

**EXPRESSIVE ART IN CROSS-CULTURAL GROUP SUPERVISION:
APPLYING THE MMOGO™METHOD**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
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(Potchefstroom Campus)**

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SUMMARY

EXPRESSIVE ART IN CROSS-CULTURAL GROUP SUPERVISION: APPLYING THE MMOGO™METHOD

Keywords: Expressive art, cross-cultural supervision, Mmogo™method

This article explores the value of the use of expressive art in cross-cultural supervision. Due to globalisation and escalating international mobility, universities are becoming increasingly multi-cultural. This poses a challenge to the supervisor who has to assist students in personal and professional growth, particularly considering that various culturally embedded intra-psychic, interpersonal and situational processes and dynamics can influence students' preconceived ideas, expectations and anxiety about supervision. People are often only vaguely aware of the cultural underpinnings of their experiences and may struggle to find words to express their feelings and experiences. Language differences and the difference in the meanings ascribed to experiences due to different cultural backgrounds add to the challenge. Efficient communication is essential for a good supervisor-supervisee relationship. In order for the supervisor to gain insight into the intra-psychic as well as the interpersonal experiences that inform personal and professional growth, an alternative method of communication needs to be explored that will enable the participants to give words to difficult processes. Various projective techniques, such as expressive art, could be used as an alternative form of communication. Art can serve as a narrative that reflects interpersonal and intrapersonal processes.

Fourteen individuals, from an African background, participated in the research, thirteen Tswana speaking women from Botswana and a male Tshivenda individual from Venda, with an age range between 25 and 45. The participants registered with the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, where supervisors are mainly endorsing Westernised and individual values. The participants attended lectures regarding: active listening and communication skills; facilitating counselling processes; and dealing with specific

manifestations of the helping relationship. They engaged with community-based institutions that offered practical implementation of their theoretical knowledge. The students also engaged in weekly supervision with the lecturers at the university.

A qualitative, case-study approach by means of the MmogoTM method was used in order to gain insight into the world of human experience and behaviour from the subjective experiences of the participants. This method values the symbolic, contextual groundedness of meaning and provides valuable information regarding social and interpersonal aspects embedded in relationships. Participants were asked to create visual representations that would illustrate any aspect of their growth since the beginning of the year. After the presentations had been made, the participants engaged in focus group discussions. Data gathered from the visual representations, as well as verbal accounts, were analysed by means of semiotic data analysis. This is an inductive form of analysis that begins with detailed observation and explanation of the presentations, and then continues towards deductions and abstract generalisations about the representation. This is done by means of denotation and connotation. The aim of the research was two-fold. Firstly, this research aimed to explore the themes that emerged in a cross-cultural supervision relationship. Secondly, this research explored the possible value of the use of expressive art, which is referred to as the MmogoTM method, in cross-cultural group supervision.

Central themes that emerged from the data suggested that participants transfer culturally embedded values and norms to their new learning environment. It further elicited valuable information regarding aspects that could play a significant role in personal and professional development. These aspects include: the nature of interaction between the individual and the community; the needs and requirements of the community in order to be conducive to growth; and also the growth needs and requirements of the individual. With regards to the use of the MmogoTM method, it has provided a valuable means of eliciting rich information that would not necessarily be shared in normal familiar one-on-one conversations.

OPSOMMING

SKEPPENDE KUNS IN KRUISSKULTURELE GROEP-STUDIELEIDING:

TOEPASSING VAN DIE MMOGO™METODE

Sleutelwoorde: Skeppende kuns, kruis-kulturele studieleiding, Mmogo™ metode

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die waarde van die gebruik van skeppende kuns in kruis-kulturele studieleiding. As gevolg van globalisering en toenemende internasionale mobiliteit word universiteite al hoe meer multi-kultureel. Hierdie verskynsel bied 'n uitdaging aan die studieleier wat die student moet ondersteun ten opsigte van persoonlike en professionele groei, siende dat verskeie kultuurgebonde intra-psigiese, interpersoonlike en situasionele prosesse en dinamiek studente se vooropgestelde idees, verwagtinge en angstigheids oor studieleiding kan beïnvloed. Mense is gewoonlik net vaagweg bewus van die kulturele basis van hul ervarings en mag probleme daarmee ondervind om woorde te vind om hul gevoelens en ervarings te beskryf. Taalverskille en die verskil in betekenis wat aan ervarings toegeskryf word as gevolg van verskillende kulturele agtergronde dra by tot die uitdaging. Effektiewe kommunikasie is noodsaaklik vir 'n goeie verhouding tussen studieleier en student. Om dit vir die studieleier moontlik te maak om insig te verkry in die intra-psigiese en interpersoonlike ervarings wat 'n invloed het op persoonlike en professionele groei, is dit nodig om 'n alternatiewe kommunikasiemethode te ondersoek wat die deelnemers in staat sal stel om moeilike prosesse te verwoord. Verskeie projektiewe tegnieke, soos skeppende kuns, kan gebruik word as 'n alternatiewe kommunikasievorm. Kuns kan dien as 'n narratief wat interpersoonlike en intrapersoonlike prosesse reflekteer.

Veertien individue uit 'n Afrika-konteks tussen die ouderdomme van 25 en 45 het aan die navorsing deelgeneem: dertien was Tswanasprekende vroue van Botswana en een was 'n manlike Tshivendasprekende persoon van Venda. Die deelnemers het lesings bygewoon aan die Potchefstroom-kampus van die Noordwes-Universiteit, waar studieleiers

hoofsaaklik Westerse en individualistiese waardes onderskryf. Die deelnemers het lesings bygewoon aangaande aktiewe luister- en kommunikasievaardighede, die fasilitering van die beradingproses en die hantering van spesifieke manifestasies van die hulpverhouding. Hulle was betrokke by gemeenskapsgebaseerde instellings wat aan hulle geleentheid vir die praktiese implementering van hul teoretiese kennis gebied het. Die studente was ook betrokke by weeklikse studieleiding deur dosente aan die universiteit.

'n Kwalitatiewe, gevallestudiebenadering deur middel van die MmogoTMmetode is gebruik om insig te verkry in die wêreld van menslike ervaring en gedrag vanuit die subjektiewe ervarings van die deelnemers. Hierdie metode heg waarde aan die simboliese, kontekstuele begroning van betekenis en voorsien waardevolle inligting aangaande sosiale en interpersoonlike aspekte wat gegrond is in verhoudings.

Deelnemers is gevra om visuele voorstellings te maak wat enige aspek van hul groei sedert die begin van die jaar sou illustreer. Nadat die voorstelling gemaak is, het die deelnemers deelgeneem aan groepbesprekings. Data wat ingesamel is vanuit die visuele voorstellings, sowel as verbale data, is ontleed deur die gebruik van semiotiese data-analise. Dit is 'n induktiewe ontleding wat begin met 'n gedetailleerde waarneming en verduideliking van die voorstelling, en daarna word afleidings en abstrakte veralgemenings oor die voorstelling gemaak. Dit word gedoen deur denotasie en konnotasie. Die doelstellings van die navorsing was tweeledig. Eerstens het die navorsing ten doel gestel om temas te ondersoek wat voorgespruit het uit die kruis-kulturele studieleidingverhouding. Tweedens het die navorsing ten doel gehad om die moontlike waarde van die gebruik van skeppende kuns, met verwysing na die MmogoTMmetode, in kruis-kulturele supervisie te ondersoek.

Sentrale temas wat na vore gekom het uit die data suggereer dat die deelnemers kultuurgebonde waardes en norme oordra na hul nuwe leeromgewing. Verder het waardevolle inligting na vore gekom ten opsigte van aspekte wat 'n belangrike rol in persoonlike en professionele groei kan speel. Hierdie aspekte sluit in die aard van

interaksie tussen die individu en die gemeenskap, die behoeftes en vereistes van die gemeenskap ten einde groei te bewerk, sowel as ontwikkelingbehoefte en -vereistes van die individu. Dit blyk dat die MmogoTM metode 'n waardevolle bydrae gelewer het om ryk inligting te verkry vanuit die visuele data sowel as die verbale beskrywings van deelnemers, wat nie noodwendig in 'n gewone een-tot-een gesprek gedeel sou word nie.

PREFACE

The candidate chose to propose an article, with the support of her supervisor

Prof V Roos

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT THIS ARTICLE FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

I, the supervisor, hereby declare that the input and the effort of L. Ferreira in writing this article reflect research done by her on this topic. I hereby grant permission that she may submit this article for examination directed towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Clinical Psychology.

Signed on this day.....11/09/2008.....at the North-West University



.....
Prof V Roos

Supervisor

INTENDED JOURNAL AND GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

This dissertation will be submitted to the *Journal of Psychology in Africa* to be considered for publication. The following is a copy of the guidelines for prospective authors set out by the journal.

Guidelines to Authors

The *Journal of Psychology in Africa* includes original articles, review articles, book reviews, commentaries, special issues, case analyses, reports, special announcements, et cetera. Contributions should attempt a synthesis of emic and etic methodologies and applications. Specifically, manuscripts should do the following.

- 1) Combine quantitative and qualitative data.
- 2) Take a systematic qualitative or ethnographic approach.
- 3) Use an original and creative methodological approach.
- 4) Address an important but overlooked topic.
- 5) Present new theoretical or conceptual ideas.

Furthermore, all papers must show an awareness of the cultural context of the research questions asked, the measures used, and the results obtained. Finally the papers should be practical, based on local experience, and applicable to crucial development efforts in key areas of psychology.

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Manuscripts should be submitted in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish. They should be typewritten and double-spaced, with wide margins, using one side of the page only. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief Journal of Psychology in Africa, Professor Elias Mpofu, Department of Counselor Education, Counseling Psychology and Rehabilitation Services, Pennsylvania State University, 327 CEDAR Building, University Park, PA 16802-3110, USA, e-mail: exm31@psu.edu. Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts via e-mail, in MS Word. However, two hard copies are required for any e-mail submission.

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MANUSCRIPT FOR EXAMINATION

Abstract

Due to globalisation and escalating international mobility universities are becoming increasingly multi-cultural. This poses a challenge to the supervisor who has to assist students in personal and professional growth, seeing that various culturally embedded processes and dynamics can influence students' preconceived ideas, as well as their expectations and anxiety about supervision. The aim of this research was two-fold. Firstly it was, to explore the themes that emerged in a cross-cultural supervision relationship. The second aim was to explore the possible value of the use of expressive art, which is referred to as the MmogoTM method, in cross-cultural group supervision.

Fourteen individuals participated in the research, thirteen Tswana speaking women from Botswana and a male Tshivenda individual from Venda, with an age range between 25 and 45. Participants were asked to create visual representations illustrating any aspect of their growth since the beginning of the year. Thereafter, the participants engaged in focus group discussions. Data were analysed by means of semiotic data analysis, which is an inductive form of analysis. Central themes suggested that the transfer of culturally embedded values and norms takes place between environments. The data further elicited valuable information regarding aspects that could play an integral role in personal and professional development.

It appears that the MmogoTM method could serve as a valuable tool in enhancing the quality of supervision. Further research is required to determine the value of the use of the MmogoTM method, with its materials that are familiar to black African people, across different cultures.

Key words:

Expressive art, cross-cultural supervision, MmogoTM method

EXPRESSIVE ART IN CROSS-CULTURAL GROUP SUPERVISION: APPLYING THE MMOGO™-METHOD

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation and international academic mobility have ensured that learning opportunities become more accessible (Altbach, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2006). The *increasing tendency of students to choose to study in foreign countries demands greater cultural awareness and insight on the part of the supervisor* (Gaskell, 2006). Supervision in a cross-cultural context can be challenging, since various intra-psychic, interpersonal and situational processes and dynamics can influence students' preconceived ideas, expectations and anxiety about supervision in subtle or complex ways (Estrada, Frame & Williams, 2004). This is even more obvious in a supervision setting where the supervisor and supervisees are from different cultural contexts, such as a more individual-focused and Western background and/or a more collective African background. In such a setting, the supervisor and supervisee bring to supervision their own cultural identities (Gardner, 2002), different worldviews and communication styles (Young, 2004). The aim of this research is to explore the themes that emerged in a cross-cultural supervision relationship, as well as the possible value of the use of expressive art, which is referred to as the Mmogo™ method, in cross-cultural group supervision.

Culture can be defined as: the unconscious shared behaviour of people in a cultural group that is determined by their habits; unspoken shared understandings (that are represented by their expectations); a group's verbal and non-verbal language; and perceptions that are shaped by culture and govern the way people understand themselves and others (Avdan, Boyacigiller, Goodman & Phillips, 2004). It is this cultural background that forms the main frame of reference for interpreting events (Kitayama, Duffy & Uchida, 2007; Postmes & Jetten, 2006). Following the socio-ecological theory, the cultural context as part of the macro system underpins learning that occurs on an individual, micro level.

Insight into the nature of cultural undertones in understanding human experiences, perceptions and behaviour, is therefore fundamental in facilitating learning opportunities in a cross-cultural context (Gaskell, 2006). For example, when supervisors see their supervisees as an extension of themselves (implying the same cultural understanding to phenomena and human functioning), and they ignore the cultural contexts which informs their supervisees' different interpretations, growth opportunities for both supervisees and supervisors are hindered (Breux, 2005; Hird, Cavalieri, Dulko, Felice & Ho, 2001).

An important outcome of supervision is that students should become more aware of their personal and professional growth (Newsome, Henderson & Veach, 2005). A greater awareness can facilitate new skills, which can manifest in the training of professionals in careers like that of health care counselling (Saarikoski, Warne, Aunio, & Leino-Kilpi, 2006). Educators, who want to facilitate learning experiences may not have insight into the cultural embeddedness of students' experiences, and could easily project their own interpretations, based on their attitudes towards the supervision relationship. The supervisor needs to enter into the supervisee's world of experience (Gilbert & Evans, 2000). According to Young (2004) cross-cultural supervision could be compared to travelling to a foreign country of which the language and customs are not known.

It is important that the supervisor seeks to obtain insight in the student's cultural context so that personal narratives will be better understood and applied accordingly to facilitate personal and professional growth (Hird et al., 2001; Young 2004). Hawkins and Shohet (2006) encourage supervisors to honour cultural differences by finding ways to communicate across differences.

Cross-cultural supervision involves different ways of communicating (Du Toit, 2004). Effective communication is essential for a good supervisor-supervisee relationship (Adams & Cargill, 2003). However, the difference in language and the meanings attached to phenomena can challenge the cross-cultural supervision process (Young, 2004). The use of particular creative approaches in group supervision can create or enable the

formation of a group process (Dunbar-Krige, 2006), because interpersonal processes involve intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and contextual realities. People are often only vaguely aware of their subjective learning experiences and cannot describe it verbally or consciously (Smith, 2004). Various projective techniques could be used as an alternative communication form, such as expressive art, which is illustrated in this research.

The creation of expressive art entails the recreation of traditions and emotional processes, and it gives meaning to the student's context and world of experience (Franklin, 2000; Loock, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2003; Madden & Bloom, 2004). According to Vygotsky, art reflects the development of an individual's social life and the community (Lindqvist, 2003). This visual expression in art is regarded as a visual narrative which can provide the supervisor with insight into those social and emotional experiences of the student that could encourage or hinder growth. The creative outcome can be seen as a narrative in form (Schiff, 2006), which can serve as a reflection to the student in terms of growth that has taken place, as well as a means of confrontation in terms of possible gaps in areas where more growth is required. Through the creation of something that is visually available, a connection is created between the private and public experience (Schaverien, 2005), a bridge develops between all the layers of the psyche that has strong internal power in terms of self-discovery (Franklin, 2000). The content which is difficult to verbalise spontaneously flows from the creative representation of the student. Franklin (2000, p.20) said that "when the limitations of verbal language end, the arts begin communicating with stunning accuracy what was previously wordless".

It is thus clear that cross-cultural supervision poses various challenges which are complicated by language barriers and different cultural discourses. The aim of this study is twofold. The first is, to explore the themes that emerged in a cross-cultural supervision relationship. The second aim is, to describe the possible value of using expressive art, which is referred to as the MmogoTM method, in cross-cultural group supervision

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

Qualitative research is used to gain insight into the world of human experience and behaviour from the subjective experiences of the participants. According to Neuman (2000), qualitative data are rich in detail, sensitive to context, and can be a reflection of complex processes or sequences of social life. The data aim to explore the ways that people construct social reality and the cultural meanings attached to these realities (Vivar, McQueen, Whyte & Armayor, 2007). In this research a case study method was applied, which is a flexible methodological approach that focuses on a specific case. Case study research is a comprehensive research method dealing with real-life situations (Rosenberg & Yates, 2007). According to Creswell (2002) a case study will lead to an in-depth understanding of processes and dynamics.

Research context and participants

As part of the SADC (South African Development Community) agreement, South Africa and its neighbours agreed to share educational, economic and other resources. The SADC was established in 1980 by the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. According to their agreement, 5% of all available placements at Universities should be reserved for SADC students (Hahn, 2005). In response to this agreement, representatives of a group of students from Botswana approached the North-West University's Department of Psychology regarding the opportunity to register for an informal certificate course to further their counselling skills. The students had to relocate from their mainly rural country to a foreign country with customs and cultures different to their own, in an effort to enhance their skills. The students did not only leave their country and families behind in search of knowledge, they also carried with them a rich cultural heritage and personal experiences that cause them to experience this learning opportunity in a unique way.

Fourteen individuals participated in the research, thirteen Tswana-speaking women from Botswana and a male Tshivenda individual from Venda, with an age range between 25 and 45. The participants attended lectures regarding active listening and communication skills, facilitating counselling processes and dealing with specific manifestations of the helping relationship. They engaged with community-based institutions that offered practical implementation of theoretical knowledge. The students also had weekly supervision with the lecturers at the university. Supervision was challenging for both supervisor and supervisees seeing that they came from vastly different cultural backgrounds. The supervisors came from a more Westernised, individual-focused culture, where people are viewed as independent of one another and where people strive towards autonomy and self-fulfilment (Oyserman, Coon & Kimmelmeier, 2002). There is a strong focus on the rights of the individual and the achievement of personal goals in contrast to the community centred viewpoint of the students that focuses on serving others and partaking in the community's duties. Individuals from a Western individual-focused society base their identity on individual achievements, while the identity of the individual from a more African, community centred society is embedded in their culture of origin (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002). The supervisor might therefore experience learning and personal and professional growth in a different way than his/her supervisees.

Procedure

Weekly supervision with the students was conducted by means of personal interviews and group discussions. On an individual level students shared their experiences with the supervisor and during the group discussions, participants engaged in making collages.

The research was executed over three sessions, after the students had engaged in 20 weeks of community-based work. Participants formed one group and were all involved in the group discussions.

After ethical permission was obtained, the students were asked to participate in the research. Students were asked to create visual presentations of their growth since the beginning of the year by using expressive art, and then they engaged in focus group discussions about their presentations. The data were analysed, provisional themes were extracted and the students were invited to join in a further focus group discussion to confirm and clarify themes and subthemes. The group was asked to reflect on the provisional findings. During this process the students contributed towards a richer cultural understanding of the images that were presented. The group was also asked to describe how the information that was revealed in the visual presentations could enrich supervision sessions.

Data collection

The MmogoTM method was used to gather data. The MmogoTM method requires participants to create their own data by making visual representations applicable to a specific research question (Roos & Klopper, 2008). These visual presentations represented people, actions, interactions and events in social life, which are part of people's social repertoire. The presentations were regarded as constructions of the participants' social realities which portrayed cultural meanings and projected contextual realities. The MmogoTM method is a culturally sensitive method that values the symbolic, contextual groundedness of meanings and could provide the researcher with information regarding the co-construction of complex contextual meanings (Roos & Klopper, 2008). This method is regarded as a useful research tool in gathering cross-cultural data, since it provides important information regarding social and interpersonal aspects embedded in community relationships. It is regarded as a method that is culturally sensitive (Roos & Klopper, 2008). The MmogoTM method utilizes familiar cultural items such as modelling clay, dry grass-sticks and coloured beads.

In this research participants were asked to make visual representations that would illustrate any aspect of their growth since the beginning of the year. After the representations had been made, the participants engaged in focus group discussions.

They were asked to state what their objects represented and to explain the meaning of their representations on different levels. Thereafter, the visual presentations were photographed and focus group discussions were conducted about the visual presentations of the participants.

According to Curtis and Redmond (2007), focus groups are especially helpful when knowledge about the research question is inadequate, and elaboration is required. The aim of the focus group is to encourage self-disclosure in order to gain more insight into the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of participants. In this research the group's shared cultural knowledge, and also individual differences, were identified as a way to understand the cross-cultural supervision relationship. Through the use of focus groups, the researcher accessed the language that participants used in the construction of meaning in their daily experiences and explored the research question while the focus group articulated and clarified their views and opinions (Curtis & Redmond, 2007).

Data analysis

Data were analysed by means of semiotic data analysis. Semiotics is the study of signs or objects that represent things other than themselves (Marvasti, 2004), and takes place on a meta-level (Sonneson, 2004). It is an inductive form of analysis that begins with detailed observation and explanation of representations, and then proceeds towards deductions and abstract generalisations about the representation. This is done by means of denotation and connotation (Emmison & Smith, 2000; Marvasti, 2004). Denotation is the first level and entails documenting the simple, obvious meaning of the representation, i.e. the participant's description and explanation of the representation. This process is essentially one of logical inference (Alasuutari, 1998). Photographs and transcribed focus group data were analysed by means of connotation.

Connotation is the second level; deeper meanings are discovered in the representations when the first level (denotations) interacts with the dominant cultural values associated with the object. According to semiotics, the study of culture is a study of conscious and

unconscious communication through language, visual images, music, and so on (Lawes, 2002). On this level a sign, symbol or object is never the thing it represents, but rather a substitute for meaning on a deeper level (Jamieson, 2007). Through semiotic analysis researchers can move between what is on the surface and the deeper cultural symbolism and meaning (Marvasti, 2004).

To enable analysis from a broader field the four levels of analysis by the Semiotic analyst, Berlyne were used (Jamieson, 2007). They are divided into four distinct categories of information namely: semantic information, which refers to the characteristics of an external object; expressive information where interpretations were made regarding the abstract, deeper meanings portrayed by the objects; cultural information which refers to cultural-specific information that was represented in the visual presentations and syntactic information that refers to the characteristics of other elements of the representation. Jamieson (2007) claims that, even though it is possible for an image to give information on all four of these levels, a focus on any one level could be sufficient.

Trustworthiness

The guidelines suggested by Marvasti (2004) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) were applied to ensure the validity of this study.

Table I: Trustworthiness of the study

Respondent validation	Respondents were invited to listen to the inferences the researcher and other participants made, before the findings were used to write the article. They could either confirm the findings and elaborate on them or deny the findings and explain their beliefs about their objects.
Triangulation	According to Neuman (2000), it is better to look at something from various angles. Data were gathered from multiple perspectives by performing a literature study, the

	Mmogo™ method, focus group discussions and the findings were corroborated with experts in the field of Tswana culture.
Credibility “Truth value”	The test of isomorphism. The researcher has to show that the multiple realities of participants have been represented adequately, and that inferences made by the researcher are credible. To ensure truth value, findings were presented to the participants for feedback and approval (member check), as well as being discussed with lecturers who are knowledgeable in the field (triangulation).
Transferability	Providing the widest range of information for adequate “thick” descriptions in order to show that the Mmogo™ method will be useful in other supervision settings as well.
Dependability	The data, results and interpretations should be supported by data. Data were triangulated by a literature review and member checking. Verbal accounts were transcribed, inferences were made regarding the statements made by participants, and then returned to the focus group to establish whether the inferences made, were valid.
Confirmability	Internal coherence can be determined by means of an audit trail which includes: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions and instrument development information. In this study raw data were analysed, recurring themes were identified and data were reduced when satiation occurred. Thereafter data were synthesised into a meaningful whole.

Ethical considerations

This study is part of a project titled, “An exploration of enabling contexts” for which ethical approval has been granted by the ethical committee of the North-West University with the ethical number 05K14. Students were also informed about the research project, the reason for the study, and that the outcome would be to gain a better understanding of the cross-cultural supervision relationship. Informed consent was given by the participants. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage, and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the material.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following discussion is an example of how the data were analysed.

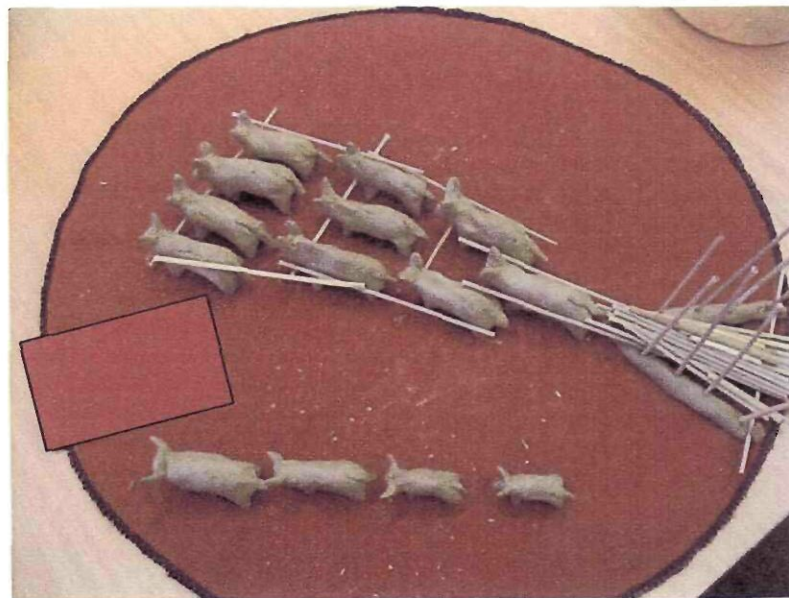


Photo 1: Cattle pulling a load

Level 1 Semantic information

The participant has created two scenarios. In the one scene animals are working on a piece of land. There are donkeys and cows working together, pulling a load. All the

animals carry an equal load. In the next scene there are four cows walking in a line from big to small. The animals are all walking in the same direction. There are no boundaries or fences and the animals are able to complete their work without obstacles.

Level 2 Expressive information

The visual presentation contained symbols in which the participant demonstrated two things. Firstly, the representation of how the participant has developed since he came into a new context is symbolised in the visual presentation of the cows in the front (from thin to fat/ right to left). The growth in the knowledge he has acquired since he has arrived is represented in the changing physical feature of thin to thick. The visual presentation that includes both cows and donkeys is secondly, used to illustrate the awareness of diversity, and to show that despite the differences between people, they can work together. The load being pulled by all represents fellow students and lecturers who collectively work together to achieve goals.

Level 3 Cultural information

The visual presentation is embedded in the cultural understanding of *tirisano*, which means working together (Gaonnwe, 2005). According to the cultural embeddedness of this presentation, it is impossible to succeed in his goals without the help of his colleagues and lecturers. This is in line with the *botho* concept that the individual is a person through others (Louw, 2001). *Botho* is a Setswana word which means “collective personhood” (Mighty, 2001), a thought system based on human interdependence, with specific focus on reciprocity, symbiosis, selflessness (Osei-Hwedie, 2005), humanness, reliability, honesty, courtesy, respect for authority, and so on (Gaonnwe, 2005). There is a Tswana saying: “work is easier with too many hands” indicating that the community values teamwork and that everyone’s input is valued. There are also specific power and hierarchy differences in the community, illustrated by the different layers in the presentation, which illustrate that the community is arranged in layers according to status, importance and power (Basabe & Ros, 2005; Nyamnjoh, 2004).

The visual presentation also illustrated the contextual value of cattle in understanding the meanings associated with the research question. Cattle are seen as a form of stored wealth, a cushion against starvation when food is scarce and a means of transport (Randela, 2003). In the visual projection the growth of knowledge is illustrated as an individual asset for the benefit of the community.

Level 4 Syntactic information

The cows and donkeys are connected to each other by means of yokes, each helping to make the load a little lighter. There is a strong reference to the continuous and constant interaction between the individual and the communal.

After the visual presentations and verbal explanations had been analysed, themes and subthemes were identified. This part of the discussion focuses on the first aim of the research, namely to explore the themes that emerged in a cross-cultural supervision relationship.

Table II: Main- and subthemes

Main theme	Subthemes
Interrelatedness between individuals and community	Reciprocal emotional commitment between individuals and community Values and norms informing individual and community interrelatedness Hierarchical organisation of relationships
Qualities of individual and community engagement	Community as containing space Individual belongingness
Metaphorical use of symbol to express abstract concepts	Rain as a metaphor for knowledge Animals as a metaphor for growth and competence

Interrelatedness between individuals and community

Reciprocal emotional commitment between individuals and community

The community supports its members to grow, achieve goals and develop their potential, which the individual member of the community in return uses for the benefit of other people and the broader community. This is regarded as the emotional commitment between individuals and the community. One participant described it as follows:

The more she gets the rain of information, the more people in the country are going to harvest from her; she's going to be productive and bring more fruits to the country.

Another added:

When I get here I met my colleagues, we shared the information, I learnt a lot from them. Then I'm going back to share with my colleagues the information that I have gotten from here and then we share with the children.

According to Murithi (2006b), there is an emotional connection between the self and the community which encourages sharing and commitment to display actions and attitudes that are beneficial to other people and the broader community. In the visual presentation below the individual is climbing the ladder with the support of others.

With a ladder you can go up high and see everyone. Have experiences from those ones and have the ideas and learn from the community what they need.



Photo 2: Ladder of support

With the support of the community, the individual is capable of climbing different ladders of obtaining more insight and knowledge, which are then harvested back into the community. It takes courage on the part of an individual to venture into uncertain domains, but this is made possible by the support of others. Most of the participants said that they had grown because they had received support from lecturers and their peers. The community depends on its members and is expecting them to return and to share their acquired knowledge and skills. Members who display qualities of individualism and strive to attain their own goals are seen as dangerous, disruptive and undesirable to the community's functioning and wellbeing (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). Individuals should rather contribute to the community by sharing and contributing to the progression of the community. One participant expressed it as follows:

She's working with her colleagues, they are socialising and they are sharing ideas and making progress. We cannot work alone; we need someone to help you. There is a Tswana saying that says work is easier with too many hands.

Values and norms informing individual and community interrelatedness

Values are referred here as the negotiated meanings that inform behaviour, perceptions and attitudes. In this research the values of an equal regard for all human beings, the acceptance of others and their ideas as well as inclusivity were observed. This is clear from the following quotes:

Everyone in the kgotla is very important.

No-one is wrong within the kgotla, so they adopt each and every idea that comes.

They sit in a circle.

According to the African understanding, people are respected regardless of their status, gender or ethnicity (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005). This value involves more than mere acceptance and respect. People have a sincere concern for the welfare of others in the community. Throughout the verbal accounts the value of humility and being of service to

others regardless who, or of what status they have, were highlighted. According to Osei-Hwedie (2005), this value entails being open to the needs of others in the community.

She is open to everyone; everybody who has problems can come to her.

And with a ladder you can climb up and go down, so you can go up with your education and you can come back down to those who have no education and help them.

The value of trustworthiness was also expressed in the way the community functions.

One participant said the following:

One can also see that the kgotla is a semi-circle, which means whatever is discussed in the kgotla, remains there.

And the tying of the rafters shows that everything that was discussed inside is bottled there. It won't go out. Confidentiality.

Hierarchical organisation of relationships

In each community people have different roles and status. The participants' community of origin is structured as a hierarchy, with the chief at the top. Those at the top of the hierarchy, i.e. the chief, the elders and men, have more power regarding what happens in the community and are also shown more respect for their status in the community. The visual presentation in Photo 3 illustrates the hierarchy of the people in the kgotla.

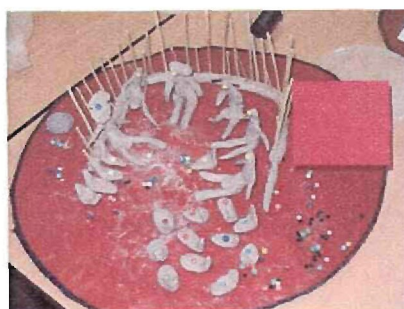


Photo 3: Hierarchical organisation of relationships

Women are subordinate to men. They have unequal access to power, decision-making and have limitations on their rights and freedom (Biakolo, Bolaane & Commeyras, 2001). They are expected to sit on the ground and lower their heads to show respect to men in the community. In Photo 3 the difference between the larger male figures sitting upright and the smaller female figures on the ground can be seen clearly.

At the kgotla men are the superior, they sit on chairs. Ladies sit on the ground. In the kgotla decision-making, in some of the cultures, ladies are not allowed to take part, they are listeners, but in some cultures they can take part. Women are not allowed to sit on chairs, to show respect.

Women in the participants' communities are required to adhere to traditional expectations. In rural societies it is expected that women will take the role of homemaker, while men leave home to better their education or find employment. One of the participants had to leave her children in the care of their grandmother which she experienced as a big emotional obstacle. Even though it is common for grandparents to take care of the grandchildren, it is taboo for a woman to leave her children behind to go to a foreign country. One participant said:

Culturally a woman is not allowed to leave the children and leave home and go away for such a long time. So when building this model, like I was thinking, it is very unusual for the woman to leave the children behind to leave everything behind, it's like you...it's a struggle, you get over many obstacles to do that. It's quite difficult to do that let me just say.

Regardless of the subordinate role of the woman, reference was made to the great value of women in the home.

So this person has left her home, she went out to stay in another country for some time, then when she comes back it is like everything has fallen apart, but the fact remains, he

has gone back home to cultivate the home, to make as good as...to make it very nice looking and good again.

Qualities of individual and community engagement

Community as containing space

A containing space is regarded as a safe place or a storage place that contains valuable provisions for survival. According to the African worldview, people are expected to provide a safe space for all community members, to share with each other and provide aid and to support to those in need (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Osei-Hwedie, 2005). One of the participants made a traditional hut and made an association with a storage house where Sorghum is stored in case of drought.

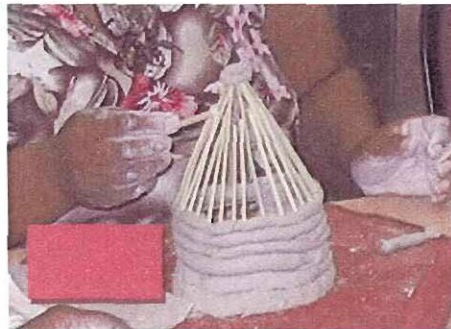


Photo 4: Traditional African hut

According to my culture that house resembles the storage house. You know structures they use to store sorghum in the, in this. It is known as safalana; in our culture we call it safalana. We store sorghum in here in case of bad years... she is acting as a storage.

The community, through its members, provides safe and containing spaces to deal with challenges and threats from the environment. The African culture focuses on the unity and welfare of all people (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2005; Osei-Hwedie, 2005).

Belongingness

A sense of belonging can be defined as feeling that one is part of the puzzle, that one is included and that one has a purpose. According to Levett-Jones, Lathlean, Maguire and McMillan (2007), all people have an inherent need to belong and to be accepted. In the African culture people believe that part of what makes them human is the fact that they belong to their community, and that they participate in rituals and demonstrate behaviour that express their beliefs. Should members in some way be detached from their community, they would be cut off from the group which makes them aware of their own existence (Mbiti, 1969).

I belong; therefore I have loyalty, commitment and a sense of responsibility.

I am because I belong, I participate and I share.

It seems, then, as if the participants in this study spontaneously recreated their own community to re-enact their feelings of belongingness. One of the participants described her feelings of belongingness as being in a shelter. Coming to a foreign country, the participants had left behind the safety and comfort of their familiar communities and exchanged these for insecurity and isolation in a search for more knowledge. One participant said:

When I first came to [Place's name] alone, I was afraid

According to Mbiti (1969), the increasing tendency for people to be detached from their traditional environment, whether due to education, urbanisation, or other factors, causes severe strain for Africans.

Metaphorical use of symbols

A metaphor can be described as the ornamental use of language (Kövecses, 2005). It is a useful tool in expressing, interpreting and re-interpreting subjective experiences and sharing it with others in an easily comprehensible way (Laungani, 2004). An object can

only be used as a metaphor or visual presentation if the individual has knowledge about the object. In creating a metaphor people, make use of their stored knowledge.

According to Mbiti (1969) African people respect nature because they are religious beings and see nature as a manifestation of God. Some participants used their cultural knowledge, values and norms metaphorically in their visual representations. They symbolised growth using elements from nature like water and also animals. A focus on the environment shifts the focus from “I” to “we”, from an inward (individual) focus, to an outward (community-centred) focus (Frantz, Mayer, Norton & Rock, 2005).

Rain as a metaphor for knowledge

The use of water is a powerful metaphor seeing that water plays such an important part in the Batswana culture. One participant said:

We depend on rain.

Knowledge is compared to the rain. In the same way as the community is dependant on rain for their survival and sustainment, the community is dependant of knowledge in order to grow. In view of this, participants depend on knowledge in order to be of greater service to their communities. Water also represents good harvest. The participants feel that the more knowledge they gain, the better they will be able to provide for their community as well as their own families.

She will produce a lot of fruits and her fellow citizens will come and harvest a lot from what she is producing. That is the river/rains of knowledge leads to expansion of knowledge which is like seeds germinating and growing, then leads to giving out knowledge to people which is symbolised as harvesting done by his fellow citizens.

This quote could also be an indication of the integration of knowledge happening during the learning process.

Water's formal qualities remain constant: it freezes and evaporates at the same temperature (Strang, 2005), indicating that the participant is experiencing consistency and stability. But water can also take many forms and can move from one shape to another. In the same way, the knowledge and skills these students acquire in one community is transferable to another. The process of transformation never ceases; water is always undergoing change, movement and showing progress (Strang, 2005). In the same way the participant is changing and progressing; growth is a life-long process. The following quote illustrates this:

This house is not finished. And that shows that this person is not yet through with learning. She's eager to continue to learn more, that is why this house is not finished. So no-one should say now she is full of knowledge, then she's going to stop. The more she grows, the more she is going to get more knowledge.

Animals as a metaphor for growth and competence

Participants also made use of animals in their presentations. One of the participants represented himself as a cow. Cattle are the most important livestock in Africa and are seen as a form of stored wealth, a cushion against starvation when food is scarce and also a means of transport (Randela, 2003). This gives valuable information in terms of the role that the participant ascribes to himself as well as the confidence he has in himself to be of great service in his community.

Cattle in our country are one of the major sources of income, because our beef is going through all over the world. So I think it symbolises the major thing about him, he will be a help, a helpful person to the whole country.

Implications of themes for the cross-cultural supervision process

An important goal of supervision is to guide students towards a greater awareness of the unconscious processes that colour their perceptions, in order to facilitate individual and professional growth. Self-awareness is necessary in the discovery of the unconscious (Ikonen, 2003; Saarikoski et al., 2006). From the themes and subthemes the processes described below are relevant to facilitate a cross-cultural supervising relationship.

The findings indicated that group supervision might be preferable when working with the students who endorse an African worldview. There is a strong need for students to apply their cultural community-centric value in their learning environment. They believe in the power of teamwork. They are not competing for individual success, but strive to learn from each other and from the lecturers.

If we work together, as a team, whether a class or colleagues, whether it's outside or with the community, there is always going to be room for expansion. As I'm climbing up the ladder here, so with support from my lectures and support from others who I am working with. So day to day I learn.

These layers show that I came when I was so small and then by being taught everyday, I grew and every lecturer who was teaching me put a layer on top of what the other lecturer did until the wall was too big.

The added benefits of group supervision became apparent during the focus group discussions. Class members were able to comment on change that was visible to them, that participants were not aware of. During these discussions participants came to new realisations about their personal and professional growth. The experience became a confidence builder, and many participants felt empowered by their class members' comments. In supervision students could be encouraged to share their strengths and weaknesses and be motivated to share those qualities they have seen in their classmates that the participants might be unaware of.

In order for individuals to contribute to the growth of the group as a whole, they need to feel secure and supported by the community. The findings suggest that, for growth to occur, the students needed to re-establish a community of support in their learning environment.

They represent my colleagues who are giving me the support, the shelter that they are giving me by sharing and giving me more knowledge. They make me feel secured.

The supervisor should therefore facilitate a safe space that will be conducive in the development of group cohesion. An environment of support will lay the foundation for healthy personal and professional growth. The supervisor could draw on individual strengths, seeing that these will be viewed as community strengths. In the same way weaknesses or individual problems could be discussed in the group in order for group members to be able to support each other. Students could provide feedback, encourage, motivate and empower their classmates in group supervision. Through sharing, students will open themselves for more support and growth.

Values that could play an important role in supervision include acceptance, respect and support for all members, and also confidentiality and trust. In this particular context, it is important to keep in mind that the community of origin of the participants has a hierarchy of status and power. This is significant information, seeing that this cultural foundation could have an impact on the dynamics in the supervision relationship. For example, women might need more support in a cross-cultural context seeing that they have had to overcome traditional expectations and stereotypes in order to enhance their skills, they may also be hesitant to take an active role in the supervision group seeing that they have been taught to show respect by taking the role of a listener.

The participants' cultural origins provide a safe space for development by offering the individual support and sharing resources. Moving to a foreign country can leave people feeling insecure and vulnerable. The supervisor as facilitator needs to help create a space

that will hold the individual and provide the necessary support in order for the individual to be able to grow. Participants reported that the support system they encountered among their colleagues and lecturers helped them to feel appreciated and enhanced their self-esteem.

It is a very important part of the growth process to establish a strong support system that can provide the student with feedback and encouragement. The supervisor needs to pay special attention to the dynamics of the group to ensure that all group members feel respected, appreciated and able to add value to the group. The lack of community and closeness in a foreign country could hinder effective learning experiences and growth opportunities. Students feel that they have grown together as a class, again stressing communal values and belongingness. They do not feel isolated any more and value the support and input of class members and lecturers.

When I get here I met my colleagues, we shared the information, I learnt a lot from them. The load being pulled represents fellow students and lecturers that make it easier to achieve my goals, than if I should be pulling the load by myself, It is impossible without their help. I need help from others.

Metaphors help students and supervisor to communicate on a meta-level. Supervisees share information with the supervisor that they might otherwise be struggling to verbalise. In doing this the supervisor has a glimpse of what it is like to be part of the supervisees' community, and the role that the supervisees play in that community.

THE USE OF THE MMOGO™METHOD AS EXPRESSIVE ART IN CROSS-CULTURAL SUPERVISION

The second aim of the research was to explore the possible value of the use of expressive art, which is referred to as the Mmogo™method, in cross-cultural group supervision. Anderson (2004) claims that there are two reasons why people create art, namely, to have better insight into the self and secondly, to convey an important message to someone else. According to Franklin (2000), a piece of art can serve as a mirror where inner and outer worlds meet, and where themes in the artists' (students') lives are reflected back to them. Just as water was used as a mirror in historical times, supervision can be a mirror to the participant regarding his/her growth in both individual and professional terms (Strang, 2005). In cross-cultural supervision however, the image that is reflected may not be very clear, almost like that of a warped mirror, due to the supervisor's lack of knowledge of the context from which the student comes. If the supervisor can not find a way to ensure a clearer image, growth will not be able to take place optimally.

Students come to supervision, not as clean slates, but as people whose worldview and thought-processes have been influenced and informed by their cultural background. Students are so absorbed in their culture that they may not even be aware of the fact that it has a great impact on the way they perceive the world and interact with others. During supervision students rarely think of explaining certain inner processes from a contextual point of view, because that it is so embedded in the self that it is taken for granted.

The Mmogo™method is a form of expressive art, which according to Rosenbaum (2003) and Synder (1997), can be used in order to gain insight into the unconscious thought processes and the self. During the creation of visual representations, students' attention is focused on the inner world of personal meaning (Eisdell, 2005). The process of communication and introspection is more important than the artistic outcome (Madden & Bloom, 2004), as this process leads to insight in core beliefs. The Mmogo™method assisted students to gain insight into their own growth by facilitating deeper reflection on

the growth process. The reason for this is that as art is created, the inner and unconscious are portrayed visually (Anderson, 2004). The creative process entails self-communication and introspection and leads to the expression of previously inaccessible emotions and thoughts. It is not only an intellectual action, but also an emotional process (France & Edward, 1997).

This research supports the notion that expressive art is a product of psychological and emotional self-communication (Acosta, 2001). The unconscious guides the creative process and in this process changes the creator that leads to much more being revealed in the art creation than was originally intended (Schaverien, 2005). The value of expressive art in cross-cultural supervision is that the narrative in form could be analysed during supervision in search for deeper meaning.

The Mmogo™ method has elicited rich information that would not necessarily be shared in normal conversation. It has provided the space for the difficult processes to become more obvious and as something that the students could reflect on. The Mmogo™ method as a visual reflection is regarded as a valuable method of stimulating self-awareness. Two students made the following observations:

I can take from the picture, as you have been analysing all these pictures, so this can help me a lot!

What you have extracted from these pictures is more than what we explained in our words. You take a lot of information, which maybe we didn't even think of.

Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research

The Mmogo™ method has worked very well in this particular context, partly due to the fact that the materials used were culturally familiar. The question could arise as to whether the Mmogo™ method would prove to be just as effective with other cultures, using the same material. For students from a Western background, these materials might

be foreign and they might struggle to use it to spontaneously create something rich in cultural information.

Conclusion

Cross-cultural supervision faces with many challenges. One of these is a language barrier; the other is the difference in perceptions due to different cultural backgrounds. The findings suggest that the use of expressive art helps to attain two important outcomes in supervision: *communication* and the *facilitation of awareness of the growth process*. Considering the rich cultural information that was subconsciously conveyed by the use of the Mmogo™ method, it seems that this particular form of expressive art does indeed add value to cross-cultural supervision. Efficient communication is essential for supervision to be conducive to growth. Expressive art, with specific reference to the Mmogo™ method, helps to overcome the language barrier between cultures by using a medium that does not require articulate language skills. On the other hand, it provides valuable personal and cultural information that the supervisee takes for granted and would not necessarily share in normal conversations. During the conversation the supervisor could facilitate an awareness within the supervisee of the processes that have already taken place and are continuing to take place in the growth process. The supervisor could also become aware of aspects that might hinder growth or could be used to enhance growth opportunities.

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