

# Traditional Dances and Musical Instruments: A Case of AmaMpondo in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa



Nontuthuzelo Mtsini <sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Education, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

## ABSTRACT

The acculturation and hegemony brought by the European settlers divided and consequently vanquished the African pride embedded in traditional music and dances in the AmaMpondo communities. This study aims to revive the AmaMpondo socio-cultural practices, reflected in their attire, language, and traditional practices, to preserve their legacy for future generations. Vygotsky's theory, which focuses on how humans arrange and express their thoughts to learn and communicate, underpins this study, concluding that human learning necessitates social contact. This study used the interpretivism paradigm, encouraging the author to seek firsthand experience and explore various interpretations of specific social contexts to advance the research. The author explored a qualitative ethnographic approach to encourage open responses from the focus groups to the semi-structured and open-ended questions, allowing for the sharing of perspectives for recording and documentation. A narrative analysis was used to describe, interpret, and analyse the collected data, allowing the author to closely read and express individual experiences and social realities from the participants' perspectives. Findings indicated that by stimulating a variety of traditional practices, with songs and dances sung during the ritual performances, the amaMpondo heritage can be revitalised. Furthermore, these practices contribute to instilling morals and values in the younger generation, and the preservation of cultural identity. The author recommends that AmaMpondo should instil symbiosis and syncretism in their children from the elementary stage, encouraging them to collaborate with teachers at school. Therefore, the author advocates for the convergence of diverse cultures.

## Correspondence

Nontuthuzelo Mtsini

Email: [nmtsini@wsu.ac.za](mailto:nmtsini@wsu.ac.za)

## Publication History

Received:

19<sup>th</sup> September, 2024.

Accepted:

6<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

Published:

14<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

**Keywords:** *Socio-Cultural Practices, Traditional Instruments, amaMpondo, Revitalisation, Syncretism.*

## INTRODUCTION

Indigenous music and dance, embedded in the cultural heritage of the amaMpondo nation in the southeastern part of the former Transkei region in South Africa, have suffered great depression and declined tremendously in response to colonisation laws before the first democratic elections in 1994.<sup>1</sup> Mekonnen et.al. describe the significance of culture and heritage as

<sup>1</sup> Oladele Ayorinde, "Dizu Plaatjies and the Amampondo: A Case of Music, Agency and Social Transformation," *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 40, no. 1 (2020): 156–84; Mda Mda, *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People* (African Sun MeDia, 2019).

“Irreplaceable sources of reference and inspiration which subsume, among others, physical artifacts, cultural properties and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from the past, and as a reference bestowed to the next generations.”<sup>2</sup>

This paper discusses the decline in the amaMpondo legacy caused, among others, by acculturation and “Western” civilisation. Further, this paper seeks ways to revitalise the traditional music and dances of amaMpondo essential as a reference to the past, to be maintained in the present, and passed down to the upcoming generations. The founder of acculturation, Berry cited in Jogee, defines acculturation as a process driven by hegemony when “one party wants to dominate another in the processes of assimilation, separation, marginalisation, and integration.”<sup>3</sup> To elaborate on this view, the culture bearers of the amaMpondo at Dungu village in Ntabankulu district, mentioned, among others, the decline and the elimination of their distinct language and attire which were their pride and identity.<sup>4</sup> These were displayed in traditional music and various dancing styles which, after the arrival of European settlers were regarded as ‘backward’ and ‘weird.’<sup>5</sup> The colonisers and missionaries, in the former Transkei region, before the democratic elections in 1994, established schools and churches and discouraged the cultural heritage of amaMpondo which were consequently vanquished. In addition, Afrikaans and English were administered as official languages in schools which substituted the indigenous language.<sup>6</sup>

Mda explains the amaMpondo land in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, as follows:- “Before conquest and colonisation, a striking feature of the territory was its verdant pastures and vast herds of cattle and goats.<sup>7</sup> The country’s inhabitants were proud and successful farmers.”<sup>8</sup> To elaborate on this point, the land of amaMpondo is ‘blessed’ by fertile soil and a moderate climate which allowed the enormous growth and harvests of sorghum, maize, beans and pumpkins, and crowds of livestock to supply families with plenty of milk. The land and the livestock, as stated by the headman of amaMpondo at Dungu village were the sources of wealth and economy of amaMpondo.<sup>9</sup> These were exchanged as stated by the culture bearers and the headman with the ‘shining objects’ such as money, knives, guns and all sorts of pins.<sup>10</sup> According to Ayorinde, Mda and Izu and deVilliers, these cultural practices were replaced by civilisation and hegemony which reduced the land utility and caused divisions among the families and communities of amaMpondo.<sup>11</sup>

Having mentioned the causes of the decline and the alteration of the traditional musical instruments and dance patterns, this paper intends to revitalise and motivate the cultural heritage of amaMpondo integrated into traditional music and dance. Izu and de Villiers articulate the crucial role played by traditional dances and traditional musical instruments as a vehicle to display the “values and beliefs performed through the communal ceremonies, embodying the essence of African heritage and identity.”<sup>12</sup> Additionally, Ngugi in Floyd articulates numerous functions of traditional music performed in activities such as wedding ceremonies, fairytales and stories of the past when people would gather in their cultural living, entertaining themselves over the African beer called umqombothi by the amaXhosa.<sup>13</sup> The activities cited in the above paragraphs contributed to reducing the amaMpondo’s love

<sup>2</sup> Habtamu Mekonnen, Zemenu Bires, and Kassegn Berhanu, “Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia,” *Heritage Science* 10, no. 1 (2022): 172.

<sup>3</sup> John W Berry, “Globalisation and Acculturation,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 4 (2008): 328–36; R Jogee, N C Callaghan, and C W Callaghan, “Student Acculturation in the Context of ‘FeesMustFall,’” *South African Journal of Higher Education* 32, no. 2 (2018): 122–42.

<sup>4</sup> Interviewed, 20 July 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Mda, *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People*; Jeff Peires, “A Buffalo on the Banks of the Mzimvubu: The Zulu Invasions of Mpondoland, 1824 and 1828,” *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 34, no. 1 (2021): 56–83.

<sup>6</sup> Peires, “A Buffalo on the Banks of the Mzimvubu: The Zulu Invasions of Mpondoland, 1824 and 1828.”

<sup>7</sup> Mda, *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People*.

<sup>8</sup> Mda, *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People*, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Interviewed, 20 July, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Interviewed, 20 July, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Ayorinde, “Dizu Plaatjies and the Amampondo: A Case of Music, Agency and Social Transformation”; Mda, *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People*; B Izu and A De Villiers, “A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society,” *ADRRRI Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 18, no. 2 (6) July-September (2021): 148–65.

<sup>12</sup> Izu and De Villiers, “A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society.”

<sup>13</sup> Simeon Floyd, “Conversation and Culture,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 50, no. 1 (2021): 219–40.

and pride for their cultural identity. As a result, black Africans imitated the European's speech, dress and thought, and developed other features of personality and behaviours to insulate themselves against their self-hatred."<sup>14</sup>

As its purpose, this research paper exposes and revitalises the distinct traditional practices and the music which accompanied the educational practices conducted in the amaMpondo culture. The vitality of cultural heritage is expressed by Mekonnen as that which "provides individuals, groups and communities in North Shoa zone, Amhara region in Ethiopia with a sense of identity, and continuity," helping them with solidarity reflected in social gatherings.<sup>15</sup> The examples given by Mekonnen are attested by the amaMpondo in the traditional songs and various dancing styles performed in different rituals such as the *imbeleko* and *inkciyo*.<sup>16</sup> According to Madosini, one of the culture bearers interviewed at Dungu village in Ntabankulu district, the *imbeleko* was the name given to the rite of passage performed after the newborn baby, whereas the *inkciyo* was another stage when the rite of passage was conducted when the young girls started menstruation. Forth refers to the rites of passage as a status change that involves the separation phase and the transmission of an individual from one stage to be incorporated to another level.<sup>17</sup> Fennie et.al. give examples of *intonjane* in the amaMpondo which is a ritual performed when a girl is transmitted from the childhood stage to womanhood.<sup>18</sup> When the ritual is performed, the traditional beer called *umqombothi* is prepared together with the slaughtering of animals to introduce and incorporate the girl to the ancestors. The following research questions, guide this inquiry:-

- How can the socio-cultural practices of the AmaMpondo, in particular, music and dance be revitalised?
- What are the benefits of revitalising traditional music and dances integrated with traditional practices?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review, according to Snyder, serves as a solid foundation and a building block for research.<sup>19</sup> Gwerevende and Mthombeni have discussed the colonisation laws and "Western" civilisation which brought "substantial suffering" of cultural practices and heritage in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and other African states.<sup>20</sup> They stated that the vital heritage sites in Masvingo and other areas of Zimbabwe were ruined and in a similar vein, the Chewa language and Gule wamkulu dance in Malawi were banned due to the administration of colonisation laws.<sup>21</sup> In the same light, Madlome elucidates the plot made by the colonisers to reduce and eradicate the Vatsonga language of the Xitsonga speakers which spread around Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa.<sup>22</sup> The colonised victims conversely accepted the stigma rendered to them by the colonisers, to the ambit of denouncing themselves as inferior in agreement to the views of the colonisers. 'Christian missionaries' as cited by Gwerevende and Mthombeni introduced boarding schools to prevent children from exposure to the essence of oral traditions, the performance of traditional music and dance.<sup>23</sup> The intention was to cease the spread of culture to the upcoming generations.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Harris Berger and Ruth Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights* (Routledge, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Mekonnen, Bires, and Berhanu, "Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia."

<sup>16</sup> Mekonnen, Bires, and Berhanu, "Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia."

<sup>17</sup> Gregory Forth, "Rites of Passage," *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, 2018, 1–7.

<sup>18</sup> Thelma Fennie, Mokgadi Moletsane, and Anita Padmanabhanunni, "Adolescent Girls' Perceptions and Cultural Beliefs about Menstruation and Menstrual Practices: A Scoping Review," *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 26, no. 2 (2022): 88–105.

<sup>19</sup> Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.

<sup>20</sup> Solomon Gwerevende and Zama M Mthombeni, "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Synergies in the Transmission of Indigenous Languages, Dance and Music Practices in Southern Africa," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 29, no. 5 (2023): 398–412, 389.

<sup>21</sup> Steyn Khesani Madlome, "Revitalizing the Psyche of a Tsonga Nation in a Multicultural Society," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2022): 2105991.

<sup>22</sup> Madlome, "Revitalizing the Psyche of a Tsonga Nation in a Multicultural Society."

<sup>23</sup> Gwerevende and Mthombeni, "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Synergies in the Transmission of Indigenous Languages, Dance and Music Practices in Southern Africa."

<sup>24</sup> Gwerevende and Mthombeni, "Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Synergies in the Transmission of Indigenous Languages, Dance and Music Practices in Southern Africa."

Floyd, agrees that traditional songs and dances have faced extinction in Kenya.<sup>25</sup> He mentions, among others, the elimination and discouragement of praise singing, traditional songs and musical instruments, spontaneously inspired by the circulation of traditional drinks. These were composed and performed after the day's work had been accomplished.<sup>26</sup> A similar view is expressed by Bunea and Popescu who cited the example of COVID-19 as one of the major issues that brought a decline in 'social interactions and cultural consumptions' including music and dance as sources of entertainment in Romania.<sup>27</sup>

Mekonnen et.al. further expressed the fear of a decline in cultural diversity caused by globalisation.<sup>28</sup> This view is triggered by, among others, the poor conservation status of cultural heritage which has been demolished and intentionally destructed due to ignorance, misinterpretations, interethnic conflicts and wars between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and Tigray Liberia Front.<sup>29</sup> Although cultures of a people 'have various uniqueness' to distinguish its people, the social interactions embraced in ethics and aesthetics as observed by Idang, are capable of 'modifying' and 'changing' some of the ways of life in which that particular culture is conducted.<sup>30</sup> This statement is witnessed when the *imfene* (baboon) dance which is associated with the amaMpondo by Twani, is performed with the accompaniment of 'Western' *Maskanda* instruments.<sup>31</sup> Maluleke refers to the 'alien and contemporary features' that incorporate traditional and 'Western' tastes.<sup>32</sup> These are experienced when *imfene*, a traditional dance, is accompanied by the 'Western' guitar and drum kits which substitute the traditional *umasengwane*, *uhadi* and *umrhubhe* instruments in the amaMpondo.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before the establishment of anthropology and sociology disciplines in the nineteenth century, scholars employed the 'foundational framework' to investigate the human experiences and cultural beliefs that influenced their ways of living.<sup>33</sup> Although the twentieth-century scholars of ethnomusicology critiqued the older theoretical traditions and developed new broader insights which catered for numerous beneficiaries such as revolutionaries, artists, culture brokers and others that exist beyond the Western academy, the social and cultural theory was explored as the guiding light and a framework to create a good rapport with the culture bearers to acquire information so to fulfil the objectives of the research in the field sites.<sup>34</sup> For this research to come to fruition, the researcher explored the social and cultural theories manipulated by scholars of ethnomusicology in Berger and Stone.<sup>35</sup> It would be impossible to learn and understand the individual experiences, social interactions and behaviours, which portray the cultural beliefs of amaMpondo in the Dungu village community in the Ntabankulu District in the Eastern Cape province if the theory opined by the previous scholars in the field of ethnomusicology was not applied.

On that same note, scholars such as Rahmatirad, Newman and Taber, support the view that the social and cultural theory was established by a Russian psychologist known by his intelligence as Vygotsky.<sup>36</sup> He was honoured as the 'founding father' of the Socio-Cultural Theory abbreviated as (SCT)

<sup>25</sup> Floyd, "Conversation and Culture."

<sup>26</sup> Floyd, "Conversation and Culture," 221.

<sup>27</sup> Ovidiu-Iulian Bunea, R A Corbos, and Ruxandra-Irina Popescu, "Challenges for a Digital Sustainable Supply Chain in a Circular Economy Context," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Economics and Social Sciences, Bucharest, Romania, 2022*, 16–17.

<sup>28</sup> Mekonnen, Bires, and Berhanu, "Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia."

<sup>29</sup> Mekonnen, Bires, and Berhanu, "Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia."

<sup>30</sup> Gabriel E Idang, "African Culture and Values," *Phronimon* 16, no. 2 (2015): 97–111, 100.

<sup>31</sup> Zoliswa Twani, "Music behind Bars: Exploring the Role of Music as a Tool for Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Offenders at Mthatha Medium Correctional Centre," *PhD Diss., University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*. <http://Wiredspace. Wits. Ac. Za/Bitstream/Handle/10539/11451/Zoliswa%20THESIS%20Final%20Submission. Pdf>, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Mikateko Joyce Maluleke, "Culture, Tradition, Custom, Law and Gender Equality," *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 15, no. 1 (2012).

<sup>33</sup> Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*.

<sup>34</sup> Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*.

<sup>35</sup> Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*.

<sup>36</sup> Mahbobeh Rahmatirad, "A Review of Socio-Cultural Theory," *Siasat* 5, no. 3 (2020): 23–31; Stephen Newman, "Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, and Sociocultural Theory," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 48, no. 3 (2018): 350–68; Keith S Taber,

who grew up during the Russian Revolution which directly impacted his work.<sup>37</sup> As much as the theory was mostly utilised in studying the cognitive mental development of learning from infants to adolescents, Vygotsky argues that learners acquire more information from the surrounding artifacts, environment, and social interaction. Rahmatirad mentions “the functioning of human mentality as fundamentally a mediating process that is perpetuated by cultural artifacts, activities and concepts.”<sup>38</sup> In this regard, Taber elaborates on Vygotsky’s theory as the one that aimed at interrogating how individuals process their thinking and express themselves to learn from the surrounding environment and share with others.<sup>39</sup> He further mentions that Vygotsky considered social interaction to be a crucial part of all human learning.<sup>40</sup> Although the socio-cultural theory is mainly based on how children acquire their knowledge, process thinking and express themselves while learning from the environment, this background is a backup to the chosen theory which has been a pillar of the enormous literature referred to in this paper. Rahaim in Berger and Stone came up with the ‘theory of participation’ which is ‘overwhelmingly seductive’ when breaking the barriers of egocentrism and individualism and assembling with the crowd to enjoy the ‘group participation in pleasures of sharing.’<sup>41</sup> To Rahaim, the participatory approach, which the individual experiences in the group according gives the feelings of belonging, sharing with others, moral conviction, and metaphysical oneness.<sup>42</sup> The individual’s behaviour, whether conscious or not, is influenced by external factors such as the sounds that emerge from the everyday meanings of culture and culture’s formative effect on identities.”<sup>43</sup>

The social and cultural theories delineated by the scholars intertwined the researcher with the participants in the field to collaborate with them. The theory enabled the researcher to understand the reasons for the individual’s behaviours and social interaction when the *infene* (baboon) dance accompanied by the *Maskanda* ‘Western’ instruments was performed by the amaMpondo at Dungu village in 2022. White articulates the significance of observation and participation of the researchers to the audience, music practitioners and dancers in ritual performances to attain skills acquired through training and practice.<sup>44</sup> “Communities of practice” as defined by White are more than just a community gathering, but a process of learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in a subject or area collaborate over an extended period and share ideas and strategies, determine solutions, and build innovations.”<sup>45</sup>

Based on the contributions made by the scholars in the reviewed literature, it is significant that traditional dances and musical sounds be considered and revitalised together with Western flavour to appreciate diversity in South Africa. These play a multifaceted role in uniting the groups and communities, expressing their dissatisfaction through musical sounds irrespective of race in South Africa and globally. Ayorinde concurs with music as a source of self-motivation, “empowerment and self-transformation,” after observing Dizu Plaatjies and the group of amaMpondo developing to the higher levels of performance irrespective of the historical backgrounds.<sup>46</sup> Izu and De Villiers posit that democracy in South Africa after 1994 opened doors of opportunity for the restoration of the lost cultural identity and human dignity which is epitomised in the Constitution of this country.<sup>47</sup> The constitution elucidates the traditional practices and heritage which embrace the African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS), as a priority.<sup>48</sup>

---

“Giftedness, Intelligence, Creativity, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Science Classroom,” in *International Perspectives on Science Education for the Gifted* (Routledge, 2016), 1–12.

<sup>37</sup> Newman, “Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, and Sociocultural Theory,” 353.

<sup>38</sup> Rahmatirad, “A Review of Socio-Cultural Theory.”

<sup>39</sup> Taber, “Giftedness, Intelligence, Creativity, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Science Classroom,” 3.

<sup>40</sup> Taber, “Giftedness, Intelligence, Creativity, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Science Classroom,” 5.

<sup>41</sup> Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*, 219.

<sup>42</sup> Rahaim in Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*, 219.

<sup>43</sup> Waterman in Berger and Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*, 141.

<sup>44</sup> Ciara White, “A Socio-Cultural Approach to Learning in the Practice Setting,” *Nurse Education Today* 30, no. 8 (2010): 794–97.

<sup>45</sup> White, “A Socio-Cultural Approach to Learning in the Practice Setting,” 795.

<sup>46</sup> Ayorinde, “Dizu Plaatjies and the Amampondo: A Case of Music, Agency and Social Transformation.”

<sup>47</sup> Izu and De Villiers, “A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society.”

<sup>48</sup> Dawn Joseph and Alvin Petersen, “Music in Worship: Making Spiritual Connections through Sound,” *Suider-Afrikaanse Kerkorrelistevereniging*, no. 42 (December 2015): 56–67, <https://sakov.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Vir-die-Musiekleier-2015.pdf>.

## METHODOLOGY

Leedy and Ormrod postulate that research methodology is the broad strategy selected to gather data in response to the study topic and questions.<sup>49</sup> Research methodology includes using appropriate methods for gathering the required information to address the research questions.

### Research Paradigm

The interpretivism was used as a research paradigm to gather experiences and understand the behaviours of individuals and groups in the ways of life in the amaMpondo communities. This statement is concurred by Ma Junjie and Ma Yingxin when they define interpretivism as a research paradigm which “ motivates the author to seek experience and consider different interpretations of particular social context to gain further steps.”<sup>50</sup> Interpretivism further allows the author to become subjective and observe and participate in the performance of activities and rituals without prejudice. Pulla and Carter confirm interpretivism as a paradigm that allows the variety of outcomes the researcher could achieve after the observations, participation, and description without prejudice to the individual experiences, beliefs and social interactions that consequently portray certain behaviours.<sup>51</sup>

### Research Design and Approach

The qualitative approach and ethnographic design were used to gather data. The qualitative approach was the best method used to monitor the social interactions, behaviours, and lived experiences of the Dungu village community. Leedy and Ormrod describe qualitative research as the method to examine the many nuances and complexities of a particular phenomenon.<sup>52</sup> For the author to closely observe the social realities and cultural beliefs of the amaMpondo, the ethnographic approach suggested by van Maanen was explored.<sup>53</sup> This design assisted the researcher in immersing herself in the field to create a good rapport with the culture bearers. This approach assisted the researcher in describing the individual experiences and behaviours, and the reaction of groups when they interact. The approach also helped in the interpretation of the cultural beliefs of individuals and groups when they reacted to the sound produced by traditional instruments and Maskanda music. The ethnographic approach further assisted the researcher in experiencing the social realities of the amaMpondo and expressing their feelings when writing the research paper. Data collected subsumed the social realities, and experiences of the culture bearers who performed the traditional *imitshotsho* and the *itimiti* dances, the modern *imfene* dancers and the *Maskanda* ‘Western’ accompaniment.

### Study Population

The population of this study was drawn from the AmaMpondo, a large group of people occupying seven districts in the coastal area of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The AmaMpondo share the same linguistic and socio-cultural background. Mack *et.al.* suggest that it can be time-consuming and expensive to collect data from everyone in a large community.<sup>54</sup> Sampling as defined by Leedy and Ormrod, “is the subset or the selection of the population and site from a large number of people.”<sup>55</sup> Thus, to obtain rich data, 37 participants were purposively selected. These included the headman of the AmaMpondo, thirty culture bearers who participated in the traditional dancers for the *umtshotsho*, *uhadi* and *imirhubhe* traditional instruments, three *imfene* (baboon) dance leaders, and three *Maskanda* leaders.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection instruments for this study included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The headman, the Maskanda guitarists, and the *imfene* group leaders were interviewed

<sup>49</sup> P. D. Leedy and J. E. Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2016).

<sup>50</sup> Ma Junjie and Ma Yingxin, “The Discussions of Positivism and Interpretivism.,” *Online Submission* 4, no. 1 (2022): 10–14, 10.

<sup>51</sup> Venkat Pulla and Elizabeth Carter, “Employing Interpretivism in Social Work Research,” *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice* 6, no. 1 (2018): 9–14.

<sup>52</sup> Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 28.

<sup>53</sup> John Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Natasha Mack, “Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide,” 2005, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*.

to understand the contribution of dances in restoring the amaMpondo traditional practices. The interviews were videoed with the permission from the participant. I observed when the traditional dances were performed in a cultural event that was held at the headman's homestead. Ciesielska et.al. cite observation as the most powerful tool in evaluating daily occurrences, trying to understand human interactions, and behaviours and sometimes indirectly observing the recordings and material collected by others.<sup>56</sup> For this study, the participants observed were free to respond in any way they liked to the open-ended and semi-structured questions.

The data analysis used by the author was a narrative inquiry. Nasheeda et.al. support the effectiveness of narrative inquiry in describing and revealing the feelings of an individual feelings and his or her life experiences as they are expressed by him or her.<sup>57</sup> The narrative analysis assisted in the description and analysis of individual and group stories told by the headman and the culture bearers at Dungu village, and in other surrounding villages. Further, the narrative was deemed appropriate for this paper as it represented the views of the amaMpondo.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Rhodes University, which was monitoring my research study in the field, issued ethical clearance with the reference number 2022-5182-6858 at the commencement of data collection at Dungu village. It served as a form of protection and allowed confidentiality to the chosen gatekeepers and the participants. They were told to voluntarily participate without any obligations. Relevant gatekeepers were telephoned for permission to conduct the research; these included the headman, who was an overseer of the five villages under his leadership; Umzukulwana kaMbhem, the *Maskanda* guitarist, who is also the leader of the *imfene*; and Ntombela (nicknamed *Sparks*) at Ntlangano village. For the benefit of the illiterate participants, the ethical guidelines were read and explained in their home language. Confidentiality was assured, in that pseudo-names were used, although it was in their interest to use their real names.

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the researcher discussed the findings from the collected data. The objectives of the research study were to investigate how the socio-cultural practices of the amaMpondo traditional music and dance, can be revitalised and performed. Another objective was to explore the benefits of revitalising traditional music and dances coupled with traditional practices. The narratives were grouped and categorised into themes. Themes that emerged from the first objective were: Revitalising a variety of traditional practices, and use songs and dances grounded by traditional instruments. From the second objective, emerging themes were: instilling moral values in the younger generation, and the sustainability of cultural identity. These objectives are presented in subsequent sections.

#### **Objective 1: To investigate how socio-cultural practices of the amaMpondo music and dance can be revitalised.**

##### **Theme 1: Stimulating a variety of traditional practices**

Participants revealed a need to revitalise a variety of traditional practices that are no longer in place nowadays. These include, among others, celebrating public events like Christmas, New Year and Heritage Days. The participants stated:

*We want to gather during Christmas, brew a traditional beer called umqombothi, and slaughter pigs, chicken and sheep to celebrate Christmas and other big days as we used to do before. In addition, during the New Year, we again slaughter sheep and pigs, unlike today, when the youth no longer engage to share and learn about these practices. We used to sing songs of the umtshongelo (an entertainment group) to enjoy ourselves. Instead, they go to the beaches to celebrate these events. (Participant J).*

<sup>56</sup> Malgorzata Ciesielska, Katarzyna W Boström, and Magnus Öhlander, "Observation Methods," *Qualitative Methodologies in Organization Studies: Volume II: Methods and Possibilities*, 2018, 33–52, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Aishath Nasheeda et al., "Transforming Transcripts into Stories: A Multimethod Approach to Narrative Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (2019): 1609406919856797.

*We also want our cultural practices and heritage to be known as existing among other tribes. We don't want our pride and identity in our songs and dances to fade away (Participant D).*

The amaMpondo were proud of their distinct language, attire and values displayed in cultural events, making them unique from other nations. The amaMpondo culture bearers expressed their pain about the tremendous changes and decline in their language, attire, traditional musical instruments and dances. They also expressed dismay at such behaviours as girls' involvement in smoking cigarettes and marijuana. According to the elders of the society, such behaviour contributes to the loss of cultural identity and denigration of pride. The statement below was shared in dismay by Participant A.

*It is a shame to us these days to see girls smoking cigarettes and marijuana and drinking alcohol. Boys, instead of learning from their fathers how to work hard and treat their wives with dignity, rather beat their girlfriends and end up killing them. This bad behaviour shows that cultural identity and pride have been forgotten and lost by their owners.*

Other traditional activities mentioned by the participants were called the *isitshongo*, where the traditional music and various dances played a role in stimulating interest working with zeal. The *isitshongo* was a group of people organised by the homeowner for various social needs, for example, to assist, whether in the form of bringing a bunch of dried wood from the forest. These included, among others, manufacturing homemade mud bricks, bunched heaves, or requesting a group of young people to weed the mealie fields or neighbours to assist in harvesting dried mealies in the winter. Children were also encouraged and forced to imitate and participate in daily activities. These practices instilled a sense of responsibility and prepared them for when they would raise their children and become leaders in their homesteads. Sharing and giving a hand in labour activities was one of the most important values transmitted orally to children. The participant's claim below confirms this:

*Sasihlangana thina ekuhlaleni singamaqela onombola nendlavini senze amalima nezitshongo. (We used to gather as groups of red people to assist each other in labour activities in the community.) Ibilisikolethu ekuhlaleni ukubona umnini- mzi ecela iqela labantu abatsha. (It was in our culture to see the homeowner inviting the group of young people to bring loads of bunched sheaves, the mudbricks, or inviting neighbours to assist in the harvesting of dried mealies). Some of these were the materials used for building the thatched huts in rural areas. Besisakucula ingoma, ngelixetsha sisebenza ukuze singawuva umsebenzi. (By the time we were involved in work activities, we sang songs to enjoy ourselves and to feel at ease by the time we were busy working. We sang and danced, clapping hands after the work was done). Njengoba umnini-mzi ebelungiselela isitshongo, bekukho imingqutsho enembotyi, kuselwa notyalwa, amarhewu nembila (Participant C).*

One of the participants echoed that during their gatherings, they also discussed matters that aimed at moulding people's behaviours. For example, if there was an unusual threat on the lives of people, it was discussed by the elders. Some people would compose songs related to that incident. When this was sung by people in society, those affected abandon their bad behaviour and behave according to the expectations of the society

*Bekumandi ngeyona-ndlela kuxovwe nezonkra. Ukuba kukhona into elihlazo eyenzekayo ekuhlaleni, okanye engaqhelekanga, bekukho amaciko aqamba ingoma ngalonto, kutsho kuqhwyatywe kusinwe, kuphume nengoma entsha. (Preparations for the isitshongo activity were made beforehand. These include the baking of home-made bread, and cooked samp with beans. There were also brewed umqombothi (African beer) and fermented liquid maize drinks such as amarhewu and imbila. If there was something unusual that was new or sometimes horrible or a disgrace in the community, someone creative would come up with a new song. The group would clap hands, harmonise and one of them would dance to the new composition while another one would come up with spontaneous variations for the improvisation of the melody) (Participant G).*

Participant G describes conditions of living and the importance of unity, support and kindness expressed by sharing and caring for each other in the community. Concurring with this statement, Floyd

poses the range of activities that influenced the composition of new songs in the African Diaspora.<sup>58</sup> These include, among others, the horrific and new occurrences in the communities, the work songs, and songs for entertainment on different occasions.<sup>59</sup> Although the exact composers are not known in traditional music, the songs and dances were transmitted orally and imitated by children from the elders and spread to the next generations.

## **Theme 2: Songs and dances sung during the ritual performances**

One of the findings in this study was that socio-cultural practices can be revitalised through songs and dances during ritual performances. Participants indicated that they perform songs and dances related to certain rituals during their rituals. These rituals, included, among others, inkciyo (the girls' initiation from girlhood to adulthood).

*We have various cultural practices that we perform as amaMpondo. During these cultural practices, we sing songs related to each and every activity. For example, when a girl started her first menstruation, she reported to her mother who would further report to the father. The ritual of the inkciyo which is sometimes called ukuthonjiswa kwentombazana was prepared. When the preparations of the inkciyo celebrations were made, there were traditional foods such as stamped mealies, grounded maize drinks accompanied by the umqombothi, a brewed traditional maize drink which was coupled with the slaughtering of cows, goats, sheep, and chickens. During inkciyo celebrations, (the girls' initiation from girlhood to adulthood), women ululate, clap hands and sing the welcoming songs while dancing. During the unveiling of tombstones, we sing songs that are different from inkciyo (Participant B)*

The participant's response above showed that ritual performances were accompanied by songs related to ritual celebrations. Furthermore, during these rituals, people used traditional foods like stamped mealies, grounded maize drinks, and *umqomboti* (fermented beer). Furthermore, the culture bearers elaborated that the *Maskanda* instruments replaced their traditional instruments such as the *umasengwane*, *umrhubhe*, *uhadi* and other traditional instruments. However, the participants felt that the sound of *Maskanda* instruments reminded them about their traditional practices, where they used their traditional instruments like 'umasengwane' which was interpreted and accepted by the amaMpondo as the representatives of their olden styles of dancing. Participants felt that traditional instruments had been substituted for *Maskanda* guitars. Although the *Maskanda* with its guitars and drum kits resemble the Western instruments, they instil the feeling of identity and inculcated a sense of pride in their culture.

Some participants, who were the *imfene* leaders, expressed their quest to reinstate traditional practices replaced by the *Maskanda* 'Western' ones, saying,

*We support the imfene dance which reminds us of our past. The imfene was established in the mine industries by the amaMpondo who, when they were homesick, gathered during the weekends to sing their traditional songs and dances while simultaneously, they were supporting each other by contributing a certain fee agreed upon by members. This was called umfolago, which was a way of raising funds for each member so that they were able to improve their living conditions when they returned back in their homes. The amaMpondo were joined later by the AmaZulu with the Maskanda 'Western' instruments such as 'guitar and accordion.' Other tribes like the abeSotho joined with an accordion to the sound called uhubhe by the amaMpondo, which referred to the sound produced by the 'Western' instruments. We love the sound produced by these 'Western' instruments as they remind us of our youth days in the ipotsoyi social club which was also accompanied by wi-fi stereo in the 1980s. It was also introduced to us in the villages by the amaJoyini who were mineworkers. The Maskanda 'Western' instruments then followed, reminding us as the amaMpondo of the sounds of our traditional instruments such as the umasengwane, umrhubhe and uhadi. Since these days the youth is playing mostly the music dominated by the 'Western' instruments, we cannot reprimand and cease the Western civilisation,*

<sup>58</sup> Floyd, "Conversation and Culture."

<sup>59</sup> Floyd, "Conversation and Culture."

*but we would appreciate seeing the traditional instruments restored and played in schools by children from a young age (Participant L).*

The response in the above was expressed by the amaMpondo culture bearers at Dungu village. They were supported by the *Maskanda* and the *imfene* practitioners who additionally gave the background on how Western civilisation spread from the Mine industries in Johannesburg to the rural areas. The participants clearly stated that the attire worn by the unschooled amaMpondo, foods, music, and dances changed. The wealth and riches previously owned by tilling the land and caring for livestock diminished and substituted by money brought by *amaJoyini* from the mines. The monetary affordability of these mine workers reduced the need for traditional music and dance performances in these social gatherings. Indirectly, such affordability affected fundraising during public events. Monson, while speaking about the African diaspora, mentions the ubiquity and centrality of music in integrating various cultures.<sup>60</sup>

Mbede refers to music as a tool to influence its subjects and the power of music in everyday life in disseminating positive or negative information to other members.<sup>61</sup> This was evident when the researcher attended the after-tears ritual held in the evening after the funeral activity in one of the villages at Macwerheni Administrative area during the day. The *imfene* was performed to comfort the family. The group of *imfene* dancers performed in an organised manner whereby the leader blew the whistle to alert the group of dancers after the recorded *imfene* song had started. The leader was followed by his liberated woman called (*idikazi*) who made him feel honoured and charmed, performing with an unquestionable big smile, confidence, and vigour. The remaining group followed in a similar fashion, competing with the expression of body movements to maintain the rhythmic steps and unity, reflecting satisfaction and appreciation of the *Maskanda* accompaniment in the *imfene*.

## **Objective 2: To explore the benefits of the revitalisation of traditional music and dances integrated with traditional practices**

### **Theme 1: Instilling morals and values to the younger generation**

Participants indicated that some of the cultural practices of the amaMpondo, which were called *imitshotsho*, were powerful in instilling morals and values in the younger generation. These were social gatherings for youth, where the songs and dance movements performed could instil self-respect and human dignity.

*Although in the amaMpondo there were social gatherings for the youth called imitshotsho which was a social club for boys and girls, there were oral teachings and respect for the body. These teachings were transmitted through these songs as well as dance movements which conveyed messages about self-respect and human dignity. Girls were taught how to behave themselves. Boys were taught from home how to treat girls. It was a disgrace to see a pregnant girl, unlike nowadays when there is no respect at all (Participant A).*

It was also revealed that there were some lessons taught in the *inkciyo* gatherings. According to the participants, once a year around September, there were ritual celebrations such as the *inkciyo* (girls' initiations). These activities were monitored by old women called *onomehlo*, who were experts in ascertaining a girl's virginity before the celebrations. The main purpose of the celebrations was to encourage girls to keep themselves pure, as virgins. Further, oral lessons were given during the celebrations. The girls were warned not to have sex before marriage. If they happened to have boyfriends, they were told to report to their mothers and elder sisters so that they taught them how to behave themselves and engage in love affairs, without having sex to the boyfriends.

*The lessons taught to girls assisted in the elimination of pregnancy as it was regarded as a disgrace to have a child before marriage. Furthermore, the infectious diseases were eliminated. In addition, the family became proud of their daughter when she started to menstruate because they were hoping that the girl would contribute to the generation of wealth at home. Raising a girl was one way of increasing wealth in the family. They were hoping to get the lobola paid as a*

<sup>60</sup> Ingrid Monson, "Global (Re) Vision: Musical Imagination in African America," 2007.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Mbede, "The Influence of Music in Theologising African Churches" (Nairobi, 2018).

*bride prize which would feed the family by producing milk and the mother was also expecting to get the mother's cow. Different celebration traditional songs and dances related to the ritual were sung during all seven to eight days spent in the inkciyo ritual (Participant E).*

The participants mentioned the benefits of revitalising the traditional practices and the significance of music and dance in facilitating the rituals. The participants indicated that the *inkciyo or ukuthomba* event was mostly dominated by women as they were the ones who prepared these girls for household chores. They get the words of wisdom from their mothers in preparation for marriage. It was also confirmed that when the girls come from the initiation school, they are ready for marriage. At the same time, the participants mentioned the significance of the ritual which was educational. During the *inkciyo or ukuthomba*, the initiates were taught how to act among the opposite genders. They were also taught about sex education and how to prevent pregnancy and infectious diseases such as HIV and AIDS. It is, thus, a hurtful feeling to find out that in the *inkciyo* as one of the significant rites of passage which is a life's stage according to van Gennep quoted by Janusz and Walkiewicz, girls in some communities still experience the physical observations of virginity testing by elders.<sup>62</sup>

Matshidze and Mulaudzi present the girl's initiation as an educational rite of passage to the initiate in Venda.<sup>63</sup> The ritual serves as a promotion to be celebrated from childhood to adulthood.<sup>64</sup> The songs of the *ukuthonjiswa kwentombi* (girl's initiation songs) sung in other activities were different from other songs. They relate more to the particular activity performed as they dance. Izu and de Villiers give accounts of the cultural practices and religious ceremonies embedded in cultural values through traditional dances, which serve as the core for sustaining and preserving indigenous knowledge.<sup>65</sup> The study relates the girl's initiation *inkciyo* of the amaMpondo to the *chinamwali* girl's initiation performed by the Chikunda in Zambia as described by Talakinu.<sup>66</sup> The celebrations are to develop and expose the girl child after attaining the first menstruation period, to the activities of womanhood. Further, Talakinu cites the example of two important figures in the transmission of the *chinamwali* initiation, the role played by the initiator in capacitating the initiate with profound cultural values that would build and transform the character of the initiate, and the role of the incumbent in practising and sustaining the ritual to portray an acceptable behaviour that reveals transformation from the childhood stage to the womanhood position.<sup>67</sup> Although there are violations of human rights and harmful practices in some African states such as Kenya and Malawi as stated by Hughes, there are Alternative Rites of Passage (ART) which condemn the cruel practices against women.<sup>68</sup>

## **Theme 2: The preservation of cultural identity**

Participants also indicated that their pride and identity are embedded in the songs they sing. Such songs are accompanied by their traditional instruments called *umasengwane*, which has been infused with the *Maskanda* 'Western' instruments. The *imfene* dance, as echoed by the culture bearers, is against the traditional *imitshotsho* and *itimiti* dances.

*We sing ululating songs and dance to express our joy and happiness. Enye into esiyithandayo nevuselela ubuntu bethu (One other thing that revives our cultural heritage and pride is the rhythmic sound of the Maskhanda which produces similar rhythmic sounds as the umasengwane) nguMaskhanda onesingqi esifana nomasengwane wethu' (Participant D).*

<sup>62</sup> Bernadetta Janusz and Maciej Walkiewicz, "Parental Experiences of the Liminal Period of a Child's Fatal Illness," *Health* 27, no. 4 (2023): 439–57.

<sup>63</sup> P E Matshidze and Mulaudzi TP, "Investigating the Role of Modern Practices on Women's Rites of Passage among the Vhavenda in Vhembe District, Limpopo," *The Oriental Anthropologist* 16, no. 2 (2016): 291–302.

<sup>64</sup> Izu and De Villiers, "A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society."

<sup>65</sup> Izu and De Villiers, "A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society."

<sup>66</sup> Carina Mweela Talakinu, "I Am Because of What I Know I Have": A Descriptive Analysis of Chinamwali in Preparing Women for Womanhood, Sexual Life and Reproduction," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 12, no. 7 (2018): 107–22.

<sup>67</sup> Talakinu, "I Am Because of What I Know I Have": A Descriptive Analysis of Chinamwali in Preparing Women for Womanhood, Sexual Life and Reproduction."

<sup>68</sup> Lotte Hughes, "Alternative Rites of Passage: Faith, Rights, and Performance in FGM/C Abandonment Campaigns in Kenya," *African Studies* 77, no. 2 (2018): 274–92.

The participant's response above showed that the AmaMpondo use instruments such as *Maskanda* (guitar) which has similar rhythmic sound patterns as the *umasengwane* traditional instruments.

Participants specified that they did not want their songs and dances to fade away. This is in line with Firenzi's concerns, that 'the African dance has been largely overlooked as a means of better understanding the African past.'<sup>69</sup> In agreement with Firenzi, traditional music and dance are viewed by Izu and de Villiers as significant and play an enormous role in the lives of the Black communities as they entertain themselves, communicate and express their concerns to others, "invoking ancestral spirits and in numerous public events."<sup>70</sup>

The amalgamation of the culture bearers representing the traditional social gatherings in the *itimiti* and *umtshotsho*), and the *imfene* modern dance accompanied by the *Maskanda* 'Western' instruments, participated in the music festival conducted at Dungu village in 2022. The response from the culture bearers, when they were asked how they felt when the *imfene* was accompanied by the *Maskanda* was as follows,

*Siyayixhasa kwaye siyithanda imfene ngezi zizathu zilandelayo (we love and support the imfene dance for the following reasons) Isinxibo sabo, noxa kungabhukuzwanga ngembola, (The attire, though not smeared by ochre) imele amatshawe etimitini (Represent the AmaTshawe when they gathered in the itimiti social club). Azohlukanga kwezi besizidlala ngo Masengwane, umrhubhe nohadi (These are not different from those that were played by the traditional Masengwane, umrhubhe and uhadi). Kukubona amankazanyana ehamba nabatsha babo esitikini (it is great to observe and see males and females dancing in partnerships). Into leyo esikhumbuza umgwejisi, egqekeni (This is something that reminded us of the process called umgwejisi when a female would be chosen to fall in love with a male in the umtshotsho or itimiti social gathering) (Participant A).*

In response to the question asked as to how the culture bearers felt when the *Maskanda* instruments were represented among their traditional instruments, such as the *umasengwane*, *umrhubhe*, and the *uhadi*, they expressed their anguish at the fading away of their traditions. In addition, the *imfene* and the *Maskanda* were interpreted and accepted by the amaMpondo as the representatives of their olden styles of dancing. Monson, speaking about the African diaspora, mentions the ubiquity and centrality of music in integrating various cultures.<sup>71</sup> In alluding to these statements, the researcher concludes that even though the culture bearers felt that their traditional music and dances were fading away, the amalgamation of the *umasengwane* and other traditional instruments and dances together with the *Maskanda* 'Western' instruments proved that these traditional practices integrated with traditional music and dance can be revitalised.

### Discussion Summary

The qualitative research method and the ethnographic and interpretive enquiries employed in accessing information from the individual experiences and focus groups on the community of the amaMpondo resulted in the understanding of cultural complexities. Data collected utilising enquiries such as interviews, and semi-structured and open-ended questions which were narratively and thematically analysed as elucidated by Rodriguez-Dorans and Jacobs, conversely led to the findings and recommendations.<sup>72</sup> For this study to be understood, the 'story-like manner' suggested by van Maanen was explored.<sup>73</sup> The cultural complexities were revealed in the aforementioned activities such as the rites of passage performed in the *inkciyo* rituals and others. Additionally, the support rendered in the communal activities portrayed unity and kindness which is highly recommended in the country. These activities play a role in keeping the learners and the community busy. In addition, they assist in reducing the crime rate caused by jealousy and high rate of poverty.

<sup>69</sup> Tara Firenzi, "The Changing Functions of Traditional Dance in Zulu Society: 1830–Present," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 403–25.

<sup>70</sup> Izu and De Villiers, "A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Monson, "Global (Re) Vision: Musical Imagination in African America."

<sup>72</sup> Edgar Rodríguez-Dorans and Paula Jacobs, "Making Narrative Portraits: A Methodological Approach to Analysing Qualitative Data," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 23, no. 6 (2020): 611–23.

<sup>73</sup> Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The first objective of the research was to examine the various traditional music and dancing styles encapsulated in the social values and cultural practices of the amaMpondo in the Eastern Cape province. Another objective was to investigate the feelings and the interpretations of the amaMpondo in seeing the alien features found in the accompanying instruments of the *Maskanda* ‘Western’ instruments substituting the traditional instruments that were prominent in the amaMpondo. Therefore, the study recommends that if there are traditional practices invaluable to develop the character and retain the identity and confidence of the amaMpondo, then, they should be revived. After the analysis of data, it is also recommended that for the objectives of this paper to be accomplished and traditions revitalised, the elders, from families to the communities, should restore the telling of educational stories, engaging children in communal activities with traditional and dances which would assist in the campaigns for alleviating poverty and reducing the escalating brutality. It is further recommended that communities work hand in glove with schools, sharing their expertise with children from the elementary stages, encouraging them to know and understand the significance of indigenous practices such as the significance of hard work embedded in traditional songs and dances to ease the work. African values such as respect and spontaneous composition of songs taught and practised at home and in the communities should be practised even at school.<sup>74</sup>

Children from an early stage should be taught to respect other cultures and rope them in while self-confidence entangled in their values and customs is not compromised. These would help to revitalise their cultural heritage, which is the legacy of the amaMpondo, and maintain their identity and pride in language embraced in traditional music for transmission to the forthcoming generations. It is further recommended that the human rights inscribed in the South African Constitution (1996) and the Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP) as suggested by Hughes, Janusz and Walkiewicz, be emphasised and become part of the subjects taught in schools.<sup>75</sup> These could reduce the stigma attached to the rituals of girls' and boys' initiation called *ulwaluko* and *inkciyo*. The amaMpondo socio-cultural practices which constitute the traditional music, dance and musical sounds, should be kept in archives and documented for the new generations to learn and appreciate their identity. It is ideal to engage children in public cultural events performed to welcome other cultures without discrimination. The *imfene* dance is a very good example of an accommodative dance style, as it constitutes within it the amaMpondo and the contemporary ‘alien’ features found in the *Maskanda* ‘Western’ musical instruments. It is impossible to reverse the past, however, the present can be appreciated by utilising the rainbow colours available in South Africa to strengthen the African roots.

## CONCLUSION

The sharing of the social and cultural practices by the amaMpondo group assisted in reviving the various cultural groups to share their traditional music and dancing styles. They expressed their profound love of their roots and appreciation of other people’s cultures. The variety of traditional instruments combined with the alien sounds of “Western” *Maskanda* instruments entranced the participants and audience to portray their feelings, satisfaction and self-identity. The feelings of self-confidence and satisfaction expressed by the participants facilitated the significance of spreading the role played by traditional music in learning and retaining the cultural values and customs of Black African people. These activities mingled with the “Western” vibe would unequivocally cease all kinds of violence in the communities. The good and bad experiences shared by the participants and culture bearers in the findings inspired the researcher to manipulate the opportunity of being a lecturer at Walter Sisulu University to encourage the student teachers to learn the playing of traditional instruments. They were also motivated to establish cultural groups in their respective areas.

<sup>74</sup> Floyd, “Conversation and Culture.”

<sup>75</sup> Hughes, “Alternative Rites of Passage: Faith, Rights, and Performance in FGM/C Abandonment Campaigns in Kenya”; “Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,” Pub. L. No. Section 7-39, Bill of Rights (1996), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5de4.html>; Bernadetta Janusz and Maciej Walkiewicz, “The Rites of Passage Framework as a Matrix of Transgression Processes in the Life Course,” *Journal of Adult Development* 25 (2018): 151–59.

Moreover, the amalgamation of different cultures explored in the Maskanda ‘Western’ instruments and traditional music and dance reflect unequivocally the beauty of unity and the revival of cultural heritage in the country.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ayorinde, Oladele. “Dizu Plaatjies and the Amampondo: A Case of Music, Agency and Social Transformation.” *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 40, no. 1 (2020): 156–84.
- Berger, Harris, and Ruth Stone. *Theory for Ethnomusicology: Histories, Conversations, Insights*. Routledge, 2019.
- Berry, John W. “Globalisation and Acculturation.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 4 (2008): 328–36.
- Bunea, Ovidiu-Iulian, R A Corbos, and Ruxandra-Irina Popescu. “Challenges for a Digital Sustainable Supply Chain in a Circular Economy Context.” In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Economics and Social Sciences, Bucharest, Romania*, 16–17, 2022.
- Ciesielska, Malgorzata, Katarzyna W Boström, and Magnus Öhlander. “Observation Methods.” *Qualitative Methodologies in Organization Studies: Volume II: Methods and Possibilities*, 2018, 33–52.
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Pub. L. No. Section 7-39, Bill of Rights (1996). <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5de4.html>.
- Fennie, Thelma, Mokgadi Moletsane, and Anita Padmanabhanunni. “Adolescent Girls’ Perceptions and Cultural Beliefs about Menstruation and Menstrual Practices: A Scoping Review.” *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 26, no. 2 (2022): 88–105.
- Firenzi, Tara. “The Changing Functions of Traditional Dance in Zulu Society: 1830–Present.” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 403–25.
- Floyd, Simeon. “Conversation and Culture.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 50, no. 1 (2021): 219–40.
- Forth, Gregory. “Rites of Passage.” *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, 2018, 1–7.
- Gwervevende, Solomon, and Zama M Mthombeni. “Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Synergies in the Transmission of Indigenous Languages, Dance and Music Practices in Southern Africa.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 29, no. 5 (2023): 398–412.
- Hughes, Lotte. “Alternative Rites of Passage: Faith, Rights, and Performance in FGM/C Abandonment Campaigns in Kenya.” *African Studies* 77, no. 2 (2018): 274–92.
- Idang, Gabriel E. “African Culture and Values.” *Phronimon* 16, no. 2 (2015): 97–111.
- Izu, B, and A De Villiers. “A Review of the Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Musical Arts in Xhosa Society.” *ADRRRI Journal of Arts and Social Sciences* 18, no. 2 (6) July-September (2021): 148–65.
- Janusz, Bernadetta, and Maciej Walkiewicz. “Parental Experiences of the Liminal Period of a Child’s Fatal Illness.” *Health* 27, no. 4 (2023): 439–57.
- . “The Rites of Passage Framework as a Matrix of Transgression Processes in the Life Course.” *Journal of Adult Development* 25 (2018): 151–59.
- Jogee, R, N C Callaghan, and C W Callaghan. “Student Acculturation in the Context of ‘FeesMustFall.’” *South African Journal of Higher Education* 32, no. 2 (2018): 122–42.
- Joseph, Dawn, and Alvin Petersen. “Music in Worship: Making Spiritual Connections through Sound.” *Suider-Afrikaanse Kerkorrelistevereniging*, no. 42 (December 2015): 56–67. <https://sakov.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Vir-die-Musiekleier-2015.pdf>.
- Junjie, Ma, and Ma Yingxin. “The Discussions of Positivism and Interpretivism.” *Online Submission* 4, no. 1 (2022): 10–14.
- Leedy, P. D., and J. E Ormrod. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2016.
- Maanen, John Van. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Mack, Natasha. “Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide,” 2005.
- Madlome, Steyn Khesani. “Revitalizing the Psyche of a Tsonga Nation in a Multicultural Society.” *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2022): 2105991.
- Maluleke, Mikateko Joyce. “Culture, Tradition, Custom, Law and Gender Equality.” *Potchefstroom*

- Electronic Law Journal/Potchefstroomse Elektroniese Regsblad* 15, no. 1 (2012).
- Matshidze, P E, and Mulaudzi TP. "Investigating the Role of Modern Practices on Women's Rites of Passage among the Vhavenda in Vhembe District, Limpopo." *The Oriental Anthropologist* 16, no. 2 (2016): 291–302.
- Mbede, Peter. "The Influence of Music in Theologising African Churches." Nairobi, 2018.
- Mda, Mda. *Struggle and Hope: Reflections on the Recent History of the Transkeian People*. African Sun MeDia, 2019.
- Mekonnen, Habtamu, Zemenu Bires, and Kassegn Berhanu. "Practices and Challenges of Cultural Heritage Conservation in Historical and Religious Heritage Sites: Evidence from North Shoa Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia." *Heritage Science* 10, no. 1 (2022): 172.
- Monson, Ingrid. "Global (Re) Vision: Musical Imagination in African America," 2007.
- Nasheeda, Aishath, Haslinda Binti Abdullah, Steven Eric Krauss, and Nobaya Binti Ahmed. "Transforming Transcripts into Stories: A Multimethod Approach to Narrative Analysis." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18 (2019): 1609406919856797.
- Newman, Stephen. "Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, and Sociocultural Theory." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 48, no. 3 (2018): 350–68.
- Peires, Jeff. "A Buffalo on the Banks of the Mzimvubu: The Zulu Invasions of Mpondoland, 1824 and 1828." *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 34, no. 1 (2021): 56–83.
- Pulla, Venkat, and Elizabeth Carter. "Employing Interpretivism in Social Work Research." *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice* 6, no. 1 (2018): 9–14.
- Rahmatirad, Mahbobeh. "A Review of Socio-Cultural Theory." *Siasat* 5, no. 3 (2020): 23–31.
- Rodríguez-Dorans, Edgar, and Paula Jacobs. "Making Narrative Portraits: A Methodological Approach to Analysing Qualitative Data." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 23, no. 6 (2020): 611–23.
- Snyder, Hannah. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November 2019): 333–39.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>.
- Taber, Keith S. "Giftedness, Intelligence, Creativity, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Science Classroom." In *International Perspectives on Science Education for the Gifted*, 1–12. Routledge, 2016.
- Talakinu, Carina Mweela. "I Am Because of What I Know I Have": A Descriptive Analysis of Chinamwali in Preparing Women for Womanhood, Sexual Life and Reproduction." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 12, no. 7 (2018): 107–22.
- Twani, Zoliswa. "Music behind Bars: Exploring the Role of Music as a Tool for Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Offenders at Mthatha Medium Correctional Centre." *PhD Diss., University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*. [Http://Wiredspace. Wits. Ac. Za/Bitstream/Handle/10539/11451/Zoliswa% 20THESIS% 20Final% 20Submission. Pdf](http://Wiredspace.Wits.Ac.Za/Bitstream/Handle/10539/11451/Zoliswa%20THESIS%20Final%20Submission.Pdf), 2011.
- White, Ciara. "A Socio-Cultural Approach to Learning in the Practice Setting." *Nurse Education Today* 30, no. 8 (2010): 794–97.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heart-felt and sincere gratitude goes to my mentors for their meticulous supervision and mentoring skills in making this research paper a success. Thanks to the Walter Sisulu University for encouraging the staff and allowing us to grow and contribute with new knowledge. Acknowledgments and gratitude go to all the researchers cited in this paper. Above all, glory goes to the Almighty God.

## ABOUT AUTHORS

Nontuthuzelo Mtsini is a very musical Black African, 'Mpondro', and a liberated woman who likes investigating cultural matters. She is lecturing ethnomusicology at Walter Sisulu University. She obtained her first Master's degree in Music Education in 2001 at the University of Pretoria. She has conducted research in ethnomusicology and obtained her second master's in music (2024) from Rhodes University.