

POST-FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES OF
AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS:
INTERPRETING IMPACT A YEAR LATER

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Abstract:

The population of this qualitative study was 11 entrepreneurs who participated in a five-week professional development and cultural exchange program. The Entrepreneur Fellows represented three Sub-Saharan African countries, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, and a wide array of enterprises, including agricultural media, agro-inputs and mechanics, production agriculture, retail food sales, social ventures, youth development, and textile design and manufacture. This study assessed the post-fellowship experiences of the participants regarding their enterprise-related goals and motivations, community-level impacts, pervasive challenges, and networking and communication practices. The fellowship program was assessed through the lenses of human capital theory and Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts, electronic mail messages, and other project-related documents provided the study's findings.

The findings revealed three overarching themes and nine subthemes. The Entrepreneur Fellows were deeply committed to life-long learning and the exchange of information. During the fellowship program, participants acquired new skills and knowledge which they intended to use and disseminate. In addition, the Entrepreneur Fellows regarded the expansion of their professional and social networks as very valuable to their business enterprises and social ventures. Furthermore, the relationships formed by participants with other African entrepreneurs, U.S. project participants, and mentors were very important to the Fellows. Participants also regarded selection for the fellowship program as validation of their entrepreneurial abilities and as a measure of success. The findings of this study indicated the Fellows were not only motivated by growth within their enterprises, but also the potential to impact their communities through job creation, reducing youth unemployment, and serving marginalized groups, especially smallholder farmers and youth.

In regard to recommendations for future research, it is suggested additional inquiries be conducted to follow-up on the Entrepreneur Fellows and their enterprises, i.e., a multiple-year, longitudinal study. Furthermore, it is recommended additional research be conducted regarding the effectiveness and needs of extension/advisory services, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, to support the development of entrepreneurs. It is also recommended similar fellowship programs be supported for and delivered to aspiring entrepreneurs in the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Alleviating poverty has been a long-term goal of world leaders, policymakers, organizations, and institutions. During his inaugural address in 1949 U.S. President Harry Truman stated:

More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people. (Truman, 1952, p. 242)

After implementation of the Marshall Plan in post-World War II Europe and its success, global leaders came together to combat poverty, alleviate malnutrition, and protect the environment. A key milestone in the global effort to end poverty was establishment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in January of 1966 (United Nations Development Programme, (2016a). The initial efforts of the UNDP and its partners, including non-governmental organizations, individual governments, and institutions, paved the way for a large scale, multilateral approach to ending global poverty as implemented at the close of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century. This initiative came in the form of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to the United Nations (UN), the MDGs served as “the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions—income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion—while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability” (UN Millennium Project, 2006, para. 2). The MDGs were comprised of eight goals to be attained from 1990 to 2015. The “Millennium Development Goals Report”, published by the UN in 2015, noted extreme poverty, defined as living “on less than \$1.25” USD per day, had dropped significantly (United Nations Development Programme, 2015a, p. 4). According to this report, in 1990, 47% of the population in developing nations lived in extreme poverty. This proportion was predicted to drop to 14% by 2015 (United Nations Development Programme, 2015a).

The year 2015 marked the conclusion of the MDGs and their replacement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 overarching goals and 169 targets were a public declaration of the renewed ambitions of the UN that called the SDGs a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. . . .” which aimed “. . . to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom” (“General Assembly Resolution 70/1,” 2015, para. 1). In addition to the new policy outline from the UN, the World Bank also released a statement which updated the threshold of the poverty line from \$1.25 USD to \$1.90 USD per day. The World Bank attributed this change to a global rise in the cost of living and “use[d] updated price data to paint a more accurate picture of the costs of basic food, clothing, and shelter needs around the world” (2015, para. 3). Nonetheless, extreme poverty still persists in many least developed countries (LDCs), including much of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

Rates of Poverty in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda

The UN defines LDCs “as low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development” (United Nations Committee for Development Policy,

2015, p. 1). LDCs are identified through three major metrics: gross national income (GNI), human asset index (HAI), and economic vulnerability index (EVI). The HAI is composed of four categories: under-five child mortality rate; percentage of population undernourished; gross secondary school enrollment; and adult literacy rate. The EVI, which assesses the state of the economic climate in the LDCs, consists of eight indicators: population; remoteness; merchandise export concentration; share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in gross domestic product; share of population in low elevated coastal zones; instability of exports of goods and services; victims of natural disaster; and instability of agricultural production (United Nations Committee for Development Policy, 2015). As of May 2016, 48 countries were designated as LDCs. Of these, 34 were found on the African continent (United Nations Committee for Development Policy, 2016). Uganda has been included on this list since 1971 (United Nations Committee for Development Policy, 2016) with one-third of its population living below the global poverty threshold of \$1.90 per day (The World Bank, n.d.a).

Beyond LDC designations, the UNDP has assessed global poverty through a multidimensional lens. The UNDP's "2015 Human Development Report: Work for Human Development" constructed the Human Development Index (HDI). A metric of this index addresses poverty in terms of "multiple deprivations at the household level in education, health, and standard of living" to assign Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) scores to each nation (United Nations Development Programme, 2015a, p. 6). Factors such as school attainment, nutrition, child mortality, improved sanitation and drinking water, and assets are taken into account to create a more holistic view of the lives of the impoverished people in each country. The MPI results were expressed in numeric values from 0.001 to 0.584. In the 2014, Uganda was given a score of .359 and ranked 163rd of the 188 countries listed (United Nations Development Programme, 2015a).

According to the World Bank, Kenya's economy was expected to exhibit continued growth, nearly 5% annually, in 2014 and in 2015. In their analysis of this economic growth, the World Bank noted Kenya's recent economic development was spurred by consumption and spending and buttressed by macroeconomic stability (The World Bank, 2014). However, the report also indicated a lack of confidence from investors as a cause of slowed GDP growth. Despite the fact Kenya was not listed as a LDC by the UN, it is still designated as a developing economy with nearly 46% of its population living below the global poverty line through the early 2000s (The World Bank, n.d.b). In the "2015 Human Development Report", the UNDP found Kenya's MPI score to be .226. Though Kenya has progressed economically, it is still regarded by the UNDP as a nation of "low human development" (United Nations Development Programme, 2015b, p. 2).

In 2001, the term *BRIC* countries was coined by Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs. This acronym represented the four countries from which O'Neill predicted a large portion of the world's economic growth would come, i.e., Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Nearly a decade later, a new letter was affixed to *BRIC* making it *BRICS*; South Africa was added (P., 2013). Though poverty in South Africa is still very present, with nearly 17% of the population living on less than \$1.90 USD per day (The World Bank, n.d.c) and a MPI score of .041, it is considered a country of "medium human development" (United Nations Development Programme, 2015c, p. 2). Carmody (2013) noted that with South Africa's economic growth came both an emerging middle class and an increase in inequality throughout the nation.

Role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Sub-Saharan Africa

According to McCourtie (2013), as reported by The World Bank in 2013, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) "are, collectively, the largest employer in low-income countries" (para. 1). In SSA, MSMEs account for almost 90% of all businesses (International

Finance Corporation, n.d., para.1). As a result, it has become widely recognized that such companies are a vital part of economic growth in developing nations. To bolster growth in such regions, The World Bank and other international aid organizations have invested greatly in the finance and support of MSMEs. In their working paper, “SMEs, Growth, and Poverty: Cross-Country Evidence,” Beck, Demirguc-Kunt, and Levine (2005) noted “SME advocates argue that SMEs enhance competition and entrepreneurship and hence have external benefits on economy-wide efficiency, innovation and aggregate productivity growth” (pp. 199-200) for a country. To strengthen MSMEs, organizations and institutions such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have worked to increase the accessibility of capital and markets to business owners, invested in capacity building, and labored to create a business environment that supports small-scale enterprises (International Finance Corporation, n.d.).

In recent years, The World Bank’s Finance and Private Sector Unit, FSDAfrica, and the Bureau for Economic Research conducted investigations in Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa revealing that, despite cultural, industrial, and geo-political differences, many of the challenges small businesses faced were the same in all three countries. Respondents in all three surveys conducted by the economic analysis agencies cited inadequate access to finance and credit, lack of infrastructure, poor governance, and inhospitable business climates as constraints to the successful operation of small businesses (Bureau for Economic Research, 2016; FSDAfrica, 2015; The World Bank Group, 2013). In Kenya and Uganda, MSMEs employed more than 5 million Kenyans in 2003 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2003) and nearly 2.5 million Ugandans in 2015 (FSDAfrica, 2015). According to Robinson (2004), MSMEs “employ[ed] 2.4 million people” (p. 175) in South Africa. Based on calculations derived from World Bank population data, MSMEs employed approximately 28% of the working population (those from 15 to 64 years of age) of Kenya in 2003, 13% in Uganda during 2015, and 8% in South Africa for 2004, respectively (The Word Bank, n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.c). To leverage economic development brought

about by MSMEs, the global development community has endeavored to support small businesses, encourage entrepreneurial activity, and spur job creation and livelihood improvement.

Entrepreneurial Activity and Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa

Entrepreneurial activity, often characterized by opportunity recognition, risk taking, and innovation, has been widely recognized as an accelerant to economic growth (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Stevenson & Gumpert, 1985). Entrepreneurs and their ventures have created jobs and been integral facets of developed economies for decades (Martin & Oberg, 2007; Schumpeter, 1975). Cornwall (1998) stated: “Entrepreneurship can have a much broader impact among disadvantaged populations and communities. . . . Entrepreneurs can play a significant role in rebuilding the social fabric when the responsibilities the new entrepreneurs have back to their communities are given priority and focus” (p. 141). Entrepreneurship and its impact proved to surpass mere economic growth, but also strengthened social ties and provided general improvements throughout communities (Cornwall, 1998).

In recent years, global development actors have placed greater emphasis on supporting entrepreneurship and fostering favorable climates for aspiring entrepreneurs. In June 2012, the United Nations held the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro during which world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable economic, social, and environmental development (“Report of the Secretary-General 69/320,” 2014). Following that conference, the United Nations adopted Resolution A/RES/67/202, i.e., “Entrepreneurship for Development” (“General Assembly Resolution 67/202,” 2012). This public declaration by the UN recognized entrepreneurship as a key driver for sustainable development. In a 2014 report, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon wrote:

Entrepreneurship has offered the opportunity to many of the world’s poor to earn a sustainable livelihood. It represents a sizeable engine of decent employment generation and can provide an important contribution to sustainable development by creating jobs

and driving economic growth and innovation, fostering local economic development, improving social conditions and contributing to addressing environmental challenges.

(“Report of the Secretary-General 69/320,” 2014, para. 1)

With the advent of the SDGs in 2015, governments, non-state actors, and institutions were encouraged to impact developing nations through investment in entrepreneurial education and human capital development (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015).

Grant Funded Project

In 2013, Oklahoma State University secured a grant from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to fund “Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success: A Professional Fellows Program for Kenya, Uganda and South Africa” (see Appendix A). This program was designed to bring entrepreneurs from three African countries to Oklahoma and provide them with hands-on learning experiences involving entrepreneurship and U.S. business practices. The broad goal of the project was to “establish and foment professional collaborations and learning experiences between mid-level, emerging entrepreneurs . . . and their professional counterparts in the United States . . .” (see Appendix A).

To accomplish this overarching mission, the program outlined six goals with 18 objectives. The first of these goals was to assist the participants, i.e., the Entrepreneur Fellows, in gaining leadership and entrepreneurial skills employed by successful entrepreneurs from the United States. Additional goals were to recruit women and disabled individuals for inclusion in the project and foster sustained business relationships between the Entrepreneur Fellows and their U.S. counterparts. Another facet of the “Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs” project was the provision of cultural exchange. To facilitate cultural understanding between Entrepreneur Fellows and U.S. participants, various cultural immersion activities were also conducted throughout the

project (see Appendix A). This grant-funded project provided the participants, i.e., the 11 Entrepreneur Fellows, interviewed for this study.

Problem Statement

In 2014, 23 Entrepreneur Fellows from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda participated in a grant-funded project delivered by faculty members in the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (DASNR) in conjunction with the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship of Oklahoma State University (OSU). During the project, the Entrepreneur Fellows were matched with Oklahoman internship and job shadowing mentors. That experience comprised three of the four weeks the Fellows spent at OSU and in other parts of Oklahoma. A lack of knowledge existed regarding the entrepreneurial enterprises of the project's participants after their return home and a scarcity of literature about the impact of international learning experiences on entrepreneurs striving to establish business enterprises or social ventures in developing countries. Overall, a deeper understanding was needed of the fellowship's impact on the business practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows. These needs formed the rationale for conducting a follow-up case study of selected fellowship participants.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to explore the experiences of select Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises after participation in a grant-funded, professional development and cultural exchange program. This inquiry aimed to identify thematic links between the selected entrepreneurs' experiences and the ways participating in such an exchange program shaped their enterprises on return to their home countries. The results of this qualitative research study may serve as the precursor to case studies for use by practitioners and scholars of international agricultural development in the future. Five research questions guided this study:

1. What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact on their enterprises after returning home?
2. What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?
3. What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?
4. In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?
5. What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Scope and Limitations

1. The generalizability of this study is limited to the Kenyan, South African, and Ugandan Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in the grant-funded project conducted by the faculty at Oklahoma State University during 2014 and 2015.
2. The scope of this study was limited to the 11 Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in qualitative interviews.
3. As the researcher acted as the instrument for data collection, the results of this study were limited to the researcher's analysis and interpretation.
4. The chance of error existed when transcribing data due to the poor audio quality of some interview recordings.

Assumptions

This study relied on individual qualitative interviews as the primary method of data collection. Therefore, the researcher assumed all interview participants responded truthfully to her questions, follow up probes, and requests for verification of accuracy of transcribed interviews by member checking.

Definition of Terms

Bureau of Education & Cultural Affairs: an administrative unit housed within the U.S.

Department of State, which, as mandated by the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, aims to “increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations” (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d., para 1).

Case: “a noun, a thing, an entity” (Stake, 2006, p. 1) which a researcher may choose to study (Stake, 2006).

Case Study: a study which investigates “the experience of real cases operating in real situations” (Stake, 2006, p. 3).

Community Development: a planned and systematic approach to bettering the lives of disadvantaged populations (Johnson Butterfield & Chisanga, 2008).

Development: efforts, by global actors, to eradicate poverty, meet social needs such as education, health, and social protection, job creation and employment, addressing climate change, and to promote prosperity (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015)

Enterprise: “a project or venture undertaken for gain” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, para. 1).

Entrepreneur: an individual who creates value by reallocating economic resources from “an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield” (Say [1832] as cited in Dees, 2001, para. 4). A person who seeks out and recognizes opportunity, assumes risk, and pursues new ventures (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

Entrepreneur Fellow: “mid-level, emerging entrepreneurs from the countries of Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda” selected for participation in the grant-funded project providing the basis for this thesis research study (see Appendix A).

Food Security: As defined by the World Food Summit of 1996, the ability of “all people, at all times, [to] have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2008, p. 1).

Human Capital: “the skills, knowledge, and abilities of human beings” (Hornbeck & Salamon, 1991, p. 3); the “activities that influence future real income through the imbedding of resources in people” (Becker, 1962, p. 9).

Internship: “a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting” (National Association of College and Employers, 2011, para. 6).

Job Shadowing: observation of a professional in their work environment, usually ranging from one day to several weeks (National Association of Colleges and Employers Glossary, 2016).

Kenya: a nation located in East Africa between Somalia and Tanzania, bordering the Indian Ocean, Lake Victoria, and Uganda; formerly a British colony (“Kenya,” 2013, no para. #).

M-Pesa: a “mobile phone-based service for sending and storing money offered by Safaricom, Kenya’s largest mobile service provider” (Morawczynski & Pickens, 2009, p. 1) which enables users to purchase and exchange digital currency for cash (Morawczynski & Pickens, 2009).

Mentor: an individual who “helps shape the growth and development” (Merriam, 1983, p. 162) of a protégé; a person who “provides the protégé with knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and

support in the protégé's pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession" (Johnson, 2002, p. 88).

Mentoring: an interaction between a more experienced (in most cases older) and less experienced (often younger) individuals (Johnson, 2002); "a powerful emotional relationship in which the older member is trusted, loving, and experienced in the guidance of the younger" (Merriam, 1983, p. 162).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME): enterprises that employ: 1 to 9 employees (micro); 10 to 49 employees (small); and 50 to 249 (medium) employees (Kushnir, Mirmulstein, & Ramalho, 2010).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): "the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability" (UN Millennium Project, 2005, p. 1).

Networking: forming relationships for the exchange of information, aid, and communication between individuals, mentors, groups, or organizations, particularly in professional contexts (Chambers, 2013, p. 352).

Non-governmental Organization (NGO): "self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life of disadvantaged people" (Vakil, 1997, p. 2060).

Oklahoma State University: Founded in 1890 as Oklahoma A&M College, OSU was established as a land-grant university (Oklahoma State University, 2012).

Quintain: the "group, category, or phenomenon" (Stake, 2006, p. 6) that links or categorically binds the cases within a qualitative multicase study (Stake, 2006).

Smallholder Farmer: a farmer who cultivate crops on two or less hectares of land (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2013). Often smallholder farmers are characterized by a lack of access to resources, information, and technology (Murphy, 2010).

Social Media: web-based communication through which users may “construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

Social Venture: those enterprises or projects which derive value from transformational benefit rather than financial profit; such undertakings are often seeking social change (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

South Africa: a nation located at the southernmost tip of the African continent, South Africa is a former Dutch colony (“South Africa,” 2013, no para. #).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a list of 17 goals published by the United Nations with the aim of “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions” (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015, p. 1).

Uganda: a nation located in East-Central Africa; a former British colony north of Lake Victoria (“Uganda,” 2013, no para. #).

United Nations (UN): an international organization founded in 1945 and focused on addressing global issues such as “peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more” (United Nations, n.d, para. 1).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): a branch of the United Nations which aids in “the eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequality and exclusion” through capacity and policy development (United Nations Development Programme, 2016b).

U.S. Department of State: an administrative branch of the U.S. federal government which manages the nation’s relationships with foreign governments, international organizations, and the people of other countries in the pursuit of stability and peace (U.S. Department of State, 2015).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the relevant literature that shaped and informed this study. Major sections include economic development, endogenous development, the rise of social ventures, entrepreneurship and its role in SSA and in the agricultural sector, and the study's theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Economic Growth and Combating Poverty

Early theories surrounding economic development are centered on Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, which focused on capitalism, the free market, and competition (Todaro & Smith, 2012). In addition, the economic theories of Karl Marx, who was a proponent of social or public ownership of property, gained popularity in the 1930s (Dang & Sui Pheng, 2015). After the end of World War II, the "first generation of economic development models" was formulated and are often defined by "Rostow's stages of growth model and the Harrod-Domar model" (Dang & Sui Pheng, 2015, p. 16). Rostow's model asserted that as a nation moves from underdeveloped to developed, it "passes through sequential stages in achieving development" (Todaro & Smith, 2012, p. 111). In his 1960 publication, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Rostow outlined the phases a nation must pass through, stating that a country may fit into one of the five stages "which can be designated as follows: the traditional society; the

Preconditions for take-off into self-sustaining growth; the take-off; the drive to maturity; and the age of high mass consumption” (p. 1).

Contemporary economists have criticized these theories for their oversimplification of the development process (Adelman, 1999; Dang & Sui Pheng, 2015). Dang and Sui Pheng (2015) asserted that under the stages of growth model, each economy, in order to pass through the same stages of development, must have “the same necessary conditions. . . . But that economic growth path, which historically had been followed by the more developed countries, is not the only one pathway. The development process is actually highly nonlinear” (p.16). The realization “that development policy requires a more complex understanding of social systems which combines economic, social, cultural and political institutions and their changing interactions over time” (Adelman, 1999, p. 75) led to a shift in dominant economic paradigms (Adelman, 1999).

Following the Washington consensus, which outlined 10 key policy reforms needed for economic growth (Williamson, 2004), economists in the 1990s began to assess economic development not solely through the lens of gross domestic product (GDP). In conjunction with GDP, economists also began to acknowledge the importance of the quality of life in a given nation in determining that nation’s level of development (Dang & Sui Pheng, 2015). This was summarized by renowned economist, Joseph Stiglitz, in his 1998 lecture to the United Nations University:

The Washington Consensus advocated a set of instruments (including macroeconomic stability, liberalized trade, and privatization) to achieve a relatively focused goal (economic growth). The post-Washington Consensus begins by recognizing that a broader set of instruments is necessary to achieve those goals. I have discussed some of most important instruments, including financial regulation, competition policy, investments in human capital, and policies to facilitate the transfer of technology. My second theme here is that the post-Washington Consensus also recognizes that our goals are much broader. We seek increases in living standards, including improved health and

education – not just increases in measured GDP. We seek sustainable development, which includes preserving our natural resources and maintaining a healthy environment. We seek equitable development, which ensures that all groups in society enjoy the fruits of development, not just the few at the top. And we seek democratic development, in which citizens participate in a variety of ways in making the decisions that affect their lives. (p. 31)

The post-Washington consensus era in economics was spurred on by the desire for equitable and sustainable development. This desire was expressed on the world stage with the creation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to economist Jeffrey Sachs (2012), the MDGs conveyed “public concern about global poverty, hunger, disease, unmet schooling, gender inequality, and environmental degradation” (p. 2206). The implementation of these goals marked not a legal obligation by nations, but rather a “moral and practical commitment” (Sachs, 2012, p. 2210).

The MDGs spanned from 2000, though they retroactively accounted for progress made after 1990, to 2015 during which time many developing countries made great strides in combating poverty. Thereafter, the number of people living in extreme poverty decreased by about one-half from 1.9 billion to 836 million in 2015. These individuals survive on less than \$1.25 USD per day and a majority reside in SSA and in South Asia (United Nations, 2015a). The year 2015 marked the end of the MDGs and introduced the formalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015). While Goals 2 and 8 of the SDGs are explicitly linked to economic growth, many of the 17 goals incorporate equitable access to economic security and resources into their targets (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015).

Goal 1 of the SDGs seeks to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere” (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015, p. 15) and outlines the UN’s desire to eradicate poverty, ensure equitable access to economic resources, and reduce the vulnerability of the poor (“General

Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015). SDG 8 aims to “promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all” (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015, p. 19). This goal seeks to tackle unemployment (particularly among youth) around the globe, provide access to financial institutions, and promote business development and diversification (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015). On a global scale, development is looking to job creation and the private sector to lift individuals, communities, and nations out of poverty (Langevang, Namatovu, & Dawa, 2012).

Endogenous Development

Endogenous development refers to development guided by local impulses and derived from local resources (Picchi, 1994, p. 195). In his book chapter titled “The Relations Between Central and Local Powers as Context for Endogenous Development,” Picchi commented:

. . . developments that have taken place critically depended on 1) the importance of the agricultural sector for the provision of the capital and man-power needed to create a non-agricultural enterprises; 2) the ability of rural workers to extend their skills, networks and management capacities towards new fields and arenas; and 3) the desire for self-employment . . . was projected by local farmers and their children on other sectors in order to create a variety of new jobs. (pp. 195-196)

Endogenous development is frequently associated with rural development and is linked to community-led initiatives (Terluin, 2003, p. 332). In her 2003 publication, Terluin analyzed data from the Agriculture and Employment in the Rural Regions of the EU project, known widely as RUREMPLO. The data were from 18 cases in nine EU member states and assessed the employment dynamics in “leading and lagging rural regions” (Terluin, 2003, p. 335). Analysis revealed that one of the most successful theories of spurring economic growth in rural areas was a “community-led rural development theory” (Terluin, 2003, p. 340) with 16 of the 18 cases

supporting the hypothesis that investing in human capital of communities stimulates employment (Terluin, 2003). The local economies in which such development models occurred were often “characterized by entrepreneurship, production flexibility, district economies, and some collective agents which act as a catalyst in the development process” (Terluin, 2003, p. 331).

Economic growth in such communities stems from internal factors, including human capital, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Recent efforts to bolster rural economies have focused on the investment in human capital and cultivation of “collective agents” (Terluin, 2003, p. 331) to revitalize communities (Murray & Dunn, 1995, p. 89). In their 2015 publication, Dang and Sui Pheng asserted that investment in knowledge differs from investment in other economic goods as knowledge has the “possibility to grow boundlessly . . . at zero additional cost. Investments in knowledge creation therefore can bring about sustained growth” (p. 20). In contrast to exogenous development efforts, which affect change through external influence, endogenous strategies create environments for the disempowered to develop from the bottom-up. Such initiatives call for community engagement and participation in the development of new programs. It is crucial for communities and external partners to invest in local human capital (Dang & Sui Pheng, 2015; Murray & Dunn, 1995; Terluin, 2003), fostering a “well-developed capacity of entrepreneurs” (Terluin, 2003, p. 339).

Entrepreneurship

The term *entrepreneur* has been widely studied in recent years, including various definitions. According to Dees (2001), the term entrepreneur can be traced back to French economics “as early as the 17th and 18th centuries” (para. 4). French economist Jean-Baptiste Say is widely recognized as giving the term its *venturesome* meaning by stating that an entrepreneur was an individual “who takes upon himself the immediate responsibility, risk, and conduct of a concern of industry, whether upon his own or a borrowed capital” (Say, trans. 2001,

p. 128). After the introduction of Say's definition, the literature surrounding entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship became permeated with common themes. One of the most pervasive of these themes is *innovation* (Baumol, 1968; Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Gartner, 1990; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990).

Entrepreneurs are perpetually on the “. . . quest for growth through innovation, be this technological or purely managerial” (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990, p. 163). In their article “Defining Entrepreneurship,” Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) outlined six schools of thought in the field of entrepreneurship: psychological, *great person*, classical, management, leadership, and intrapreneurship (p. 51). In their analysis of the *classical school of thought* about innovation, Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) stated: “Innovation, creativity, or discovery are the key factors underlying the classical body of thought and research. Entrepreneurship, in this view, refers to the process of creating an opportunity . . .” (p. 51). Entrepreneurs are typically characterized as those who actively seek and recognize opportunities for themselves or their companies (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990; Stewart, Watson, Carland, & Carland, 1998).

Along with opportunity recognition, innovation, and creativity, entrepreneurs are often denoted by their propensity for risk and desire for growth (Baumol, 1968; Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Gartner, 1990). As economic development theory evolved, so too has its view of entrepreneurship. To that end, Baumol (1968) asserted:

If we seek to explain the success of those economies which have managed to grow significantly with those that have remained relatively stagnant, we find it difficult to do so without taking into consideration differences in the availability of entrepreneurial talent and in the motivational mechanism which drives them on. (p. 66)

The skills of entrepreneurs, particularly those which pertain to the “ability to perceive changes and adjust to them . . . and the willingness to respond to market changes” (Terluin, 2003, p. 342), have the potential to greatly impact their local economies and communities.

The Entrepreneurial Spirit

Entrepreneurs are characterized by their creativity, innovation, goal-oriented nature, desire for growth, and exploitation of opportunity (Stewart et al., 1998). According to Ang and Hong (2000), such characteristics comprised what is known as the *entrepreneurial spirit*. Ang and Hong (2000) noted the entrepreneurial spirit “pertains to the entrepreneurial outlook and stance. As an entrepreneur often is defined as an individual who undertakes new, innovative, and risky ventures, entrepreneurial spirit often is referred to as the possession of such personality characteristics as risk-taking propensity. . . .” (p. 289). The authors continued: “Motivation also is needed to drive an individual to have the entrepreneurial spirit. Therefore, there are two components to an entrepreneurial spirit—the ability or personality component, as well as the motivational component” (p. 289). The entrepreneurial spirit is a combination of the abilities, the personality, and the motivations an individual or firm which drives entrepreneurial activities (Ang & Hong, 2000; Gartner, Bird, & Starr, 1992; Markley, Lyons, & Macke, 2015).

Agricultural Entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurial traits of decision-making ability, desire for growth, seeking of information, and problem solving are very relevant to the agricultural industry and the adoption of appropriate technologies by its producers, processors, and purveyors (Singh & Krishna, 1994). As a result, policymakers in the United States have emphasized innovation and entrepreneurship within its agricultural sector. In 2002, the U.S. Farm Bill, for example, allocated nearly \$28 million in grants “for independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher

cooperatives and farmer controlled private firms for the purpose of pursuing value-added activities” (Knudson, Wysocki, Champagne, & Peterson, 2004, p. 1330).

This focus on technological and methodological advancement is particularly important, not just in the West, but also in developing countries. Many farmers in developing nations are characterized by small landholdings and subsistence production. In a study published in *Small Business Economics*, it was noted that among those surveyed in Ghana,

[a]gricultural firms were consistently the least innovative on all measures of innovation, excluding production processes where they were under-performed by service firms. For agricultural firms, this result is not surprising as other studies have found that those businesses in the agriculture sector tended to be the most constrained in financial and human resources among the three sectors of the Ghanaian economy. (Robson, Haugh, & Obeng, 2008, p. 341)

In their 2005 report, authors Temu and Temu discussed the ways in which farmers in SSA might benefit from entering into the high value agricultural product (HVAP) sector. In recent years, returns from the production of traditional crops, such as cereal grains, coffee, cocoa, and other export crops, have declined (Temu & Temu, 2005). Meanwhile, the HVAP sector is becoming increasingly important in the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, agricultural laborers, and those involved in the marketing and sale of agricultural goods. Temu and Temu (2005) also asserted that if smallholder farmers were to capitalize on the emerging opportunities in the HVAP market, they must be equipped with the ability to “upgrade their skills and overall capacity such that they consistently, and cost effectively, meet consumer demands and out compete imported products” (p. 22).

In his book, *The New Harvest: Agricultural Innovation in Africa*, Juma (2011) noted that agricultural entrepreneurship is very prevalent in SSA. An example of such an enterprise is the

Homegrown Company, Ltd (Juma, 2011). Founded in 1982, Homegrown is a large scale flower company that processes and packages horticultural products for export. Outside of the company's own land-holdings, Homegrown contracts with small farmers throughout Kenya for about 25% of their production (Juma, 2011). By entering into contracts with Homegrown, smallholder farmers are provided capital and technical support from a reliable entity along with access to the global market (Juma, 2011).

The literature notes that increasing interest exists for the development of innovative products and the establishment of new markets around the world (Knudson et al., 2004). However, for farmers to take advantage of these opportunities, training and extension initiatives with a focus on new ventures and entrepreneurial education must be provided to engaged and aspiring entrepreneurs (Knudson et al., 2004; Temu & Temu, 2005).

Smallholder Farmers

In recent years, development agencies have placed additional emphasis on supporting smallholder farmers. Although no universally accepted definition exists for the term “smallholder farmer,” many look first to landholdings to measure the scale and productivity of agricultural operations (Murphy, 2010). However, Murphy (2010) asserted that, although the size of land-ownings is often used as a “proxy for small-scale production” (p. 3), it is not a wholly appropriate definition. Murphy (2010) highlighted the need for complementary metrics in the classification of smallholder farmers. The International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD] (2013) stated: “overall, smallholder farmers are characterized by marginalization, in terms of accessibility, resources, information, technology, capital, and assets, but there is great variation in the degree to which each of these applies” (p. 10).

According to the IFAD (2013), “nearly 2.5 billion people live directly from agricultural production systems” (p. 10). These individuals, known as smallholders, manage more than 80%

of the 500 million small farms around the world (IFAD, 2013). In a report published by International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (2009), it was noted that subsistence farms accounted for up to 70% of food production in SSA. The conclusion of IFAD's report (2013), "Smallholders, Food-security, and the Environment", indicated:

With their immense collective experience and intimate knowledge of local conditions, smallholders hold many of the practical solutions that can help place agriculture on a more sustainable and equitable footing. Markets currently do not capture this potential, and smallholders need tailored mechanisms to overcome market failures and disincentives for sustainable land use. (p. 34)

As the world seeks to achieve the SDGs, actors in the development sphere have paid increasing attention to the needs of smallholder farmers, including viewing them as entrepreneurs operating in the agricultural sector. In recent years, these agricultural producers and their impact on economic development and food security, have become regarded as an integral part of the drive to alleviate poverty.

Social Entrepreneurship

In the first chapter of the book *Innovative Approaches to Reducing Global Poverty*, authors Lisa Easterly and Paul Miesling (2007) defined social ventures as "innovative businesses that operate with social purposes to provide services to disadvantaged individuals or the community that the market does not" (p. 1). *Social ventures* or *venturing*, which may share the social agenda of some non-profits, are delineated by their goals of financial viability, sustainability, and market-based solutions (Haugh, 2007). As well as being different from traditional non-profits, social ventures are differentiated from traditional enterprises by their efforts to not only make a profit, but to do so while accomplishing a social mission (Easterly & Miesling, 2007; Haugh, 2007; Martin & Osberg, 2007). Such initiatives may seek to

. . . reduce poverty through job creation for the chronically unemployed, help impoverished communities produce their own products rather than importing them, create markets for products produced by impoverished communities, and provide job training to help the chronically unemployed acquire employable skills. (Easterly & Miesling, 2007, p. 539)

An example of social entrepreneurship is that of Grameen Bank. Founded in 1983 by Muhammad Yunus, Grameen Bank was designed to provide loans of appropriate scale to the poorest women of Bangladesh (Yunus, 2007). The bank was described by authors Auwal and Singhal (1992):

The Grameen (which means ‘rural’ in the Bangla language) Bank represents a highly innovative, flexible, and effective institutional mechanism to reach and empower the poor: it provides credit to the rural poor without any collateral and gives its members the flexibility to be self-employed and invest in various other income-generating activities. (p. 8)

The creation of the Grameen Bank is often cited as the birth of micro-credit, a financial institution which has been widely used and accepted as a development tool (Aagaard, 2011). Social entrepreneurs seek and exploit opportunities which offer solutions to injustices or social issues at the community level (Haugh, 2007). The values and missions of such enterprises are inherently different from traditional business; such entrepreneurs seek to affect change more widely in the existing social order of a community.

The Importance of Social and Professional Networks

Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) stated: “entrepreneurship is a social role, embedded in a social context” (p. 20). The networks within which entrepreneurs operate are immensely

important to their enterprises, as both professional and social networks provide social capital to entrepreneurs. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (as cited in Westlund & Bolton, 2003), social capital is “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 77). While human capital is recognized as the capacity of the individual, social capital is derived from the “links between individuals” (Westlund & Bolton, 2003, p. 78).

Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) viewed entrepreneurship as a series of linkages or relations between individuals and/or firms. According to Aldrich and Zimmer (1986), such

. . . relations may be treated as containing (1) communication content, or the passing of information from one person to another; (2) exchange content, or the goods and services two persons can exchange; and (3) normative content, or the expectations persons have of one another because of some special characteristic or attribute. (p. 11)

Networks act as crucial sources of information; entrepreneurs frequently utilize networks to find new ideas, access new markets and sources of capital, and scout new talent (Hoang & Atoncic, 1999; Langevang et al., 2012). This reliance on networks is not limited only to the startup and initiation phases of business development (Hoang & Atoncic, 1999). Instead, entrepreneurs often continue to rely on the social capital provided by networks throughout the lifespan of their enterprises (Hoang & Atoncic, 1999).

Networks may consist of family, friends, neighbors, former and current co-workers, and so forth (Langevang et al., 2012). The ties to family, friends, and the surrounding community are particularly important to African entrepreneurs (Khavul, Bruton, & Wood, 2009; Langevang et al., 2012). Khavul et al. (2009) noted that compared to entrepreneurs in other regions, “. . . African micro-entrepreneurs have fewer immediate resources and have to draw on the social

capital embedded more broadly within their social networks” (p. 1222). Due to a lack of institutional and governmental support and inadequate infrastructure, poor access to markets and financing, African entrepreneurs are extremely reliant on social capital (Khavul et al., 2009; Langevang et al., 2012).

Taken together, the literature proposes that entrepreneurs form networks for myriad reasons, i.e., accessing funding, seeking advice, sharing information, securing new locations, and acquiring new employees (Khavul et al., 2009; Langevang et al., 2012). These networks and the social capital they provide are vital to the success and sustainability of enterprises, especially in the African context (Khavul et al., 2009; Langevang et al., 2012). To better understand the nature of networks formed through trainings and international exchange programs, further research is needed. Gaining insight into such is important to the improvement of future entrepreneurial development programs and the facilitation of resulting entrepreneurial networks (Khavul et al., 2012).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

Throughout the developing world, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are integral parts of the economy. According to a report published by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, “where possible, MSMEs are defined as follows: micro enterprises: 1–9 employees; small: 10–49 employees; and medium: 50–249 employees” (Kurshnir, Mirmulstein, & Ramalho, 2010, p. 2). MSMEs accounted for up to 90% of businesses and 50% of employment worldwide in 2012 (IFC Issue Brief, 2016). Due to their prevalence, MSMEs have been recognized as key drivers of economic growth in developing nations (Juma, 2011, Okpara & Wynn, 2007). Juma (2011) noted that MSMEs have played “an integral part in the development of all industrialized economies” (p. 183), including those emerging in Africa.

It has been widely noted that MSMEs are the cornerstone of African economic enterprise. Sriram and Mersha (2010) indicated the African private sector was greatly bolstered by MSMEs because

. . . [i]n Africa, SMEs accounted for 3.2 million jobs and 18% of Kenya's GDP in 2003 and were responsible for 95% of Nigeria's manufacturing in 2005. Further, 70% of Ghanaian firms employed fewer than five people. . . . In South Africa, over 90% of formally registered businesses in the country are small, medium, and micro enterprises and they account for almost half the country's GDP and nearly a fifth of employment. (p. 258)

In 2015, the African Union (AU) Commission to the UN released their "First Ten-Year Implementation Plan" for the Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 is the AU's "shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development" (The AU Commission to the UN, 2015, p. 33). A major facet of this strategic plan was the support of small business and entrepreneurship throughout Africa. The commission proposed to do this by fostering an "enabling environment for the growth and development of the manufacturing sector including the building of the capacities of small, medium and micro enterprises linked into regional, continental, [and] global value chains" (The AU Commission to the UN, 2015, p. 55).

Impact of Empowered Entrepreneurs

According to Ahmad and Hoffmann (2008), in a report published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), three primary social and "economic objectives related to entrepreneurship [exist]. . . job creation, economic growth, poverty alleviation and formalization of the informal sector" (p. 11). In developing economies, these factors are extremely important, particularly in regard to human capital development. Echtner (1995) stated:

. . . the development of any country depends on the effective and proper utilization of

human resources. An education system must be capable of responding to the internal developmental problems of poverty and unemployment; . . . By utilizing an entrepreneurial approach to . . . education, a developing country can build the human resources it needs to ensure well-qualified, indigenous entrepreneurs. (p. 132)

In his article “The Entrepreneur as a Building Block for Community,” Cornwall (1998) examined the potential impact entrepreneurs have on a community. Cornwall (1998) made the distinction between entrepreneurs who use enterprises to improve their own livelihoods and thereafter exit the community versus those who leverage businesses or ventures as tools to improve their communities through job creation and youth education via internships (Cornwall, 1998). The author stated:

Entrepreneurship should no longer be viewed only as a tool to help individuals in poor and low-income populations. It must be viewed as a part of a social system in which it serves as a powerful force for change. . . . That is, the focus is no longer on just the impact of entrepreneurship on individuals in a given community, but rather on the impact that each entrepreneur can have on the community as a whole. (Cornwall, 1998, p.145)

Cornwall (1998) discussed the responsibilities entrepreneurs have to their communities, such as providing employment opportunities, strengthening social ties, and taking on leadership roles.

Recent trends in international development have looked to entrepreneurship as a means of mitigating youth unemployment and gender inequality in developing nations (Awogbenle & Chijioke Iwuamadi, 2010; United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2013).

Entrepreneurship is seen not only as a vehicle for economic development, but also for social change. The implementation of the SDGs positioned entrepreneurship at the forefront of poverty alleviation and uplifting marginalized groups (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015).

Global actors are rising up to empower aspiring entrepreneurs, not only for their individual benefits, but to impact and lift their communities.

Entrepreneurship and Its Role in Sub-Saharan Africa

In a 2013, the UN held the Entrepreneurship for Development thematic debate during which Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated:

I call on all partners to support youth entrepreneurship, self-employment and youth-led businesses. The United Nations system will do its part. There are five steps we can take together: First: Foster an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship. Second: Build the capacities of local institutions. Third: Provide career counselling. Fourth: Facilitate access to finance and youth-friendly financial services. And fifth: Coach young entrepreneurs beyond the start-up phase, so they can maintain success. Let us also support cooperatives, microcredit initiatives and other drivers of entrepreneurship. (Ki-moon, 2013, para. 22)

In an effort to leverage the strengths of entrepreneurs in developing nations, and further combat extreme poverty around the world, international development policy has shifted (“Report of the Secretary General 69/320,” 2014). The development community has primarily placed a greater emphasis on bolstering the private sectors of, and encouraging entrepreneurial activity in, developing nations. Some developing communities, such as those examined by McDade and Spring (2005), have given rise to a new generation of African entrepreneurs who are well educated and business savvy, while other communities work to empower their poorest citizens through small business ownership and capacity development (Prieto, Osiri, & Gilmore, 2009).

Research has indicated that in developing nations young people constitute a larger and larger proportion of the population (Langevang et al., 2012). Also prevalent in these countries is a rise in youth unemployment (Langevang et al., 2012). Another apparent trend worldwide is the

relatively low age of most entrepreneurs. Most “new generation entrepreneurs” (McDade & Spring, 2005, p. 18) are between the ages of 24 and 40 (Langevang et al. 2012; Prieto et al., 2009). Langevang et al. (2012) noted the young exhibit many of the desirable attributes usually associated with entrepreneurs: “resourcefulness, energy, enthusiasm, vitality, boldness and courage” (p. 444). To leverage this trend and the increasing youthful population of underdeveloped countries, development agencies have targeted their efforts toward young entrepreneurs. In their 2011 study, Pfefferman and Brown asserted this increase in youth involvement will, through the use of networks, help spur the dissemination of information and lead to long-term effects on local and regional economies.

Networking provides a platform for emerging entrepreneurs to share ideas, ask questions, and give and receive feedback (Chambers, 2013). Through both formal and informal networks, members develop a community and an accountability system. In addition, networks promote transparency and cooperation amongst their members as well as facilitate stronger and more trusted business relationships across similar and dissimilar industries (McDade & Spring, 2005). McDade and Spring (2005) published a paper in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* describing the entrepreneurial landscape of the African continent. Based on analysis of their survey data, McDade and Spring (2005) reported seven themes:

(1) the importance placed on financial transparency and ethical business behaviour; (2) the practical significance of organizational management; (3) initiatives to obtain information and update technology; (4) trust of fellow network members; (5) the desire to expand intra-Africa and South-South trade and investments; (6) the consistency of members with optimistic, ‘can-do’ attitudes; and (7) establishing co-operative relations with government, but abstaining from patronage and rent-seeking. Network members say that these are guiding principles that they try to incorporate in their business and professional activities. (p. 26)

Referencing a study conducted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Pfeffermann and Brown (2011) discussed the necessity of strong management and leadership skills in not only businesses in developing countries, but also in the healthcare sector and many other industries. In addition, global actors have been called recently to increase their focus on leadership, management, and facilitation trainings (Ki-moon, 2013). Investing in such human capital development programs seeks to form a

. . . cadre of change agents able to take advantage of opportunities, create innovative solutions to development problems and perpetuate the virtuous cycle of seeking out, adapting, and disseminating new, relevant knowledge. This kind of investment in intellectual and human capital will produce the leaders and managers needed to attain the shared growth and development Africa is looking for. (Pfeffermann & Brown, 2011, p. 116)

Taken together, the literature indicates development organizations and governments have shifted towards initiatives in which the private sector takes a leading role (Langevang et al., 2012; Pfeffermann & Brown, 2011). Small businesses in the private sector have become the frontlines of many development initiatives. However, to further enhance these efforts, more emphasis must be placed on training leaders and managers of these enterprises in entrepreneurial competencies. Kiggundu (2002) described such competencies as “attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, wisdom, and expertise” (p. 244). When individuals are adequately equipped to manage their own enterprises, they are empowered to create employment opportunities for themselves and others within their communities (McDade & Spring, 2005).

Though organizations, agencies, and government entities have begun to research the effects of entrepreneurial enterprise on economic development, little research has been devoted to learning about the experiences of entrepreneurs as a result of the training programs or

professional development in which they were involved. Understanding their experiences are crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of training and entrepreneurship development programs that have occurred or are to be implemented. By further studying the effects such programs have on participants and their business practices, future programs may be designed and calibrated to better meet the expectations and needs of their participants with the likelihood of positively impacting them and the economy and welfare of their communities.

In 2014, 23 aspiring entrepreneurs from three SSA countries took part in a grant-funded project at Oklahoma State University. To further understand the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in the project, the researcher developed a qualitative study. To bolster the research study, the investigation was supported by conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underpinning this study is that of human capital theory (HCT). According to Hornbeck and Salamon (1991), “human capital refers to the acquired skills, knowledge, and abilities of human beings” (p. 3). The “activities that influence future real income through the imbedding of resources in people” are known as “investing in human capital” (Becker, 1962, p. 9).

Cultivating a well-trained and skilled workforce requires investment—monetary, time, and a commitment to improving human performance. Such investments may be in the form of education or training. These investments have the potential to yield “cultural and other nonmonetary benefits” (Becker, 1993, p. 392) as well as gains in earnings and improvements in occupations for the individuals in which investments are made (Becker, 1993).

Becker (1993) posited that human capital can impact a person outside of their professional life. He stated: “. . . investing or disinvesting in human capital often alters the very nature of a person: training may change a life-style from one with perennial unemployment to one

with stable and good earnings . . .” (p. 392). Along with changing the life of an individual, economic benefits of investing in human capital can permeate a society (Sweetland, 1996). Although these investments are crucial to the success of economies as a whole, they are also important in ensuring that marginalized groups are able to be productive in a society and take advantage of its opportunities (Juffras & Sawhill, 1991). To reach these disadvantaged groups, “special training and intervention strategies are needed” (Salamon, 1991, p. 26). The “Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success: A Professional Fellows Program for Kenya, Uganda and South Africa” fellowship project is an example of such an intervention. Assessing the project through the lens of HCT, in conjunction with Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior as the study’s theoretical frame, sought to reveal the impact of the human capital investment made in the project’s Entrepreneurs Fellows.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework supporting this study is derived from Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB). According to Ajzen (1991), human behaviors, or intentions to act, are guided by three factors: attitudes toward a behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. TPB addresses the antecedents to forming attitudes and perceptions toward a behavior. These precursors, comprised as *salient beliefs*, are “considered to be the prevailing determinants of a person’s intentions and actions” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Salient beliefs can be divided into three distinct categories: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs, which provide the basis for an individual’s attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls, respectively (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitudes surrounding a particular behavior are dictated by a person’s behavioral beliefs and refer to the extent to which the individual has a favorable or unfavorable opinion regarding the specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Deemed a social factor by Ajzen (1991), subjective norms

are the second predictor of behaviors. Subjective norms refer to a person's perceptions of the "social pressures to preform or not perform a behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). The third indicator of intention is the individual's perceived level of behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control describes the "perceived ease or difficulty of the behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Ajzen (1991) asserted these perceptions reflect the individual's previous experiences and views on anticipated obstacles associated with a given behavior. TPB states that the relative importance of each factor may fluctuate based on the particular situation or context in which the given behavior *would be exercised* (Ajzen, 1991).

Ajzen (1991) posited the perceptions and attitudes held by an individual may be affected by a behavioral intervention. An intervention can be targeted at one or more behavioral determinants, i.e., attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control (see Figure 1). Interventions have the potential to change the beliefs of an individual (Ajzen, 1991). It is possible, therefore, to affect change in a person's intentions and, ultimately, her or his actions.

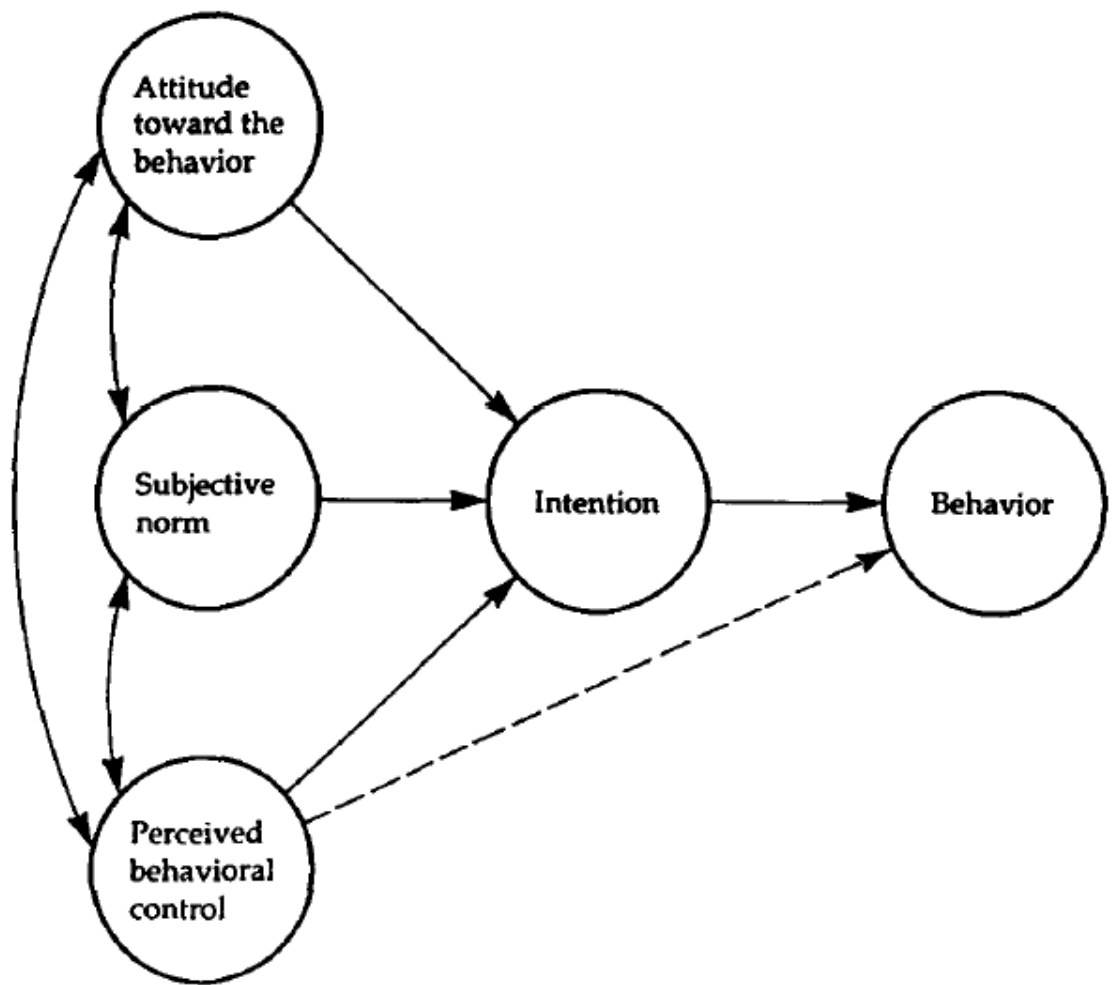


Figure 1. Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. An individual's intention to act, and, ultimately, her or his behavior are indicated by three factors: attitudes toward a behavior, perceived societal pressure, and perceived behavioral control surrounding a behavior. Adapted from "The Theory of Planned Behavior," by I. Ajzen, 1991, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), p. 182. Copyright 1991 by Academia Press, Inc.

To do this most effectively, it is important to direct the intervention at an individual's *salient*, or prominent, beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). Examining the “Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success” fellowship as a behavioral intervention may be helpful in developing effective interventions in the future, especially in regard to impacts on participants who were either entrepreneurs or aspired to be such. Therefore, TPB (Ajzen, 1991) was the theoretical lens employed to describe and interpret the study's findings.

Summary

In 1998, economist Joseph Stiglitz presented a lecture to the United Nations University declaring the post-Washington consensus view of economic development had arrived. Stiglitz called for equitable and sustainable development through “increases in living standards, including improved health and education – not just increases in measured GDP” (p. 46). Just two years later, at the Millennium Summit in 2000, the UN adopted the MDGs (UN Millennium Project, 2006). According to Jeffrey Sachs, adoption of the MDGs was a public acknowledgement of the need for a global partnership in combating issues of poverty, health, conflict, and environmental degradation around the world (Sachs, 2012).

At the close of the MDGs, the UN renewed its promise to the global community through the implementation of the SDGs (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015). The SDGs place particular emphasis on job creation, equitable access to resources and education, and small businesses as major drivers of development around the world. Of the 17 overarching goals, seven are directly linked to economic security, empowerment, and resources (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015).

As the world looks toward achieving the SDGs by 2030, it is important to consider the types of communities, development approaches, tools, and institutions, which will play a role. Endogenous development, which is rooted in local resources and impulses and linked to rural communities, is spurred by investment in human capital, innovation, and entrepreneurial

endeavors (Murray & Dunn, 1995; Terluin, 2003). The literature suggests that through the development of human capital and community engagement, rural or agriculturally based communities will exhibit economic growth and vitality (Becker, 1962; Hornbeck & Salamon, 1992; Murray & Dunn, 1995).

A key driver of economic development, as noted by the UN, national governments, and various institutions, is entrepreneurship. Around the turn of the 19th century, French economist Jean-Baptiste Say, as translated by Princep and Biddle (2001), called an entrepreneur a person “who takes upon himself the immediate responsibility, risk, and conduct of a concern of industry, whether upon his own or a borrowed capital” (p. 182). In the years after Say’s proclamation, a number of themes have fomented the discussion of entrepreneurship, including innovation, risk-taking, opportunity recognition, and creativity (Baumol, 1968; Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990; Stewart et al., 1998). These traits of entrepreneurs, in conjunction with their motivations, i.e., growth, profit, and goal achievement, coalesce to form an individual’s *entrepreneurial spirit* (Ang & Hong, 2000; Gartner et al., 1992; Lyons, 2015).

Entrepreneurs are often reliant on a series of networks between friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors, among others. The literature notes that social capital, or the “links between individuals” (Westlund & Bolton, 2003, p. 78) are exceedingly important to entrepreneurs. This is especially prevalent in SSA. African enterprises often lack resources which are more readily available in other regions (Khavul et al., 2009). For this reason, entrepreneurs in SSA are very reliant on their social and professional networks (Khavul et al., 2009; Langevang et al., 2012).

Moreover, entrepreneurs in low-income or developing regions such as SSA can play a large role in community development through job creation, problem solving, leadership, and affecting social change (Awogbenle & Chijioke Iwuamadi, 2010; Cornwall, 1998; Pfeffermann &

Brown, 2011). The related literature also notes the rise of social entrepreneurs (Haugh, 2007; Martin & Osberg, 2007). These individuals and enterprises are different from their profit-seeking counterparts due to their goals of accomplishing a *social mission* (Easterly & Miesling, 2007; Haugh, 2007; Martin & Osberg, 2007).

The traits of entrepreneurship, such as innovation, desire for new information, creativity, and growth, are relevant within many industries, including agriculture (Singh & Krishna, 1994). In recent years, policymakers and non-state actors have focused their efforts on supporting entrepreneurship within this sector (Knudson et al., 2004). Encouragement of agricultural entrepreneurs has not only occurred in the United States. Agricultural entrepreneurs also have been identified as very important catalysts for economic change in SSA (Juma, 2011; Temu & Temu, 2005). However, for agricultural producers to better fulfill this role as drivers of economic development, entrepreneurial training and extension programs must be offered. Along with agricultural producers and other entrepreneurs, smallholder farmers and proprietors of MSMEs have been specifically identified as integral players in economic development (IFAD, 2013; Juma, 2011; Okpara & Wynn, 2007) throughout the world, including SSA.

This review of literature also discussed the conceptual framework of this study: HCT. As noted by Hornbeck and Salamon (1991), “human capital refers to the acquired skills, knowledge, and abilities of human beings” (p. 3). Becker (1962) noted that activities which impart knowledge to people and equip them with new skills are seen as “invest[ments] in human capital” (p. 9). Investing in human capital often benefits the individual, but may also diffuse through communities or the larger society. The study’s participants were assessed through the lens of HCT to understand the impact of the investment made in them, i.e., as Entrepreneur Fellows.

In addition to HCT, this study is supported by Ajzen’s (1991) TPB. Ajzen (1991) posited human behaviors are influenced by three factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived

behavioral control. Ajzen (1991) noted behavioral interventions have the potential to change an individual's beliefs surrounding a behavior. The "Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs: A Professional Fellows Program for Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda" was viewed as a behavioral intervention in accord with Ajzen's (1991) TPB.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study, including an explanation of the researcher's epistemology and the study's theoretical perspective, a description of the study's design and participants, case selection, instrumentation, data collection, as well as coding and analysis of the collected data.

Study's Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to explore the experiences of select Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises after participation in a grant-funded, professional development and cultural exchange program. This inquiry aimed to identify thematic links between the selected entrepreneurs' experiences and the ways participating in such an exchange program shaped their enterprises on return to their home countries. The results of this qualitative research study may serve as the precursor to case studies for use by practitioners and scholars of international agricultural development in the future. Five research questions guided this study:

1. What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact on their enterprises after returning home?
2. What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

3. What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?
4. In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?
5. What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Qualitative Inquiry

The decision to employ a qualitative inquiry approach stemmed primarily from the desire to create individual case studies which would “provide detailed description of the themes within each case, followed by thematic analysis across cases” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 31) of the study's participants. In addition, qualitative cases are used to make “comparisons to discover important patterns and themes” (Patton, 2015, p. 13). According to Patton (2015), “qualitative data consist of quotations, observations, excerpts from documents, and entries from social media” (p. 54). The author also noted that qualitative researchers must exhibit *empathetic neutrality*. Researchers embody *empathetic neutrality* when they occupy “a stance of being non-judgmental” (Patton, 2015, p. 59) and are “completely focused on the interaction with the person or people being interviewed” (Patton, 2015, p. 60).

Interpretivist Theoretical Perspective and Constructionist Epistemology

The researcher was guided by an interpretivist theoretical perspective. She interpreted the meanings made by the fellowship participants as they conducted their enterprises after returning home. To do this, the researcher gathered data from personal interviews and the review of project-related documents. She worked to create a rich description of each case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), highlighted various perspectives, and strove to present a holistic understanding of the entrepreneurs' enterprises and related experiences.

Further, this study was shaped by the researcher's constructionist epistemology. According to Gergen, as cited in Crotty (1998), *constructionism* is focused on the “collective

generation [and transmission] of meaning” (p. 58). Individuals’, i.e., the researcher and study participants’, perceptions of reality and assumptions about the human experience are socially, historically, and culturally constructed (Patton, 2015). Crotty (1998) described social constructionism as “empasiz[ing] the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things (even the way we feel things!) and gives us a quite definite view of the world” (p. 58). The role of the researcher is to “capture diverse understandings and multiple realities about people’s definitions and experiences of the situation” (Patton, 2015, p. 122); in this case, of the entrepreneurs who participated in the fellowship program. The interpretivist theoretical perspective and constructionist epistemological viewpoint shaped the case study methodology employed in this research study.

Case Study Design

According to Stake (2006), “qualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations” (p. 3). This study analyzed multiple cases by which each participant was viewed as an individual unit of analysis; therefore, the researcher was able to “integrate and synthesize interview responses from throughout the interview[s] into a coherent story” (Patton, 2015, p. 443). Stake (2000), in a chapter in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, stated that case study is not a series of methods for qualitative research, but rather *a decision of what to study*. Stake (2006) noted the “benefits of multicase study will be limited if fewer than, say, 4 cases are chosen, or more than 10. . . . But for good reason, many multicase studies have fewer than 4 or more than 15 cases” (p. 23).

Stake (2006) outlined the criteria for selecting cases in a multicase study in the form of three questions: “Is the case relevant to the quintain? Do the cases provide diversity across contexts? Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts?” (p. 23). Stake (2006) used the term *quintain* to refer to the whole group being studied via individual

cases (p. vi). For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined its quintain as the two cohorts of Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in the professional development exchange during 2014.

This researcher explored the study participants' perceptions of the entrepreneur fellowship program, its impacts on their business practices, including aspects of related networking and communication. When aligning this case study with the interpretivist position, the researcher went through the process of meaning-making to get to know individual participants and develop a deeper understanding of their experiences. In an effort to reflect the diversity of the group, participants selected for interviews represented a wide array of entrepreneurial enterprises. The fellows interviewed included women and men from three Sub-Saharan African countries, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda who had a variety of entrepreneurial endeavors, and represented different levels of economic wherewithal. Furthermore, representatives of marginalized groups such as providers of youth development programs and disabled persons were among the participants interviewed.

Grounded Theory Methods

The researcher utilized the methods common in grounded theory research to guide her collection and analysis of this study's data. According to Patton (2015), the methods of grounded theory research emphasize “. . . steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction . . .” (p. 110). The researcher simultaneously collected and analyzed the data by following an iterative process (Patton, 2015). Further, the researcher engaged in open, axial, and theoretical coding, along with memo-writing (Saldaña, 2012).

Setting and Participants

This project, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Education and Cultural Affairs Professional Fellows Division, was conducted in six phases. The initial phase, which took place in fall of 2013, involved the recruitment and selection of 24 fellows from

Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda to take part in the fellowship during 2014. The second and fourth phases brought 23 Entrepreneur Fellows from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda to the United States to participate in a five-week, professional development program. Twelve fellows, four from each participating nation, attended the program in May 2014. The remaining eleven fellows, four from South Africa and Uganda, respectively, and three from Kenya, came to Oklahoma in October of 2014. The third and fifth phases of the project included two groups of Oklahoma State University faculty and students, as a part of this reciprocal exchange, traveling to SSA to learn more about the ventures of the Entrepreneur Fellows as well as the business climates of their countries.

The population of this study was 11 Entrepreneur Fellows. Of the 11 interviewed, six participated in the second “Spring phase” of the project (Cohort I) and five participated in the fourth “Fall phase” (Cohort II) during 2014. The participants in this study were selected using criterion-based sampling as it “works well when all the individuals studied experienced the same phenomenon” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 104); in this case, the fellowship program. In addition, to ensure diversity of the sample, the researcher utilized maximum variation to “display multiple perspectives about the case” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 104). To that end, participants were chosen based on four criteria:

- Roughly equal representation of female and male participants, as derived from participants in the Entrepreneur Fellowship program;
- All three participant countries, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, were represented;
- A variety of entrepreneurial enterprises were represented in the sample by including owners of farms, agro-input suppliers, educators, and social entrepreneurs in the group interviewed;
- Different levels of socioeconomic status were also taken into account when selecting the Entrepreneur Fellows to interview.

With these criteria in mind, the researcher selected 11 participants (see Table 1). The interviewees included four Kenyans, three South Africans, and four Ugandans. Four women and seven men comprised the group of interviewees. Altogether these individuals represented enterprises in agricultural media, agro-inputs and mechanics, production agriculture, retail food sales, social ventures, and textile design and manufacture.

Table 1. Summary of Study Participants.

Participant Pseudonym	Country	Gender	Project Phase (Spring or Fall)
Matthew	Kenya	Male	Fall
Charlotte	Kenya	Female	Spring
Nicholas	Kenya	Male	Spring
Roger	Kenya	Male	Fall
Nancy	South Africa	Female	Fall
Penelope	South Africa	Female	Fall
Malcolm	South Africa	Male	Spring
Martin	Uganda	Male	Spring
Jacob	Uganda	Male	Spring
Simon	Uganda	Male	Spring
Cara	Uganda	Female	Fall

During their five-week stay in the United States, participants took part in fellowship workshops, entrepreneurial training, and cultural experiences exposing them to entrepreneurship and culture in Oklahoma (see Appendix A). Each participant was also involved in a short-term internship or job shadowing experience that aligned with their entrepreneurial interests. Faculty and graduate students at Oklahoma State University coordinated and delivered the fellowship program. The project team included Dr. D. Dwayne Cartmell, Dr. M. Craig Edwards, and Dr. Shelly Sitton from the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership; Dr. Shida Henneberry, director of the Master of International Agriculture Program; and Dr. Craig

Watters, executive director of the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship. Graduate students included a doctoral student in agricultural education, Mrs. Lisa Taylor, and a master of science student in agricultural communications, Ms. Brentney Maroney.

Procedures

It is the policy of Oklahoma State University, as mandated by federal law, that all research involving human subjects must be approved by its Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher submitted a research proposal and application to Oklahoma State University's IRB. The IRB reviewed the proposal and deemed it acceptable research involving human subjects. The proposal was approved on October 9, 2015 and assigned the reference number AG-15-46 (see Appendix B).

Solicitation of Study Participants

After receiving IRB approval, the researcher was introduced, via electronic mail, to the Entrepreneur Fellows by Dr. M. Craig Edwards, a project team co-director. The researcher then contacted individual participants to request an interview by sending them a scripted invitation (see Appendix C) to provide background information regarding the study. This electronic mail message also contained an informed consent form (see Appendix D) by which recipients could accept or decline to participate in the research study. All 11 Entrepreneur Fellows contacted for an interview agreed to participate. After the initial electronic mail message, the researcher scheduled individual interviews with each participant.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

This study included two types of data to facilitate triangulation and bolster the credibility of the research. According to Stake (2000), "triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an

observation or interpretation” (p. 443). The data sets include individual interviews with the selected Entrepreneur Fellows and content analysis of project-related documents.

Semi-structured interviews were held from October 2015 to May 2016. These interviews were guided by 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix E) which prompted the respondents to answer specific, predetermined items, but also allowed space for spontaneous anecdotes or descriptions as shared by the interviewees (Brinkmann, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2015) noted that in such interviews the “exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance” (p. 438). The list of open-ended questions was developed by the researcher, under the guidance of OSU faculty members with qualitative research expertise and her advisor.

In addition to the open-ended questions, the researcher also prepared probes. According to Patton (2015), “probes are used to deepen the response to a question, increase the richness and depth of responses, and give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired” (p. 465). The completed interview protocol was used to guide 45 to 60 minute interviews with the selected participants. The questions and probes were designed to glean information regarding the business structures, relevant social and professional networks, motivations, and achievements and challenges of the participants’ enterprises, including for-profit and social ventures. Along with descriptions of their enterprises, interview participants also discussed the impacts of their fellowship experiences with the researcher. In addition, participants were asked to discuss the goals they had for their enterprises.

The interviews were recorded using a mobile telephone with voice recording application. Following each interview, the recording was transferred from the mobile telephone and saved to the researcher’s computer. Transcription was done promptly after each session. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to accurately reflect the conversations that took place. After transcription, the participants were provided their transcripts to review and provide clarifications, as needed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Tracy, 2010; Yin, 2014). This process is known as

member checking during which the researcher “document[s] feedback on their interpretation of data from study participants” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 110), which assists in bolstering the credibility of a study and ensures accurate data are derived from the transcribed interviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Groenewald, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher highlighted sections of the transcripts and posed specific questions to elicit clarifications from the interview participants. Of the 11 participants, seven responded with minor changes and clarifications. The researcher amended the data to reflect the input received from those study participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Groenewald, 2004).

The study also included archival analysis to examine additional data regarding the experiences of participants in the fellowship program. The researcher utilized various, program-related documents as sources of data. According to Merriam (2009), documents served “as the umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (p. 139). These documents included electronic mail messages exchanged between program participants, including some messages sent by Entrepreneur Fellows who were not interviewed but corresponded with Fellows who were, menus and marketing materials from one of the Ugandan participant’s enterprises (see Appendices F & G), and logos for a newly formed organization to develop youth for the respective countries agriculture sectors, as launched by the fellows (see Appendix H).

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) noted that content analysis is a method of analyzing documents during which the researcher “focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (p. 1278). This analysis provided a deeper insight into the communication behaviors of, and relationships formed between, the participants, and the documents “provide[d] the inquirer with information about many things that cannot be observed” (Patton, 2015, p. 376). Analysis of the artifacts also assisted in triangulating the research phenomenon (Patton, 2015, p. 376).

Data Analysis

An individual case record was created for each study participant. These case files included an electronic file of the interview transcripts, the participants' signed consent forms, and other relevant documents (see Appendix D). The study employed data triangulation by utilizing "a variety of data sources" (Patton, 2015, p. 316). According to Stake (2000), "triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen" (p. 444). Through the analysis of interview transcripts and artifacts provided by the participants, the researcher was able to develop a *rich and thick* description of the research phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Throughout the process of data analysis, the researcher looked for specific codes within individual cases. Saldaña (2013) defined codes as "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). Key words and phrases were pulled from the transcripts and documents, affixed to notecards, and categorized. Coding occurred in several phases, emphasizing the fluid nature of qualitative research (Patton, 2015; Saldaña, 2012). This process allowed the researcher to draw parallels between categorized codes across the various cases and develop themes. Eleven interview transcripts, organization logos, and electronic mail messages were analyzed and coded by the researcher.

The researcher initially employed *open coding* to reveal analytic leads for further evaluation within the data (Saldaña, 2012). This step in the coding process allowed the researcher to categorize the data into distinct parts and compare and contrast such (Saldaña, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During the coding process, the researcher also engaged in memo writing by noting her initial assumptions, connections, and by expanding and linking codes (Charmaz, 2000; Saldaña, 2012). According to Charmaz (2000),

[m]emo writing helps the researcher (a) to grapple with ideas about the data, (b) to set an analytic course, (c) to refine categories, (d) to define the relationships among various categories, and (e) to gain a sense of confidence and competence in their ability to analyze data. (p. 518)

As the researcher combed through the data she worked to first expand and then contract codes to create a comprehensive and clear representation of emerging themes through the use of open-coding and memo writing. To further understand the linkages and disparities between codes, the researcher also employed axial coding. Axial coding involves the development of relationships and networks between themes, sub-themes, and the data (Böhm, 2004; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This coding enabled the researcher “to refine and differentiate concepts that . . . [were] already available and lends them the status of categories” (Böhm, 2004, p. 271).

In addition to open and axial coding, the researcher engaged in *theoretical coding* (Charmaz, 2006; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz (2006) noted: “. . . theoretical codes specify possible relationships between categories you developed . . .” (p. 63), i.e., the researcher. According to Thornberg and Charmaz (2014), “theoretical codes refer to underlying logics that could be found in pre-existing theories” (p. 159). The preexisting theories underpinning this study were Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB; see Figure 1) and human capital theory (HCT). These theories provided structure to the researcher’s analytical process (Saldaña, 2012). The researcher assessed 35 codes, ten pervasive subthemes, and three overarching themes through the lenses of TPB and HCT.

During this process, the researcher assessed and sorted the codes derived during open and axial coding to “explore, create and refine theoretical relationships (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, p. 165). This step allowed the researcher to evaluate the strength and weakness of her codes in relation to the study’s theoretical framework. For instance, codes such as *funding* and

governmental support exhibited weaker ties to TPB and HCT. On the other hand, codes regarding the impact of the fellowship, i.e., *community development* and *youth unemployment*, and those which comprised the entrepreneurial spirit, such as *lifelong learning*, *desire to share information*, and *new networks*, were closely tied to principles of HCT and TPB, especially benefits of investing in human capital and the impacts of behavioral interventions. Through memo writing and open coding, which the researcher did by hand, and axial and theoretical coding, as facilitated by using NVivo 11 Pro, a qualitative data analysis software, the researcher was able to understand better the nature of causal relationships and connections between data, themes, and the study's theoretical basis.

Researcher Reflexivity

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that, in the qualitative paradigm, the researcher is the “instrument of inquiry” (p. 193); therefore, researchers must outline “personal beliefs, values, and biases that may shape their inquiry” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). This is known as *researcher reflexivity* (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2015) noted that reflexivity is “a way of emphasizing the importance of deep introspection, political consciousness, and cultural awareness” (p. 70). The nature of qualitative research is interpersonal, experiential, and in-depth (Patton, 2015).

To engage in self-awareness and to bolster the validity of this study, the researcher disclosed her assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes surrounding each interview in a reflective journal. In addition, she discussed interview procedures and formative analysis with her advisor. The researcher was born and raised in an agricultural community in northern California where her family grows rice. She received her bachelor's of science degree in agricultural business with a minor in global politics from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in June 2015. Following the completion of her undergraduate coursework, the researcher entered the

Master's of International Agriculture Program at Oklahoma State University with an emphasis on international development.

Further, the researcher also reports having previously visited Uganda during her undergraduate coursework to participate in a four-week internship with an American non-profit organization. In addition, she took part in an internship in the same country during the summer of 2016. During this nine-week internship, the researcher visited the enterprise of one of the Ugandan Entrepreneur Fellows involving the retail sale of coffee and other food items. This individual was also one of the participants interviewed for the study. Her graduate internship occurred in northern Uganda at an orphanage where she taught agricultural topics to mostly middle school aged children.

Quality of Qualitative Inquiry

Tracy (2010) outlined eight criteria to shape high quality qualitative research. According to Tracy (2010), such “research is marked by (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence” (p. 839). These criteria assisted the researcher in fleshing out data in a transparent, honest, and meaningful way. To further establish credibility and dependability of the study's findings, the researcher used three specific methods as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): member checking, triangulation, and reflexivity. To ensure the participants' interviews were accurately represented, participants received their interview transcripts and were asked to review such for accuracy and thereafter provide feedback to the researcher, especially in regard to errors or clarifications (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 110), i.e., member checking. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is the “most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). The member checks were especially important to this study because many interviews were conducted via Skype or Google Hangout with Internet connections of varying quality. In addition,

a slight language barrier existed between the researcher and the study participants, i.e., the use of American English versus British English.

In addition to member checking, the researcher triangulated her data. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). Further, the researcher engaged in peer debriefing. Creswell and Miller (2000) described peer debriefing as “the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored” (p. 129). Peers involved in the review sessions included a doctoral candidate from Uganda and a doctoral candidate from Oklahoma. These individuals were studying agricultural education and had engaged with the investigation’s participants during their stay in the United States. The native Oklahoman experienced an eight-week international internship in Uganda during the summer of 2016 through which he interacted with a study participant.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the findings of the study. The findings are organized by the five research questions which guided this study.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer five research questions:

1. What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact on their enterprises after returning home?
2. What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?
3. What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?
4. In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?
5. What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Discussion of the Study's Themes and Subthemes

To answer the study's research questions, the researcher analyzed 11 interview transcripts, external mail messages exchanged between fellows, menus and marketing materials from an Entrepreneur Fellow's enterprises, and other relevant documents. This analysis led to the creation of 35 codes, three overarching themes, and nine underlying subthemes (see Figure 2).

The three pervasive themes were *interpersonal connections*, *the entrepreneurial spirit*, and *impact of the fellowship*. The theme *interpersonal connections* is comprised of three subthemes: *community engagement*, *importance of relationships*, and *networking and communication*. Embedded in the theme of *entrepreneurial spirit* were three subthemes: *accessing capital*, *growth and goal-oriented*, and *seeking and sharing information*. Within the theme *impact of the fellowship* were also three subthemes: *OSU as a measure of success*, *new global network*, and *creation of a youth development organization*.

Interpersonal Connections	The Entrepreneurial Spirit	Impact of the Fellowship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Importance of relationships • Networking and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing capital • Growth and goal-oriented • Seeking and sharing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSU fellowship as a measure of success • New global network • Creation of a youth development organization

Figure 2. Themes and Subthemes Derived from the Study's Findings

The theme *interpersonal connections* refers to connections and relationships between individuals impacted by the “Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs” professional development program (see Appendix A). These connections spanned from between the Entrepreneur Fellows themselves to their families, friends, mentors, co-workers, and community members. In addition, connections Entrepreneur Fellows formed with U.S. participants during the fellowship, with members of the Stillwater community, and with entrepreneurs throughout Oklahoma also supported this theme.

The subtheme *community engagement* refers to the Entrepreneur Fellows' desires to positively impact members of, or groups within, their communities. Several of the enterprises had the goal of employing youth; some served the primary purpose of youth development. Other ventures sought to empower smallholder farmers and similarly marginalized groups. In addition, many of the Entrepreneur Fellows expressed desires to spur job creation in their communities.

The subtheme *importance of relationships* indicated the emphasis Entrepreneur Fellows placed on the relationships with those individuals involved in and supporting their enterprises. The Fellows expressed a deep appreciation and respect for such relationships. These valuable connections were held between Entrepreneur Fellows and colleagues/partners, family members, friends, employees, customers/clients, mentors, and fellow business owners/entrepreneurs.

The subtheme *networking and communication* includes the professional activities and communication behaviors of the Entrepreneur Fellows. The Fellows emphasized the need for open lines of communication between themselves and their employees and clients. Further, they needed to stay informed regarding all aspects of their enterprises, and maintain a strong working knowledge regardless of scale. The participants also utilized social media platforms, engaged in professional associations, and attended industry-related functions.

The theme *entrepreneurial spirit* comprises the aspirations, motivations, and challenges which the Entrepreneur Fellows exemplified and expressed. Such motivations include a desire to learn and share new information, a growth and goal-oriented mindset, and confidence in their ideas and enterprises. This theme also entails the Fellows limited access to funding and their solutions to financial strains. This overarching theme includes the subthemes *accessing capital*, *seeking and sharing information*, and *growth and goal-oriented*.

The subtheme *accessing capital* encompasses the difficulty the Entrepreneur Fellows faced when trying to access capital and sustain funding sources for their enterprises. This theme

also explored the creativity and determination with which the Fellows approached challenges associated with cash flow through cost cutting, fundraising, government support, and lending agencies.

The subtheme *growth and goal-oriented* discusses the future oriented and goal-seeking views of the Entrepreneur Fellows, as well as their ability to recognize and leverage opportunities. Many of the participants mentioned the desire for further growth and expansion of their ventures. In addition, the Entrepreneur Fellows all expressed their plans for future project steps, moves, and programs. The subtheme *seeking and sharing information* summarizes the Entrepreneur Fellows' affinities for lifelong learning and their desires to share new information with those around them. The Fellows enjoyed open dialogue and exchange of ideas and promoted access to information.

The third overarching theme, *impact of the fellowship*, outlines the broad impacts participation in the "Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs" fellowship had on the Fellows and their business operations. The fellowship resulted in strong connections between Fellows from both cohorts, participants from Oklahoma State University, and the wider Stillwater community, including other locations in Oklahoma. This theme was bolstered by three subthemes. Several participants in the study noted that being selected as an Entrepreneur Fellow was a mark of success or a major achievement. This led to developing the subtheme, *OSU as a measure of success*.

Also within the theme of the fellowship's impact is that of a *new global network*. This subtheme refers to the formation of a new network of Entrepreneur Fellows which links three Sub-Saharan African countries, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. This new network provides a support system and sounding board for thoughts and ideas between individuals who are united through a common experience, i.e., OSU's fellowship program. In addition to their own cohorts, Entrepreneur Fellows also have been connected to participants from a previous grant-funded project organized by faculty members of OSU, the Food Security Fellows program.

The fellowship program was a catalyst for the founding of a youth development organization. The Global Partnership for African Youth in Agriculture (Glo-PAYA) was the result of the Fellows' shared vision to change the perception of African youth surrounding agriculture and its allied fields. The Entrepreneur Fellows' strong commitment to Glo-PAYA and its mission led to developing the subtheme *creation of a youth development organization*.

Findings related to Research Question #1

Research Question #1: What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact of their enterprises after returning home?

Assertion: During their stay in the United States, the Fellows were equipped with new skills, accessed new information, and broadened their professional and social networks, which enabled them to more effectively manage their enterprises. The interviews revealed the Fellows had implemented new technologies and management tools in their enterprises after returning home. In addition, they discussed the value of this new network the fellowship had created.

Substantiation: After thematic analysis of the study's data, two subthemes emerged and were used to describe and interpret the study's findings in regard to research question one: *new global network* and *seeking and sharing information*.

As a result of the fellowship, Entrepreneur Fellows are now connected to a wider variety of individuals. These connections span three African countries, two entrepreneur fellowship cohorts, two grant-funded projects, and are linked to Oklahoma State University, its surrounding community, and the state of Oklahoma. Establishing and maintaining these connections has been very important to the Entrepreneur Fellows. Martin, a Ugandan agro-inputs dealer who works with smallholder farmers stated: "[M]ost of the entrepreneurs from the U.S., team Uganda, we are still together. I can always call on them. We compare notes and see how far we are going. And we recently met last week" (Lines 124-126). Penelope, a South African Fellow, noted that as a result

of meeting her cohort and being connected to the fellowship program she was able to learn about the efforts and projects of other young entrepreneurs. She said:

. . . in many ways that [meeting fellow entrepreneurs] also gave me a lot of confidence, and at the same time it was challenging. But it gave me a good idea, in terms of as far as the African Girls Leadership Institute goes [i.e., her social venture], I am on the right track. (Penelope, lines 73-77)

Matthew, a small-scale Kenyan dairyman, also expressed his enthusiasm for relationships formed through the fellowship. He said of his mentor at the OSU dairy farm: “I really appreciate what he was able to do for me. . . . I learnt a lot and that even compelled me to even want to succeed even further” (Matthew, lines 208-209). Cara, a gender equity specialist for a coffee cooperative, noted the impacts participating in the fellowship program had on her. She stated:

The experience I had in Oklahoma was really good. I was attached to Aspen Coffee Company where I gained a lot of experiences and learned a lot of lessons, because I had never worked in a coffee shop. When I came back I was able to open and manage a coffee shop owned by my organization. (Cara, lines 32-34)

An underlying characteristic of each of the Entrepreneur Fellows is their desire to seek and share new information. The fellowship program served as a great source of new information for its participants. During their job shadowings or internships, Fellows were exposed to new methods of operation and participated in hands-on learning experiences. Roger, a Kenyan agricultural engineer, discussed how his business practices had changed as result of the fellowship and that others were beginning to notice. Roger explained:

In our daily operations, I have applied about 99% of what I learned in the U.S. I really appreciate that because you’ll find that I am pulling more people to come to my business,

because they are seeing a different or a new product or way of operating in our business.

(Roger, lines 289-291)

Roger also noted that his experience with Meridian Technology Center of Stillwater and a John Deere equipment dealer provided him with aspirations and valuable new skills. Roger stated:

I came back to this country, in a small way, hoping to aspire to those heights. I also had a placement in P&K Equipment; they deal with John Deere. . . . I gained a lot of experience on how they do their work, repair their machinery for farmers. I was so happy to bring that knowledge to our workshop and, also assist farmers here in Kenya. (Roger, lines 74-77)

Martin expressed growth had occurred in his business after his return from Oklahoma. He attributed much of this growth to the innovations and techniques he was introduced to while in the United States. During his interview, Martin shared: “. . . [F]rom the time that I have left from the U.S., the growth has been a rapid growth. This is because I have been implementing things I was not using before” (Lines 180-181). He went on to discuss his use of radio and social media to provide information to farmers in the surrounding area. He explained:

Whenever I go on the radio, I get so many calls of people asking me about this service.

Or whenever I post something new on Facebook, farmers that can access social media—they are able to learn and succeed through information. And we do have competition, but because of the innovation I got from the U.S., it has helped me to make my business grow at a very fast rate. (Martin, lines 181-185)

Charlotte, a swine supply chain manager and PhD student from Kenya, indicated that despite phytosanitary issues inhibiting her job-shadowing experience in the United States, she learned the value of collaboration. Charlotte stated:

. . . because of those phytosanitary restrictions, which I fully understand. I didn't really get the kind of exposure I wanted. But . . . what I did get was the idea that, 'Wow, I don't have to have everything on my own. I just probably need to partner with the right people and get moving from there.' So when I landed here in Nairobi, the first person I thought about was [my current partner] because she is just perfect [in regard to future venture expansion]. (Lines 75-79)

Similar to Charlotte, Penelope also sought collaboration when she returned from the fellowship. Penelope had an informal group who helped run the African Girls Leadership Institute, but she said her participation in the fellowship program prompted her to solidify that group.

One of the things that I did almost immediately when I got back to the country was to form a team. . . . I made it official. You know, I have people on board full time, like a full time commitment and they bring different expertise on the team. (Penelope, lines 138-141)

During their experiences in the fellowship program, the participants were exposed to many new entrepreneurship approaches and lessons. To further their entrepreneurial pursuits, the Fellows sought out participating in the exchange experience, absorbed new information, and implemented their learning on return to their home countries.

Findings related to Research Question #2

Research Question #2: What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Assertion: The Entrepreneur Fellows are motivated by the desire to fulfill business-related needs, to facilitate job creation and capacity building for themselves and others, to exploit gaps in the market, and to strengthen their communities.

Substantiation: Through thematic analysis of the study's data, three subthemes emerged and were used to describe and interpret this study's findings in regard to research question two. The subthemes include *growth and goal-oriented*, *community engagement*, and *seeking and sharing information*.

The Entrepreneur Fellows interviewed spoke of opportunities they recognized, ideas they encountered and explored, or gaps in the market they understood better and intended to fill with their enterprises. These intentions exemplify the subtheme *growth and goal-oriented*. For Simon, a Ugandan agriculturalist who is hearing impaired, his opportunity recognition was to start a poultry operation. He explained:

I identified a gap in my area, whereby, I was the first person to start this project. Why? Because people wanted eggs, they wanted chickens, but there were no houses for people to get them. So I made this project to get that market from my neighborhood. That is the opportunity I used to start that project. (Simon, line 40-43)

Malcolm of South Africa also identified a need within his sector: agricultural communications and media. In that regard, Malcolm said:

... I decided to start my own company which is called Pillar Agrimedia. The idea behind that was really to focus on development agriculture, because South Africa is actually a very commercially driven and focused agricultural sector. And I felt that small farmers are left out of the equation. (Lines 7-11)

The study participants expressed their desire to create employment opportunities, not only for themselves, but for members of their communities. After being laid off by his previous employer, Roger set about starting his own company. He recalled: "I was working for Londro East Africa in Eldoret. I was working in their workshop there. Because the lease period for the foreign investment in the country came to an end, we were laid off" (Roger, line 17-20).

Assessing his situation, Roger saw an opportunity to serve small- and medium-scale farmers by starting his own fabrication firm. Roger recounted this decision during his interview:

What happened is that when I came out of the company I had two options—be employed again or to look for an opportunity outside. So what I realized is that many farmers are suffering. They didn't have anyone to assist them in carrying out making their implements, showing them what to do, how to go about [using such]. And because I had done much in the workshop in the company, I had a lot of experience. Plus, because of that experience I had trained for, I was better placed to assist the farmers. That is what made me move in that direction. (Lines 25-30)

At the time of the interview, Roger's firm employed 27 individuals and he was proud to say his employees were well trained and empowered to work with minimal supervision.

Nicholas, a Kenyan Entrepreneur Fellow who operates a rent collection agency and mobile banking firm, spoke of his longstanding desire to positively impact the youth in his community. He and his business partners aimed to capitalize not only on the need for their service, but also to assist unemployed youth by providing job opportunities. Nicholas described the progress his business had made in this regard: "I've been able to employee some youth who were unemployed. I remember that I told you that when we started we had one. And now we have four" (Lines 65-66).

During his interview, Martin also discussed the desire to create jobs through his enterprise. He described part of the vision for his operation: "... I want to employ so many other people. I am an entrepreneur; I want other people to get employment from me" (Martin, lines 192-194). Martin, similar to many of the Fellows interviewed, regarded his employees as valuable team members. He stated: "... we always work as a team" (Martin, line 278). This expressed

regard for their employees and the impact job creation has on communities, helped the researcher construct the subtheme of *community engagement*.

Imbued in *community engagement* is the desire to empower others and focus on helping marginalized groups. Many of the enterprises operated by the Entrepreneur Fellows have a social element and others were entirely social ventures. Penelope discussed the African Girls Leadership Institute she founded:

I've always wanted to do something whereby I give back to the community. And when I was starting during my studying years at the university, I started getting involved with different community development activities and organizations. It was during this time again when I thought, 'You know, one day I would like to do something. I would like to do something where I can give back to the community.' . . . [W]hen I eventually started the African Girls Leadership Institute it almost came naturally to want to do something that adds to what everyone is really doing in terms of women empowerment and education for girls. And overall, creating space for these young girls to dream and become leaders of tomorrow. (Lines 25-32)

Communication between the Fellows and project team members at OSU also exemplifies the emphasis Entrepreneur Fellows place on *community engagement*. In an electronic mail message, Rebekah, a communication specialist from Uganda, provided an update to a doctoral student at OSU, along with several faculty members. Although Rebekah was not one of the 11 interview participants, she was one of the 23 Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in the "Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs" fellowship program. She visited the United States as a member of the fall cohort. In an electronic mail message, she updated members of the U.S. project team: "I am currently working with Enterprise Uganda as a communications specialist on contract for a project called Northern Uganda Youth Empowerment Project (NUYEP) in addition to other communication activities" (Rebekah, electronic mail message, lines 17-18). She went on to outline the challenges Uganda faced in regard to youth unemployment. As she described her

role with NUYEP, Rebekah wrote: “I find the work very fulfilling because of my deep rooted interest in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship!” (Electronic mail message, lines 37-38).

Similarly, Jacob an agriculturalist, spoke about an organization founded by the participants of the fellowship program, the Global Partnership for African Youth in Agriculture (Glo-PAYA). At the time of the interview, Jacob was considering leaving his position with a climate change focused NGO to manage the development of Glo-PAYA fulltime. This organization seeks to change the perspectives of youth in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda about agriculture as a career and livelihood opportunity through workshops and other learning activities.

. . . [W]e want to turn that perspective of the youth. We want to turn it from agriculture is dirty to, you know, it needs a lot of strength, and it is good. I tell them that, ‘[s]ome of you are earning indirectly from the sector even though you may not realize it. And if you did realize it, maybe you would promote the sector more.’ But the perspective of the youth, that has to change. Our engagements will be focused on turning the attitudes of the youth towards the sector. When they learn about it, they will appreciate it much more. And they will gain from it and see that there are jobs for them in the sector. (Jacob, lines 133-140)

This focus on engaging the next generation, especially within the agricultural sector, is a perspective held by many of the Entrepreneur Fellows. This is also true of enterprises that are not specifically social ventures. Nicholas discussed his desire to launch a foundation to train and empower wayward, unemployed, and underprivileged youth in his community. He said:

We are thinking of how to be able to reach most of the youth who are currently jobless—they are engaged in drinking, and some of them have no direction. . . . So that foundation [which Nicholas aims to launch with profits from his business] will not only rehabilitate them, but it will give them life skills. They will be able to stand on their own feet. They

will be able to start their own projects and actually be able to be self-sufficient.

(Nicholas, lines 239-246)

Cara has used her enterprise an outlet for the coffee produced by members of the cooperative for which she works. Her café is designed to provide a market for smallholder farmers to sell their coffee. The courtyard of the café was adorned with large banners, which Cara proudly pointed out to the researcher when they met (see Appendix G). These banners depicted beautiful cups of coffee, lush plantations, and proud members of the coffee cooperative. One banner bore the statement, “[b]y buying [name of the café] coffee, you positively bond and impact shared value among farmers, customers and society.” The shop not only serves as a retailer for smallholder coffee growers, but also as a platform to support budding entrepreneurs. Cara said: “We are also trying to promote the youth. We have youth that have come up with their own enterprises, like coffee liquors and other items. So we sell those for them” (Lines 46-47). This desire to support, develop, and empower, i.e., *engage with their communities*, was a core motivation expressed by the Entrepreneur Fellows.

Finally, those interviewed were motivated by a yearning for information and their desire to share it with those around them. Research question two, in part, was also addressed by the subtheme *seeking and sharing information*. Charlotte is focused on training smallholder farmers, teaching them best practices, and providing them with a market for their products. During her interview, Charlotte described how she hoped to leverage her work experience and continued education to tackle real problems in Africa through hands-on, practical learning approaches.

I am always so happy to teach things which I have done. I get to speak about real problems farmers are encountering. . . . Because, here in Kenya, and I think for the rest of Africa, we have professors and academics that are exactly that. They teach things that people are supposed to do in the field when they have never done them themselves.

(Charlotte, lines 289-293)

Malcolm also expressed that information and its accessibility are crucial to changing the face of African agriculture. Malcolm founded his business “to do something for [smallholder farmers], at least create something that can in a more sustainable way disseminate information and create content, all those kinds of things” (lines 26-29). Malcolm was so committed to this goal, that after returning home from the fellowship, he left his job to pursue the goal of providing farmers, and the general public, reliable and accessible information regarding the agricultural sector in South Africa.

Similarly, Matthew also emphasized that access to reliable information can greatly impact the lives of smallholder farmers. He explained: “[T]hese are people who, if well taught and well trained, and given information they can really, really change their lives through those small farms” (Matthew, lines 40-41). He went on to discuss his desire “to have an agribusiness consultancy firm, an office where I can share a lot of information with farmers” (Matthew, lines 66-68). Matthew remarked about Kenya: “[W]e have the land, but information is lacking, we don’t have the machinery. So I thought I could act as a bridge and to bridge that gap that is missing” (Lines 76-78).

Findings related to Research Question #3

Research Question #3: What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?

Assertion: The Entrepreneur Fellows found accessing capital and financial institutions to be a major challenge. Concerning achievements, many study participants cited selection as an Entrepreneur Fellow to be a substantial accomplishment. In addition, creating jobs for and empowering members of their communities, such as smallholder farmers, youth, and aspiring entrepreneurs, including members of marginalized groups, were achievements.

Substantiation: After thematic analysis of the study's data, three subthemes emerged and were used to describe and interpret this study's findings in regard to research question three: *accessing capital*, *OSU as a measure of success*, and *community engagement*.

A widely faced challenge mentioned by Entrepreneur Fellows from all three countries, regardless of the scale of their operations, was *accessing capital*. Malcolm, assuming the full financial burden of his business and leaving a steady job to pursue his enterprise fulltime, noted his plans changed because of limited funding:

So initially when I started I thought that I would have publications and all these things that I developed for farmers. But, I mean, that was a very costly route and was going to need a lot of financial muscle and support. So what I'm doing is, I'm providing information or complementary content for existing publications. (Lines 128-131)

Nancy, a South African farmer and rancher, also left her job with a financial group to join her family's enterprise fulltime. Despite this operation being well established and receiving government support, Nancy still expressed a need for increased cash flows:

So the challenge that we still face is the management of cash flow. Understanding that, we can't sell every month, the beef cattle. . . . But, things like our salaries have to be paid every month. It doesn't matter if what other expenses we've got. So juggling those expenses is probably my biggest issue. (Lines 130-33)

Kenyan Entrepreneur Fellows, Charlotte, Matthew, and Roger, also gave voice to the need for more capital. Despite the high quality of pork Charlotte brings to the market, she is still unable to obtain *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points* (HACCP) certification. During her interview, she said: ". . . while I know I qualify for everything in terms of standards, I can't pay for that license. It's about \$2000 annually. So that's too much for a small-scale person. Yet, you know your product is good" (Charlotte, lines 129-131). Matthew stressed "raising money is not so

easy, especially here we have to rely on mainly loans. We don't have much government support" (Lines 119-120).

Roger indicated that even with the successful launch and expansion of his business, he needed more funding. He stated:

. . . as the business grows, you need to expand the business. And always you have a lot of ideas on how to do things, how you want things to be done, but you are limited by the finance. That is the biggest challenge. (Roger, lines 53-55)

Jacob, from Uganda, described a lack of funding as an issue facing Glo-PAYA. He shared: "[I]t is difficult for us to fundraise, because we are new and people won't really give you money. They don't really believe in you" (Jacob, lines 51-53). In an electronic mail message update to U.S. project team members and several Entrepreneur Fellows, Jacob discussed the need of funding for Glo-PAYA. He wrote: "Of course this [registration of the organization] marks the beginning of a fresh and altogether different challenge for us which is fundraising and sustaining the organization" (Jacob, electronic mail message, lines 9-11).

Simon, who is mostly self-funded, has also relied on some investments from his family to help launch his new piggery project. Although they shared difficulties accessing capital, the Entrepreneur Fellows also described their methods of overcoming these challenges. The Fellows look to cutting costs, fundraising campaigns, government support, and grantseeking to ameliorate their financial challenges. For instance, Penelope leveraged personal relationships and social media to launch a donation drive. And to keep operating costs low, Charlotte contracts nearly all labor associated with pork processing and sales. She stated: "I don't have any direct employees at all. I engage them at, as I said, a need-to-need basis. And when they are done, I pay them piecemeal for that time that we had agreed" (Charlotte, lines 277-278). After he completed the

fellowship training, Matthew joined a savings and credit cooperative (SACCO). With the money received from the SACCO, he was able to purchase a new parcel of land for his dairy operation.

The participants regarded their involvement in the fellowship program as a major achievement. Martin, who wore an OSU shirt throughout the interview, said:

. . . my greatest achievement, I must say, was when I was invited to the U.S. and the African entrepreneurship program. That was the biggest achievement because it was a very big opportunity. We were four people from Uganda, yet the people who applied—there were so many. . . but because of my entrepreneurship skills and my innovation, I was selected among the best four that were sponsored by the United States Department of State to go and participate in African fellowship in the U.S. (Lines 48-54)

Matthew also cited the fellowship experience as his highest achievement. “My greatest achievement, first of all, has been the experience. I am better off, I am a better placed professional and a better farmer as well” (Lines 94-95). When asked about her achievements, Penelope was quick to say this:

Well, it will have to definitely, without a doubt, have to be the fact that I was chosen as one of the Fellows hosted by the Oklahoma State University. . . . I traveled for the first time to the USA in October 2014. So for me, without a doubt, Gabriella, it will go down as the greatest achievement because I was given the opportunity to travel. But, moreover, I was given the opportunity to meet with other African Fellows and be exposed to what other young people are doing around the world. (Lines 67-74)

Their participation in the fellowship program provided the participants with confidence in and validation of their ideas. Malcolm stated his status as an Entrepreneur Fellow is “. . . a very good foundation to give credibility” (Lines 58-60) to his enterprise. The Fellows were singled out from among many applicants, and this deeply resonated with them.

In addition to being named Fellows and experiencing growth with their enterprises, the participants also regarded their success in *community engagement* as an achievement. Some ways Fellows actively engage their communities through their enterprises is with job creation and capacity building. Roger noted a point of pride for him was that his company is providing training to students and better serving farmers:

. . . we are giving training to the college students on lots of farm equipment. Because we train the college students who come to the business and we train them after that period of internship programs in the shop. Another achievement is that farmers are able now to get the services, the modern services from our shop. They get them cheaply, because they were being exploited by those who did not have experience in the field, making things that were not so valuable to them and that they could not afford. (Lines 45-50)

Nicholas expressed that his employment of four previously unemployed youths was a noteworthy milestone. He also discussed the efficient system of money-collection his company has created is a major achievement because it benefits not only their business, but also clients. Cara declared that her “greatest achievement is we began with only three employees, but currently we have seven” (Lines 67-68).

Another achievement outlined by study participants was the growth of their businesses. This is a crucial factor within subtheme *growth and goal-oriented*. When asked about his achievements, Roger said: “[T]here’s been growth in my business—that’s the first one” (Line 41). Much of this growth has come as a result of the training he received during the fellowship. Roger further noted he has employed 10 welders as result of the growth in his business. Cara also shared that when first opening the coffee shop she manages, the business was

. . . just at break even. Like when it comes to rent, the organization would have to support us to make the payments. But now, we get money from the coffee shop for rent and are also able to pay our workers. (Lines 68-70)

During a conversation with researcher, which took place at the coffee shop during the researcher's summer internship in Uganda, Cara also shared her excitement about the new menus. She recalled that at the time the U.S. members of the professional exchange visited her shop the previous summer, no menus existed. Cara saw the printing of the menus as another mark of growth and achievement for her enterprise (see Appendix F).

Simon also described the growth of his business as an achievement. As a result of the success of his poultry operation, Simon has been able to expand: "From the success of the poultry project, I managed to establish another project. With the savings from the poultry project, I was able to start this other project, the piggery project" (Lines 53-54).

Penelope described a similar experience in an electronic mail message update to members of the U.S. project team. In the message, Penelope shared she had accepted a job in Cape Town, moving away from the city in which her enterprise was founded. In regard to her organization, Penelope wrote:

. . . [T]his phase is also an opportunity for growth and to expand across SA [South Africa]. Fortunately, for the last 3 years, I worked with an amazing core team and now they are equipped to continue here without me fully present. I'm excited about this phase and trusting for sustainable outcomes and deep impact as we reach to young girls one community at . . . [a] time. (Electronic mail message, lines 8-11)

Findings related to Research Question #4

Research Question #4: In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?

Assertion: The Entrepreneur Fellows have acted as sources of information, employment, and leadership in their communities. The study participants shared their progress in empowering others and bettering the lives of those in their communities. Fellows from all three countries had

taken part in launching the Glo-PAYA (Global Partnership for African Youth in Agriculture) initiative.

Substantiation: After thematic analysis of the study's data, two subthemes were used to describe and interpret the research study's findings in regard to research question four: *community engagement and creation of a youth development organization.*

Community engagement was a motivating factor for the Entrepreneur Fellows. Because of this, their enterprises have not only lifted their own households but also the livelihoods of community members. Nicholas shared that he had witnessed his clients, the landlords who hire him to collect rents, making progress in their own enterprises:

. . . when you come to Kenya, you realize that you have those houses that are mud houses. And we have others that are made of brick. You are able now to see the transformation from muddy houses. These landlords are able now to construct brick and permanent houses. There is a change. (Lines 69-73)

Martin's enterprise, which markets inputs at an appropriate scale to smallholder farmers, serves about 45 farmers a day. In addition to selling inputs to previously underserved farmers, Martin ". . . goes to farmers directly to show what does work and what doesn't work" (Lines 178-179). Charlotte has also impacted small-scale pork producers within her region. Along with the training she provides, Charlotte shared that the producers with whom she works are better off. She stated: ". . . they will get market access through me because I have contacts who would be interested to buy from me because of my expertise. So they are sure of my standards" (Charlotte, lines 16-18).

Through Roger's enterprise, small- and medium-scale farmers have access to equipment suitable for the size of their operations. When discussing small-scale farmers, Roger said: "They need more, smaller equipment to use on their farms so we've been actually trying to modify for

them equipment that will suit their farms and training them how to use it” (Lines 184-185). He continued: “And for the medium-scale farmers, those people with slightly bigger farms, the main thing we do for them is calibration, servicing their agricultural machinery for those farmers who have agricultural machinery” (Roger, lines 191-192). Roger’s company also does contract harvesting and threshing for farmers who cannot afford to purchase their own machinery.

After returning from the United States and establishing her team, Penelope’s organization provides mentorship and coaching “for a group of about 40 teen girls that [they] work with on a regular basis” (Penelope, lines 12-13). Along with emotional support, her group also provides the girls with practical knowledge. To that aim, she stated: “[W]hether that be spending time teaching them the basics of computer, how to compile a CV, for example, or how to knit, or how to conduct an interview” (Penelope, lines 192-193). Penelope’s long-term goal is to travel to neighboring countries and establish collaborative initiatives with likeminded organizations to empower young women throughout Africa.

Through the launch of her coffee shop, Cara is “encourag[ing] Ugandans to not only export, but [to] consume their own products” (Line 62). Through her business, in addition to creating jobs and supporting aspiring entrepreneurs, Cara is ensuring small producers from around Uganda are seeing their coffee consumed in country and retain a higher share of profits from the coffee supply chain.

Another way in which the Entrepreneur Fellows have impacted their communities is through *creation of a youth development organization*. When describing the organization, Jacob said: “[F]ollowing our engagement in the fellowship, we started something called Glo-PAYA—the Global Partnership for African Youth in Agriculture” (Jacob, lines 29-30). Glo-PAYA is modeled after the U.S. Cooperative Extension’s youth education initiative, 4H, which the participants were exposed to during their fellowship experience. This organization, which aims to engage youth through agricultural programming in local communities, was founded by members of both fellowship cohorts from all three participant countries.

Glo-PAYA has been formally registered in all three countries. Jacob noted the importance of this step: “I thought that was very important, [that is being registered] in Uganda, South Africa, and Kenya. Because once we have the structures off the ground and once we are legally existing, then we can be pushed to do things” (Lines 41-43). The group received some grant funding to aid in launching the organization. Jacob also shared this important milestone with Fellows, mentors, and project team members in the United States via electronic mail. Jacob wrote: “We are happy to announce that despite enormous challenges we have managed to complete registration in Uganda and to keep our dream alive” (Electronic mail message, lines 9-10).

The Fellows communicated in regard to registering the group in each country, as well as in making decisions about the organization’s structure. One such decision was the selection of a logo. Several options were distributed to the Fellows via electronic mail and they, through online discussions, selected the logo used on their marketing materials and social media platforms (see Appendix H). Malcom stressed the importance of these steps during his interview: “The point is that we need to go beyond registration and start to do marketing and you know, talking on behalf of Glo-PAYA” (Lines 100-102). After selecting their logo, Glo-PAYA launched branded Facebook and Twitter accounts in the summer of 2016 (see Appendix I).

Findings related to Research Question #5

Research Question #5: What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Assertion: The Entrepreneur Fellows value open and consistent communication, transparency, and collaboration among themselves and contacts made during their fellowship experiences, as well as with their colleagues and employees. The Fellows engage in social media use, networking events, and are leveraging the new network created by the fellowship program.

Substantiation: After thematic analysis of the study's data, the researcher utilized three subthemes to describe and interpret the study's findings in regard to research question five: *importance of relationships, networking and communication, and new global network.*

The Entrepreneur Fellows stressed the *importance of relationships* to the operation of their businesses. These relationships with family, friends, clients/customers, neighbors, mentors, and colleagues are permeated with social capital, including investments in and returns from it.

Cara explained that in managing her coffee shop it is very important she form relationships with her customers. In that regard, Cara shared this during her interview:

. . . our customers come from UNICEF, they are the middle income earners, and the emerging youth in Kampala. . . but they are also our friends. They are returning customers. We know them. When he or she comes we know what they are going to order.
(Lines 168-171)

Simon stressed the influence relationships with his uncle and other family members had on his enterprises:

When I started this project, I started it with my uncle and my family members. They help me to look after the birds when I am not around. They help me and, in most cases, because I am a hard of hearing person, my family members, at night, can move around and provide security for my poultry project. (Lines 102-104)

In regard to her pork processing and sales operation, Charlotte discussed her relationship with her husband and friends and the support that provides:

My husband is very good in accounting. He helped me get a software, he set it all up, so I just have to key in this number and it brings me a whole list of things. So I just click-click-click and it does for me all of the accounting. So he's done that in terms of support. And he is always telling people, 'Oh, my wife does this and you should buy this product from her!' So . . . I have a lot of support from him. I also have a lot friends who buy from me, they know our product is quality. (Lines 153-159)

Penelope, when discussing her creative solutions to meeting the needs of the girls in her program, gave an example of her friends coming together on her birthday. She shared: “For my birthday, I made a wish” (Penelope, line 295). Penelope’s wish was to provide each of the girls in her program a one month supply of toiletries, including feminine hygiene products. Penelope described the response to her wish with great joy:

People gave toiletries, people gave money, people gave their time. It was just wonderful. . . . and in that three weeks we had so much raised, I had a party with all my friends, and their friends, and my family with their gifts for the girls. We even had some of the teenage girls come and it was just a wonderful, successful campaign. (Lines 317-321)

The campaign was so successful that each girl was provided with a four-month supply of toiletry items. Penelope plans to launch a similar campaign each year around her birthday.

Similar to Penelope and Simon, many of the Fellows rely on their families for support. Matthew stated: “I have gotten a lot of support from my family. My mother, my wife, my two children, they have really supported what I do” (Lines 201-202). Matthew’s family will spend days off from school working with him on the farm. Nicholas began his enterprise by reaching out to friends and family for patronage. “Our family have really played a major role in our business,” Nicholas declared. He continued:

We decided that we were going to start with our families and through their acceptance they can also assist us to get other customers. . . . And it really worked out because when our family, like our parents, actually we started with our parents. When our deal with them started working out, it was easy for them to start giving information to their colleagues. Therefore, we were able to reach out to so many. And I thought that was a good idea—let our family members be our first customers. (Nicholas, lines 127-133)

Mentors are also important to the success of the Entrepreneur Fellows. Many of the mentors mentioned throughout the interviews are family members, teachers, and those individuals who impacted the Fellows during their stay in the United States. Martin indicated he can “always

call on” (Line 115) individuals who mentored him at OSU. He further stated: “They have been so useful to me. It is even like we are with each other every now and then. We are so close to each other” (Martin, lines 117-119).

Strong and open working relationships with their employees and business partners is also integral to operation of the Entrepreneur Fellows’ enterprises. The Fellows expressed the need to empower their employees and to equip them to go about their work efficiently with little supervision. Roger discussed his emphasis on training:

. . . our employees actually have been trained about what I can help them with. We have also trained them on how to speak to people, language they give to farmers. They can talk to people and they can learn from people. If someone comes and wants to learn about an operation, they can explain to them how they normally do it. We share information. . . . We always invest a lot of training on them so they can actually pass that knowledge on to other people. (Lines 229-234)

Malcolm strives to be “an inclusive manager” who “takes people along in [his] vision” (Lines 188-189). This helps him foster an environment where everyone can learn from one another and contribute ideas. Similarly, Nancy said it is important that her employees “are empowered and are able to do things and understand why, because we have other responsibilities and things we need to take care of that are away from the farm” (Lines 361-363). When her employees are well prepared, they can manage their roles and feel comfortable in discussions with management.

Even in small-scale operations, such as Matthew’s, open communication with employees is important. Matthew said of his employees, “I like talking to them so that they can understand and they can also give their input” (Line 376). He continued: “Because sometimes you find that their input is very valuable. You might think you know everything, but they also know quite a lot” (Matthew, lines 377-378).

Networking and communication are valuable activities to the enterprises of the Entrepreneur Fellows. Charlotte said after her return from the United States she had engaged in networking via trade shows:

I now go for trade fairs. . . . When there is a special group that I feel would benefit from knowing me, then I attend such trade fairs as an exhibitor. . . . So for me that's something that I didn't really conceptualize from the start. (Lines 45-52).

Nancy is a member of several professional organizations. She also relies on the packing house, through which the apples from her orchard are marketed, for industry information and connections to other growers. She noted that the packing house

. . . provides a lot of information about the industry, prices of apples They put together conferences that we've attended over the years. We've been able to get in touch with the other producers. They put together courses for the producers. So the communication with the pack house is really, really active. (Nancy, lines 308-311)

This communication keeps her farm abreast of new information and involved in the industry's dialogue at a producer level. Similarly, Roger and his employees attend field days to see new equipment and technologies in operation, as well as to meet new clients.

Penelope discussed the constant communication she engages in after returning from the fellowship program:

. . . writing a letter to interested people, or asking for funding, or most of it, believe it or not, is networking. I am constantly in communication whether by Facebook, Skype, emails, talking about [the] African Girls Leadership Institute and reaching people. (Lines 173-176)

Simon explained that when he is networking, he is learning. During his interview, he said:

“[W]hen you are consulting and working with different people, you get new ideas” (Simon, line 86).

The Entrepreneur Fellows are now part of a *new global network*. Uniting three Sub-Saharan African countries, individuals from various industries and sectors, faculty members and students of a land-grant university, and enterprises throughout Oklahoma, this *new global network* is viewed by the Fellows as very valuable to their success. Roger expressed his appreciation for involvement in this network:

I really appreciate how the U.S. people are working, especially the Oklahoma State University. We have a network now—we didn't know each other, earlier on, when we came to this program. So it really created a lot of networks with our countrymen and with OSU. (Lines 326-328)

Jacob expressed his pride for the communication maintained between the Fellows in regard to Glo-PAYA: “[W]e have kept the communication flowing across these countries. It shows that people believe in it and it is going to grow” (Lines 44-45). The Ugandan Fellows discussed the alumni meetings they attend with some regularity. Cara’s coffee shop has become a meeting place for the fellowship alumni in and around Kampala. Cara also mentioned that some of the Fellows hold business meetings at her establishment.

This *new global network* was also reflected in the designs proposed for the Glo-PAYA logo. Many of the suggested logos incorporated a sphere or a globe to signify the international ties that support the group’s mission (see Appendix H). Several logos depicted joined hands, linked arms, and individuals placed side-by-side. Such images were representative of the bonds formed through the Glo-PAYA initiative, which was sparked and supported by the fellowship program.

Penelope described the connections this network has created: “Now I have this amazing group of people in the continent of Africa and outside Africa. These are the people that I can always share ideas with. The support has just been amazing” (Lines 78-79).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the study, including its problem, purpose, research questions, setting and participants, as well as procedures for data collection and analysis. This chapter also contains conclusions and implications drawn from the findings of this qualitative study, as well as recommendations for future research and practice.

Summary of the Study

Study's Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this case study was to explore the experiences of select Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises after participation in a grant-funded, professional development and cultural exchange program. This inquiry aimed to identify thematic links between the selected entrepreneurs' experiences and the ways participating in such an exchange program shaped their enterprises on return to their home countries. The results of this qualitative research study may serve as the precursor to case studies for use by practitioners and scholars of international agricultural development in the future. Five research questions guided this study:

1. What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact on their enterprises after returning home?
2. What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

3. What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?
4. In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?
5. What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Problem Statement

In 2014, 23 Entrepreneur Fellows from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda participated in a grant-funded project delivered by faculty members in the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (DASNR) in conjunction with the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship of Oklahoma State University (OSU). During the project, the Entrepreneur Fellows were matched with Oklahoman internship and job shadowing mentors. That experience comprised three of the four weeks the Fellows spent at OSU and in other parts of Oklahoma. A lack of knowledge existed regarding the entrepreneurial enterprises of the project's participants after their return home and a scarcity of literature about the impact of international learning experiences on entrepreneurs striving to establish business enterprises or social ventures in developing countries. Overall, a deeper understanding was needed of the fellowship's impact on the business practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows. These needs formed the rationale for conducting a follow-up case study of selected fellowship participants.

Review of Literature

This study reviewed relevant literature to shape and guide its inquiry. Major sections of the literature review included economic development, endogenous development, the rise of social ventures, entrepreneurship and its role in SSA and in the agricultural sector, the roles of MSMEs and smallholder farmers in the developing world, and the importance of social and professional networks in entrepreneurial endeavors. The review of literature also outlined the conceptual and theoretical frameworks supporting this study.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

The conceptual framework undergirding this study is human capital theory (HCT). According to Salamon (1991), “human capital refers to the acquired skills, knowledge, and abilities of human beings” (p. 3). Becker (1962) asserted that investment in human capital “. . . often alters the very nature of a person: training may change a lifestyle from one with perennial unemployment to one with stable and good earnings . . .” (p. 392). The “Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs” fellowship program (see Appendix A) was an example of an investment in human capital. The theoretical framework supporting this study was derived from Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB). Ajzen posited that human behaviors are guided by three factors: attitudes toward a behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. TPB (Ajzen, 1991) asserts that an individual’s perceptions and attitudes regarding a behavior may be affected by a behavioral intervention. The grant-funded project was implemented as a behavioral intervention and studied from that perspective.

Setting and Participants

This project, supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Education and Cultural Affairs, Professional Fellows Division, was delivered in six phases. During the fall of 2013, individuals from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda were recruited to take part in the fellowship during 2014; this constituted the first phase of the project. Twenty-three Entrepreneur Fellows came to the United States to take part in the five-week, professional exchange program during the second and fourth phases of the project. The first cohort, which arrived in May 2014, was comprised of 12 fellows, four from each of the three participating countries. The second cohort came to Oklahoma in October of 2014. Of the 11 individuals in this cohort, three were from Kenya, and four were from South Africa and Uganda, respectively. In the

third and fifth phases of the project, faculty and students from OSU traveled to SSA to take part in this reciprocal exchange.

The population of this study was 11 Entrepreneur Fellows. Six of the participants took part in the second *Spring phase* of this project and five participated in the fourth or *Fall phase*. These participants were selected based on four criteria:

- Roughly equal representation of female and male participants, as derived from participants in the Entrepreneur Fellowship program;
- All three participant countries, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, were represented;
- A variety of entrepreneurial enterprises were represented in the sample by including owners of farms, agro-input suppliers, educators, and social entrepreneurs in the group interviewed;
- Different levels of socioeconomic status were also taken into account when selecting the Entrepreneur Fellows to interview.

Based on these criteria, the researcher selected four participants from Kenya, three from South Africa, and four from Uganda to interview, which included four women and seven men. These participants represented social ventures and enterprises in agricultural communications and media, agro-inputs, agricultural fabrication and mechanics, production agriculture, retail food sales, and youth development.

This project was orchestrated and delivered by faculty and graduate students at OSU. Project team members included faculty members from the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership, the Department of Agricultural Economics, and the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship. Graduate students included a doctoral student in agricultural education, and a master of science student in agricultural communications.

Data Collection

This qualitative inquiry employed a case study design to collect two types of data to facilitate triangulation of the phenomenon investigated and enhance the study's credibility. According to Stake (2000), "triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation" (p. 443). The data sets included individual interviews with the 11 Entrepreneur Fellows and content analysis of fellowship-related documents, including post-training experiences and actions.

The interviews were semi-structured and guided by 14 predetermined, open-ended questions (see Appendix E). Patton (2015) noted that in such interviews the "exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance" (p. 438). Such items prompted the respondents to answer specific questions, but also allowed for spontaneous descriptions and anecdotes to be shared by the interviewees (Brinkmann, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interviews were recorded with a voice-recording application on the researcher's mobile telephone and transcribed promptly following each interview session. After transcribing was complete, the participants were provided their transcripts to review and clarify, as needed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Tracy, 2010; Yin, 2014). This process is known as member checking during which the researcher "document[s] feedback on their interpretation of data from study participants" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 110).

The researcher also engaged in archival content analysis to examine additional data regarding the experiences and post-fellowship actions of the Entrepreneur Fellows. Documents, including electronic mail messages exchanged between program participants, marketing materials and menus from one of the Ugandan participant's enterprises, and logos for a newly formed organization to develop youth for the respective countries' agriculture sectors as launched by the Fellows, were also analyzed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

An individual case record was compiled for each study participant. The case files included the participants' interview transcripts and signed consent forms, as well as other relevant documents. Throughout the process of data analysis, the researcher looked for specific codes within individual cases. Saldaña (2013) defined codes as “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3).

Initially, the researcher engaged in *open coding* to discover leads for future thematic analysis. During the coding process, she also conducted memo writing by noting her initial assumptions, connections, and by expanding and linking codes (Charmaz, 2000; Saldaña, 2012). Following open coding, the researcher employed *axial coding*. This method of coding consists of the development of relationships between themes, sub-themes, and the data (Böhm, 2004; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Finally, the researcher engaged in *theoretical coding*. According to Thornberg and Charmaz (2014), “theoretical codes refer to underlying logics that could be found in pre-existing theories” (p. 159). This study was supported by two preexisting theories: Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB) and human capital theory [HCT] (Becker, 1962). Throughout the theoretical coding process, the researcher evaluated codes and memos derived during open and axial coding to “explore, create and refine theoretical relationships” (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, p. 165) between the data and the study's conceptual and theoretical lenses.

By memo writing and open coding, and axial and theoretical coding, the researcher extracted causal relationships and connections between data, themes, and the investigation's theoretical basis. Thirty-five codes emerged to create three overarching themes and nine subthemes (see Figure 2), which guided answering the study's five research questions.

Interpersonal Connections	The Entrepreneurial Spirit	Impact of the Fellowship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Importance of relationships • Networking and communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing capital • Growth and goal-oriented • Seeking and sharing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSU fellowship as a measure of success • New global network • Creation of a youth development organization

Figure 2. Themes and Subthemes Derived from the Study's Findings

Conclusions and Implications

Research Question #1: What were the experiences of the Entrepreneur Fellows regarding participation in the fellowship program and its impact of their enterprises after returning home?

The Entrepreneur Fellows reported mostly positive experiences regarding the “Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs” (see Appendix A) fellowship program. As a result of the fellowship program, the Entrepreneur Fellows were exposed to new information, strategies, and personal connections to strengthen and support their enterprises. As an intervention, the fellowship program provided the Fellows with confidence in their ability to launch and/or sustain entrepreneurial enterprises, i.e., their *perceived behavioral control* improved (Ajzen, 1991) in regard to undertaking such endeavors. For example, Malcolm shared his view with the researcher: “The entrepreneurial fellowship, it gave me a lot of confidence in what I am trying to start here” (Lines 41-42). This shift in perceived behavioral control led the Fellows to making the transition from *intention to perform a behavior*, such as the intent to undertake a business venture, to *actualized behaviors*, as outlined by Ajzen (1991).

In addition, the fellowship also established a new global network amongst the Entrepreneur Fellows, faculty and students of OSU, and other Oklahomans. Their widening networks are filled with new and expanding social capital (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Westlund & Bolton, 2003). Penelope described her experience during the fellowship and within the new network: “I was given the opportunity to meet with other African Fellows and be exposed to what other young people are doing around the world” (lines 73-74). The Entrepreneur Fellows also stressed the importance of ongoing communication with and support from the U.S. project team members and entrepreneur mentors with whom they interacted. For instance, Martin said of his mentors in the United States: “I am always in touch with them. Every time I have an issue I can call on him and tell him about it. . . . We are always in touch” (Lines 115-116).

Participation in the fellowship program was a direct investment in the human capital of the Entrepreneur Fellows (Becker, 1993; Sweetland, 1996). This investment resulted in the growth of several of the participants’ enterprises and the employment of not only the Fellows themselves, but also other members of their communities in the respective SSA countries. The economic impacts such as reducing unemployment and increases in revenue experienced by the Fellows as a result of participating in the fellowship program align with the assertions of Becker (1962, 1993) and Sweetland (1996) that *both individuals and communities* derive economic benefits from investments in human capital.

Research Question #2: What were the enterprise-related motivations of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

Several factors were described that motivated the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their business enterprises and social ventures. Ang and Hong (2000) posited that entrepreneurs may be identified, in part, by their desires for profit and security. Although the desires for financial and job security were found among the Entrepreneur Fellows, they were also driven by the motivation to create jobs for others, to achieve growth within their businesses, and, in some cases, to impact social change. These motivations are in agreement with Cunningham and Lischeron (1991),

Stevenson and Jarillo (1990), and Stewart et al. (1998) who characterized entrepreneurs as individuals who recognize and leverage opportunities, embrace innovation and risk, and desire growth.

Easterly and Meisling (2007) and Haugh and Ostberg (2007) asserted that social ventures seek to be financially stable while positively affecting social change. However, this study's findings suggest that proprietors of traditional, for-profit enterprises were also partially motivated by a desire to better their communities. For example, Nicholas, whose business is not considered a social enterprise, i.e., a rent collection agency, was deeply committed to addressing youth unemployment in his community by providing regular employment and job training. Many of the Entrepreneur Fellows expressed similar sentiments. Nancy, whose ranch and farm operate as traditional, for-profit ventures, intended to engage local youth and smallholder farmers with trainings, employment opportunities, and programs hosted and facilitated by her enterprises. She stated: "We're going to have quite a big rabbit production that will employ quite a lot of youth and also assist smallholder farmers to have their own youth projects" (Nancy, lines 408-410).

These findings align with Cornwall (1998) who wrote: ". . . the focus is no longer on just the impact of entrepreneurship on individuals in a given community, but rather on the impact that each entrepreneur can have on the community as a whole" (p. 145). The Entrepreneur Fellows, regardless of the scale or intentional social change aspects of their enterprises, were motivated by the potential to positively impact members of their communities, including youth, aspiring entrepreneurs, and members of marginalized groups.

In addition, the Entrepreneur Fellows were motivated by the opportunities to disseminate information to members of their communities. Chambers (2013) called networking "mutual aid" (p. 352) between and among entrepreneurs. The Fellows expressed a deep desire for continued learning and to share information with those around them as well as international contacts.

Research Question #3: What were the challenges and accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows in regard to their enterprises?

The most pervasive challenge mentioned by the Entrepreneur Fellows were limitations caused by a lack of funding. Kiggundu (2002) stated: “. . . there is no doubt that most [African] SMEs are under capitalized” (p. 248). Fellows operating at all scales and throughout many sectors shared their experiences regarding financial constraints. Roger explained: “. . . [A]lways you have a lot of ideas on how to do things, how you want things to be done, but you are limited by the finance. That is the biggest challenge” (lines 54-55). In an electronic mail message to members of Glo-PAYA and U.S. project team members, Jacob discussed the persistent difficulty the group encountered trying to raise funds to support the fledgling organization. Similarly, Matthew stated that one of his main challenges “has been the financial aspect” (line 119) of operating his business. This finding supports the need outlined by the UN and the SDGs to strengthen small businesses and increase the accessibility of financial institutions in the developing world (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015; Ki-moon, 2013).

This study also sought to understand the accomplishments of the Entrepreneur Fellows. To that end, findings describing their achievements revealed that the Fellows regarded their selection as a fellowship participant as a mark of success. Martin voiced this sentiment during his interview: “. . . [m]y greatest achievement, I must say, was when I was invited to the U.S. and the African Entrepreneurship program” (line 48-49). The Fellows saw their experience in the United States as validation of their innovativeness, entrepreneurial abilities, and potential for future success.

The Fellows recognized participation in the fellowship program as a way to bolster their entrepreneurial competencies. Kiggundu (2002) outlined these competencies as the “attitudes, values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, wisdom, expertise (social, technical, managerial), mindset, and behavioral tendencies” (p. 244), which contribute to sustainable and successful entrepreneurship. One Fellow stated: “I feel comfortable presenting my case to

[potential clients] also precisely because of the entrepreneur fellowship, which I think was a very good foundation to give credibility to what I've always wanted to do" (Malcolm, lines 58-60). These findings align with Kiggundu (2002) and Knudson et al. (2004) assertions that such trainings, including "overseas visits and other human capital development initiatives" (Kiggundu, 2002, p. 244), can positively impact entrepreneurs from developing nations by enhancing their entrepreneurial capacities.

Research Question #4: In what ways had the Entrepreneur Fellows' enterprises impacted their communities?

The Entrepreneur Fellows had positively impacted their communities through the establishment, maintenance, and growth of their ventures. Investment in human capital, i.e., the learning activities conducted during the fellowship program, resulted in the creation of job opportunities and bolstered economic growth within the Fellows' communities. This finding is in agreement with Murray and Dunn (1995) and Terluin (2003) who stressed the importance of capacity building and entrepreneurship in rural development and revitalization. In addition, this finding supports the "economic objectives related to entrepreneurship" (p. 11), as described by Ahmad and Hoffman (2008). These objectives were "job creation, economic growth, poverty alleviation and formalization of the informal sector" (Ahmad & Hoffman, 2008, p. 11).

Several of the Entrepreneur Fellows, through their enterprises, had created jobs for previously unemployed youth in their communities. Langevang et al. (2012) noted youth unemployment is an increasingly pressing issue in SSA. The Fellows' efforts to reduce youth unemployment supports the assertions of Awogbenle and Chijioke Iwuamadi (2010). They stated the focus of the global development community has, in part, shifted toward empowering young entrepreneurs and to provide "... youths with insights into entrepreneurship and enterprise; ... [and] to help them realistically consider the options of starting a small business or of self-employment" (Awogbenle & Chijioke Iwuamadi, 2010, p. 4).

In addition, the Fellows had invested in capacity building for themselves and others, including training and the sharing of information. Roger discussed the training he provides for his employees, college students, and farmers with whom he works. For example, he said: “. . . we are giving training to the college students on lots of farm equipment. Because we train the college students who come to the business and we train them after that period of internship programs in the shop” (Roger, lines 45-47). This finding regarding community engagement through youth employment and outreach aligns with Cornwall (1998) who emphasized the effect entrepreneurs have on communities when they provide opportunities for youth, including internships and employment.

The Fellows had also impacted the agricultural sectors of their respective countries. After returning from the United States, many of the Entrepreneur Fellows described empowering and serving smallholder farmers through their enterprises. Martin, whose three shops serve 45 customers per day, shared the purpose of his enterprise: “Our company supplies inputs in especially small quantities, manageable for the smallholder farmers, because most the farmers here have little money” (Lines 4-6). Martin, similar to many of the Fellows, had continued to expand his services and customer base. The Fellows who operated enterprises in the agricultural sector shared an interest in developing human capital through training and the provision of sector-related information supporting the needs of smallholder farmers.

Further, the Entrepreneur Fellows had founded an organization with the mission of engaging youth through agricultural extension and education. Due to their exposure to the U.S. Cooperative Extension’s youth education initiative, 4H, and School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE)/FFA, including interactions with youth who were recipients of such programming, the Fellows founded Glo-PAYA—the Global Partnership for African Youth in Agriculture (see Appendix H). This organization has been formally registered in all three participating countries and received grant-funding to conduct a reforestation tree planting program in a border region between Kenya and Uganda, including the involvement of local schools and communities.

Research Question #5: What were the communication and networking practices of the Entrepreneur Fellows?

The Entrepreneur Fellows stressed the importance of relationships to the success and support of their enterprises. These relationships existed between the Fellows and their family members, friends, clients/customers, neighbors, mentors, and other colleagues. This conclusion supports the assertion of Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) who stated: “[E]ntrepreneurship is a social role, embedded in a social context” (p. 20). Similar to what Khavul et al. (2009) discussed regarding the strong ties of African entrepreneurs to their social networks, the Fellows were reliant on their social networks for support of their enterprises through patronage, emotional sustenance, and financial backing. For instance, during her interview, Charlotte explained her husband assisted in setting up accounting software for her enterprise and she has “a lot friends who buy from [her], they know [her] product is quality” (Line 159). Khavul et al. (2009) and Langevang et al. (2012) described the importance of social networks to African entrepreneurs. The importance of connections between entrepreneurs, their families, friends, and other community members was reflected in the findings of this study.

The Entrepreneur Fellows also emphasized the need for clear and open communication between themselves and their employees, colleagues, and clients. Many of the Fellows discussed the desire to empower their employees. For instance, Nancy shared that to ensure her farm operates smoothly, she strives to “empower the workers to be able to get on with their work” (Lines 360-361) in her absence. Similarly, Matthew described the need for open lines of communication to foster the exchange of ideas. He said of his employees: “I like talking to them so that they can understand and they can also give their input. Because sometimes you find that their input is very valuable” (Matthew, lines 376-377).

The Fellows maintained open lines of communication through several channels. They frequently communicated with employees and customers during face-to-face interactions and via

telephone calls or the exchange of SMS texts. In addition, the Entrepreneur Fellows also disseminated information about their industries or specific enterprises through social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, and through radio broadcasts. Martin described his use of radio and Facebook to reach smallholder farmers throughout his region:

Whenever I go on the radio, I get so many calls of people asking me about this service.

Or whenever I post something new on Facebook, farmers that can access social media—they are able to learn and succeed through [acquiring new] information. (Lines 181-183)

In addition to informal, social networks and regular communication behaviors, the Entrepreneur Fellows also engaged in formal professional networking activities. Charlotte and Cara described their participation in trade shows. Nancy discussed her membership in several professional organizations which link agriculturists from around South Africa. In addition, Roger shared his experience attending field days to gain new information and meet potential clients. The Fellows engaged in these activities to exchange information, to interact with other business owners, and to encounter potential customers. This finding is in concert with McDade and Spring (2005) who found regional enterprise networks are utilized to improve business climates, seek investment and capital, and expand trade among entrepreneurs.

After completion of the fellowship program, the Entrepreneur Fellows were linked to a new global network. This network consists of members of two fellowship cohorts from three Sub-Saharan African countries, faculty members and students from OSU, as well as citizens of Stillwater and other Oklahoma communities. The Entrepreneur Fellows valued this new network and its sustained impact on their enterprises. This finding is in agreement with Pfeffermann and Brown (2011) who discussed the Global Business School Network approach to entrepreneurship in Africa. They stated: “Networking activities that focus on long-term, capacity-building goals will play a key role in nurturing and strengthening local knowledge” (Pfeffermann & Brown, 2011, p. 116). As a result of the fellowship and the network it created, the Fellows are engaged in

sustained dialogue and “strengthening of knowledge” (Pfeffermann & Brown, 2011, p. 116).

Martin said of his mentors in the United States: “They have been so useful to me. It is even like we are with each other every now and then. We are so close to each other” (Lines 117-119).

Moreover, Penelope described the value of the new network: “Now I have this amazing group of people in the continent of Africa and outside Africa. These are the people that I can always share ideas with. The support has just been amazing” (Lines 78-79).

Discussion

The findings of this study support the theory of planned behavior as posited by Ajzen (1991). The individuals who took part in the “Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs” fellowship program did so with an “*intention* to perform a given behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181), i.e., to launch or expand their business enterprises and social ventures. This intention indicated the Fellows held favorable attitudes toward entrepreneurial behaviors prior to participation in the fellowship experience. The fellowship program was a behavioral intervention designed to provide the Entrepreneur Fellows with information and strategies to strengthen their enterprises. As an intervention, it provided the Fellows with practical knowledge and skills to better achieve their entrepreneurial goals. The fellowship program was an “activit[y] that influence[d] future real income through the imbedding of resources in people” (Becker, 1962, p. 9); therefore, it was an *investment in human capital*. As a result of this capacity-building intervention, the Entrepreneur Fellows exhibited a greater level of *perceived behavioral control* (Ajzen, 1991) regarding their enterprises, including the likelihood of success in the future. Ajzen (1991) asserted that as an individual’s perceived behavioral control increases or improves, i.e., his or her self-efficacy, the likelihood of actualizing related behaviors is also enhanced.

This study’s findings provide insight into the traits of successful and motivated entrepreneurs in SSA who sought out learning opportunities, i.e., participation in the fellowship program. The findings also emphasize the need for perseverance and creativity in the face of financial challenges when pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors. In addition, the Entrepreneur

Fellows exhibited a deep desire to engage in lifelong learning, to strengthen their communities, and to leverage, expand, and sustain their social and professional networks. Highlighting the importance of engaging the next generation of business leaders, the findings of this study illustrate the impact empowered entrepreneurs have on youth and other marginalized groups within their communities.

This qualitative study examined the experiences of 11 Entrepreneur Fellows who participated in a professional development program, i.e., an intervention, intended to improve their entrepreneurial abilities as relevant to business enterprises and social ventures in their home countries. The study not only adds to the body of literature a deeper understanding of the impact such programs have on entrepreneurs, but also their spillover effects on the participants' communities (Awogbenle & Chijioke Iwuamadi, 2010; Cornwall, 1998). Further, this investigation and the grant-funded project that made it possible provides a framework for future practitioners to conduct similar fellowship programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Entrepreneurs and MSMEs are widely regarded as drivers of economic growth and poverty alleviation (Juma, 2011, Ki-moon, 2013; Okpara & Wynn, 2007). In addition, smallholder farmers have been identified as integral facets of economic development (IFAD, 2013; Juma, 2011; Okpara & Wynn, 2007), especially in developing countries. However, due to the qualitative nature of this study, little quantitative data was assessed. For this reason, the researcher suggests future investigations include an economic impact study to further understand the effects empowered entrepreneurs may have on the economic standing of their communities and nations.

In addition to assessing the economic impact of fellowship programs featuring entrepreneurship, the researcher suggests additional inquiries be conducted to follow-up on the Entrepreneur Fellows and their enterprises, i.e., a multiple-year, longitudinal study (Rogers, 2003). As a part of the current research study, the Fellows discussed their long-term

entrepreneurship goals. Additional research should assess the achievement of their goals, the growth and adaptations which may have occurred within their enterprises, and any enduring impact of the fellowship program.

Smallholder farmers, agriculturists, and entrepreneurs are recognized widely as integral players in global development (IFAD, 2013; Murphy, 2010). Murphy (2010) asserted that many of the gains in productivity which occurred during from the Green Revolution and throughout the latter half of the 20th century were the result of government and donor funded extension efforts. The IFAD (2013) noted the need for efficient extension efforts which target smallholder farmers with “adapted advice that takes into account local environmental conditions, production practices and market access to help in decision-making and risk reduction” (IFAD, 2013, p. 32). As global actors seek to empower and equip those working within the agricultural sector and related fields, it is crucial to understand past and current trends in extension/advisory services efforts in SSA involving the support of entrepreneurs. For this reason, it is suggested additional research be conducted regarding the effectiveness and needs of extension/advisory services in assisting entrepreneurs to develop successful ventures, particularly in SSA.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is also suggested that further research be conducted regarding the long-term progress of the Glo-PAYA organization founded by the Entrepreneur Fellows. Agriculture has been identified as a key sector in the development of SSA going forward and the requisite need for training and capacity building (Juma, 2011; Knudon et al., 2004; Temu & Temu, 2005). This implies the pressing need to recruit youth to the sector and for them to pursue employment and careers in agriculture and its allied fields (Mukembo, Edwards, Ramsey, & Henneberry, 2014, 2015). However, the need also exists for additional research on the impact of youth development in and for the agricultural sector of SSA, including the support of aspiring entrepreneurs seeking to create for-profit and social ventures.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that future fellowships devote significant programming to fundraising and the acquisition of financing required for entrepreneurial ventures to achieve success. The Entrepreneur Fellows, regardless of scale or entrepreneurial pursuit, expressed some difficulty in capitalizing their ventures. Equitable access to and promotion of financial institutions has been identified as a goal of global development actors (“General Assembly Resolution 70/01,” 2015; The African Union Commission to the UN, 2015). For this reason, the researcher suggests a rich discussion of funding sources, such as private micro-credit, savings, and lending institutions, granting agencies, and governmental actors, be a training priority during future fellowship programs featuring entrepreneurship.

This study’s findings highlighted the value of professional development programs such as the “Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs” fellowship. Such trainings have been recognized as important catalysts for the development of human capital and economies within Africa (IFAD, 2013; Kiggundu, 2002). The Entrepreneur Fellows interviewed were equipped with strategies, technologies, and practices to bolster their entrepreneurial endeavors. Further, the Fellows expressed their appreciation of the new global network established as a result of their participation in the fellowship program. An earlier study of participants in the “Empowering Aspiring African Entrepreneurs” fellowship program revealed the Fellows’ interest in leveraging social media as a promotional and networking tool (Maroney, 2015). Therefore, future fellowship programs should facilitate sustained communication and networking opportunities for their participants. For example, by incorporating the creation of a Facebook group into the fellowship program participants will be enabled to quickly and easily communicate with one another. In addition, it is recommended future fellowship programs strongly encourage and assist in the initial planning of semi-regular meetings amongst Fellows residing in the same localities. Grant

proposal developers should include such intentions in their proposals and identify budgeting for that purpose.

It is also recommended future fellowship programs facilitate information sharing through extension/advisory services efforts. This study's findings revealed the profound desire of aspiring entrepreneurs working in agriculture and allied industries in SSA to access new information and technologies. In a 2013 report, the IFAD described the importance of extension services which engage farmers and asserted that strong "research/extension linkages need to be built, and the use of modern technology needs to be further developed" (p. 32) in SSA and in other developing economies. Future practitioners should seek to facilitate sustained information sharing networks during and after fellowship programs that include connections with providers of extension/advisory services.

The findings of this study also illuminated the importance of mentoring/mentorship relationships. According to Johnson (2002), these relationships provide career functions such as "sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, provision of challenging assignments, and transmission of applied professional ethics" (p. 9). Johnson (2002) also described the psychological purposes mentoring relationships serve which include "role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship (mutuality)" (p. 9). Due to the benefits of mentorship on individuals, both professionally and psychologically, it is imperative future fellowship programs promote sustained relationships between mentors and their protégés. Future programs may accomplish this by encouraging mentors and protégés to collectively develop enterprise-related goals and timelines for achievement. This approach would not only assist the entrepreneurs in pursuing future success, but also encourage continued dialogue between them and their mentors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
GRANT PROPOSAL

Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success in Sub-Saharan Africa:

A Professional Fellows Program for Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda

Executive Summary

The project's broad aim is to create professional collaborations and learning experiences between mid-level, emerging entrepreneurs from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda and U.S. entrepreneurs as part of a two-way exchange program. The project's focus is entrepreneurship development with the intent to include marginalized groups. Multiple opportunities for enhanced learning and cross-cultural understanding of U.S. citizens also will be emphasized. Six goals will guide the project. The goals range from training leading to the Fellows acquiring entrepreneurial skills and attitudes to creating collaborations supporting their success with enterprise projects while sustaining U.S. mentor contacts through social media. The primary implementing organization is Oklahoma State University (OSU). OSU hosts the nationally recognized Riata Center for Entrepreneurship; its director is a proposer and will play a key role in the project. Three in-country partners have committed to the project: Agri-ProFocus – Agri-Hub (Kenya), University of the Western Cape (South Africa), and Straight Talk Foundation (Uganda).

The project will support the exchange of 24 Africans (8 per country; 12 during each of its two cycles) and 16 U.S. participants (8 per cycle) distributed among the African nations. The first group of Africans would train in the United States for 32 days inclusive of April/May 2014 with the second group trained similarly during September/October 2014. More than a dozen internship sites, spanning private businesses to not-for-profits to government agencies to education centers, have committed to serving as mentors for the African Fellows, and other potential sites are being discussed. The first group of U.S. participants would travel to Africa in July 2014 (15 days in-country) and the second group in either December 2014 or January 2015.

**Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success in Sub-Saharan Africa:
A Professional Fellows Program for Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda**

Project Rationale/Need/Justification

Paul Collier (2007), in his book *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About It*, described four “traps” that often conflate to mire some 58 countries into a stratum he labeled the world’s bottom billion. Kenya and Uganda are among the nations occupying Collier’s stratum, as are millions of blacks in South Africa’s highly segregated townships and rural areas who share a similar economic plight. These pernicious traps – conflict, being landlocked, overexploitation of a few natural resources (or “Dutch disease”) at the expense of other sectors of the economy, and bad/corrupt governance (Collier, 2007) – limit the economic empowerment of tens of millions in these countries.

Collier (2007), however, also stressed that, “[i]n every society of the bottom billion there are people working for change, but usually they are defeated by the powerful internal forces stacked against them” (p. 96). But he concluded poignantly, “*we should be helping the heroes* [italics added]” (p. 96). This project would seek to identify some of Collier’s *heroes* – individuals interested in business-enterprise development, including aspiring and emerging entrepreneurs – for travel to the United States to receive training and participate in internship experiences with business professionals and entrepreneurship educators.

According to Juma (2011), “[t]he development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has been an integral part of the development of all industrialized economies. This holds true in Africa” (pp. 142 – 143). However, as Moss (2007) explained, “. . . it is also clear that local businesses, especially budding entrepreneurs, face considerable barriers” (p. 235) in Africa. Moss (2007) identified a litany of ills facing African entrepreneurs, including “lack of property protection” (p. 234), regressive legal restrictions, and excessive regulations such as “colossal

amounts of red tape and other headaches” (p. 234). Moss (2007) also described “segmentation,” i.e., “where very small firms tend to be owned by indigenous blacks and the medium and larger firms are owned by ethnic minorities or foreigners” (p. 235), making policy decisions impacting business very political. For example, in South Africa, these enterprises would include *spaza* shops, which are estimated to exceed 100,000 small businesses “with a collective turnover of R7 billion [i.e., South African Rand; ~\$650m USD]” (Charman, Petersen, & Piper, 2012, p. 48).

Although this project *will not be limited* to entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, the proposers recognize the significance and potential for agribusiness development and its impact on the economic livelihoods of millions of rural Africans and their communities, e.g., enterprises featuring value addition (or food processing/post-harvest transformation). In support, Juma (2011) asserted that, “creating links between knowledge and business development is the most important challenge facing agricultural renewal in east African countries” (p. 143). The importance of the agricultural sector to the economies of the target countries is undeniable. This is evidenced acutely by many of the women who populate rural Africa (Jivetti & Edwards, 2010) and grow much of its staple foods. Thus, “[t]ransformations in the food processing sectors of developing countries are increasingly seen as strategic from the point of view of export earnings, domestic industry restructuring, and citizens’ nutrition and food security” (Juma, 2011, p. 155).

The potential for stimulating enterprises allied with and supporting agribusiness ventures is significant. Further, catalyzing tangential enterprises or what would be entirely non-agricultural businesses represents additional opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Overall Aim of the Project

The project’s broad goal is to establish and foment professional collaborations and learning experiences between mid-level, emerging entrepreneurs (approx. 25 to 40 years of age) from the

countries of Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda and their professional counterparts in the United States as part of an *Entrepreneur Fellows (EFs)* two-way exchange program. The program's focus is entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development with the intent to include members of marginalized groups such as women and the disabled. Multiple opportunities for enhanced learning and cross-cultural understanding of U.S. citizens would be emphasized, as well. Six targeted goals and 18 enabling objectives will guide the project.

Targeted Goals/Enabling Objectives/Anticipated Outputs & Outcomes

Goal 1: Assist EFs in acquiring the professional leadership and entrepreneurial skills used by successful entrepreneurs in the United States, especially practices resonating with their countries' economies and their opportunities for entrepreneurship. (*Note.* This goal supports achievement of the "President's Young African Leaders' Initiative [PYALI].")

Objective 1: Recruit 24 EFs appropriate for participation in the exchange program (*output*).

Objective 2: During their U.S.-based, five-week fellowships, the 24 Africans will receive training in a variety of topics supporting their understanding of business enterprise development, skills and practices of successful entrepreneurs, principles of ethical business leadership, business-networking strategies, venture financing propositions, and other topics as appropriate for their home environments (*output*).

Objective 3: At least 85% of the EFs will gain new knowledge and develop skills related to U.S. entrepreneurial principles and ethics by the end of the five-week program (*outcome*).

Goal 2: Facilitate the EFs participating fully in three-week internship experiences in business enterprises complementing their existing business ventures/interests or those to which they aspire. (*Note.* This goal supports achievement of the PYALI.)

Objective 4: Secure and monitor appropriate internship placements for the 24 EFs (*output*).

Objective 5: Facilitate digital connections between the selected incoming EFs and their anticipated internship mentors (e.g., through LinkedIn profiles, Facebook pages, and e-mail exchanges) (*output*).

Objective 6: During their fellowships, the 24 EFs will intern for three weeks in professional settings appropriate for their career interests and home working environments (*output*).

Objective 7: At least 85% of the EFs will develop positive attitudes toward U.S. business ethics and values and will aspire to apply those in their home businesses or institutions (*outcome*).

Goal 3: Provide real-world experiences in aspects of economic empowerment in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, through reciprocal exchanges for U.S. entrepreneurs/business professionals and officials of for-profit and not-for-profit agencies that support entrepreneurship, including internship mentors and appropriate university faculty (i.e., the “outbound” portion of the project for 2.5 weeks in length each time).

Objective 8: Facilitate the selection and travel of 16 U.S. citizens with experience in business enterprise development/entrepreneurial ventures, agencies supporting the same, and business education professionals to participate in the project’s follow-on activities in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda (*output*).

Objective 9: The 16 U.S. participants will have established lasting professional linkages with the EFs and their business enterprises or related professional institutions by the end of the exchange program (*outcome*).

Goal 4: Build capacity for future collaborations between African and U.S. entrepreneurs and other parties interested in supporting entrepreneurship, such as practitioners, responsible agency officials, personnel of financial lending institutions, aspiring entrepreneurs, educators, and students, with special attention paid to empowering women and disabled entrepreneurs.

(*Note.* This goal supports achievement of the PYALI.)

Objective 10: Establish digital platforms, e.g., a project website, blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter posts, and e-mail exchanges, to increase the likelihood of collaboration between the EFs and their U.S. contacts continuing after funding for the project has ended (*outcome*).

Objective 11: By the end of the project, all participants – African and American – will be connected through at least one form of social media to exchange views, experiences, and entrepreneurial ideas going forward (*outcome*).

Objective 12: The project team members' (PTMs') recruiting efforts will emphasize the selection of women and individuals who are disabled (e.g., the hearing impaired) with the recruitment target that 50% of the EFs be derived from these historically marginalized groups in Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda (*output*).

Goal 5: Facilitate cultural experiences for the exchange participants – international visitors and U.S. outbound citizens – to support mutual awareness and understanding of the unique cultural norms found in the four nations comprising the project. (*Note.* This goal supports achievement of the PYALI.)

Objective 13: Multiple cultural activities will be planned for the EFs, including one day each weekend devoted to their participating in a significant event resonating with Oklahoma culture specifically and American culture broadly (*output*).

Objective 14: Multiple cultural activities will be facilitated for the U.S. exchange participants unique to and appropriate for the African country(ies) visited (*output*).

Objective 15: The U.S. participants will develop positive attitudes toward African cultures and learn to appreciate cultural diversity in their workplaces and communities (*outcome*).

Goal 6: Augment sustained collaborations among and between the EFs and their U.S.

counterparts, including the EFs implementing entrepreneurial projects, as facilitated by follow-on visits by U.S. cohorts to Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, as well as the participants' reciprocal use of social media networking tools and other digital platforms. (*Note.* This goal supports achievement of the PYALI.)

Objective 16: A portion of the U.S. outbound citizens chosen to travel to the African countries will be drawn from the EFs' pool of internship mentors (*output*).

Objective 17: The EFs will design projects for implementation in their home countries such that the likelihood of continued collaboration with the internship mentors is increased and sustained by both parties using social media and related digital platforms (*outcome*).

Objective 18: The EFs will attempt at least one entrepreneurial idea, principle, or concept they learned through the exchange program in their home countries (*outcome*).

Project Management Plan

Eight Kenyans, eight South Africans, and eight Ugandans will be selected as EFs. Two separate groups, inclusive of the three countries, would visit the United States. Both groups will include entrepreneurs/business professionals, aspiring entrepreneurs, and business educators. The PTMs, working with in-country partners in the three nations and respective U.S. Embassy officials (**see Attachments 1 & 2**), will work collaboratively to identify individuals appropriate for the program (Phase 1). Also during Phase 1, the project's internship sites will be solidified, and pending final selection of the EFs, the pre-departure orientation for the EFs will be conducted by the respective in-country partner organizations (ICPOs) working in collaboration with the PTMs, and the travel document procurement process will be facilitated by the PTMs and the ICPOs. Table 1 below illustrates the major Phases of the project management plan.

Table 1. Project Management Plan

Dates	Phase	Major Events/Tasks	Person(s)/Group(s) Responsible
8/1/13 – 12/31/13	1a	Recruitment of EFs (see related documents in Attachment 4); engage participants in social media.	PTMs; ICPOs; Relevant In-country Groups; Officials of U.S. Embassies
1/1/14 – 03/31/14	1b	Plan travel itineraries, lodging arrangements, and all activities for the first group of fellowship participants. Finalize internship sites. Schedule evaluator's travel.	PTMs; ICPOs; Internship Mentors; Invited Speakers; DOS, BECA Officials; External Evaluator
4/1/14 – 6/15/14 (5 wks. inclusive)	2	Conduct program for the first group of EFs (see detailed U.S. training schedule in Attachment 3). Conclude with Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C.	PTMs; Internship Mentors; Invited Speakers; External Evaluator
5/1/14 – 6/30/14	3a	Make travel itineraries, lodging arrangements, transportation arrangements, etc. for the first U.S. participant group's travel to Africa.	PTMs, Internship Mentors, ICPOs; Group 1 of EFs; Relevant In-country Groups
7/1/14 – 7/31/14 (2.5 wks. inclusive)	3b	Conduct the activities associated with Phase 3a of the project (see draft schedule in Attachment 3). Recruit and interview applicants for group 2 of EFs.	PTMs, Internship Mentors; Group 1 of EFs; Relevant In-country Groups; Officials of U.S. Embassies
8/1/14 – 8/31/14	4a	Plan travel itineraries, lodging arrangements, and all activities for the second group of EFs. Finalize internship sites. Schedule evaluator's travel.	PTMs; ICPOs; Internship Mentors; Invited Speakers; DOS, BECA Officials; External Evaluator
9/1/14 – 11/15/14 (5 wks. inclusive)	4b	Conduct the program for the second group of EFs (see detailed U.S. training schedule in Attachment 3).	PTMs; Internship Mentors; Invited Speakers, External Evaluator
11/1/14 – 11/30/14	5a	Make travel itineraries, lodging arrangements, transportation arrangements, etc. for the second U.S. participant group's travel to Africa.	PTMs; Internship Mentors; ICPOs; All EFs
12/1/14 – 1/31/15 (2.5 wks. inclusive)	5b	Conduct the activities associated with phase 5a of the project (see draft schedule in Attachment 3).	PTMs; Internship Mentors; All EFs; Officials of U.S. Embassies
2/1/15 – 7/31/15	6	Complete final reporting as required by the DOS. Complete the external evaluation of the project. Facilitate and monitor on-going DOS alumni/follow-on activities, especially social media channels supporting the project's long-term, sustainable collaborations and success of the EFs' individual entrepreneurial projects.	PTMs; External Evaluator; Internship Mentors; ICPOs; All EFs

Background Information on Implementing Organizations

OSU's Institutional Capacity and Commitment

OSU began providing international education through President Harry S. Truman's Point Four Program (later known as USAID) in 1949. OSU's extension and outreach mission's expenditures grow each year as the institution dedicates more of its faculty effort to educating those beyond its campuses. In 2012, Sponsored Program expenditures were more than \$300 million, including external awards for Sponsored Extension/Outreach, Instruction, and Research. Similar to the proposed project, the previous DOS, BECA project with Malian media specialists that OSU faculty conducted during 2007 (Cartmell et al., 2008, 2009; Robertson et al., 2010; Sitton et al., 2009) exemplified OSU's land-grant heritage and mission. The completed project was titled "Nurturing the 'Fourth Estate': Professional Development for Media Specialists in the Republic of Mali, West Africa" (\$227,392). Three of the PTMs together with Oklahoma media professionals worked closely with 14 Malian media specialists (see **Attachments 2 & 9**) to help them acquire professional skills and attitudes as well as understand better the unique role and responsibilities of a free press in a democratic society.

Three of the PTMs also conducted the project titled "Improving Food Security by Catalyzing Communication Networks between Key Stakeholders: Linking Media, Policies, and Communities in Kenya and Uganda" (\$480,734) from 2011 to 2012, which included 13 Kenyan and 13 Ugandan participants (Alcala et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 2012; George, 2012; George et al., 2012; Robertson et al., in press; Sitton et al., 2012; Tillinghast et al., 2013). That project sought to *catalyze communication networks* between those stakeholders as it related to issues of food security. Experiences and work products (see **Attachment 9**) achieved by those Fellows included two feature stories in *The Oklahoman*, the state's largest newspaper; a television

program on OETA, Oklahoma's public television station; feature stories on KOSU, a public radio network affiliate at OSU; service as a judge for 4-H youth competitions; making guest presentations in several courses at OSU on the topic of food security and culture in Kenya and Uganda; contributions to a newsletter produced by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau and to the *Oklahoma Living* magazine published by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, to name a few internship activities of the Food Security Fellows (see **Attachments 2 & 9**). See **Attachment 9** for an example of a Fellow's work on food security after returning to Kenya.

The Riata Institute for Entrepreneurship

The Riata Center includes a dedicated staff of professionals who foster the spirit of entrepreneurship through innovative outreach programs (see **Attachments 1 & 2**). The team is dedicated to high-impact entrepreneurial outreach at OSU, around the State of Oklahoma, and nationwide. The center is intimately engaged with the entrepreneurial community and strongly committed to creating unique experiential learning opportunities for its students.

From internships to venture creation to scholarship and research, the center offers experiential opportunities for its students. In particular, the *Riata Entrepreneurial Internship Program* provides unique entrepreneurial opportunities for highly qualified undergraduate and graduate students at OSU. The program offers internships requiring students to work directly with entrepreneurs and senior executives in high-growth, innovative companies in Oklahoma. Interns are expected to add meaningful value to the work environment and to produce a number of useful deliverables. *This program would support the internship placement aims of the project.*

Three of the key team members who delivered the abovementioned projects are proposers of this project (see **Attachment 1**). The PTMs already have received commitments for invited speakers, tours/field trips, and internship placement sites for the African exchange

participants (see **Attachment 2**) to create interactions with U.S. experts, direct observations of businesses, opportunities for professional practice, guided reflection, and follow-on activities.

In-Country Partner Organizations (ICPOs)

The PTMs anticipate paying the partnering organizations a modest “facilitation fee” for their services (see **Budget Narrative**). A reliable and appropriate in-country partner has been retained for each of the three target countries (see **Attachments 1 & 2**):

Kenya – Agri-ProFocus – Agri-Hub (<http://apf-kenya.ning.com/>)

Mr. Amos Thiong’o and Mr. Tito Arunga, as staff members of Agri-ProFocus, will lead their group in supporting the PTMs’ economic empowerment efforts in Kenya. Agri-ProFocus is a professional network of more than 110 organizations ranging from local NGOs to the private sector, all engaged in “promoting farmer entrepreneurship in developing countries,” including a longstanding collaboration with the Netherlands Development Organisation (see **their résumés in Attachment 1**).

South Africa – University of the Western Cape (UWC) (<http://www.uwc.ac.za>)

UWC is a historically black institution that became an “open university,” i.e., open admission to all racial groups, in the 1980s. It was a leader among those universities that were deeply invested in the long struggle to defeat the apartheid system and it continues to work in service of the “common people” of South Africa. Eslyn Isaacs is a senior lecturer in marketing and SME management and the head of postgraduate studies for the same at UWC. He is a member of an international team teaching entrepreneurship and small business management. Dr. Rubin Pillay, a native of South Africa, is a health entrepreneurship faculty member at OSU and holds a joint faculty appointment with UWC (see **their résumés in Attachment 1**).

Uganda – Straight Talk Foundation (<http://www.straighttalkfoundation.org/>)

Mr. Robert Muwawu, a Food Security Fellow (April/May 2011) in an earlier DOS-supported project delivered by the PTMs, is a livelihood officer at the Straight Talk Foundation (STF) in Uganda. STF is focused on educating and empowering the youth of Uganda, including their capacity for economic development and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. Mr. Muwawu and his colleague, Mr. Gaster Kiyingi (**see their résumés in Attachment 1**), would be STF's key staff members for this project.

The three ICPOs described above will assist PTMs with 1) *recruiting* applicants for the fellowships, 2) *providing* a pre-departure orientation for the selected EFs, 3) *liaising* with Public Affairs Section officials at the respective U.S. Embassies, 4) *facilitating* re-entry seminars for the returning EFs, 5) *coordinating* the follow-on visits of U.S. participants, and 6) *supporting* the EFs as they implement their entrepreneurial projects after returning home.

Facilitating the Fellows' Individual Entrepreneurial Projects

Beginning with the EF application process, prospective Fellows will be asked about their plans in regard to entrepreneurial enterprises. Following the EFs' selection but before traveling, they will be linked through social media with one or more prospective internship mentors with knowledge of the EFs' areas of interest. The EFs also will be linked similarly with those PTMs with expertise in economics and entrepreneurship: Dr. Shida Henneberry, professor of agricultural economics and agribusiness, and Dr. Craig Watters, clinical professor of entrepreneurship and interim director of the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship at OSU (**see Attachment 1**). It is expected that 1) EFs, internship mentors, and the named PTMs will exchange ideas and feedback around the Fellows' entrepreneurial ideas; 2) their dialogue would continue, including the drafting of related business plans and market analysis procedures/tools, during the five-week training periods (**see Attachment 3**); 3) EFs would conduct market

analyses after returning home, as needed, and continue social media-facilitated dialogues with their internship mentors and the PTMs; 4) EFs would begin implementation of their enterprises; 5) internship mentors and PTMs who travel to the EFs' countries would visit the EFs' enterprises and/or workplaces to provide advice and additional mentoring; and 6) the collaborations established would continue thereafter through the project's social media (see Attachment 8).

Administration/Supervision of J-1 Visas and Related Travel Requirements

The PTMs are prepared to assist the BECA in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. The J Exchange Visitor Program is the responsibility of International Students and Scholars (ISS) Office at OSU. OSU has one Responsible Officer (RO) and three Alternate Responsible Officers (AROs). The RO and AROs screen all Exchange Visitor (EV) requests in the student and scholar categories. As part of the project, the essential information will be provided to all EVs and their inviting departments: pre-arrival information to assist with the regulations and compliance for EVs as well as a reminder to the department regarding their obligations to the EVs; orientation program in verbal and written forms; access to cross-cultural events and experiences available on and off campus; and an encouragement of reciprocity throughout the university's departments. In addition, the ISS office ensures OSU adheres to the regulations under 22 CFR 62, which includes monitoring of EVs, reporting a change of address in SEVIS, and verifying health insurance compliance for the EVs and their family members as well as updating ROs and AROs in SEVIS.

ISS administrators keep records of the arrival and departure dates of the EVs and of the EVs who do not arrive on campus. In addition, the ISS office staff completes all annual reporting requirements, which is submitted to the Department of State in July of each year. The ISS office monitors all aspects of the EV program, and the RO/AROs ensure OSU is in compliance.

The Essential Role of Internship Experiences and Related Roles/Responsibilities

Adults expect *immediacy of application* from their learning and value learning they deem important in the present or near-term (Knowles, 1990). Kolb (1984) posited that as people experience the world their perceptions are transformed and thereafter guide the selection of new experiences (see Figure 1). And, an individual's "theory of action has not been learned in the most important sense unless it can be put into practice" (Argyris & Schön, 1989, p. 12).

Opportunities for experiential learning and practice, as well as the potential for creating new perceptions or "personal theories" and modifying pre-existing ones, will be powerful tools to support the learning of the EFs as they acquire and practice new professional behaviors and competencies related to economic empowerment. Internship experiences, in particular, if conducted in context-rich settings, offer a valuable venue in which greater understanding and behavioral change occurs. Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1996) described this approach to learning as "cognitive apprenticeship," i.e., learning relying on context and authenticity, which is precisely what effective internship experiences provide.

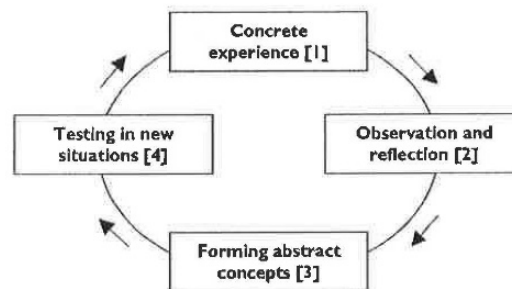


Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984). (Informal Education, 1996, 2005)

The EFs will intern in business enterprises, agencies, and with local, county, and state organizations that support the training and development of aspiring entrepreneurs and business leaders in Oklahoma (see **Attachment 2**). How these entities stimulate business development

and impart entrepreneurial skills will be stressed and modeled. The EFs will undergo concrete experiences, collaborate with expert mentors to interpret and reflect on the experiences, abstract *lessons learned* toward future experiences, test new theories through active experimentation, and then apply newly acquired attitudes and knowledge as new experiences arise (Kolb, 1984; Informal Education, 1996, 2005). **This portion of the project supports the achievement of output related objectives, 2, 4, 6, 13, and 16 as well as outcome related objectives 3, 7, 17, and 18.**

The PTMs will monitor the quality of these experiences, including making on-site visits as well as social media contacts with the EFs and their mentors. OSU's Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership has a long history of successful internships for its students. Internships are required of all undergraduates. Numerous potential internship partners (see **Attachment 2**) already have expressed their willingness to host and mentor the EFs; additional internship sites are being explored. Moreover, the PTMs have experienced an excellent working relationship with officials at BECA on past projects, including the project officer for Africa, Dr. Curt Huff, and intend to collaborate with him and others at BECA in regard to the final selection of internship sites. Through an orientation meeting with internship mentors and related communications, the importance of their interacting with the EFs on core American principles of civic and community engagement will be stressed, e.g., participating in activities of the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce and Payne County Extension (see **Attachment 2**). The internship mentors will be invited to all planned cultural outings with the EFs.

Summary of the Project's Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

The project's external evaluator's (see **Attachment 1**) detailed plan, logic model, and sample instruments can be found in **Attachment 6**. The main objective of the evaluation will be

to assess the project's implementation process, outcomes, and impacts from the onset for monitoring and accountability. The process evaluation will answer two questions: 1) Has each of the project implementation steps been completed properly as planned and on time? 2) What can be learned by reviewing the implementation process for monitoring the overall project?

The outcome and impact evaluation will be based on Kirkpatrick's and Kirkpatrick's (2006) training evaluation model that focuses on four levels of outcomes: 1) satisfaction, 2) learning, 3) practice/behavior changes, and 4) situation improvement or impacts. The evaluation plan will employ pre- and post-test design and use quantitative and qualitative methods to collect valid and reliable data. Survey instruments (**see Attachment 6**), interviews, focus groups, reflections, and observations will be used to collect data and information. Process evaluation data will be reviewed periodically for monitoring the project to achieve the desired results.

The Project's Commitment to and Support of Diversity

The PTMs include diversity of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and professional experience, including two women, one who is an Iranian American, and an African American male (**see Attachment 1**). The project's external evaluator is of Sri Lankan heritage who recently became a U.S. citizen. This inclusion of diversity will be extended to the entities who have indicated their willingness to serve as internship providers for the EFs (**see Attachment 2**). For example, the associate general manager of KOSU, Stillwater's NPR affiliate, is a woman, as are several other mentors, and some of the mentors have Native American heritage.

Oklahoma is unique in that it is home to more than 30 recognized Native American nations (tribes), e.g., the Cherokee and Choctaw are headquartered in the state. Two of the PTMs have a Native American heritage. So, the EFs will have numerous contacts, formal and informal, with Oklahomans of Native American ancestry. They will visit the Cherokee Nation's national

headquarters and tour Sequoyah's Cabin State Park. The state park in his honor is one of many places where the cultural heritage and contributions of Native Americans is recognized and celebrated in Oklahoma. In past exchanges, the EFs' interactions with Oklahoma's Native American culture resonated deeply with them (George, 2012) regarding their own cultures.

As an example of both geographic diversity and tribal/ethnic diversity, recruiting efforts would target EFs from the North Rift Valley of Kenya. OSU faculty have worked previously with colleagues at Moi University (MU) in Kenya (including an MOU, **see Attachment 9**) to deliver programming to improve the economic livelihoods of Kenyans in that region. Of note, faculty members of OSU's Spears School of Business have mentored business faculty members of MU on their dissertation study proposals for several years and would mentor one or more EFs who are business educators (**see Dr. Federico Aime's letter in Attachment 2**). (MU's agricultural component, including aspects of its agribusiness training, is now Eldoret University [EU]. An EU faculty member assisted PTMs with their last exchange project as a resident facilitator and two MU/EU staff were Fellows; **see related letters of support in Attachment 2**).

The North Rift Valley, as well as other regions of Kenya, is considered as having significantly marginalized populations: poverty is endemic; literacy and higher learning is substantially underdeveloped; wealth-generating resources are scarce; and the provision of state-sponsored assistance has not been distributed equitably (Mwaura, 2005). Capacity-building initiatives designed to work collaboratively with intended beneficiaries and their advocates are sorely needed (**see related letters of support in Attachment 2**).

Similarly marginalized areas will be recruited from in Uganda, e.g., northern Uganda, and in particular the Acholi and Lango populations, who have suffered from 21 years of civil conflicts. Even though the region has stabilized now, people still suffer from post-conflict

issues, including food insecurity and poor economic livelihoods. To that end, a past Food Security Fellow, Mr. Walter Odongo, a faculty member of Agriculture and Environment, Department of Rural Development and Agribusiness, Gulu University, and his institution, have agreed to assist the PTMs in recruiting prospective EFs for this project (**see letter of support in Attachment 2**). South Africa's black townships, e.g., in the Western Cape region (**see UWC's MOU with OSU in Attachment 9**), will also provide similar recruiting grounds.

Along with targeting women participants, the PTMs also intend to recruit disabled Africans as EFs. Multiple organizations representing both groups have provided letters of support for the project (**see Attachment 2**). In the case of Kenya, two groups serving the disabled ("Nambale Disabled" and "Tumaini Women"; **see Attachment 2**) and both involved in business enterprise development, have offered to support the project. The principal of two Ugandan schools serving students with disabilities, including many who are hearing impaired, and the Gulu Deaf Association of Uganda have provided letters of support, as well (**see Attachment 2**). Of note, most OSU facilities are ADA compliant (<http://sds.okstate.edu/>), including some housing units, and disabled accessible vehicles are readily available through OSU's motor pool as are university buses that serve the campus and the Stillwater community.

The Oklahoma Experience

Even after almost 20 years, memories of the domestic terrorism action at the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, which killed 167 innocent Oklahomans, including a number of children, still remains fresh in the PTMs' memories. (The Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial is a destination the EFs will visit.) Accordingly, PTMs understand the need for disparate and unique voices to communicate regardless of social strata, ethnicity, or religion. PTMs embrace the opportunity to interact and collaborate with the EFs such that mutual understandings of our

cultures and peoples are enhanced and valued.

Civic engagement opportunities will span from interacting with adult volunteers who advise aspiring agribusiness entrepreneurs (e.g., Payne County 4-H Club members) to experiencing how a moderate-sized, Midwestern city and OSU strive to achieve social cohesion, cooperation, and commerce. Many opportunities to observe and investigate civic responsibility and community involvement, especially activities resonating with economic development and rural vitality, will fill the span of the exchange program. U.S. citizens who travel to Africa as outbound participants will have multiple opportunities to experience the people and cultures of Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda (**see letters of support from past U.S. participants in Attachment 2**).

In learning and sharing with our EFs, we can help open their eyes to what is an essential component of any sustainable society: an integrated education system supporting aspiring entrepreneurs who will be a nation's future business and civic leaders. This is a fundamental premise on which OSU was founded and remains part of its core mission as a land-grant university in the 21st century. Moreover, PTMs will use their newly enhanced global perspectives and cross-cultural understandings to broaden the education of OSU students and the views of citizens in Oklahoma. The PTMs' public relations efforts were substantial in this regard as the past projects (described above) were promoted and publicized (**see Attachment 9**).

Collaboration with the Public Affairs Sections at the Respective U.S. Embassies

The PTMs will work closely with officials of the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of the respective U.S. Embassies (**see Attachment 2**) to further develop plans for program implementation and to recruit and select EFs as well as for them to participate actively in the EFs' pre-departure orientations and re-entry seminars (See Budget narrative describing support for these functions.). The PTMs anticipate significant consultations with the Embassies'

respective Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) to plan and deliver as strong a program as possible, including their joining the PTMs in visits to the EFs' enterprises or workplaces. The officials will be invited to join in the project's social media forums, e.g., Facebook group, Twitter, and blogs.

When delivering a similar project with Malian journalists during 2006/2007, the PTMs developed a strong working relationship with the PAO at that time from the U.S. Embassy in Mali, Mrs. Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath, and her staff (see her letter of support in Attachment 2). Ms. Shannon Dorsey, PAO at the U.S. Embassy in Uganda, who PTMs worked with to deliver a Food Security Fellows' project during 2011/2012, has also provided a letter of support for this proposal (see Attachment 2). In addition, the PTMs have received a letter of support/commitment (see Attachment 2) from an ICPO in each target country (described above) who will liaise with U.S. Embassy officials on behalf of the project.

Working w/ Officials of the Department of State & Participating in the Fellows Congresses

The PTMs will work closely with officials of DOS, BECA, especially the project officer, Dr. Curt Huff and/or his designee(s). The PTMs understand completely that the final selection of EFs will be made with full approval of cognizant officials at the DOS and the U.S. Embassies.

Two of the PTMs participated in the inaugural Professional Fellows Congresses in 2011: Drs. Cartmell and Edwards helped with break-out sessions and other activities, and Edwards assisted in developing the Ethiopian case study used by the food security group. They and the other PTMs are committed to participating in teleconferences and/or on-line forums to plan the Congresses for 2014, and two PTMs will attend each Congress. While in Washington, D.C., time will be scheduled for the EFs to tour prominent historical places, especially those resonating with U.S. democracy and citizenship and to visit their Embassies, similar to the PTMs' last exchange.

Plan for Social Media and Project Outreach

Throughout the proposed project, social media will be used by PTMs (1) to communicate among EFs, ICPOs, internship mentors, relevant in-country groups, U.S. Embassy and DOS, BECA officials and (2) to share project news with the public and the news media. The PTMs have used email and Facebook as effective post-grant, follow-on engagement tools to continue working with alumni and others from previous exchange projects. Many letters of support (**see Attachment 2**) in this proposal speak directly to the effectiveness of this on-going dialogue and mentorship. The PTMs will continue to use both tools in the proposed project to solicit quality fellowship applicants and to expand this project's impact. In addition, the PTMs will employ a variety of social media to reach a diverse domestic and international demographic in a number of progressive ways, including Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, Skype, Instagram, Dropbox, and DOS-sponsored ExchangesConnect and State Alumni platforms (**see Attachment 8**).

Budget & Budget Oversight

Form SF-424A provides information regarding the budget. The detailed budget, budget narrative and budget summary, including breakouts of the administrative budget and program budget, have been provided (**see Attachment 10**). Dr. Dwayne Cartmell II, a PTM, working closely with the project's Graduate Associate, will provide budget oversight as he did for two previous DOS, BECA-funded projects. He will be backstopped by staff of DASNR's Sponsored Programs Office and by OSU's Office of Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer.

Acknowledging the Department of State, BECA's Financial Support

The PTMs will acknowledge BECA's financial support and use the DOS's seal, when possible, on any literature, recruitment pieces, media, and scholarship created as a result of this project. Examples of promotional pieces from the PTMs' previously funded DOS, BECA projects can be found in **Attachment 9**.

APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Friday, October 09, 2015

IRB Application No AG1546

Proposal Title: African entrepreneurial enterprises -- A study of business ventures of African entrepreneurship fellow from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 10/8/2018

Principal
Investigator(s):

Gabriella Bragoli

Michael Edwards

272 Stout Hall

Stillwater, OK 74078

Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

- ☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Hugh Crethar, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT SOLICIATION LETTER

SCRIPT

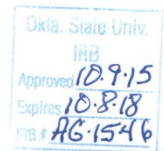
Hello _____,

My name is Gabriella Bragoli. I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University and am working with Dr. Edwards to work on a follow-up study regarding your participation as an Entrepreneur Fellow at Oklahoma State University. This study will focus on your experiences as a business owner in order to learn more about the structure of your enterprise, your management operation, and the people you interact with as you conduct business.

If you agree to participate in the study, I will work with you to schedule a Skype or Google Hangout interview. This interview will last about an hour. Attached to this email you will find a consent form as well as a copy of the questions that will be asked during the interview. Please review these documents and contact me with any questions you may have. If you agree to participate, I will ask you to sign the consent form and return it to me as an email attachment or as a scan before the interview. I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your business experience.

Warm regards,

Gabriella Bragoli
Graduate Research Assistant
Oklahoma State University



APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMAL CONSENT FORM
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROJECT TITLE: African Entrepreneurial Enterprises—A Study of Business Ventures of African Entrepreneurship Fellows from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda

INVESTIGATOR: Gabriella D. Bragoli, Oklahoma State University

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this inquiry with a case study design is to explore the experiences of African Entrepreneur Fellows in your specific enterprises. I am interested in learning about the structures of your individual businesses along with your management styles and customer base. Additionally, you will be asked about networking and communications practices that are a part of your enterprises.

PROCEDURES:

Once you agree to participate, the researcher will set up a 60-minute interview to take place at a mutually agreed location and time. The interview will be recorded using a digital recording device. The researcher will transcribe the interview recordings. You will be asked to review a draft of the written report to confirm findings prior to reporting results. Direct quotes from the interview may be included in the written report. You will not be identified by name in the report; instead they will be assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

RISK OF PARTICIPATION:

There are no known risks associated with this project, which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

Participation in this study will provide a deeper insight on the nature of enterprises of the fellows who took part in the Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs for Economic Success fellowship program. The results of this data will be used to construct case studies for university and staff members to better understand the structures and operations of individual enterprises. These cases will inform further programming and research into entrepreneurship in an international context.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private. Any written results will use pseudonyms (made up names) and will not include information that will identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in the study.



CONTACTS:

You may contact the researchers at the following addresses, emails, and phone numbers:

Gabriella Bragoli: 545 H Agricultural Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 74078, bragoli@okstate.edu,

Dr. M. Craig Edwards: 464 Agricultural Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 74078, 405-744-8141, craig.edwards@okstate.edu

If you have questions about rights as a research volunteer, they may contact officials of the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at: **223 Scott Hall**, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:

Participation is voluntary, there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw permission at any time without penalty.

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of participation. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I personally explained this document before requesting the participant to sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

**African Entrepreneurial Enterprises—A Study of Business Ventures of African
Entrepreneurship Fellows from Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda
Interview Protocol
Gabriella Bragoli**

1. Could you please briefly describe your enterprise, as it operates today?
 - a. What kind of changes, if any, have occurred since you started it?
2. What led you to starting this entrepreneurial (business) project?
 - a. How did you identify the need/opportunity for your enterprise?
 - b. What were some of the important decisions you made during this process?
 - c. Has your previous business experience shaped the way you make decisions regarding your business? In what ways?
3. What would you say has been your greatest achievement in this enterprise?
 - a. What led to this achievement?
 - b. What did you learn from that experience?
4. What has been your greatest challenge in this enterprise?
 - a. How have you overcome that challenge?
 - b. What did you learn from that experience?
5. What relationships (with family, friends, mentors, peers, etc.), if any, in your life that have shaped or affected your enterprise?
 - a. How have these relationships shaped your enterprise?
 - b. Do these relationship(s) have an effect on your decision making process?
 - c. Why?
6. Who, if anyone, do you communicate with other business associates, suppliers, or engage in networking?

- a. How do you communicate with them? (Face-to-face meetings, social media apps like *Facebook* and *WhatsApp*, emails)
 - b. How have these activities been helpful to your enterprise?
7. What is your day-to-day operation like?
- a. Is your routine similar each day?
 - b. Does it change seasonally or as a result of any other pattern?
8. How does the location of your enterprise impact the operation of your enterprise?
9. What has been your history with funders and investors?
10. Has your enterprise grown recently?
- a. Why do you think this growth occurred?
 - b. Do you want to continue to grow your enterprise? Explain.
11. Who are your primary clients/customers?
- a. Are they returning (repeat) clients/customers?
 - b. Has your client/customer base grown as result of your participation as an Entrepreneur Fellow?
12. Could you describe your communication with customers/clients?
- a. What is your primary method?
 - b. Do you find it to be very effective?
13. Please describe your employees?
- a. How many people do you employ? Are you content with this number?
 - b. How would you describe the way you manage your employees?
14. In closing, what are your goals for this enterprise?

APPENDIX F
COFFEE SHOP MENU

Pastries Served With Coffee

Samosa
Cakes
Ch...

Pastries Served With Coffee

Samosa
Cakes
Ch...

[illegible][illegible]

APPENDIX G
COFFEE SHOP BANNER



APPENDIX H
GLO-PAYA LOGO PROPOSAL

1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	
				
				
				
				

APPENDIX I

GLO-PAYA BRANDED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

VITA

Gabriella Diane Bragoli

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: POST-FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS:
INTERPRETING IMPACT A YEAR LATER

Major Field: International Agriculture

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in International Agriculture at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2016.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Business California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo, California in 2015.

Experience:

Graduate Research Assistant, Oklahoma State University 8/2015-12/2016

- Conduct interviews with participants in the Entrepreneurs Fellowship program
- Synthesize interview data as well as observation, focus group, and document analysis to create a rich narrative
- Engage in and promote cross-cultural learning and networking

Noble-Watoto Fellow, Uganda 5/2016-7/2016

- Strengthened farm management and record keeping practices
- Implemented agriculture curriculum in Restoration Gateway Secondary School
- Facilitated hands-on learning and created an engaging learning environment

Professional Memberships:

Phi Beta Delta Honor Society, Epsilon Upsilon Chapter: member since 2016
Alpha Zeta, Cal Delta Chapter: member since 2014