (deur gemeenskapswerkswinkels).

Verdere navorsing moet gedoen word om die effektiwiteit van die studie-aanbevelings te bepaal. Die gewenste resultaat sal wees om meer gemeenskapslede sover te kry om deel te neem aan die DROP-projek om sodoende die hoeveelheid kere wat individue/gesinne kookolie hergebruik, te verminder.

PREFACE

This dissertation is presented in article format according to the guidelines set out in the Manual for Master's and Doctoral Studies (2016) of the North-West University and Rule A 5.4.2.7.

The article will be submitted to: *Self and Identity*. The guidelines for submission to the journal are attached as Addendum C.

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SECTION A: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Identity can be defined as a psychosocial concept that includes interaction between the individual and the social environment. It further refers to how this interaction influences individual development (Illeris, 2014). The formation or configuration of one's identity occurs through experiences with important figures in one's life (Weinreich & Saurderson, 2003). These significant figures may include parents and other individuals that have a direct influence on the person. Identity can be differentiated from a person's self-concept in that an individual's self-concept refers to a more specific understanding of the self and our experiences in the world (Thoits, 2012). Identity refers to who you are and may contain some aspects of the individual that are not within their self-concept, as identity also has unconscious properties. However, even though an individual's identity can be described through individuality, one cannot ignore the importance of community in one's definition of the self, especially within the South African context (Visser & Moleko, 2012).

South Africans still adhere to the notion of an African cosmology, which at its core is the concept of universal oneness or holism. This refers to an interconnectedness and interdependence of all humanity (Visser & Moleko, 2012). Within this interdependence, there is a strong understanding of respect for the self and other people. Respect for others is based on the principle of *ubuntu*, which governs the way South Africans relate with each other.

According to Visser and Moleko (2012), societies that place an emphasis on the role that the larger group plays in an individual's life are known as collectivistic, while those that place emphasis on the individual are known as individualistic. In collectivist cultures, people are integrated and belong to one or more close "in-groups" (Cho, Thyroff, Rapert, Park & Lee, 2013).

Individualism is a social configuration that is made up of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent from collectives. It is often a result of economic growth, hence its prevalence in more Westernized countries (Hamamura, 2012). Traditional African societies align more with the collectivist orientation. This concept of collectivism is based on the development of an individual's identity in the relational and contextual setting of his or her community as opposed to a more Westernized orientation, which focuses on the isolation of the individual from his or her settings in understanding an individual's sense of an individualized self (Visser & Moleko, 2012). For the purposes of this study, the self and identity are viewed as relational in the sense that the people of the Tlokwe Local Municipality define themselves in relation to everybody else in the community (at the time of the data gathering Castello still fell within the Ventersdorp municipality, but since then the Tlokwe and Ventersdorp municipalities have merged). As previously stated, South African communities adhere to the principle of humanity through mutual respect and working together. Although this study did not follow a specific theoretical framework, it was guided by a specific paradigm where the individual is not viewed in isolation, but as part of a larger social group. Some of the theories underpinning the concept of social identity are for example social identity theory, gestalt theory and self-categorization theory. Although these theories do play an important role in how the researcher views others and the world around him in general, they did not form a coherent theoretical framework for the study.

Social Identity

Social identities are reproductions of the social categories, groups and networks to which individuals belong. It manifests through an active process of categorization that functions by means of socially meaningful stimuli. These stimuli result in a self-categorization or a self-grouping process that is aligned with the distinctive features of group behaviour (Burford, 2012). Social

identity is defined as “that part of a person’s self-concept which is derived from his or her knowledge of membership of a social group (or groups) together with the values and emotional significance attached to membership...” (Tajfel, 1978 p. 63). This self-concept can be characterized by social characteristics that arise from individuals who identify with social groups or categories. These groups and categories are distinct from personal or individual characteristics (Esbensen & Maxson, 2012). Self-concept is made up of a personal identity consisting of idiosyncratic characteristics that include bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests, etcetera, and a social identity that is made up of important group classifications (Ashforth & Miller, 1989). With regards to belonging to some human aggregate, for example when asked the question, “Who are you?”, individuals may define themselves in terms of the group(s) with which they associate (I am a South African, I am a Motswana). Polster (2005) agrees that self-categorization and identification by others relate to the configuration of different selves and that this process of configuration occurs through personal experiences within the broader environment.

According to Cadinu and Galdi (2012), the perception of the self is partially based on salient self-categories. To some degree, people’s identity and self are formed by the organizations or work groups to which they belong (Hogg & Terry, 2000). People perceive others and themselves in relation to social identities such as gender, age, and they perceive these social identities as clusters of qualities that define the in-group relative to outgroups. Individuals acting in the context of a social structure, recognize themselves as occupants of positions or roles and name themselves accordingly. The essence of an identity is the incorporation of meaning and expectations linked to the self in a specific role and the execution of that role. The expectations and meanings associated with that role form a set of standards that guide behaviour (Stets & Burke, 2000). Having a particular social identity entails being one within a specific group, owning things from the group’s

perspective. In order for behaviour change to take place, the aim should be to target the greater community as a whole, instead of focusing on individuals.

In the specific community where the research was conducted, certain practices and behaviours form part of a tradition passed on from generation to generation, making it difficult to change such behaviours as people's identities are deeply rooted in their cultures and traditions. These collective deep-rooted practices and behaviours may therefore also influence decisions made by individuals. The aim should therefore rather be to target the greater community as a whole to affect behaviour change, instead of focusing on individuals.

Identity Configuration and Decision-making

According to Ford and Richardson (2012), individual factors and situational factors play a dual role when making decisions. Individual factors refer to factors such as personal attributes (e.g. nationality, gender, and age), educational background, personality, beliefs, and values. Situational factors represent situational pressures, which include groups and codes of conduct and encourage or discourage decision-making. According to the cognitive-behavioural approach, identity shapes behaviour (Fresque-Baxter & Armitage, 2012). The assumption is that who individuals are, may play a role in this decision-making process. Appelt, Mitch, Handgraaf, and Weber (2011) mention that it is widely recognized that decision-making by individuals is affected by three factors, namely decision features, situational factors and individual differences.

Decision-making is identity fulfilment, which implies that a set of rules is matched with a situation. This set of rules refers to the concept of identity and includes norms, values and assumptions that are associated with a certain individual or collective society (Torpman, 2004). An identity fusion approach assumes that when people are entrenched or form part of a group, they

experience an instinctive “oneness” with that group, which involves the union of the personal self and a social self (Swann, Gomez, Buhrmester & Rodriguez, 2014). This fusion results in motivation for pro-group behaviour and decision-making (Swann, Jetten, Gomez, Whitehouse, & Bastian, 2012). Social identity analysis suggests that the changes that occur during collective decision-making form part of rational psychological processes. These processes build on the essence of the group in psychologically efficient ways, that are grounded in the social reality and potentially have a positive impact on society as a whole (Haslam, 2001). Before group decision-making can take place, a group has to structure a constant dialogue that represents what is in the mind of each of its members (Saaty & Peniwati, 2013). In order to achieve a solution in a group or community, it is necessary to consider multiple points of view. In the process, a group of experts provide their preferences (Rodriguez, Martinez & Herrera, 2013).

According to Kramer, Pommerenke, and Newton (1993), people who have a more social identity are more likely to make decisions that are in line with other members of that particular society. Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) state that an individual’s identity (which consists of the interaction between social and cultural factors) has an influence on decision-making. When people are faced with uncertainty, they will use group status (as related to social identity) as a cue for decision-making (Lapinski & Mastro, 2001). Although social identity has some positive outcomes in terms of commitment towards attaining group goals, it may also lead to group members feeling superior, which in turn results in them refusing to seek outside information (Stagnor, 2014). In the case considered by this study, this refusal to seek outside information may contribute to the Tlokwe and Castello communities’ reluctance to take part in a Demand Renewable Oil Programme (DROP) project, which is explained later in this section. The importance and value of depositing used

cooking oil in terms of energy generation and health benefits are supported by the discussion that follows.

According to Singahabhandhu and Tezuka (2010), the generation of energy from waste cooking oil is considered an effective method for waste management and a constructive form of energy recovery. Japan was one of the first nations to initiate projects that collect used cooking oil from the population and convert this to biofuel. The towns of Aito, Yokaichi City, Imazu and Shin-asahi, as well as all the local municipalities within the Shiga Prefecture, convert waste cooking oil into biodiesel.. Kyoto City and Zentsuji City in the Kagawa Prefecture also use biodiesel derived from waste vegetable oil (“Used Cooking Oil Recycled As Bio-diesel Fuel”, 2003). In order to promote recycling of waste cooking oil, the Japanese government issued and amended the *Promotion Law on Effective Utilization of Resources* (2000) and *The Act of Food Waste Recycling* (2001) to provide incentives in the form of raw material grants (Zhang, Ozturk, Wang & Zhao, 2014).

The RecOil project (co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Union) was established in 2012. The aim of the project is to increase sustainable biodiesel production by enhancing household used cooking oil collection and transformation in six European countries (Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Denmark). The RecOil project identified key success factors that play a role in the success of a used cooking oil collection system, including: a) support from local administrations, involvement of local municipal waste management companies and the engagement of local stakeholders; b) appropriate locations for the collection points of the used cooking oil in public areas in easily accessible and convenient spots; c) focusing on community awareness with regular and multi-channel communication activities, and d) motivating citizens by giving rewards or incentives for their active participation. The RecOil project was

successful in reaching over two million citizens through promotional campaigns. This shows that there is an opportunity for a recyclable cooking oil project to grow in the African and specifically the South African context.

According to Pradhan and Mbohwa (2014), a biofuel initiative in South Africa would have the capability of extending and diversifying South Africa's energy supply, which will in turn reduce South Africa's dependence on imported fuels and reduce the overall pollution fuels. According to Yang, Takase, Zhang, Zhao, and Wu (2014), Africa is a non-exploiter of biofuels. The motivation to establish a biofuel industry in South Africa is based on its anticipated benefits. Four biodiesel and four bioethanol plants are currently in the planning stages and are targeted to the farming industry (Nasterlack, von Blottnitz & Wynberg, 2014). However, these biodiesel and biofuel plants do not target individual communities in South Africa.

ALENSYS (Alternative Energiesysteme) AG, a German company with more than 10 years of experience in alternative energy systems, together with the Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) and the Demand Renewable Oil Programme (DROP), has started a household bio-fuel project in South Africa after it was discovered that about three million low income households use highly flammable and unhealthy paraffin for cooking, lighting and heating. This is associated with unhealthy behaviour. A healthier and safer alternative source of energy is thus needed and this led to the focus on collecting used cooking oil. The DROP project has set up various collection points for the community to deposit their used cooking oil in exchange for incentives to purchase new and healthier cooking oil. The collected oil is then recycled into bio-products. The collection of used cooking oil from the community members and businesses and the process of converting it into bio-fuel is not only a healthier alternative, but also provide sustainable, local jobs for the buyback collectors. Furthermore, reusing cooking oil to the extent that is currently

the practice becomes a health threat for the consumers. According to Ng, Leong, Masbah, Adam, Kasiah, and Jaarin (2014), prolonged consumption of re-heated cooking oil increases blood pressure and total cholesterol, which causes vascular inflammation and thus predispose people to atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease. According to Heidtman (2015), unrefrigerated used cooking oil leads to the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, causing a potentially fatal food poisoning. Reusing cooking oil creates free radicals which, when ingested, can attach to healthy cells and lead to diseases such as cancer and atherosclerosis (Saraswat, 2014; Uwimana, 2014). Other potential health risks include acidity, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease (Saraswat, 2014).

However, regardless of the community's knowledge of the DROP project and the possible health threats, it is apparent that some members of the community are not yet willing to take part in this environmental project and they keep reusing unhealthy cooking oil. The current study therefore aims to explore the role of identity configuration in decision-making and how it is linked to behaviour change, especially regarding the depositing of used cooking oil. The focus is on exploring the dynamics and reasons behind the community members' decisions to continue using used cooking oil, especially with regards to who they are and how they see themselves within the community and with regards to decisions being made as individuals, but also as members of a community. Our identity plays a major role in how we make certain life choices. For this reason, the participants' identity is a major contributor to the re-use of cooking oil.

Cooking oil has been reused for years in the Tlokwe community and this practice can therefore be seen as being integrated with the community's identity. Since the establishment of the household bio-fuel project, the Tlokwe and Castello communities have shown reluctance to deposit their used oil, and this reluctance may be attributed to their personal identity and the identity of the community as a whole. This study therefore wants to explore identity configuration and how it

contributes to the Tlokwe and Castello communities' difficulty with behavioural change related to the depositing of reused cooking oil. The study specifically wanted to explore the role of identity configuration within communities with respect to decision-making towards behavioural change. Sparks and Shepherd (1992) state that self-identity plays a role in influencing behaviour and attitudes towards the use of environmentally friendly products, which makes it worthwhile to explore this role in the specific context of the current study.

Most of the research conducted in relation to environmentally friendly alternatives in South Africa focus on sustaining fuel for transportation. This may be due to the increase in the cost of petrol over the years (Marvey, 2008). Such studies include the SAA using tobacco plants to generate sustainable aviation fuel ("SA Airways to Test Tobacco Biofuel in 2015", 2014). Research on household bio-fuel is underrepresented in the South African context. Furthermore, despite a large body of research being conducted with regards to how identity plays a crucial part in consumer behaviour (Reed II, Forehand, Puntuni, & Warlop, 2012; Kennedy & Basu, 2013; Biswas & Roy, 2014; Oyserman, 2009), little research is available in the South African context, especially with regards to household bio-fuel. Most research relating to consumer behaviour merely highlights the current trends with little focus on identity-based consumer behaviour. Mpinganjica and Dos Santos (2013) highlight the importance of social class, status and group influences on consumer behaviour. In addition to Mpinganjica and Dos Santos (2013), Steenkamp and Burgess (2002) and Cohen, Prayag and Moital (2013) also mention how exploratory consumer behaviour is affected by socio-demographics. Conducting psychological research on this topic will perhaps allow researchers and stakeholders to understand identity formation and how it can be linked to behavioural change better, especially in the light of consumer behaviour of a specific South African community. This research will also further add to the knowledge of how individuals in South African communities identify

with one another and how their actions are influenced by and influence the actions of others in their communities. This can hold benefits for future psychological research on the identity of South Africans and can help inform policy makers on how to bring about behaviour change in resisting communities. If a link between identity configuration and behavioural change can be established in this specific project, it can assist the DROP project to adapt their project in such a way that it can be beneficial to themselves and the community. The question that is asked for the purpose of this study, is: How does identity configuration inform decision-making with regard to behavioural change?

Research Aim

The study aims to explore qualitatively how identity configuration informs decision-making to bring about behavioural change related to the depositing of used cooking oil within specific communities in the Tlokwe and Castello municipal areas in the North West province, South Africa.

Review of Literature

In order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between identity formation and decision-making and how it may lead to behaviour change, the following concepts were studied by consulting the various search engines mentioned below: social identity theory; personal identity; behavioural change, identity-based consumer behaviour; identity configuration; qualitative research; interpretive descriptive design; and focus groups.

Google Scholar, Science Direct, SAGE Publications and various other search engines that are available through the North-West University library services, were consulted. Books, articles and research dissertations/theses were used as additional scientific sources.

Research Context

The proposed study was conducted in the Castello and Tlokwe local municipalities in the North West province. According to Statistics South Africa (2013), the population of Tlokwe was 162 762 in 2011. Black Africans form 71.3% of the total population. Whites make up 20.6%, Coloureds 6.8% with Indian/Asian making up 0.9% of the total population. Setswana and Afrikaans are the predominant first languages of inhabitants at 40.6% and 27.5% respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2013). There are 52 537 households in the municipality, and according to Statistics South Africa (2013) and Van der Merwe (2015), electricity and paraffin are the two main energy sources, with paraffin being the second most common form of energy used for cooking, heating and lighting. The education level of community members range from very low to high. With regards to the bio-oil project, DROP established 13 collection points scattered throughout the community at schools, restaurants, and petrol garages (Van der Merwe, 2015) in 2014. Two thousand eight hundred and fifty five litres per month have been collected thus far, with 950 litres being collected in February and March 2015. The community of Castello only recently opened collection points in 2015. There is still room for more used cooking oil to be collected, from there the aim of the current study.

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The study entailed a qualitative investigation as this provided the opportunity to gain in-depth, rich data. Tewksbury (2009) states that the essence of qualitative research is to focus on the what, how, when and where of everyday life experiences. According to Hammersley (2013), qualitative research is aimed at “discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret and produce the social world. . .” (p. 2). Qualitative research can thus be differentiated from quantitative

research in that it is concerned with the quality and texture of experience, instead of the identification of cause-effect relationships (Willig, 2013). The focus of this study was an in-depth exploration of decision-making regarding the depositing of used cooking oil in a specific community. The researcher specifically wanted to know how the individuals within the community make decisions with regard to who they are; how they view themselves and the community; how they view the role of cooking oil in the community; and what it will take for them to partake in the project where household bio-fuel is produced. The study was not aimed at generalizing or emphasizing numerical descriptions and the relationships that exist between variables. Instead, the focus was on exploring people in their natural setting and finding out how they make certain decisions.

There are various research designs that are applicable to a qualitative research study. More emphasis is placed on the following types of designs: ethnography; grounded theory; phenomenology; narrative biography and case study (Fouché & Shurink, 2011; Smith, 2015). However, for this study, an interpretive descriptive design was used, as it is an appropriate study design in view of the aims of this study. According to Sandelowski (2000), an interpretive descriptive design is used when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired. Examples of typical interpretive descriptive research questions include: What reasons do people have for using or not using a service or procedure? Who uses a service and when do they use it? An interpretive descriptive design allows generic qualitative inquiry that is dedicated to the generation of knowledge about lived experiences (Newton, Thombs & Groleau, 2012). In this study, the researcher aimed to explore and identify some of the reasons why and how individuals in a specific community make certain decisions, especially those relating to the depositing of used cooking oil.

Participants and Sampling

The participants for the proposed study were selected by means of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling depends on the researcher who uses his or her judgement when selecting particular participants (Willig, 2013). The participants were purposely chosen as selection was based on specific criteria. The inclusion criteria specific to this study were:

- Adult participants (both male and female) residing within the Tlokwe local municipality;
- Participants should still had to be re-using cooking oil and depositing some of the cooking oil;
- Participants had to be aware of the bio-oil project set out by the DROP project, in other words they had to be well informed on depositing their used oil in turn for incentives to buy new oil;
- Participants had to be able to understand and speak Afrikaans, English or Setswana;
- Participants had to be able to engage in discussions about the re-use of oil;
- Participants should be able to speak in a group.

The exclusion criteria specific for this current study were:

- Individuals who did not produce a signed copy of the consent form;
- Individuals who were visually or cognitively impaired.

Recruitment

Before the data were collected, the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, NWU Potchefstroom campus gave ethical clearance for the study. The research was conducted under the ethics number: NWU- 00204-15-A1

Community members who met all the criteria listed above were invited to take part in the study through the use of gatekeepers. These community members were all involved at the collection points and were known to the gatekeeper, who was involved in the DROP project. Only those

community members who were available and willing to participate voluntarily were selected. The gatekeeper visited the collection points and obtained permission from the persons in charge to conduct the study and to make contact with the prospective participants. The gatekeeper then visited the different collecting points a second time to explain the goal of the study to prospective participants and to provide an opportunity for questions to clarify any vagueness. The participants had a day to go through the consent form and to decide whether they want to participate or not. The gatekeeper then visited the sites again and those interested notified the gatekeepers of their interest in participating in the study. The participants were then notified by the gatekeeper of the specific date, time and place that the research would take place and these dates were also communicated to the managers of the premises where the collecting points are situated.

The participants were collected with NWU transport and transported to a venue on the North-West University's Potchefstroom campus for the Tlokwe focus groups. The focus group with the Castello participants took place at a community hall organized by the gatekeeper. At the venue, the researcher explained the research focus again, followed by an opportunity to ask questions. The participants were also informed about the meaning of specific concepts like identity and identity configuration, which were linked to focus group questions, for example, "Please tell me about how you see yourself" and "Can you tell me how you have been shaped by the community?" The participants then signed the consent forms in the presence of an independent person, who also signed a letter of confidentiality. The informed consent was made available in the participants' first language and they agreed to audio-recordings of the focus group discussions. Participants were also informed about the opportunity to withdraw from the discussions at any time.

Four focus group discussions of an hour to an hour-and-a-half each were conducted with fourteen participants, all female and middle-aged. This is because the population (people trained in

the DROP Project) consists of mainly females and the sample that agreed to participate was only female. The participants reside in the Tlokwe and Ventersdorp municipality in the North West province. Thirteen of the participants were first language Setswana speakers, with only one being a second language Setswana speaker. All of the participants could read and write in English and Setswana.

Data collection

As stated, focus groups were conducted to gather the data for the current study. Participants from different collecting points were mixed in the different focus groups so that all the participants from a collecting point were not simultaneously interviewed, as this might have disturbed their work schedule. The focus group discussions focused on the topic of identity, decision-making and behaviour change. The process of data collection entailed that informed consent was first obtained by an independent person, after which the participants were asked a series of six pre-selected questions:

- You are a person living in your community. You are thus a person in your own right, but also part of the community? Please tell me how you think you are?
- Please tell me how you fit into the community.
- How do you make decisions as a person?
- How do you make decisions as part of the community?
- In your training you have learned about used cooking oil and that it is not healthy. You have also learned that you can sell this cooking oil and buy fresh oil. This used oil can also be used to make a paraffin that is safe to use. This is called household bio-fuel. What will help you to decide to sell

your used cooking oil in exchange for fresh cooking oil and to try out the healthy household bio-fuel?

- We have spoken about how used oil can be used to make a kind of paraffin that is healthy. How do you think people can become part of this new healthy project?

The researcher began with participant one, who shared her views on the first question with other participants in the group. Other members of the group were then asked to add their views to the response of the first participant and were given the opportunity to either agree or disagree with the participant based on their experiences and views.

The researcher was sensitive to any possible misunderstandings of the questions due to the subject matter of the questions. Where necessary, follow-up questions were used such as: Can you perhaps tell me more? Do I understand you correctly? Do you agree with what participant one said? The focus group discussions were recorded and translated verbatim. A total of four focus groups were conducted, after which data saturation was reached.

Data Analysis

The data were derived from the transcriptions of the focus group discussions. The transcripts were first transcribed in Setswana and then translated into English. Both the Setswana and English transcripts were compared with a parallel set of a fellow researcher who also transcribed and translated the data. Comparing the transcripts enhanced the consistency and trustworthiness of the data. The data of the four focus groups were integrated due to the small sample size. Following the transcription of the data, the data were thematically analysed to identify and report patterns and themes. Inductive analysis was done, which involved a process of open coding and generating themes from the raw data (Van Gorp & Vercruysee, 2012). The purpose of inductive analysis was to

break down raw data into a summary format and to form clear links between the aims of the research and the summary findings that were obtained from the raw data. (cf. Thomas, 2006).

Furthermore, the researcher employed inductive analysis by reading and re-reading the data and coding, identifying patterns and establishing themes as suggested by Bearman and Dawson (2013) and Schadewitz and Jachna (2007). The themes were titled in a way that conceptualized and captured the essence and quality of what was represented in the text (cf. Willig, 2013). Following inductive analysis, literature was used in order to explain and evaluate the identified themes. These findings are discussed in section B.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is defined as an indication of “methodological soundness and adequacy” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p, 254). The aim of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to support that the findings of qualitative research are “worth paying attention to” (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas, 2014). The trustworthiness of this study was ensured by following a model proposed by Guba (1981). This was done by paying particular attention to four aspects, namely, credibility (truth value), transferability (applicability), dependability (consistency), and confirmability (neutrality).

Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the representation of the participants’ view and interpretation by the researcher (Cope, 2014). The researcher made use of research methods that are well established in qualitative research to ensure that this study would be credible. Shenton (2004) states that the specific research methods used in any new study should be in line with those successfully used in previous studies that are similar to the current study. Interpretive descriptive designs were successfully used in previous studies relating to this study, with semi-structured

interviews and focus groups being the most popular method of data collection employed in these studies. Following a process of immersion during which the researcher immersed himself in the data by reading and examining the data, the researcher also reflected on the analysis experience to identify patterns or themes (Ellingson, 2009). James (2012) mentions that immersing oneself in the data ensures that the researcher is familiarized with the data and can come up with sound themes that reflect the data. Credibility can also be established by means of participation validation and working in real life settings. Strategies that ensure honest responses from participants may also be used to increase credibility (Shenton, 2004) and these include the establishment of rapport and making sure that the participants are relaxed and comfortable. The venue for the focus groups was accessible, comfortable, private, quiet and free from distractions. The researcher was also in prolonged engagement with the research data through the reading and re-reading of the transcripts and through carefully analysing the raw data to ensure that important aspects of the group discussions are not missed or overlooked.

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied to other contexts, although not generalized (Wadembere, 2012). For this study the aim was to provide sufficient contextual information to allow other researchers to transfer the work to their own contexts. In an effort to enhance transferability, a dense description of the research procedure, methodology, and findings are included in the final report. The assumptions that underlie the research are also be described. The researcher explained in detail how the data were collected, including the specific questions that were asked during the focus groups and how he came to the conclusions based on the findings.

Dependability refers to the minimizing of researcher idiosyncrasies. This can be achieved by recruiting similar participants and checking for similar results (Willig, 2013). Although a second

researcher may not necessarily replicate the exact same study as the current study, a level of consistency may be obtained by comparing the results to those of similar studies. The researcher was able to identify consistent themes that further strengthened dependability. Issues relating to the research process are reported in detail to enable future researchers to repeat the work. The text includes sections that are dedicated to detailing the research methods used, how they were implemented and how the data was collected to ensure that the readers would have a thorough understanding of the methods.

A final aspect involved in ensuring that this research is trustworthy is confirmability. Confirmability refers to the researcher maintaining an adequate distance from the research study to minimize the researcher's influence on the research study (Watkins, 2012). This can be compared to the objectivity measure of quantitative research. Confirmability can be assured with the inclusion of a significant degree of reflexive consideration of the role of the researcher in the process (Willig, 2013). Reflexivity, as described by Berger (2013) was obtained by explaining the researcher's involvement in the research process. Confirmability also ensures that the results of the study are truly based on participants' experiences. The interpretations of the researcher were confirmed by the participants by means of a process of clarification during the focus group interviews to establish agreement that their perspectives have been adequately represented.

Ethical Implications

This study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus under the ethics number NWU 00204-15-A1. All die participants signed informed consent. The researcher was aware of the potential risk or harm that may result from the discussion and as such the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time from the study.

Confidentiality was maintained at all times throughout the research process. Only the researcher knew the names of the participants and their names are not included in the final research report and in any publications. The researcher ensured anonymity by not using any identifying particulars of the participants, referring to them as Participant 1, 2, etc. All electronic documents with identifying particulars are kept on the password-protected computers of the researcher and the supervisor. Transcriptions and recordings are kept in a lockable cabinet at the house of the researcher. After the study has been completed, the data will be stored in the archives of the research entity of the NWU within which the research was conducted. Due to the nature of focus groups, only partial anonymity was ensured. Rules regarding confidentiality were discussed with the group and included in the informed consent forms. The researcher could only promise partial confidentiality to the participants as the discussions took place in a focus group setting. This was discussed with the participants and they were asked to keep the discussions to themselves and to not share the discussions with anyone outside the venue.

Respect for Persons

The dignity, well-being and safety of all participants were main concerns of the researcher. The emotional and physical welfare of the participants in this study were considered and monitored at all times. The researcher had received training to identify cues or signals that show when a participant is distressed. Participants were given the time to express significant emotions as this is important to the well-being of the participant. A trained counsellor of the NWU was available for debriefing for participants who showed distress. Participants were also free to withdraw from the focus group whenever they felt the need to. The researcher also engaged with the members while keeping in mind that they are the experts on the information that they share during the focus groups.

Risk and Direct and Indirect Benefits

The study holds benefits for the general public as it provides relevant information to guide similar studies in the future. One of the benefits of this study is that it highlights key aspects involved in changing maladaptive and unhealthy behaviour. The DROP project itself will have the opportunity to apply these strategies to ensure that the people living in the Tlokwe local municipality and Castello recycle their used oil and make use of new cooking oil. This study also has personal indirect benefits for the participants as it provided them with the opportunity to reflect on experiences and identity and to contribute towards the development of pre-existing character strengths. Another indirect benefit would be that participants could gain the awareness to make the decision to deposit their used oil and to use new oil.

The researcher did not expect the study to elicit any strong emotional reactions on the side of the participants, and this seemed to be an accurate forecast. Counsellors from the North-West University were available, but their services were not needed. The study carried a favourable risk/benefit ratio.

Voluntary Participation

Participants were not forced to take part in this study. They were also given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time before data analysis.

Scientific Integrity

The limitations of the research design and data collecting methods were considered to ensure that the research findings are a true reflection of the participants' responses. Some of these limitations may include subjective interpretations on the part of the researcher. Data collection was a time-consuming process and the methods carry the risk of the manipulation of the participants.

Bracketing was employed by the researcher to ensure that no researcher bias played a role during the interpretation of the data.

The researcher is currently enrolled for the Master's degree in Research Psychology and was therefore trained in conducting and facilitating focus groups. The researcher also worked with a supervisor who has years of experience in community research and with focus groups.

In relation to data integrity, all participants were assigned participant numbers during data analysis. The findings of the research will be presented to the participants from the community once the researcher has submitted his findings for examination. The researcher will organize a group meeting with all the participants at which time a PowerPoint and poster presentation will be given with regard to the findings of the research. The poster will be a summary of the PowerPoint presentation and will be available for the participants to take home. After completion of the study, data will be stored in the archives of COMPRES, the research entity within which the research was conducted. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Professional Conduct

The study was conducted in a professional manner at all times with regard to dress code, self-disclosure and objectivity towards the participants. The researcher is trained to perform specific research tasks such as conducting and facilitating focus groups and handling recording instruments. The researcher was open to expert advice when needed. Time was also used efficiently and effectively so as not to exploit the participants.

Choice and Structure of Research Report

The final results of the current study is presented in article format (see section B) in accordance with the General Regulation A.13.7 of the North-West University in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for a Master's degree. The final report of the current study will be submitted for examination in 2017. *Self and Identity* was identified as a possible journal for publication.

Outline of the Study

Section A: Problem formulation and orientation

Section B: Journal article to be sent to *Self and Identity*

Section C: Reflection on the research process

Section D: Addendum

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SECTION B: ARTICLE

Exploring the Role of Identity Configuration in Decision-Making towards Behaviour Change

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Exploring the Role of Identity Configuration in Decision-Making towards Behaviour Change

Abstract

There is a link between identity and decision-making. In this study four focus group discussions were held with female participants to explore the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change. The study was conducted within the context of the Demand Renewable Oil Programme (DROP) project, which is a household bio-fuel project in South Africa that aims to collect used cooking oil to convert it to bio-fuel. However, the Tlokwe and Castello communities have been reluctant to partake in this project. This reluctance was subsequently explored. Following inductive analysis, six themes were identified that relate strongly to the notion of “*ubuntu*.” The community members believe strongly in defining themselves according to group membership. Communal living and belonging are deeply entrenched in the Tlokwe and Castello communities.

Key words: *Behaviour change; Community research; Decision-making; Identity; Self-configuration*

Introduction

Our personal identity is more than just our name and the roles we play on a day-to-day or our personalities. Defining our own identity is a lifelong process and becomes more complicated as time goes on as it continuously changes. Our identity plays a significant role in the decisions we make every day. It is thus worthwhile to understand exactly how this process takes place.

Identity can be defined as the distinct and unique characteristics of an individual or those shared by all existing members of a specific social group (Rummens, 1993). Identity relates to “...how we think about ourselves as people, how we think about other people around us and what we imagine others think of us” (Kidd & Teagle, 2012, p.7). The core of identity is sameness and

continuity over time and how the constructed sameness and continuity positions a developing person in a complex and multivalent social world (McLean & Syed, 2015). According to Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007), identity is socially, historically, politically, and culturally constructed at both the community and individual levels. Identity does not only reflect how one talks or thinks about oneself, or the way others think or talk about one, but also in the way one's identity is lived day-to-day (Tsui, 2007). With regards to Erikson's theory on psychosocial development, identity formation occurs between childhood and adolescence, which results in advanced cognitive abilities (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). The formation or configuration of one's identity occurs as a result of experiences with important figures in one's life (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003). These significant figures may include parents and other individuals that have a direct influence on the person.

Individuals seek to attain their identity in terms of in three important ways: (1) their unique traits; (2) dyadic relationships; and (3) group membership (Sedikides & Brewer, 2015). The important place of group membership or community with regards to identity is highlighted by Visser and Moleko (2012). According to these authors, even though an individual's identity can be described as a function of individuality, one cannot ignore the importance the community plays in one's definition of the self, especially within the South African context. South Africans still adhere to the notion of an African cosmology, which at its core is the concept of universal oneness or holism. This refers to an interconnectedness and interdependence among all of humanity (Visser & Moleko, 2012). Societies that place an emphasis on the influence that the larger group has on an individual's life are known as collectivist. However, societies that place emphasis on the individual are known as individualistic. Individualism is more prevalent in industrialized Western societies. This is especially true for more traditional societies in developing countries, where the emphasis is more on collectivism (Hamamura, 2012).

The Collective Self and Social Identity

The collective self is realized by inclusion in large social groups and contrasting the group to which one belongs (i.e. the in-group) with relevant out-groups. This means that the collective self contains those aspects of the self-concept that differentiate in-group members from members of relevant out-groups. The collective self is based on impersonal bonds with others derived from common (and symbolic) identification with a group. These bonds, however, do not require close personal relationships among group members (Long, Spears & Manstead, 1994). Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987) define the collective self as a “shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person” (p. 50). The collective self represents membership in, and similarity and identification with valued social groups (Olson & Zanna, 2013). This collective self relies on intergroup comparison processes and is associated with the purpose of protecting or enhancing the in-group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Once the self and others are categorized into in- and out-groups, perception becomes de-personalized, which means that instead of being perceived as unique individuals, people are perceived in terms of the category to which they belong and are assimilated into the category prototype (Rabinovich, Morton, Postmes, & Verplanken, 2012). According to Tsui (2007), it is through alignment that the identity of a large group, such as a community, becomes the identity of the individuals within that specific community. This concept of collectivism is based on the development of an individual’s identity in the relational and contextual setting of his or her community. This is opposed to a more Westernized orientation, which places emphasis on the isolation of the individual from his or her setting when attempting to understand an individual’s sense of an individualized self (Visser & Moleko, 2012). Social identities improve members’ well-

being through the provision of social support and feelings of collective efficacy, as well as by acting as a basis for collective action (McNamara, Stevenson & Muldoon, 2013).

Social identity refers to an “individual’s knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292). It explains how identification, which is seen as a social process, works individually, interactionally and institutionally (Jenkins, 2014). Social groups, whether large demographic categories or small task-oriented teams, provide the individuals in that group “with a shared identity that prescribes and evaluates who they are, what they should believe and how they should behave” (McKeown, Reeshma, & Ferguson, 2016).

Social Identity and Decision-making

Turner et al. (1987) found a link between social identity and decision-making. In situations where personal identity is prominent, group identification tends to decrease and decision makers become more likely to adopt individualistic and relatively self-interested orientations (Kramer, Pommerenke, & Newton, 1993). Such decision-making is based on the relationship between likelihood (that the decision will be a good one) and desirability (Byrnes, 2013). In contrast, when social identity is prominent, personal identity decreases and making a decision is based on the outcomes for other group members. Group decision-making therefore account for the conflicts among different group members who may have different objectives, goals and criteria (Hwang & Lin, 2012). The latter correlates with the dependent decision-making style of Scott and Bruce (1995), which refers to a style that correlates with an external locus of control.

In relation to decision-making processes Levy (1959), observed the importance of self-identity in consumer choice (Hanimann, Vinterback & Mark-Herbert, 2014). Environmentally

friendly products that are not familiar to a certain community or society, may be perceived as being either more expensive or less comfortable when compared to similar products that have been used in that community for generations. Consumer decisions may also be influenced by personal factors that result in behaviour being influenced by social and emotional values (Kennedy & Basu, 2013). Some studies have shown that consumers' decisions are influenced more by personal factors such as attitudes and personality traits that relate to an individual's identity (Biswas & Roy, 2014). However, social pressure also serves as a driving force behind consumer decision (Biswas & Roy, 2014).

Having a particular social identity entails being one within a specific group, being similar to others in the group, and seeing things from the group's perspective (Stets & Burke, 2000). Members of the same social group seem to be more similar than they actually are and more similar than they were before they were categorized together (Nelson, 2016). In certain cases, in order for behaviour change to take place, the greater community as a whole should be targeted, instead of individuals. Individuals' behaviour is influenced by an interaction with the social environment, which includes influences at the interpersonal, organizational and community levels (Merzel & D'Aflitti, 2003). In this study, the first author mobilized the Castello and Tlokwe communities to actively participate in the research study. Working with the greater community may result in a collective social process that could bring about individual and community change (Visser & Moleko, 2012).

In the specific community where the research was conducted, re-using cooking oil is a tradition that has been passed on from generation to generation, making it difficult to change such behaviour as people's identities are deeply rooted in their cultures and traditions. Self-identities are seen as flexible entities that can be changed to accommodate an individual's priorities, circumstances or a variety of influencing factors (Cherrier, 2006). With the current study, the first

author applied the same rationale by exploring identity configuration and the role it plays within decision-making towards behaviour change. Collective self-identity is based on group membership. People are motivated by the norms and goals of the groups to which they belong and self-worth is dependent on group success (Jackson & Johnson, 2012). If they have a common goal (to stop re-using cooking and to deposit used cooking oil), the Tlokwe and Castello communities are better situated to achieve this goal by working together.

As stated, the Castello and Tlokwe communities have difficulties with changing their current behaviour regarding the re-use of cooking oil. The re-use of cooking oil has potential health risks, not only at the individual level, but also for the greater community as a whole. Some of these health risks include increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and various liver disorders and cancer (Ishak et al., 2016). The potential health risks associated with re-using cooking oil is one of the reasons ALENSYS (Alternative Energiesysteme) AG, together with The Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) at the North-West University and the Demand Renewable Oil Programme (DROP) established a household bio-fuel project. As part of this project, community members have the opportunity to deposit their used oil (which will be converted to healthier and safer household bio-oil) for incentives (in the form of cash vouchers) to purchase new oil that is healthier and safer. The bio-fuel project was started in South Africa after it was discovered that about three million low-income households use highly flammable and unhealthy paraffin for cooking, lighting and heating, which is associated with unhealthy behaviour. The DROP project has set up various collection points for the community to deposit their used cooking oil in exchange for incentives to purchase new and healthier cooking oil. The collected oil is recycled and manufactured into bio-products. This conversion into bio-fuel is not only a healthier alternative, but also provides sustainable, local jobs for the buyback collectors.

The re-use of cooking oil becomes a health threat for the consumers, and is currently a daily reality within certain communities. According to Ng, Leong, Masbah, Adam, Kasiah, and Jaarin (2014), prolonged consumption of re-heated cooking oil increases blood pressure and total cholesterol. These in turn cause vascular inflammation and predispose people to atherosclerosis and cardio-vascular disease. According to Heidtman (2015), unrefrigerated used cooking oil may cause a potentially fatal food poisoning. Other diseases and potential health risks may include cancer and atherosclerosis (Saraswat, 2014; Uwimana, 2014), as well as acidity, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease (Saraswat, 2014).

However, for some reasons the Castello and Tlokwe communities have difficulties depositing the used oil and continue to re-use the unhealthy oil. This study aims to explore identity configuration and how it may contribute to Castello and Tlokwe communities' difficulties with behavioural change with regard to the depositing of re-used cooking oil. The depositing of the used cooking oil benefits the community in that they receive incentives in exchange for the used cooking oil to purchase new and healthier cooking oil.

Method

A qualitative approach was followed to do an in-depth exploration of decision-making related to depositing used cooking oil in a specific community. An interpretive descriptive design was used to analyse the data, as this design not only involves the formation of a description, but also moves the description beyond the self-evident to discover potential associations, relationships and patterns within the phenomenon under study (Stevenson, Jack, O'Mara, & LeGris, 2015). The selected approach allowed for exploration and the identification of reasons why and how individuals in a specific community make certain decisions, especially those ones relating to the depositing of used cooking oil.

Research Context and Participants

According to Statistics South Africa (2013), the population of the Tlokwe community was 162 762 in 2011. Black Africans form 71.3% of the total population. Whites make up 20.6%, Coloureds 6.8%, with Indians/Asians making up 0.9% of the total population. There are 52 537 households in the municipality. The education level of community members within the Tlokwe municipality ranges from very low to high. No statistics could be found on the Castello community.

A purposive sampling method was employed to select the sample for the study. Certain inclusion and exclusion criteria were followed in selecting the participants. Participants who met the following criteria were chosen to take part in the study: 1) they had to be adults (both male and female) residing within the Tlokwe local municipality or the Castello local municipality; 2) they had to be re-using cooking oil and depositing some of the cooking oil; 3) they had to have an awareness of the bio-oil project set out by the DROP project, being well informed about the possibility of depositing their used oil in turn for incentives to buy new oil; 4) they had to understand and speak Afrikaans, English or Setswana; 5) they had to be able to engage in discussions about the re-use of oil; 6) Participants should be able to speak in a group.

Four focus group discussions lasting an hour to an hour-and-a-half were conducted with fourteen participants who were all female and middle-aged. The participants lived in the Tlokwe and Castello local municipalities in the North West province. Thirteen of the participants were first language Setswana speakers, with only one being a second language Setswana speaker. All of the participants could read and write in English and Setswana.

Data gathering

The study used focus groups as described by Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012). Each focus group was made up of participants from different collecting points so that none of the focus groups consisted of members who are all from the same collecting point, as this may have disturbed their work schedule. The focus group discussions focused on the topic of identity, decision-making and behaviour change. The process followed with each focus group started with obtaining informed consent. This process was facilitated by an independent person. Once informed consent had been obtained, the participants were asked a series of seven pre-selected questions. The first author began with participant one, who shared her views on the first question with the other participants in the group. Other members of the group were then asked to add their views on the response of participant one and were given the opportunity to either agree or disagree with the participant based on their experiences and views.

The first author was sensitive to any possible misunderstandings of the questions due to the subject matter. Where necessary, follow-up questions were used such as: Can you tell me a little more? Do I understand you correctly? Do you agree with what Participant 1 said? The focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. After four focus group discussions, data saturation was reached.

Procedure

The focus group in Castello took place at a community hall organized by the gatekeeper. The community hall was within walking distance of the homes of the participants and thus the participants were not collected and transported from their homes to the community hall.

Participants were collected and transported from their respective workplaces to a preselected venue at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus for the Tlokwe focus groups. Upon arrival, the participants were again informed of the purpose of the study and were given the opportunity to read the informed consent form and agree to participate by signing of the informed consent form. An independent person facilitated the consent process. Once consent had been obtained, the first author was called back into the venue and proceeded with the focus group discussion. The first author explained how the focus group discussion would work and then proceeded with asking the first questions. The first author and his co-researcher took turns to ask the questions and sometimes asked the participants to clarify certain aspects to ensure that they understood and interpreted what the participants were saying correctly. Following the focus group discussion, refreshments were provided and the participants were informed that they would be invited to a dissemination session where the results of the study would be presented to them. The participants were then dropped off at their workplace.

Data Analysis

Inductive analysis, as described by Campbell, Pleic, and Connolly (2012) and Yukhymenko, Brown, Lawless, Brodowinska, and Mullin (2014), was used, starting with reading and re-reading the transcripts. This allowed for characteristics to emerge from the data, followed by the identification of themes, as suggested by Yilmaz (2013). The themes were titled in a way that conceptualizes and captures the essence and quality of what was represented in the text, as described by Willig (2013).

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus under the ethics number: NWU 00204-15-A1. Informed consent was signed by the participants. The first author was aware of potential risks or harm that may result from the discussion and the participants were therefore informed that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed six main themes and these were divided into subthemes. Describing one's identity was new to the participants and the first author had to take time to explain in detail what the construct "identity" means.

Table 1: Themes and subthemes formulated from the data

Identity formation through social interactions <i>Providing assistance to others</i> <i>Being a people's person through communication</i> <i>Ensuring the well-being of others</i>
Participation in community groups/gatherings <i>Taking the lead at community gatherings</i> <i>Advising community members</i>
Prioritizing and planning when making a decision
Providing knowledge to allow decision-making and bringing about changes in behaviour
Accessibility of containers when depositing cooking oil
Employer training

Themes

Theme 1: Identity Formation through Social Interactions

Some participants reported that they viewed themselves as being people's persons and that they get along well with other people in their communities. This notion of being a people's person has its roots in "*ubuntu*," which implies that you are a person because of other people (Mangaliso & Damane, 2001; Gade, 2012). This principle of *ubuntu* ties in well with the following subthemes:

Providing assistance to others. When asked about the kind of person she thought she was,

Participant 2 responded with:

“According to me, I am a good person. I am one with helping [I am helpful]. I look at a person’s circumstances and then I look whether it is important [relevant] for me to help them.” (P2)

According to Karsten and Illa (2005), *ubuntu* can be defined as humanness, which refers to a persistent spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, as well as respect and responsiveness that individuals and groups display for one another. Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in terms of the person’s relationship with others (Le Grange, 2012).

Being a people’s person through communication. The participants in the study defined themselves in relation to how they relate and communicate with others in their communities.

“I get along very well with people, even when I do not make it to church at times a lot of people want to know if I am well.” (P3)

“I don’t want to lie; I talk to just everybody. I am friendly and talkative and I am never angry at people.” (P4)

Communication has its roots in the need for belonging, connectedness and unity with others (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Communicating with and learning about others fulfil the needs of belonging (Seidman, 2013). Identity is assigned through social processes (Ochs, 1993; De Fina, 2013). The participants from the Tlokwe and Castello communities define their identity through social interactions and getting along well with others. Communicating with others was central to the identities of the participants from the Tlokwe and Castello communities. According to Comello (2009), communication can potentially play a role in activating a particular identity. A person’s sense of the group or social identity is enhanced through processes of communicating with others in the same social category (Ren et al., 2012). Eisenberg (2001) mentions that communication, personal narratives and mood mutually reinforces identity configuration. The emphasis of the communication perspective is that the self does not create identities in isolation; instead, they are

co-created through communicating with others (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002). Identities materialize when messages are exchanged.

Ensuring the well-being of others. As a result of the principle of *ubuntu*, the participants from the Tlokwe and Castello communities inherently want to ensure the well-being of others in their respective communities:

“It means that I am a person that likes to at all times have my face add something [value]. In other words, at all times for it to be pleasant. Yes, and when I see that someone is not well, I want to know why is this person not feeling well today... when I see that today someone is... I do not want them to remain angry, I want us to share what the problem may be then we begin to solve that problem and then things are good. I enjoy it when things are always good [well/ pleasant].” (P2)

Communion acts as a function of socialization and centres on the need to belonging and to live in connectedness and the union with others. Identity plays a key role in explaining the basis of prosocial behaviour and altruism (Crocetti, Jahromi, & Meeus, 2012). Helping others in the absence of external rewards makes the participants feel good about being kind and caring (Brown & Leary, 2017). The act of helping others by ensuring their well-being help the participants feel a sense of being significant or mattering and making a difference (Adams & Marshall, 1996). According to Kim, Lee and Bonn (2016), altruism has significant effects on common identity and bond. This belonging and mattering to others form part of the participants’ social identities. Social identity theory suggests that individuals feel useful when affiliating with social groups because they benefit the in-group (Fowler & Kam, 2007).

The above subthemes support the importance of *ubuntu* in these two communities. The principle of *ubuntu* is an African philosophy of humanity and community (Letseka, 2012; Skelton, 2002). A person who possesses an *ubuntu* attitude is one who is seen to be hospitable, friendly,

generous, compassionate and caring towards his or her fellow human being (Arthur, Issifu & Marfo, 2015). The results of the study showed that an attitude of *ubuntu* is embedded in the participants' identity. South Africans adhere to a collectivistic culture, which is characterized by a strong sense of mutual commitment and cooperation (Adams, Van de Vijver, Bruin & Bueno Torres, 2014). Their identities are firmly based on relational aspects and group membership with the tendency to have an interdependent orientation (Buckingham, Frings & Albery, 2013; Grace & Cramer, 2003). This was evident from the results of this study. Awareness of interdependence is of great importance in group behaviour. It can be seen as part of a wider social identity mechanism where people construct social categories by using information, such as interdependence (Hornsey, 2008).

Theme 2: Participation in Community Groups/Gatherings

According to the participants, participation in community groups/gatherings forms a key aspect of the social identity that members of Tlokwe and Castello share and live by. This active participation is not only rooted in the principle of "*ubuntu*," but is also used as a means to bring about social change. According to Hughes, Williams, and Ren (2012), collaboration refers to the act of working together, which is based on trust, dedication to common goals, and an understanding of each other's individual expectations and values.

Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) mention that the key to identification lies in the perception of oneness or a sense of belonging to a particular social entity. There is an apparent link between belonging and subjective well-being (Malone, Pillow & Osman, 2012). Because they identify as belonging to a particular group, the participants from the Tlokwe and Castello communities have a shared or common goal towards the fulfilment of the well-being and wellness of their communities. They participate in community groups/gatherings to bring about this fulfilment. One of the participants stated:

“I am involved in the ANC, like when there are meetings I attend those meetings. We also do door to door visits to get to those who could not make it to the meetings, or deliver notes door to door and let others know about scheduled meetings so they can be in attendance”. (P5)

In order to bring about social change, communities have to mobilize around situations that concern them (Visser & Moleko, 2012). It is therefore imperative for community members to come together to bring about a change in behaviour in their communities. When asked about how community members can be taught to deposit their used cooking oil, many of the participants referred to the mobilization of community members as they found this to be an effective method that plays an important role in “*word of mouth.*”

“...within the community.... many people do not know about the dangers of re-using oil three or four times. Just as Participant 3 says, you lot can also go into the community, get to people and share with them 1, 2, 3 things in order for them to be knowledgeable that the oil that you re-use is going to cause things”. (P2)

Participation in community groups/gatherings is not only entrenched in the identity of Tlokwe and Castello community members, but can also be used as a tool to bring about changes in behaviour. Two subthemes were identified:

Taking the lead at community gatherings. Some of the participants found themselves centre stage when organizing social gatherings or meetings pertaining to certain issues that arise in their respective communities. The community members believe community issues in predominantly black communities can only be solved or addressed by means of collaboration and cooperation between community members. Participant 3, who participated in one of the Tlokwe focus groups, had this to say about the role they have in their community:

‘I am also one of those people who would organise themselves to approach the counsellor and demand that he must deliver one, two and seven for us. I am the person who would mobilise people “let us go, he must supply us with electricity, let us go we do not even have water amongst other things”

Advising community members. Another subtheme that emerged from the data that relates to social gatherings is the willingness and ability of the participants in the study to provide or give advice to other community members. Participant 4 in the Castello focus group highlighted this by saying the following:

“You know me, I am able, let’s say I am able to help a person... you can come to me and tell me about your life, I as a person will be able to recognise that maybe there is a shortage here, so there are many instances where am able to help many people. I am able to say “hai man, why don’t we try this. What is there that I can do to close this hole (gap)...” (P4)

Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) mention that providing advice is an important type of communication that could have a significant impact on the life of both the giver and receiver of advice. Providing advice shapes important decisions while empowering others to act (Garvin & Margolis, 2015). It also influences the identities and the relationships of the participants. The participants in this study reported that they feel a great deal of gratitude and warmth when they are able to give advice to community members. This satisfaction was evident in the statement of Participant 5:

“She would call me to mediate and reconcile them so they do not break up from their fights. I like to advice, to guide...when I see that their lives are not okay.” (P5)

As mentioned above, identity serves as a conceptual framework through which we interpret personal experiences and that guides the processes we use to make certain decisions (Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996). Urminsky, Bartels, Giuliano, Newman, Puntoni, and Rips (2014) found a link between identity configuration and how decisions respond to shifts in identity and changes in self-

concept. The subthemes above relate to how the participants from Tlokwe and Castello view themselves as individuals and also as part of a greater community. The themes discussed below explore the role of this identity in decision-making and in bringing about a change in behaviour.

Theme 3: Prioritizing and Planning when making a Decision

When the participants were asked “*How do you make decisions as an individual, what motivates you to end up deciding to do things a certain way?*” they mentioned that they usually plan and prioritize before making a decision.

“As a person, in life there are things that you want. A plan that you have devised that this is something that I want. There is no way that I can say that there is a gap in this now so... I have already planned my way ahead there is no way that I can abandon what I have wanted and replace it with something new. It just requires me to leave the new event and focus on the planned one...” (P6)

It was clear from the discussions that decisions involved a great deal of thought for the participants, including planning and prioritizing. The participants thought long and hard before pursuing a matter or making certain decisions.

“...you obviously you think about it. You think first. Because sometimes you think about it when you are asleep [in bed], that what will I wake up and do tomorrow, you see? So then when you wake up in the morning you have to get busy doing that thing that you had thought about, you see?” (P2)

According to Saaty (2004), decision-making involves criteria and alternatives from which the decision maker has to choose. Decision-making is the process of selecting a possible course of action from all the available alternatives (Hwang & Masud, 2012). The criteria usually differ in importance and we usually prefer certain alternatives above others. When faced with a decision, people sometimes spend a great deal of time thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative (Wilson & Schooler, 1991). A good decision should be made in such a way that it

eliminates other alternatives that would be better in some regards (Yu, 2013). Participant 1 from the Castello focus group supported this by saying:

“You think about how the decision would benefit you, as well as the consequences of your decision and the effort that is needed to take a certain decision” (P1)

In line with “thinking about it first” is the process of planning one’s actions or decisions systematically. According to the participants, systematic planning plays an important role when making decisions within their communities. The art of good decision-making lies in systematic thinking (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 2002). Systematic thinking towards decision-making involves positioning alternatives, collecting information on the advantages and disadvantages of each and estimating the possible costs and benefits of the decision (Rivlin, 2015). Following a systematic approach to making decisions allows you to address the correct problem; to simplify your real objectives; and to develop a wide range of creative alternatives. Participant 5 from one of the focus groups in Tlokwe had this to say with regard to making decisions:

“As a person, in life there are things that you want. A plan that you have devised that this is something that I want. There is no way that I can say that there is a gap in this now so... I have already planned my way ahead there is no way that I can abandon what I have wanted and replace it with something new. It just requires me to leave the new event and focus on the planned one...” (P5)

Hoffman, Bennett and Del Mar (2017) mention a process called shared decision. This refers to where an individual along with other individuals jointly participate in making a decision. The first step in shared decision making involves defining/explaining the problem as a collaborative process (Elwyn, Edwards & Thompson, 2016). Following this step, collaborative option talk is employed to provide information about the options at hand before making a decision. The DROP project may employ a shared decision-making process whereby a collaborative session can be held

with community members to define and explain the issues facing the depositing of used cooking oil. Information on various options to solve these issues can also be discussed collaboratively and a consensus made with the communities on how to solve this issue and ensure that more people participate in the DROP project.

Theme 4: Providing Knowledge to Allow Decision-Making and Bring About Changes in Behaviour

Many of the participants in the study felt that the rest of the communities in Tlokwe and Castello are not equipped or do not have the necessary information regarding the reasons why one should not re-use cooking oil:

“...within the community.... many people do not know about the dangers of re-using oil three or four times. Just as Participant 3 says, you lot can also go into the community, get to people and share with them 1, 2, 3 things in order for them to be knowledgeable that the oil that you re-use is going to cause things” (P7)

According to Pangil and Chan (2014), knowledge sharing takes place when individuals who share a common purpose and experience similar problems come together to exchange ideas and information. This knowledge should be in a form that is easily understood, absorbed and can be used by other individuals. The Tlokwe and Castello communities should be given information on the health risks associated with re-using cooking oil. This information should be transferred in a way that would be easily understood by the community members so that they can change their current behaviour.

Theme 5: Accessibility of Containers When Depositing Cooking Oil

A hindering factor in bringing about a change in behaviour (along with the lack of knowledge) is the accessibility of containers when depositing cooking oil. Many of the participants

felt that the DROP collection points were limited to their workplaces and they find it difficult to bring the oil [from home] to work:

“Okay I also throw it out. There isn’t a place where store it. Where will I store it? I’ll put a bit here, then there is a little cup of oil there and they will be scattered all around the house. When I have just used it and I see that it is discoloured, I pour it out...” (P9)

“If there is a truck. You see how they do it when they get goods for the scrap yard? Also you guys could try sometimes, maybe once a week you could stand at the community hall or at a place such at Sarafinah you could arrive at tell the people that “elders we would like to have your old oil because...”(P10)

Once community members have been educated on the health risks associated with the re-use of cooking oil, many of the community members will be more willing and open to participating in the DROP project should the drop-off points be located in a convenient location. Community members should also be made aware of the incentives (in the form of cash vouchers) they will receive for depositing their cooking oil.

Theme 6: Employer Training

The participants mentioned that although they did indeed attend training on the DROP project, their employers (at their respective employment where the used cooking oil is collected from) were still not clued up on the project as a whole. As a result of not having the necessary knowledge about the project, some of the employers would inform community members to re-use the cooking oil and to deposit the cooking oil only after a few rounds of re-use. Participant 3 from the Tlokwe focus group highlighted the importance of employee training:

“It will also be beneficial if you provided training for our employees because we find that at work, they would sometimes ask us to keep on re-using the cooking oil until the truck came to collect the oil. By that time, I would have used it 4 or 5 times” (P3).

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change. The participants in the study defined who they are in relation to everyone else in the community by referring to notions such as “Being a people’s person” and “Getting along with everyone”. These references are aligned with the principle of *ubuntu*.

Participating in community gatherings/groups gave participants a sense of fulfilment in that this brought a sense of belonging and being part of a larger societal group. It is also through this participation that the participants in this study are able to share knowledge.

Through altruism, the helping of each other through sharing knowledge, giving advice provided a sense of belonging and kindness to the participants in this study. This finding relates to the *ubuntu* principle. The participants in the study did not expect any external or monetary compensation for helping other community members. They realised the essences of being who they are because of other people. According to the participants, communities are built through mutual understanding, kindness, caring and general betterment of each community member.

When asked the question that relates to who they are, the participants in the study answered this with relation to others. The importance of being around and sharing their world with others is a deep root to how the participants define and view themselves.

Community gatherings may be fruitful and get more community members to join the DROP project. Mesmer-Magnus and DeChurch (2009) found that the importance of information sharing is to bring about team/community decision-making towards behaviour change. There is a great deal of trust within the participants from both Tlokwe and Castello focus groups. This was evident from the mutual understanding and respect community members have for each other. Kim,

Seo, Noh and Ham (2012) found that trust is key with regard to successful information sharing. Awareness is an imperative factor that can be employed in order for the DROP project to be more effective. The initiative of arranging community meetings to inform the Tlokwe and Castello communities about the health risks of re-using cooking oil and the DROP project may be successful in striving towards behaviour change. This awareness however should not only be aimed at targeting the communities as a whole, but should also be incorporated in the form of employer training as some of the participants found their employers to be resistant to change in behaviour. However, behaviour change is not a simple process or something that one easily agrees to.

The participants in the study mentioned a systematic process of decision-making that would include “Thinking about it first” and “Planning step-by-step”. Every decision is hidden in a guess about the future. Droutman, Bechara and Read (2015) divide the decision-making process into three phases – evaluation, action and outcome. When solving a problem or aiming to achieve a specific goal, we estimate the situation and then anticipate that if we take a certain action, another situation will be created that will help us reach our desired goal. By planning step-by-step, the participants in the study go through a systematic process through which they are able to identify if certain steps or actions will bring them closer to the desired goal (making a decision).

It is imperative that the DROP project organizes community gatherings/information sessions to mobilize the community and to inform them about the project and its benefits. Both the Tlokwe and Catello communities adhere to communal values and they achieve tasks by working together. The study found that re-using cooking oil has been a custom for many families in the communities and is it entrenched in their identity. The Tlokwe and Castello communities may change their current behaviour if there is thorough education regarding the DROP project and its benefits (through community workshops).

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SECTION C: CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE STUDY

Introduction

The aim of this section is to provide a reflective overview of the study and to evaluate the research process critically in order to determine whether the aim of the study has been reached. The section begins with a brief overview of the research to put the critical evaluation, conclusions, limitations and recommendations into perspective. Above all, this section allows me to reflect on my own experience of the process, the challenges faced and the insights gained throughout the research process.

Background and summary of the research

My research journey began with the first coursework workshop the University offered for first-year Master's students in Research Psychology. We were all novice researchers and were all very excited to begin this new chapter in our lives. We set to work on our very first research project during which we had to conduct qualitative research on university students. This experience increased my interest in psychology research, especially with regard to working with a large group of novice researchers and experts, and most importantly, with human subjects (before this, I had gained much experience in the natural sciences during my undergraduate years). I found myself out of my comfort zone, but was deeply thrilled by the prospect of starting something new. Throughout my coursework period, I had exposure to conducting focus group discussions and analysing transcripts of those groups. This exposure prepared me and gave me the confidence to conduct this study, even though the exposure was not directed at the concepts of identity, identity configuration, decision-making and behaviour change.

It is challenging to try to explain identity to people and I found myself struggling to define it, even in my home language (Setswana). The participants in this study were predominantly

Setswana first language speakers. However, through consultation with colleagues and the use of a translator, the participants were able to grasp the concept of identity fully. Being a novice researcher, the thought of carrying out research was exciting and nerve wrecking at the same time. I have always leaned more towards appreciating qualitative research as I have always had a constructionist view of reality. For this study, a qualitative research method was employed to explore how the participants of the Tlokwe and Castello communities configure their identities and how this configuration may play a role in decision-making, particularly with bringing about a change in behaviour. Focus groups were selected as a means of data collection and the recordings of these group discussions were transcribed and translated. Inductive analysis was performed on the transcriptions.

Evaluation of the research process

The research process began with an exploration of the concept of identity and how various communities come to define this identity, not only at an individual level, but also at the community level. In an effort to investigate this thoroughly, I consulted literature and gained valuable information from experts in community psychology. The challenge I experienced during this phase was that some of the literature had limited information on the South African context, further increasing the importance of conducting this type of research in the South African context.

Data Collection

The process of data collection began with my colleague and I going to meet with prospective participants at the various collection points and introducing ourselves and explaining the aim and objectives of the study. My colleague conducted a study similar to mine, but focused more on how identity configuration plays a role in the buying behaviour of eco-friendly products. We had the same focus group questions that focused on identity formation and decision-making. This phase

proved fruitful in that I had the opportunity to interact with the prospective participants and to explain the research in detail. Following these information meetings, the prospective participants were keen and motivated to partake in the study provided they were able to get some time off work to participate in the focus groups. These meetings also provided much needed clarity on the DROP project as I saw how the used cooking oil was collected from the premises (such as the local garages, convenience stores and conference centres) to the drop-off zone. This put the research project as a whole in perspective.

The first focus group was held with the Castello community at a community hall organized by the gatekeeper. The process began with the gatekeeper obtaining consent from the participants and explaining the research. Once consent had been obtained, my colleague and I were given the chance to come into the hall and to proceed with the focus group discussion. The first question, which asks how the participants define or view themselves, was then asked to the group. Translating the question to Setswana was challenging and the concept of identity had to be explained numerous times before the participants could grasp what the question was asking from them. The first participant responded and other participants were given the opportunity to follow up or add onto what she had commented. In some instances I asked follow-up questions related to what the participant had said for more clarity. However, no leading questions were asked so that we could get a true account and meanings from the participants. The rest of the focus group discussion followed the same sequence, but participants at times deviated from the topic of discussion. The derailment was initially frustrating, but as per the advantage of qualitative research, I was able to obtain valuable information from this, as I started noticing cues, the tone and subject matter of the discussions. They further added valuable information to the data analysis process. One concern during the focus group discussion was the audio recorder, as I was constantly worried and checking

if the recorder was still on and that the discussion was loud enough to be audible on the recording. Following the focus groups, participants were treated to refreshments and the participants and I reflected on the data collection process. This reflection took place as an informal conversation and was used as a debriefing session between the participants and myself.

Subsequent focus groups were conducted with participants from the Tlokwe community. By this stage, I had learned a great deal from the previous focus group and was well prepared and could translate the questions in a more coherent manner so that both the participants and I could understand. These focus groups were more intimate as less participants were able to attend, and this made the discussion more open. However, the decrease in participation was initially demotivating, as it appeared that fewer participants were interested in partaking in the study. Despite this, the focus groups went on as planned and produced fruitful information. The participants and myself were more at ease during the focus group discussions and appreciated the debriefing sessions that followed. The debriefing sessions also served as affirmation that the participants were truthful and honest with their responses and this increased my confidence in the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began immediately following data collection. The recordings of the focus groups were transcribed and translated by a third party (who had to sign a non-disclosure agreement), my colleague and myself. The transcripts were then compared in order to increase the trustworthiness of the data. There were a few discrepancies between the transcripts and we thus had to discuss and come to a probable conclusion. I remembered learning during my coursework that the analysis of qualitative data is very subjective as we hold and have different interpretations of what is being said or done. It is therefore important to always have co-translators or co-transcribers in qualitative research to enhance the trustworthiness of the results.

Following the transcriptions of the raw data, I had to apply inductive analysis to the transcripts. Inductive analysis allowed me to familiarize myself with the data (through the actual transcribing and re-reading of the transcripts), to code the data and generate themes and categories from the data. These themes were later compared to the themes identified by my colleague, after which we went through a process of editing and revising some of the themes. These themes were then sent to my supervisor, who has many years of experience in postgraduate research. He went through a process of revising, editing and verifying these themes.

Research Findings

The aim of the study was to explore identity formation among participants in the Tlokwe and Castello communities by asking relevant questions. These questions are discussed below:

Question 1: How do individuals in the Tlokwe and Castello communities define or view themselves (what is the identity of the Tlokwe and Castello community members)?

Based on my exploration of previous research and my own personal experience (I come from a predominantly black community similar to those in the Tlokwe and Castello communities), I had specific expectations of what this question would reveal. It was surprising to find that most of the participants made reference to “Being a people’s person” as the first description of identity that they identify with. This really proved to me that collectivistic communities live on the principle of “*ubuntu*” and that we are inherently driven to look out for the well-being of others and to live in harmony with others. I almost immediately started to think of the effect that the apartheid regime had on such communities. During the apartheid regime, black communities were forced to live in areas outside the municipality district in the “locations,” and this increased a spirit of working

together and looking out for each other as the individuals in these locations were all striving for one common goal, emancipation and freedom.

Question 2: How do individuals in the Tlokwe and Castello communities make decisions as individuals and as a collective?

I had no prior conception of what the responses to this question would be. It was very interesting to understand that individuals in these communities apply the same logic and understanding of the decision-making process that I had noticed from literature. The participants followed a systematic process that included planning, thinking about the outcomes of the decision and attaching an emotive element in that the decision had to “feel right.” The emotive perspective on decision-making really resonated as it is something that I used to overlook when making my own decisions. It has always been there, but never really paid much attention to it.

Question 3: How can the current behaviour in the community be changed?

This question was of particular interest to me as I deemed it interesting to see how an individual or community’s identity may play a role in bringing about a change in behaviour. Because of the collective views that the people in the Tlokwe and Castello communities hold, a change in behaviour would be possible only if the whole community was brought in and made aware of how the current behaviour is maladaptive. Community interventions such as the establishment of community-driven education campaigns and programmes could help to bring successful behaviour change, not only at an individual level, but also community-wide. Participants mentioned how it would be beneficial if the entire community received training on the DROP project and the health risks that are associated with re-using cooking oil. The DROP project had

only focused on training the employees of the convenience stores, local gas stations and restaurants, and failed to recognize the tremendous effect that training would have on the wider community.

Conclusion

The study provided valuable insights on the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change. The study was able to unearth how the Tlokwe and Castello communities configure their identity, namely through the collective nature and collaboration they hold so dearly. These communities live by the notion of “*ubuntu*,” which directly translates to “You are who are you because of others.” The participants in the study defined themselves in relation to others, how others view them and how they would like to be seen by others. They deeply care about the well-being of their families and of the community as a whole.

A change in behaviour will therefore only be possible if the entire community is mobilized and information is shared in a bottom-up manner. Community members should be involved in knowledge-sharing as this will not only result in behaviour change, but also empower the community as a whole.

Contribution of the study

The results of the study will contribute to the limited body of research on identity configuration in decision-making and behaviour change in psychology, especially in the South African context. The study provides motivation for similar studies to be conducted within the South African context. South Africa is a country that prides itself in its diversity and multi-culturality. This diversity allows different identities to be formed and therefore the current study should be seen as a stepping-stone towards shedding more light on the concept of identity configuration in South Africa.

The results of the study provide valuable information on how more community members can be involved in the DROP project. From the results, it is clear that the Tlokwe and Castello community members adhere to a social identity and adhere to the notion of communal living. This means that the DROP project should target the greater community and not focus only on individuals. This would mean setting up educational sessions with the Tlokwe and Castello communities so that community members are educated on the harmful effects of re-using cooking oil and the benefits that come from taking part in the DROP project (receiving incentives to purchase new cooking oil, living a healthier life and participating in a community-wide project to bring about a positive change to the lives of all of the community members).

The results of the study also puts the DROP project in a position to offer employer training, as the participants mentioned that the employers are not knowledgeable on the DROP project and would instruct them [the participants] to re-use the cooking oil. Providing training for the employers will be fruitful as they will be better informed of the harmful effects of re-using cooking oil and thus change this behaviour by allowing their employees to deposit the cooking oil and to use fresh cooking oil. However, the benefits of the study are not limited to the DROP project, as it has direct benefits for the participants.

The well-being of the community is of importance to the participants. The purpose of the study was to ensure a change in maladaptive behaviour to bring about a healthier lifestyle for the Tlokwe and Castello communities. The participants of the study have been empowered to know that they are able to bring about positive change in their communities. They will aspire to take part in more community-based initiatives that aim to change current community issues.

Limitations of the study

The study has several limitations. The findings cannot be generalized to all communities in South Africa due to the small sample size and the fact that the study focused on middle-aged female individuals.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the recommendations proposed by the study, follow-up research would have to be conducted to determine if the recommendations did indeed bring about behaviour change (getting more community members to partake in the DROP project and subsequently reducing the number of times individuals/families re-use cooking oil).

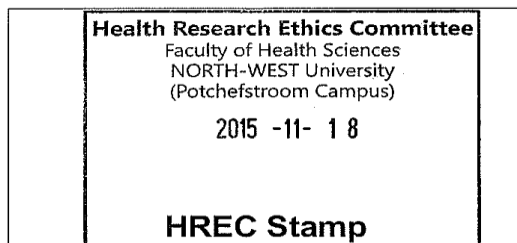
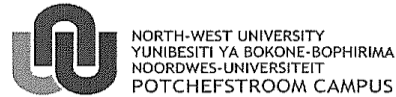
Recommendations for future research

It is suggested that a much larger and more diverse sample be used for future research. It should incorporate participants of all genders (males, females and those that do not adhere to a specific gender), age groups (the current study focused on middle-aged community members) and races. It will be interesting to find out how the youth in these communities define or view themselves and what opinions they have on a change in behaviour.

A mixed method approach is also recommended to find out how the results of this qualitative study would tie in with results of a quantitative study. Future research may also be directed at determining the effectiveness of the recommendations set out by the current study.

SECTION D: ADDENDUM

ADDENDUM A: PARTICIPANTS INFORMED CONSENT FORM (SETSWANA)



Version 2

FOROMO YA TUMELELO YA GO TSAYA KAROLO YA BATSAYA KAROLO PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Setlhogo sa porojeke ya patlisiso: Go tlhotlhomisa tiro ya go rulaganya dikarolo tsa go itshupa ka go tsaya tshweetsho go ya phetolong ya mekgwa

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Exploring the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behaviour change

Motlhotlhomisi mogolo: Refentse Khaole

Aterese: Flat 0611 Corner Place, 243 Hamilton Street, Arcadia 0083

Nomoro ya go ikopanya: 074 111 0241

Nomoro ya kaelo:

O lalediwa go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong ya porojeke e dirang karolo ya Patlisiso yame ya Thutokakanyo ya moithuti wa Masetara wa porojeke ya patlisiso. E katitswe ke Thrip. Ka kopo tsaya nako go bala tshedimoso e abilweng fa, e e tla tihalosang diteng tsa porojeke e. Ka kopo botsa wa patlisiso dipotso dingwe le dingwe ka karolo ngwe le ngwe ya porojeke e, e o sa e tihaloganyeng sentle. Go bothokwa thata gore o kgotsofetse ka botlalo le gore o tihaloganya sentle se patlisiso e amanang le sone le gore o ka amega jang. Gape, go tsaya karolo ga gago ke **boithaopi gotlhelele** gape o gololesegile go gana go tsaya karolo. Ga o patelediwe go tsaya karolo mo thutong e. Ga o re nyaa, se ga sena go go ama bosula ka tsela epe tota. O gololesegile go ikgoga mo thutong e ka nako ngwe le ngwe, le fa o ka dumela go tsaya karolo.

Thuto e, e rebotswe ke **Komiti ya Maitshwaro a a siameng ya Patlisiso ya Boitekanelo ya Lephata la dithuto tsa Saense ya Boitekanelo ko Yunibesithi ya Bokone-Bophirima (Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University [NWU 00204-15-A1])** gape e a go tsamaisiwa ka fa ditaelong le metheong ya maitshwaro a a siameng a Polelo ya ga Helsinki ya ditshabatsaba le ditaelo tsa maitshwaro a a siameng tsa Lekgotla la Maitshwaro a a

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siameng la Patlisiso ya Boitekanelo Ga Setshaba (ethical guidelines and principles of the international Declaration of Helsinki and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council). Go ka tlhokega gore maloko kgotsa baitseanape ba ba tshwanetseng ba komiti ya maitshwara a a siameng ya patlisiso ya boitekanelo ba ka sekaseka dipego tsa patlisiso.

Ke eng se patlisiso ya thuto eleng ka ga sone?

- *Thuto e, e a go tshwarelwa ko Yunibesiti ya Bokone-Bophirima, ko khampaseng ya Potchefstroom e be le nna mo setlhopeng se se lebaneng mo dipuisanong tsa go utlwa maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago (e e tshwanang le dipuisano tsa setlhopa) le ba-patlisiso ba ba naleng maitemogelo mo patlisisong gape ba atisitswe mo Patlisisong ya Thutokakanyo le go etelela pele diporojeke tsa patlisiso. Ba tsaya karolo ba le tlhano go ya ko go ba le borobabedi ba go nna karolo ya setlhopa se se lebaneng le dipuisano tsa go utlwa maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago se o tle be o le karolo ya sone.*
- *Maikelo a patlisiso e ke o tlhotlhomisa gore o nagana gore wena o yang le gore wena o tsaya yang tshweetso mo dilo tse di rileng le gore o dira yang dilo tse di rileng bogolo-jang ka ga go dirisa mafura a apayang a setse a dirisitswe.*

Go reng o laleditswe go tsaya karolo?

- *O laleditse go tsaya karolo ka gore o tsenya boleng jo bogolo mo porojekeng ya patlisiso.*
- *Gape o dumelane le mekgwa e re tlhopang ka yone e e latelang;*
 - *O ko godimo ga ngwaaga tse lesome le borobedi (18);*
 - *O nna mo tikologong ya masepala wa Tlokwe kgotsa Ventersdorp;*
 - *O nale kgotsa o santse o dirisa mafura a a apayang a setse dirisitswe;*
 - *O itse ka porojeke ya DROP ;*
 - *O nale tlhologanyo ya go tlhologanya diteng tsa lokwalo la tumelelo go re o kgone go fa tumelelo mo ditseleng tsa patlisiso;*
 - *Ga o tsenye mafura a gago a a dirisitsweng mo teromong ya go a tsaya e a ntshafatse gape gore a dirisive go feta moo;*
 - *O kgona go bua gape o tlhologanya e ka tswa e le Setswana, Sekgoa kgotsa Seburu le;*
 - *O kgona go bua mo setlhopeng.*

O a go tshwanela go dira eng ga o ka tsaya tshweetso ya go nna karolo mo thutong e?

- *Go a go solofelwa gore o tseye karolo mo puisanong ya setlhopa ko o a go tsewang ka bese e nnye ebe o isiwa ko lefelong ko Yunibesiti ya Bokone-Bophirima ko khampaseng ya Potchefstroom. Ga o goroga teng, o a go tlhalosedwa ka patlisiso gape ebe o bolelwa melao ya setlhopa. O tle be o tsaya karolo mo puisanong tsa setlhopa le batho ba ka nna batlhano ga ya ko go ba le borobedi, go tla tsaya ura go ya ko ureng le masome a mararo. Go a go nna le ditlhopa tse di buisanang ka go utlwa maikutlo le maitemogelo bonyenyane tse pedi. Wa patlisiso o a go go botsa dipotso ebe o kopiwa gore o di araba ebe o buisana ka tsone le batho ba bangwe mo setlhopeng.*
- *Wa patlisiso o ithebola go nna boikanyego mo go wena le go go tshwara ka tlhomo e tshwanetseng.*

O a go tswelwa mosula keng ka go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e?

- *O a go itse go le go ntsi ka porojeke ya DROP ebe o kgona go tsenya mafura a gago a apayang a a dirisitsweng mo teromong ya go a tsaya e a ntšhafatse gape gore a dirisiwe go feta moo e be o reka mafura a mantšha a e leng gore a nonofile go feta mafura a a dirisitsweng.*
- *Batho ba porojeke ba a go itse go feta fa, ka gore go diriwe eng go netefatsa gore batho ba le bantsi mo setshabeng sa lona ba tsenye mafura a bone a apayang a a dirisitsweng mo teromong ya go a tsaya e a ntšhafatse gape gore a dirisiwe go feta moo, ebe ba kgona go reka mafura a mantšha a eleng gore a nonofile go feta mafura a a dirisitsweng.*

A go nale diteko tse di amang go tsaya karolo ga gago mo patlisisong e?

- *Diteko mo thutong e ke gore o tle be o le karolo ya dipuisano tsa setlhopa gape batho ba bangwe mo setlhopeng ba ka nna ba bolela batho ba bangwe ko ntle se o se buileng. Le fa go ntse jalo, rea go kopa batho botlhe go dumela gore ba ka se bolele ope ko ntle ga setlhopa ka se re se buileng mo setlhopeng. Teko e ngwe ke gore o ka ikutlwa maikutlo a tsholetsegile ke se se tsileng go buiwa. Le fa go ntse, re tla be re nale mogakolodi gore o kgone go bua le ene, ga o ka ikutlwa jaana. Dipuisano tsa setlhopa di a theipiwa mo setsaya modumong.*
- *Tse di mosola di feta diteko*

Go a go diragalang mo tiragalong e e se nang go direga ya tsela ngwe ya go kokonelwa e ka direga jaaka pheto e lebaneng le go tsaya karolo ga gago mo thutong e ya patlisiso?

- *Ga o ka ikutlwa maikutlo a le ko godimo kgotsa o tenegile ka nako ya dipuisano tsa setlhopa, o tla ba le monyetla wa go bua le mogakolodi.*

Ke mang tle be a nale botseno mo tshedimoso e e tserweng?

- *O ka ikutlwa gore theimi ya patlisiso e a go itse leina la gago le se o se buileng le batho ba bangwe mo setlhopeng ba a go reetsa dikarabo tsa gago ka nako ya setlhopa se se lebaneng le dipuisano tsa go utlwa maikutlo le maitemogelo a gago. Le fa go ntse jalo, leina la gago ga le na go itsiwe mo lokwalong la bofelo la patlisiso le tshedimoso ya gago e a go tshwarwa ka khupo-marama mo go kgonegang. Ga go na ope o tsileng go itse gore ke wena mo phasaletsong tse di tswang mo thutong e gape ke fela theimi ya patlisiso e e tla berekang ka tshedimoso e o abalaneng ka yone. Tshedimoso yotlhe e a go sirelediwa ka go e lotlelela le go beya mo khomputareng e sireleditsweng ka khunololo-moraba.*

Go a go diragaleng ka tshedimoso e e tserweng?

- *Se ke kgobokanyo ya gangwe fela gape tsheimoso e e tserweng e a go beiwa dingwaaga tse tlhano ka paballo ko Yunibesiting ebe e phimolwa ga e fetile.*

A o a go duelwa go tsaya karolo mo thutong e kgotsa a go nale tihwatlhwa e e amang?

Ga o na go kreiya tuelo epe go tsaya karolo mo thutong e, mme tle be go nale sengwe sa go ja le go nwa pele ga setlhopa se simolola.

A go na le sengwe gape se o tshwanetseng o se itse kgotsa o se dire?

- O ka nna wa ikgolaganya le Rrê Refentse Khaole ko 0741110241 kgotsa le Prof. Herman Grobler ko 0722349675 fa o na le dipotso go feta foo kgotsa o ka kopana le mathata mangwe.
- O ka ikopanya le Komiti ya Maitshwaro a a siameng ya Patlisiso ya Boitekanelo ka Mmê Carolien van Zyl ko 018 299 2089; carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za ga o nale dikamego dingwe kgotsa dingongorego tse di sa arabiwang mo go lekaneng ke wa patlisiso.
- O a go fiwa khopi ya kitso e le ya foromo ya tumelelo go nna le rekoto ya gago.

Ke a go itse jang ka diphithhelelo?

- Diphithhelelo tsa patlisiso di a go abelwana le wena ka go dirisa peopele ya komputara go bontsha ditlha, e e tla diriwang ko lefelong le le gaufi le wena ga patlisiso e feditswe go diriwa. Letlha le nako ya se, e tla buisangwa le wena mo nako e tlang.

Polelo ke mo tsaya karolo

Ka go saena fo tlase, Nna ke dumela go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong ya thuto ya setlhogo sa: Go tlhotlhomisa tiro ya go rulaganya dikarolo tsa go itshupa ka go tsaya tshweetsho go ya phetolong ya mekgwa (Exploring the role of identity configuration in decision-making towards behavioural change)

Ke bolela gore:

- Ke badile tshedimoso e le foromo ya tumelelo ebile e kwadilwe ka puo e ke bokgeleke mo go yone le ka boiketlo.
- Ke ne ke nale monyetla wa go botsa dipotso mo mothong o o tsayang tumelelo, gape le mo wa patlisiso e bile dipotso tsaaka di arabilwe mo go lekaneng.
- Ke tihaloganya gore go tsaya karolo mo thutong e ke **boithaopi** gape ga ke a patelediwa go tsaya karolo.
- Ke ka tlhopa go tlogela thuto e ka nako ngwe le ngwe e be ke sa otlhaiwe kgotsa ke sa kelemelwe ka tsela epe.
- Ke ka kopiwa go tswa mo patlisisong pele ga e fela, fa wa patlisiso a utlwa gore go mo kgatlhegong e e ntshiametseng, kgotsa ga ke sa sele lananeo la thuto morago jaaka ke dumetse go dira.

E saenetswe ko (*lefelo*).....ka (*letlha*)..... 20....

.....
Mosaeno wa mo tsaya karolo

.....
Mosaeno wa paki

Polelo ke motho o o tsayang tumelelo

Nna (*leina*) ke bolela gore:

- Ke tihalositse tshedimoso e e mo lekwalong le mo go
- Ke mo rotloeditse gore a botse dipotso ebile ke tsere nako e e lekaneng go di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore o tihaloganya mo go lekaneng ditsela tse di diriwang tshotlhe tsa patlisiso, jaaka go buisantswe ko godimo.
- Ke dirisitse motoloki/ga ke a dirisa motoloki

E saenetswe ko (*lefelo*)..... on (*letlha*)..... 20....

Mosaeno wa motho o o tsayang tumelelo Mosaeno wa paki

Polelo ke motlhotlhomisi

Nna (*leina*) ke bolela gore:

- Ke tihalositse tshedimoso e e mo lekwalong le mo go
- Ke mo rotloeditse gore a botse dipotso ebile ke tsere nako e e lekaneng go di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore o tihaloganya mo go lekaneng ditsela tse di diriwang tshotlhe tsa patlisiso, jaaka go buisantswe ko godimo.
- Ke dirisitse/ga ke a dirisa motoloki.

Saenetswe ko (*lefel*) ka (*letlha*) 20....

.....
Mosaeno wa motlhotlhomisi

.....
Mosaeno wa paki

ADDENDUM B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

The research question is: How does identity configuration inform decision-making with regard to behavioural change?

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

1. You are a person living in your community. You are thus a person in your own right, but also part of the community? Please tell me how you think you are?
2. Please tell me how you fit into the community.
3. How do you make decisions as a person?
4. How do you make decisions as part of the community?
5. In your training you have learned about used cooking oil and that it is not healthy. You have also learned that you can sell this cooking oil and buy fresh oil. This used oil can also be used to make a paraffin that is safe to use. This is called household bio-fuel. What will help you to decide to sell your used cooking oil in exchange for fresh cooking oil and to try out the healthy household bio-fuel?
6. We have spoken about how used oil can be used to make a kind of paraffin that is healthy. How do you think people can become part of this new healthy project?

ADDENDUM C: ARTICLE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

A. Style: If your article is accepted for publication, the manuscript will be copyedited and typeset in the correct style for the journal.

- Font: Times New Roman, 12 point, double-line spaced. Use margins of at least 2.5 cm (or 1 inch).
- Title: Use bold for your article title, with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns.
- Abstract: Indicate the abstract paragraph with a heading or by reducing the font size.
- Keywords: Please give five or six
- Headings: Please indicate the level of the section headings in your article:
 - First-level headings (e.g. Introduction, Conclusion) should be in bold, with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns.
 - Second-level headings should be in bold italics, with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns.
 - Third-level headings should be in italics, with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns.
 - Fourth-level headings should be in bold italics, at the beginning of a paragraph. The text follows immediately after a full stop (full point) or other punctuation mark.
 - Fifth-level headings should be in italics, at the beginning of a paragraph. The text follows immediately after a full stop (full point) or other punctuation mark.

- Please use American spelling style consistently throughout your manuscript.
- Please use double quotation marks, except where "a quotation is 'within' a quotation". Please note that long quotations should be indented without quotation marks.
- Please include a title page. This should contain only:
 - the title of the paper, the name(s) and address(es) of the author(s);
 - a shortened version of the title suitable for the running head, not exceeding 40 character spaces;
 - the name, address, email address, telephone, and fax numbers of one author to whom correspondence and proofs should be sent.

B. Referencing Style: APA.

- In-text citations generally consist of the surname(s) of the author(s), the year of publication of the work cited, and page number(s) if necessary, enclosed within parentheses.
- At the end of a document, list the references to sources that have been cited in the text, including those found in tables and figures, under the heading "References". Place references in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author followed by the initials of the author's given name. Arrange references with the same.