

Artistic Expressions of Caribbean Family Resilience Before and After COVID-19

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Abstract

- Families are population units that behave in distinct ways. Caribbean families are not the same as the Western idea of family.
- Cultures define *family* in ways that don't necessarily include only those who share the same blood. Mom, dad and their daughters and sons are not the only members included.
- Considering the distinctions in culture before and after the COVID-19 Pandemic, families respond to stress factors differently and can carry such experiences through art-making.
- Arts-based research aims to reconsider and at times distance the research process from traditional-western research methodology.
 - Traditional methodology does not consider cultural distinctions, the subjectiveness of the human participant, and how the researcher's own background affects the process.
- Each Caribbean family was invited to create visual art about how they cope with stress as a family unit. Various art materials were provided, and they were allowed to express their approach freely.

Methods

Participants

- Participants of this research are families in English-speaking Caribbean countries.
- With the family unit being fluid, demographics varied based on how each household defined their family. The artwork was completed in a collaborative effort with individuals of any age or gender participating in any capacity they saw fit.
 - For example, some families selected one person to create the actual art while they provided input on how the artwork should look. For other families, everyone took on a more hands on approach with all family members actually working on the artwork.

Materials/Measures & Procedure

- The families were asked questions about how they deal with stressors as they completely artworks with supplies such as canvas, paint, markers, and paintbrushes provided by the interviewer, Dr. Donald.
- The artwork was analyzed by the team using a coding process that involved interpreting each piece through several cycles using short phrases and creating reflective pieces in response to each artwork from an academic lens rather than an aesthetic one. Each team member compared the coding in order to compile a list of agreed upon key phrases to summarize the art.

Preliminary Findings

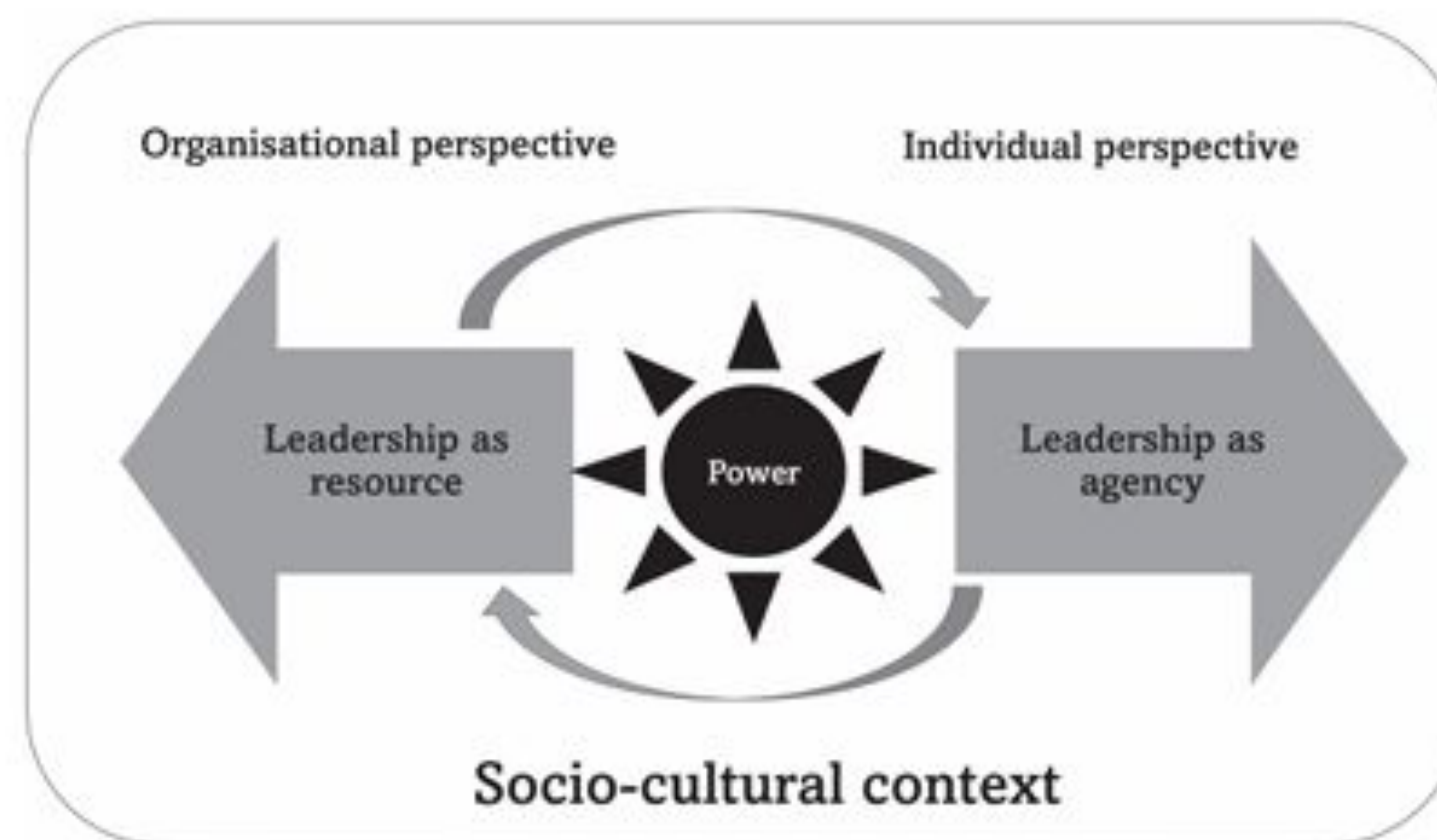
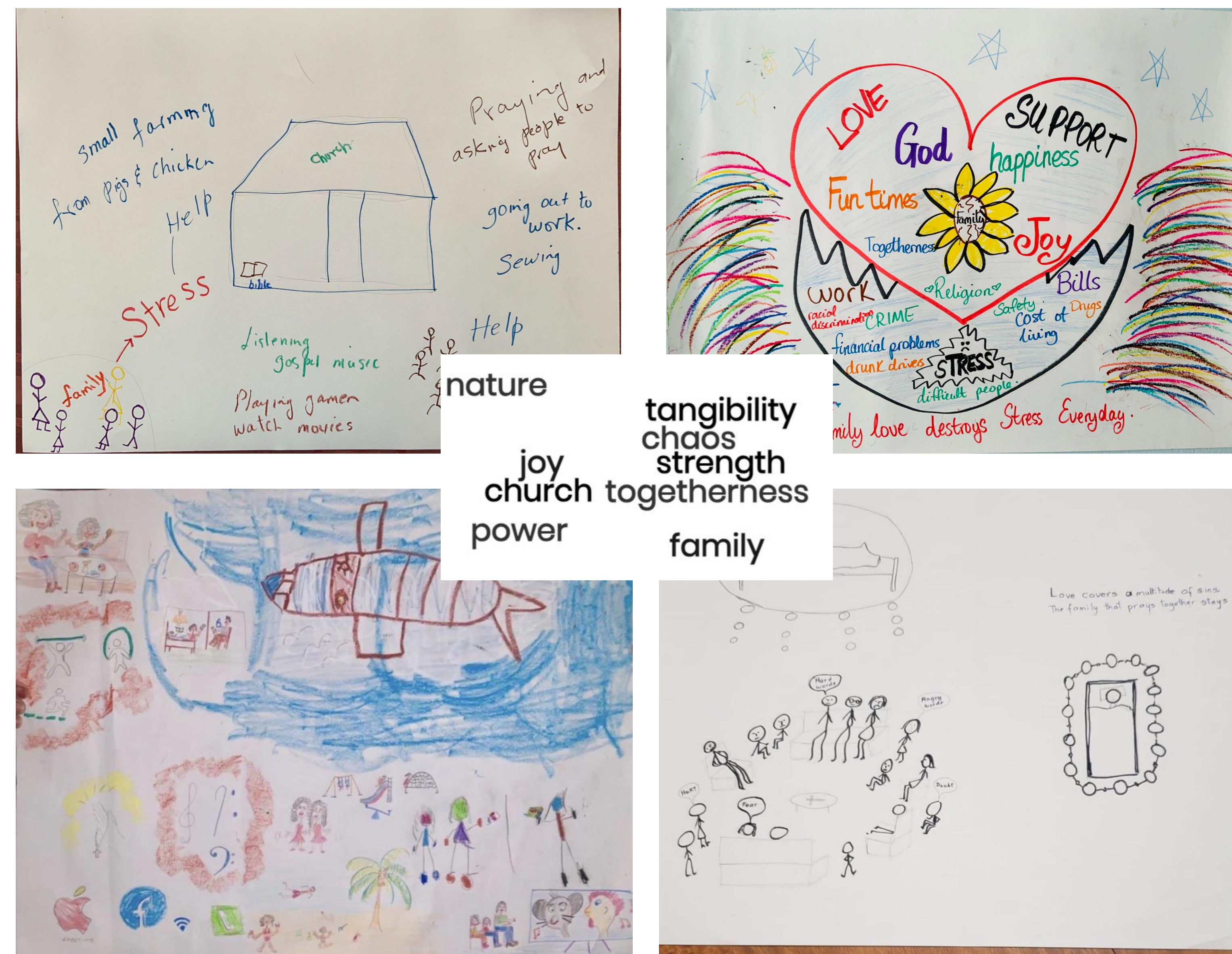


Figure 4.5 Resource-agency duality model of distributed leadership (Tian, 2016, p. 18)

Results

- Participating families engaged in vibrant displays of artistic expression mainly through two-dimensional forms.
- Families consisted of blood relatives that extended past the nuclear family and represented multigenerational cohesion.
- Families did not limit their artistic and expressive ability to realism or tangible shapes but also included words, phrases, and diagram-like structure to convey their behaviours as a family.
 - While nearly all pieces were 2 dimensional some families engaged in singing melodies and at times moved along to their rhythms.
- Our findings suggest a strong distinction from traditional approaches to stress. Their definition of family played a major role. Conflicts and hardships were illustrated while a few also included happier moments and solutions to challenges like stress.
- COVID-19 disrupted services and businesses around the world creating strains amongst population units everywhere including the Caribbean. COVID-19 indirectly affected Caribbean families: their reliance on each other was challenged.
- Conflict-Resolution methodology and power dynamics were emphasized.

Discussion

- While extensive research has been done on the changes in family resilience as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. Literature review allowed us to come to the conclusion that there is a gap in research that accounts for the cultural nuances of being Caribbean.
- When assessing family resilience, the main stressor that most research is done on is natural disasters. For example, research in Puerto Rico mainly focuses on Hurricane Maria.
 - Natural disasters also highlights a limitation in our research because that can service as a key factor in families' outlook on resilience.
- Familial dynamics as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were altered. Challenges such as prolonged interruptions to social services and supply chain systems has encouraged families to face such challenges with unity and perseverance or allow instability to enter the family unit.

Acknowledgements

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References

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