The co-creation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creators producing indigenous knowledge-based content

By

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Declaration

I, Tsakani Emmarencia Nyoni, declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters in African studies degree at the University of Venda, has not been previously submitted at this or any other University and that it is my work in design and execution, and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature: ……  ……. Date: ……03/05/2023…….

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people:

- The stakeholders who have worked with me and contributed their knowledge. It was an honour to be able to co-create the Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation through their lens.
- My mom - Tinyiko Barbinah Annah Makhubele. She has worked very hard throughout her life; because of her hard work, I've had the freedom to choose a career of my liking. Thank you for encouraging me to work hard, believe in myself and always chase my dreams. I really appreciate you! *Ndza khensa mama!*

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- My brothers, Ntwanano Shiringani and Masingita Nyoni, I appreciate the support you've given me.

Abstract

The rise of the digital age has seen an increase in the production of Indigenous Knowledge (IK)-based content by digital content creators. However, Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines for producing IK-based content are barely covered in the literature and are not popularised. Thus, this study's aim was to co-create Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creators producing IK-based content. The Afrocentric ethical guidelines that do exist in the literature are for research and are not fully applicable to digital content creation. I have followed the work of Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), Chilisa (2012), Kovach (2013), and Shokane and Masoga (2020), in building this study's foundation and in preparation for the co-creation of Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines. The data generated was analysed through a thematic analysis technique. Key findings in this study include that stakeholders have experienced a violation of their knowledge's boundaries and sacredness, its ownership often challenged after its shared with creators and the lack of long-term partnerships from the creators' end. The co-created Afrocentric ethical guidelines have also been documented in this study's findings and have included a three-step process as follows: (i) Preparing to engage with an indigenous community, (ii) The process of engaging and, (iii) Presenting/posting IK-based content on digital/social media platforms. The study also found that IK Holders are often not involved in the process of telling stories about their knowledge. This study's recommendations include the inclusion and involvement of Indigenous Knowledge Holders (IKHs) in the presentation of IK-based content on digital/social media platforms. The content should be presented by IK Holders or at least through their lens. This recommendation is based on the idea that their involvement will ensure an emancipatory digital content creation process.

Key words: Digital content creation, Ethical guidelines, Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous communities, Co-creation, Afrocentric, Social/digital media platforms.

List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

AI:	Appreciative Inquiry
DCC:	Digital Content Creation
DL̓M:	Dzomo L̓a Mupo
IK:	Indigenous Knowledge
IKHs:	Indigenous Knowledge Holders
IKS:	Indigenous Knowledge System
PALAR:	Participatory Action Learning and Action Research

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

"The beginning of a dream that came true"

1.0 Introduction

In the process of situating myself, finding my voice and growth as an upcoming indigenous scholar, words from the book "Research is Ceremony", by Wilson (2008:54), have stuck with me:

> "*Indigenous scholars are in the process of shaping, redefining, and explaining their positions. They are defining research, outlining the ethical protocols and explaining the culturally congruent methodologies that can be used at the behest of their communities"*.

Through Wilson's (2008), words and the teachings that have been instilled in me as an African child, I would like to start off my writing in this dissertation by introducing myself. Holmes (2020) emphasises the importance of a researcher sharing their worldview, "where they are coming from", and their assumptions, in other words, their epistemology and ontology.

I am Tsakani Emmarencia Nyoni, a passionate, creative, confident and hard-working Tsonga woman, who comes from a family of four in Giyani, Limpopo. I was raised by my mother, and one of the lessons that my mother taught me was to always believe and be confident in myself, and with that I can achieve anything I set my sights on. I carry that very lesson with me on a daily basis and as I write this dissertation. I identify as a digital content creator. I create content of my travel adventures on TikTok, and have shared content on Xitsonga storytelling and heritage sites on YouTube.

My undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (achieved with a distinction). Through the degree, I established the depth of my passion for Indigenous Knowledge and ethical community engagement. In the fourth year of the degree, I started volunteering at the University of Venḓa's Community Engagement. My volunteer work afforded me a platform to interact with many Indigenous Knowledge Holders in Dzomo Ḽa Mupo, which was exciting because I learnt a lot from them. As I spent more time in the field with them, they told stories about how people visit their communities to explore their knowledge for different reasons, but never come back to share what has become of the

knowledge. They hear or are told of documentaries, books and other publications that they later would discover were written without acknowledging them as a source.

This, including my experience as a digital content creator, piqued my interest in Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation with indigenous knowledge - thus this study is conducted from an emic perspective. I wondered if we - the indigenous knowledge holders, digital content creators, and I - could co-create these ethical guidelines. Those stories that the knowledge holders shared with me created more curiosity and passion about the subject of ethics, ethical engagement and processes of integrating and acknowledging the IK Holders in my dissertation journey. This dissertation has voiced out the concerns of the Indigenous Knowledge Holders who have felt violated, excluded from the presentation of their knowledge, and that their knowledge has been misrepresented.

1.1. Background to the study

With the rise of the digital age, this research study has acknowledged the growing concerns on the ethics of presenting Indigenous Knowledge (IK)-based content on social media platforms. Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), Chilisa (2012), Shokane and Masoga (2020), and Kovach (2021) have engaged in the ethics of conducting research with indigenous communities. These scholars have also written about how the Eurocentric/Western-centred influence has affected how indigenous knowledge has been explored and interacted with, and its presentation (through non-indigenous approaches).

Studying the works of Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), Chilisa (2012), Shokane and Masoga (2020), Kovach (2021), and my interaction with indigenous knowledge holders has led to my exploration of ethical guidelines for Afrocentric digital content creation. The problem was that these had been scantily researched, and digital content creation was often conducted through a Euro/Western lens. Stapleton (2020) has referred to digital content creation as an "Umbrella" term covering a wide number of activities. It is also referred to as the process of contributing pieces of information to express an opinion on certain topics for an audience on various platforms.

Perricone (2022) and Lyons (2023) have shared a similar definition, where digital "content creation" is defined as the process of generating various topic ideas for a target audience. The content can be made accessible in different formats like blogs, vlogs, podcasts or infographics on varying social/digital media platforms. The platform used is dependent on the

interests and preferences of the target audience. Digital content creation serves (but is not limited to) one or all of the following: i) Education, ii) Entertainment and/or, iii) Transformation (Henderson, 2020). Recently, digital content creation has become more popular, with more people participating in the activity. For indigenous knowledge, the lack of Afrocentric ethical guidelines poses concerns around the respectful nature and inclusivity of digital content creation with IK-based content. This research study has documented the co-created Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creators producing content on indigenous knowledge.

Ethics are an important component in this study. Parveen and Showkat (2017), have referred to ethics as the principles that help distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, while Kovacs (1985), and Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2005) have defined ethics as a branch of philosophy which guides the norms and standards of behaviour in people's relationships with each other. For this study, "Afrocentric" ethics are the blueprint which guides digital content creators' interactions with indigenous knowledge and communities, and the respectful presentation of indigenous knowledge on social/digital media platforms.

This study was collaborative in nature, and encouraged Indigenous Knowledge Holders (IKHs) and digital content creators to work together towards the engagement of and co-creation of the Afrocentric ethics. This means that co-creation was at the core of this study. Liwång (2022) defines co-creation as the collaborative efforts between stakeholders in working towards an idea or a solution to a problem.

In understanding the context of the ethics when working with indigenous knowledge and identifying the gap on Afrocentric ethics for digital content creation, I have also referred to the San Code of Research Ethics (2018), which outlines respect, care, justice, fairness and honesty as guidelines for researchers, with the hope that the co-created ethical guidelines could be as inclusive and relatable as the San community has found this particular code to be.

1.2. Problem Statement

Indigenous Knowledge and communities are receiving more attention for digital content creation. Digital content creators have mainly explored and presented IK-based content for their social/digital media platforms. However, there are no Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation and they are barely entertained in literature. Existing ethical

guidelines have mainly been for academic research purposes, and despite the contributions of scholars such as Smith (1999), Chilisa (2012), and Wilson (2008), on decolonial, indigenous and Afrocentric ethics, research ethics have been influenced by Eurocentric paradigms and the ethics are not fully applicable to digital content creation.

In identifying this gap in Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines, the study has also noted that Afrocentric research ethics would not be applicable for digital content creation because of the following reasons: (i) Adherence of ethical guidelines in research is mostly facilitated by University Research Ethics Committees, whereas one does not need to be affiliated with the university to produce content; this can done independently, (ii) Without regulatory/facilitating bodies for digital content creation, creators do not need to adhere to any ethics (no regulatory body can hold them accountable for unethical behaviour).

A lack of these ethical guidelines has, in the past, contributed to the content being largely presented through the lens of the creator and has added to the risk of misrepresentation of indigenous knowledge and communities. This study has thus explored and co-created ethical guidelines that encourage an inclusive content creation process.

1.3. Significance of the study

The co-creation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation can provide indigenous communities with the opportunity for a participatory, emancipatory and inclusive content creation process. This study makes its contributions on Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines in the literature through clarifying how digital content creators should negotiate access, explore the content, and present it (ethically) on social/digital media. Drawing from the existing work of scholars in the field of decolonial, indigenous and Afrocentric ethics has helped craft this study's niche on Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines, while filling the existing gaps in the field of ethics. Its contribution is also a great addition to media ethics for engaging with indigenous knowledge and communities.

This study is essential in reducing the inequalities currently associated with digital content creation, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 10 of 2030 (target 10.2), on reducing inequality (precisely within indigenous communities). It also adds an important foundation for future research and policy frameworks for digital content creation with indigenous communities. The lack of Afrocentric digital content creators' ethical guidelines was addressed through the co-creation of these guidelines for the benefit of and between

indigenous knowledge holders, Indigenous Knowledge digital content creators and I (the researcher).

Although the ethical guidelines co-created and documented in this study may be ignored by the creators they are targeted towards, there is hope that Dzomo La Mupo, and other communities that have, in the past, been approached by unethical digital content creators, can present these in the future, as a way to educate and protect themselves.

1.4 Aims, objectives, and research questions of the study

This section is divided into three parts: aims, objectives and research questions.

1.4.1 Aim

The main aim of the study is to co-create the Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creators producing IK-based content.

1.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Discern the "Afrocentric" ethical guidelines considered by digital content creators when creating IKS based digital content,
- Explore the stakeholder experiences on digital content creation of indigenous knowledge (IK) based- content, and
- Co-create the "Afrocentric" ethical guidelines preferred by indigenous knowledge stakeholders in the creation of indigenous knowledge based digital content.

1.4.3 Research questions

The research questions guiding the study are:

- What are the "Afrocentric" ethical guidelines considered by digital content creators when creating IK based content?
- What are the experiences of stakeholders on digital content creation of indigenous knowledge (IK) based content?

- What are the preferred "Afrocentric" ethical guidelines preferred by indigenous knowledge stakeholders in the creation of indigenous knowledge based content?

1.5 Definition of key terms

1.5.1 Digital content creation

'Digital Content Creation' is an umbrella term, which refers to a wide number of activities, the term itself is known as the process of contributing information around certain topics towards a precise audience, with the purpose of spreading it through social/digital media platforms (Stapleton, 2020; Perricone, 2022). This definition of digital content creation was referred to and applied throughout the conceptualization of this study.

1.5.2 Afrocentric

The term 'Afrocentric' is used to refer to a phenomenon of African origin (Asante, 2001), with 'Afrocentricity' recognised as an effort to encourage the view of African perspectives through African thought. The term 'Afrocentric' was used throughout the study as an attempt to ground the study in perspectives that are aligned to Afrocentric thought.

1.5.3 Ethical guidelines

"Ethical guidelines" is a concept that consists of the words "ethics" and "guidelines". "Ethics" refers to a branch of philosophy that studies acceptable human behaviour (Rich, 2016). Therefore, the word "ethical", derived from ethics, refers to a behaviour/action/process that is grounded in acceptable moral standards of society. According to *The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2023), a guideline provides information that is meant to advise people on how something should be done. Guidelines as defined by PowerDMS (2023), provide employees with information needed through a process of the completion of a task, and give recommendations on how to proceed in a situation.

For the purpose of this study, I use the concept "ethical guidelines", to refer to acceptable (by/to the community) forms of engaging indigenous knowledge holders throughout the digital content creation process.

1.5.4 Indigenous knowledge

"Indigenous knowledge" refers to observations, oral and written knowledge, beliefs and innovations that promote sustainable relationships between humans and their environment (Daniel, 2022). It can also be referred to as the skills and understanding developed within a community, and has been passed down through generations over a long period of time (Keane, Khupe & Muza, 2016). Both definitions are aligned to how I present and contextualise indigenous knowledge in this study, thus they have both been adopted in the attempts to clarify what indigenous knowledge is.

1.5.5 Indigenous communities

According to the Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Act 6 of 2019, 'indigenous communities' refers to a group of people living in a region that has been previously passed down by their ancestors within the Republic of South Africa. They have distinct social, cultural and economic conditions which set them apart from the rest of the Nation. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, has defined indigenous communities as a group of people that identify as such and have lived as a community from time immemorial, bounded by their territory, and sharing language and customs. This study adopts the Indigenous Knowledge Act 6 of 2019's definition. The definition is coherent with the principles of the indigenous communities that I portray in this study, thus its adoption.

1.5.6 Co-creation

O'Hern and Rindfleisch (2001), have suggested that "co-creation" can be defined as the collaborative new product development activity where the customers actively participate and contribute towards selecting elements for a product. The key principle of co-creation across different fields is that there are collaborative efforts towards an expected outcome. Similarly, Liwång (2022), defines co-creation as the collaborative efforts between stakeholders towards the invention of new ideas or solutions to a certain problem; in applying co-creation to this study, Liwång's (2022), definition of co-creation is adopted as it speaks to my collaborative efforts towards the negotiation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines.

1.5.7 Social/digital media platform

"Social media" refers to interactive platforms through which content is created, disseminated and shared among users on the web (Lumen Candela, n.d). Similarly, Dollarhide (2021), has

defined social media as the computer based technology that is responsible for facilitating the dissemination of thoughts, ideas and information through virtual networks and communities. The latter definition is applied throughout the study.

1.5.8 Stakeholder(s)

The term 'stakeholder(s)' refers to a community or an individual that has shares or possesses ownership of a certain project or initiative, and contributes through their knowledge and efforts to make the project a success (Bourne, 2005). Miles (2011), has referred to Freeman's (1984), definition of a stakeholder which refers to such an individual as a person who can impact or be impacted by an organisation's abilities in achieving its objectives. The study adopts Bourne's (2005), definition of the term stakeholders.

1.6 Chapter arrangements

Chapter 1: Background to the study

The first chapter of this study has detailed out the introduction, background, problem statement and significance of this study. The study's objectives and research questions were also defined, including the key terms that will be used throughout the study.

Chapter 2: Conceptual framework and literature review

Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework adopted in this study; that is, Afrocentricity and Appreciative inquiry. The literature review gives an overview of digital content creation, ethics and implications of both on indigenous knowledge/communities.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

Chapter 3 provides an overview and justifications on the choice of methodology in this study. A brief report on the tools that enabled engagements with stakeholders is also provided through various sections of the chapter. These are elucidated through the study area, population, sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and how trustworthiness was ensured.

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

The findings and analysis from the engagement with stakeholders are presented in chapter 4.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of this study. In writing this chapter, I have attempted to respond to the following questions: (i) Why was this study carried out? (ii) What problem did I intend on addressing? (iii) Why was it important to address this problem? (iv) What were expected outcomes for addressing the problem? These questions were addressed through the background of the study, problem statement, significance of study, objectives, and research questions. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 give further background on the questions that were raised in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAME AND LITERATURE REVIEW

"My dawn of inspiration"

2.0. Introduction

As I introduce this chapter, it is worth mentioning that this chapter has been "my dawn of inspiration" throughout the conceptualization and writing of this dissertation. I have drawn inspiration from other scholars, which became a light-house that showed me the path in times of uncertainty. This chapter has included a discussion of the study's conceptual framework, and a literature review on digital content creation, the production of IK-based content, and ethics. This has included the identification of gaps in such fields, and the evolution of such fields through the work of some of the scholars in those fields.

2.1. Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework refers to a lens which a researcher adopts to understand, probe and explain a phenomenon within a research study (Camp, 2001). In Liehr and Smith's (1999) view, the conceptual framework is an "integrated" way of studying a research problem, as it applies concepts from different frameworks. It is commonly used when the available theoretical frameworks are not sufficient in explaining and understanding a research problem within a study (Akintoye, 2015).

Ravich and Carl (2016) assert that the conceptual framework generates and reflects on the thoughts behind the research process, giving a map of the study. For this study, I found that both Afrocentricity and the Appreciative inquiry worked best as the lenses that underpinned the study's research problem, thus the adoption of both.

2.1.1 Afrocentricity

The conceptualization of "Afrocentricity" is traced back to the United States of America, and is apprehended as an effort encouraging the recognition of African perspectives, not from a Eurocentric stance (Chawane, 2016). The exact origin of this term is not definite. Verharen (2000) states that the term predominantly surfaced in the 1970s and became popular in the 1980s through Dr. Molefi Kete Asante's advocacy.

The term “Afrocentric” refers to a phenomenon of African origin. Asante (2001) defines “Afrocentricity” as the centrality of thoughts, beliefs or dogma from an African paradigm. It advocates for the understanding and viewing of circumstances from an African viewpoint. To understand the way of life in African communities, there is a need for awareness of the cultural values, norms and paradigms. In Asante’s (2001) view, advocacy of Afrocentrism is not an attempt to cancel out Eurocentrism, it is rather an effort for a world where the two can co-exist. Afrocentricity was adopted in this study to ensure that the stakeholder experiences and the co-created ethical guidelines were viewed from an Afrocentric lens.

2.1.2 Appreciative inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is known for its positive approach towards opportunities and encouraging a mutual perspective among team members (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). Beyond opportunities, appreciative inquiry encourages a positive approach to what may sometimes be viewed as a “challenging” situation. Maintaining a positive approach yields good results, this does not mean that AI is ignorant to problem solving or challenges that may be experienced, it simply means that it encourages the maintenance of a positive attitude towards challenges (Bushe, 2011).

Appreciative inquiry is also known for its ability to influence learning and reflective exercises in a positive way between researchers, team members and other stakeholders involved (Curtis, Gallagher, Ramage, Montgomery, Martin, Leng, Theodosius, Glynn, Anderson & Wrigley, 2017; Dewar & Nolan, 2013). Moreover, Watkin, Dewar and Kennedy (2016), have asserted that the appreciative inquiry works well as a catalyst towards collaboration in research, development and fostering change. Berkessel (2020) describes appreciative inquiry as a sunflower, and he has further described that it enables us to tell our stories.

Appreciative inquiry includes a 5-D cycle (Define, Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny) which has been detailed by Macpherson (2015). The 5-D cycle was used as an approach to co-create Afrocentric ethical guidelines that the community deemed as suitable for digital content creation. Afrocentricity was at the core of the study, guiding each step of AI’s 5-D cycle.

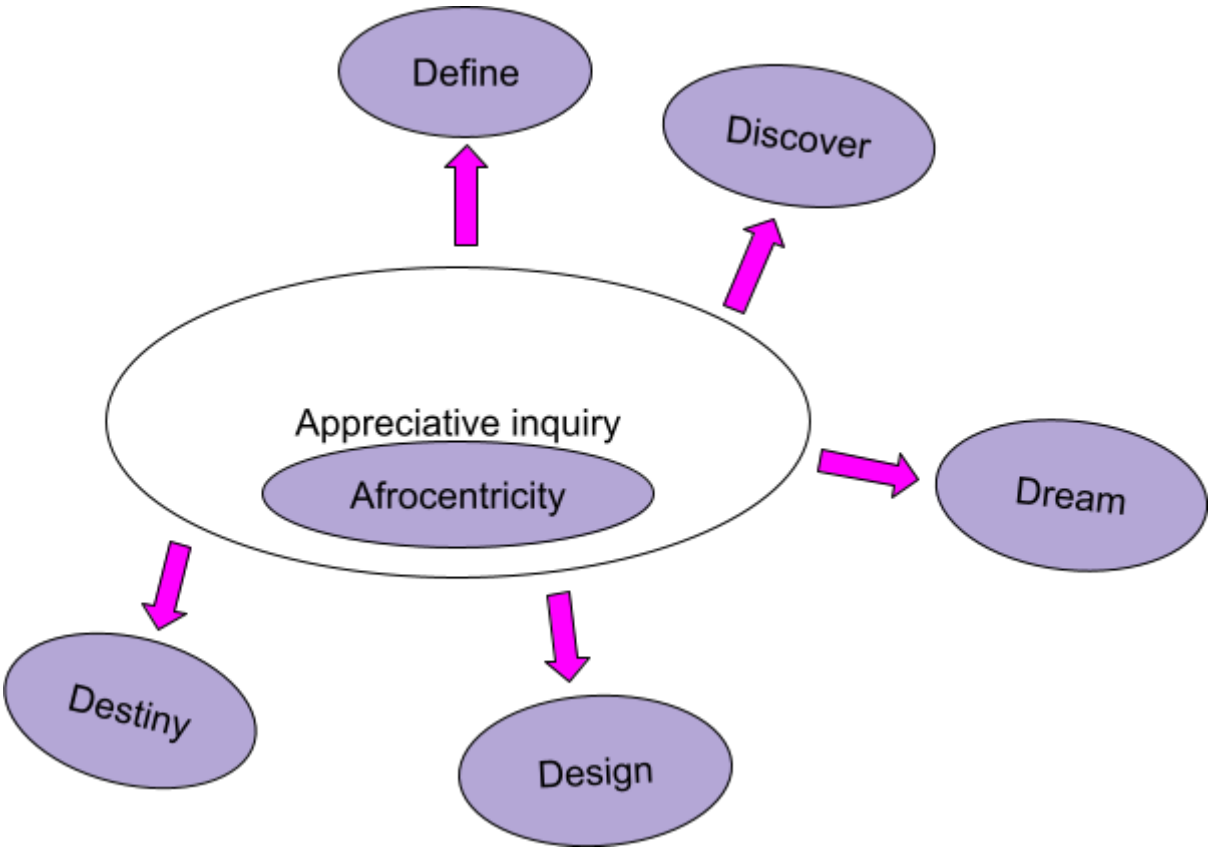


Figure 1: Visual representation of how the conceptual framework is applied in this study

2.2 Literature review

Ramdhani, Ramdhani and Amin (2014) posit that the literature review lays the foundation or background of a study, providing scholars with the information they need towards carrying out a certain study. In addition, understanding what has been written in their field of interest and the gaps thereof (Hart, 1998). Reviewing the literature has exposed me to different worldviews that other researchers have conformed to, including the justification on why they have conformed to such a worldview.

For this study's literature review, I was interested in understanding the concept "ethical digital content creation" with a focus on indigenous communities. The literature review has unpacked the focus areas of the study; namely digital content creation, ethics, and the use of both in engaging with indigenous communities and creating indigenous knowledge-based content, and finally, the possible gaps that existed in the field. I used this literature review to go a step further from what was identified as the issues that were investigated in this study.

The diagram below is a visual representation of my thoughts, intentions and structure of the chapter.

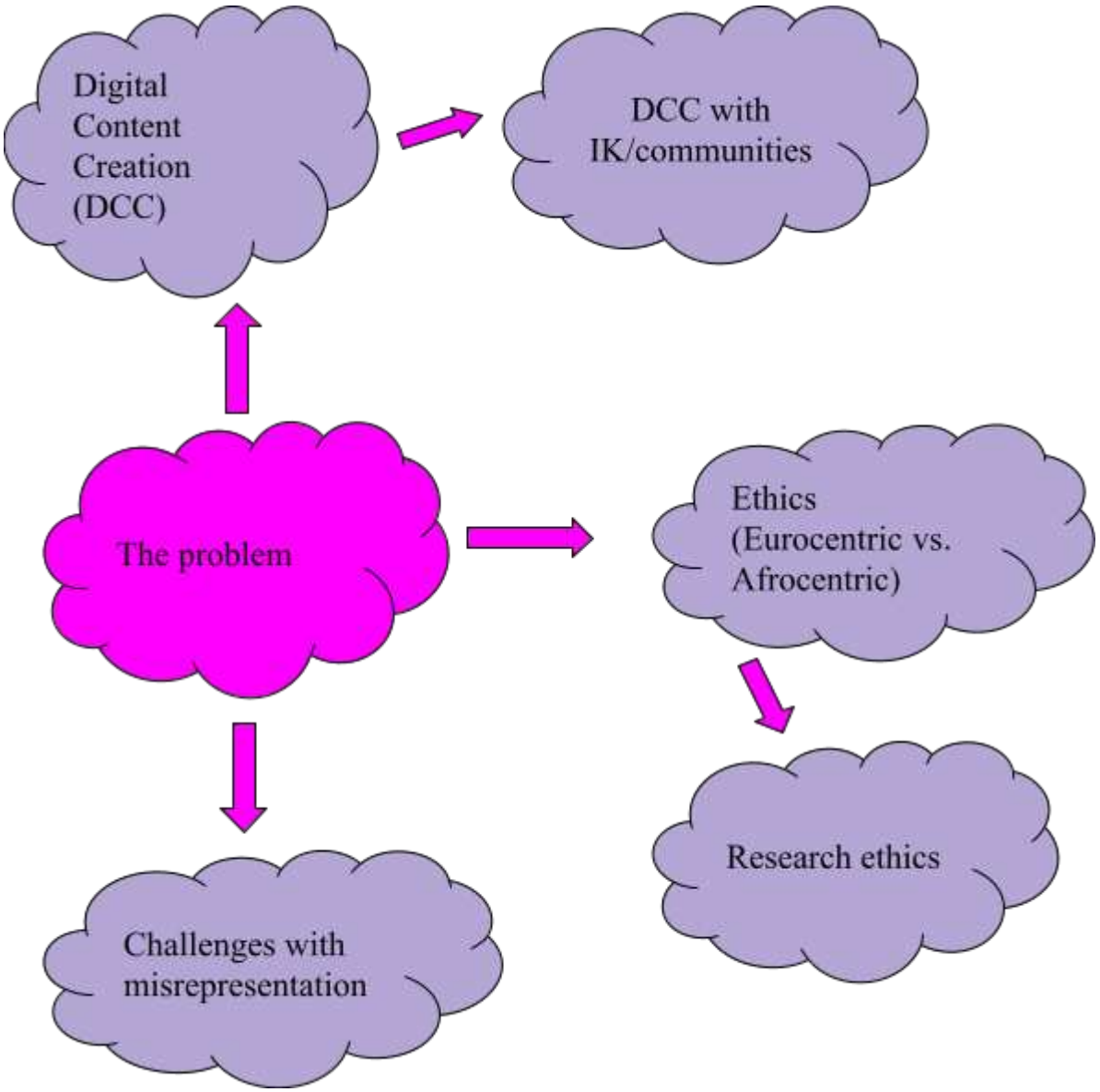


Figure 2: An overview of the literature review

2.2.1 Digital content creation

Stapleton (2020), and Perricone (2022), have defined content creation as the process of generating written and/or visual content with a focus on a certain topic that appeals to an audience, and sharing the content through (not limited to) blogs, infographics and videos on social media platforms. Stapleton (2020), has acknowledged that digital content creation covers a wide range of activities, and Viral Nation (2019), opines that the ultimate principle

in digital content creation is that it should be relevant and useful to its audience. It is worth noting that content should also be accessible to its audience.

Seemingly, the concepts "content creation" and "digital content creation" are used interchangeably to refer to the same activity, although the term "content creation" omits "digital". Lenkert (2020), has also acknowledged that "content creation" may be used to refer to digital content creation as oftentimes this involves the creation of content on digital platforms. For this study, I use the term "digital content creation".

In Lenkert's (2020), view, a content creator's responsibilities include seeing to the use of the best Search Engine Optimization (SEO) applications (to ensure that search engines can access the digital content), creating social media posts, writing, editing, blogging and monitoring the website and social media metrics. Henderson (2020) highlights that the content can serve one or all the following purposes: i) Educating; ii) Entertaining and/or iii) influencing change. The increase in the use of social media platforms has also seen content being used as a tool to earn an income. Henderson (2020), further outlines that content can be tailored for different platforms (depending on where/how the target audience consumes the content).

Content is at the core of digital content creation, it is what drives the use of social media platforms. It would be an injustice to this study if I do not briefly define what "content" is. Lenkert (2020), asserts that content in the publishing, communication and art spaces is defined as the combination of experiences and information, like writing, speech, and/or other varieties of arts which are delivered through a platform to express value to a target user.

The next part of this literature review has given a background on indigenous knowledge and briefly discussed its use for digital content creation.

2.2.2.1 Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge, otherwise known as traditional knowledge or traditional ecological knowledge, refers to the body of observations, innovations, oral and written knowledge, practices and beliefs, promoting responsible stewardship and sustainability between humans and their natural environment (Daniel, 2022). Keane, Khupe and Muza (2016), have defined it as the skills and understanding that have been passed down through generations and have existed over a long period of time. Indigenous knowledge, in Warren (1991), is the knowledge used by local people to earn a living within a particular environment.

In both Noyoo (2007), and Grey's (2014), view, indigenous knowledge consists of an intricate set of skills, insights, knowledge and technologies that have been generated over many years of living and interacting with a specific location by individuals indigenous to that area. The submissions by the scholars Daniel (2022), Warren (1991), Noyoo (2007), and Grey (2014) have in common that indigenous knowledge is developed by people in a particular location who have a strong connection to their environment. Sithole (2007) has added that indigenous knowledge is tacit, and is found in the practices and experiences of indigenous knowledge holders, passed down through their teachings to younger generations.

Although indigenous knowledge has been known for its contribution to the livelihood of its custodians and towards sustainable development, it is not without challenges. Indigenous knowledge is also faced with a number of threats; these include the erosion of important pieces of the knowledge - linked to the death of knowledge holders, intellectual property predation, loss of languages, territorial destruction and the decline of its significance amongst young people (Grey, 2014). While indigenous knowledge is faced with threats, there has also been an increase in the production of IK-based content for digital content creation.

2.2.2.2 Digital content creation with indigenous knowledge

The world is living in the digital age as acknowledged by (Ginsburg, 2008); this necessitates an increase in the use of indigenous knowledge for digital content creation and on social media platforms. Considering the oral nature of the knowledge, scholars, Owiny, Mehta and Maretzki (2014), have also proposed the use of social media and mobile technologies to create, preserve and disseminate the knowledge, which would lead to an increase in the presence of the knowledge in the form of digital content.

According to Koma, Kupa and Oyademi (2014), the use of social networking and the introduction of indigenous knowledge is crucial in enabling individuals to address challenges locally and globally. However, they add that the current norms observed through social/digital media platforms do not have a foundation on indigenous knowledge, which makes that kind of content dispensable on such platforms. The premise of this study is encouraged by the IK-based content that does make it to social/digital media platforms and how it is produced and presented.

The British Columbia site (2021) has elucidated guidelines that should be adhered to during the production IK-based content or content with indigenous peoples. The guidelines include

that: (i) Language is important when producing the content - it can empower or cause harm, (ii) Indigenous knowledge holders should be engaged from the beginning of the project, and permissions and/or input acquired as some information may be sacred, (iii) With respect to the 2007 United Nations Declarations (on the rights of indigenous peoples), the content creators can/should be an indigenous person, (iv) Collaboration and inclusion of knowledge holders is important, (v) Seeking approval before publishing and acknowledging the knowledge holders, and finally, (vi) Involving the knowledge holders when developing/choosing images and graphics.

These guidelines have laid a foundation on this study's attempts to co-create Afrocentric digital content creators ethical guidelines for producing IK-based content. The next section has clarified what ethics are in this study's context.

2.2.2.3 Challenges associated with the misrepresentation of indigenous knowledge/communities on social/digital media platforms

Individuals of indigenous identities are victims of marginalisation and are stigmatised because of their identity both online and offline. Carson and Frazer (2018) have shared that 52% of social media users who are of an indigenous background reported that they have had to be selective about the content they share about their identity on social media due to fear of receiving not-so-pleasant comments about who they are. Carson and Frazer (2018), report that one of the reasons shared by many of the indigenous users was that they had previously been discriminated against, abused and questioned about their identity, for some it was because of their skin colour.

Seemingly, there are stereotypes around what an indigenous person should look like, "they shouldn't be too white", "they should look indigenous". Carlson and Frazer (2018) interviewed a group of participants who outlined that they are uncomfortable to share information around their culture and indigenous background as this is misrepresented by other non-indigenous social media users, who tend to post that information and impose their views on it as a result spreading misinformed information about indigenous peoples.

Cottle (2000) argues that most representations of indigenous peoples by the media mostly degrade and marginalise them. Representations refer to constructions that are used by the media to tell the story of a lived experience (Fiske, 1987; Nairn, McCreanor, Moewaka, Borell, Rankine & Gregory, 2012), they may be in the form of images, words and any other

form that can be used to create content. Research studies have shown that this representation tends to paint indigenous peoples as outsiders who are not part of the nation.

These depictions further deprive indigenous communities of their right to be represented as diverse peoples (Nairn, McCreanor, Moewaka, Borell, Rankine & Gregory, 2012; Perkins & Starosta, 2001), they are never represented as the diverse group that they are. These further contribute towards exacerbating the subjugations against indigenous communities in their own environment (Banerjee, 2000; Lang, 2015; Voyager, 2000).

2.3. What are ethics?

Ethics are defined as the branch of philosophy that studies acceptable human conduct or behaviour. It also aids in the analysis, understanding and identification of what's right and wrong, and good or bad (Rich, 2016). Similarly, Prabhakar (2011) refers to ethics as the comprehension of what is right and wrong and, in the process, doing what is right. The scholar has also added that ethics include the important rules that people follow as they live their lives. Paliwal's (2006) view takes the description of ethics a step further. Paliwal (2006) shares a few qualities that characterise "ethical behaviour"; these are honesty, integrity and morality. Beyond the three, there are more characteristics that can be associated with ethical behaviour.

Chowdhury (2018), offers three definitions that can be applied to describe what ethics are: i) the term ethics can be used synonymous to morality, ii) it is a branch of philosophy that is responsible for studying sources of human values and standards, and iii) the term can also be applied in reference of "professional" ethics to refer to guidelines or a code of conduct that is applied within a profession, these are unique to different professions. Through these definitions, I note that while ethics may aid in identifying, understanding and analysing between what is right or wrong, people's ideas of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours vary.

Oftentimes, ethics and morals are used interchangeably to describe what is right or wrong, and the kind of behaviour that is regarded as acceptable. Despite their similarities and interchangeable use, there is a difference between the two. Considering the centrality of ethics in this study, I have contrasted the two to justify the use of this term in this chapter and in the rest of the study.

Rich (2016), and Schiaffonati (2019), share that morals provide guidance on beliefs, decisions, behaviours and ways of being which people (individuals/collective) may describe as good or bad. Churchill (1982), describes morals as the human behaviour of morality, which is more practical compared to ethics, whilst ethics are a systematic, rational and theoretical human behaviour that is used as a lens to reflect on human behaviour. Morals have also been described as more specified and are derived from ethics (Rich, 2016).

Rich (2016), outlines that ethics can be classified through three branches: Meta-ethics, normative ethics and descriptive ethics.

The section below briefly outlines what normative ethics, meta-ethics and descriptive ethics are.

(i) Normative ethics

Schiaffonati (2019) defines normative ethics as the branch of ethics that judges morality and attempts to formulate recommendations on how to act or live. It involves questions about what is good or bad, what we ought to do and why meta-ethics is said to be concerned with questions about what it means to say something good or bad, and the likelihood of such claims corresponding facts about what/how we know/understand about the world (Schroeder, 2015).

Von der Pfordten (2011), suggests that to be deemed sufficient, normative ethics should have five elements; i) normative individualism, consideration of an individual's interest and concerns, iii) a pluralism of references of the concerns, iv) the necessity of a principle of aggregation and weighting of concerns, and, lastly v) as a central principle of aggregation and weighing, the principle of relative reference to self and others.

(ii) Meta-ethics

Allan (2015) refers to meta-ethics as an attempt to answer questions about ethics and asserts that one way to get a lay of the land on Meta-ethics is to ask questions like where, what, why, when and how. Similarly, Schroeder (2015) asserts that Meta-ethics involves questions "about" normative inquiry as opposed to questions "within" normative inquiry. Each of these questions are said to reveal important aspects of "ethical-inquiry".

(iii) Descriptive ethics

According to Schiaffonati (2019), "Descriptive ethics" is a branch of ethics that describes existing morality, including customs, habits, opinions on good or evil behaviour, acceptable and unacceptable action, and responsible or irresponsible behaviour. Nordenstam (1967), defines descriptive ethics as the description and analysis of ethics for individuals and groups of people.

2.4 Eurocentric versus. Afrocentric ethics

This study's problem statement has found its strength in highlighting the need for Afrocentric ethics for digital content creation, the influence of Eurocentric ethical paradigms and how the lack of Afrocentric ethics have affected interactions between digital content creators and communities. Therefore, in the following section, I discuss Eurocentric and Afrocentric ethics to give context.

2.4.1 Eurocentric ethics

In defining/discussing Eurocentric ethics, it is important for me to start off this section by briefly acknowledging Greek philosophy, considering its contribution in the western thought. Ancient Greek philosophy, which arose in the 6th century BC, covers topics like politics, philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and ontology - the ethics are of interest to this study. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (sometimes considered the founding fathers of Greek Philosophy) are regarded as the three philosophers to focus on during this era (Perdue, 2014).

An encyclopedic entry by National Geographic (2022), highlights that Ancient Greek philosophers are classified according to three groups namely; Pre-Socrates, Socrates, and Post-Socrates, with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle falling under the Socratic era. This is to highlight that there have been other philosophers of Ancient Greek philosophy, however, the three are considered as some of the most well-known Greek philosophers.

According to Seawell (2004), the ethics discipline has always exhibited four important ethical approaches to western thought, namely, Deontological ethics (Duty based), Utilitarian ethics (Outcome based), Virtue ethics (virtue based) and Communitarian ethics (Community based). Oftentimes, these have been referred to as the "ethical decision-making frameworks". These approaches have been known to have common elements, which are impartiality, rationality, consistency and reversibility (Seawell, 2004).

2.4.1.1 Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory which evaluates the rightness or wrongness of decisions according to their ability to bring happiness or reduce unhappiness. It is also regarded as a standard through which rules of morality, policies, laws and social institutions are to be critically evaluated (West, 2004). West (2004), s further elaborates that in utilitarianism, an action is not considered right or wrong just because one is telling the truth or lying, it is considered wrong because lying has bad consequences. Robertson and Walter (2007), in their original conception of utilitarianism, also discuss how ethical hedonism (referring to maximising pleasure) and the consequentialist philosophy, when integrated, gave the broad foundation of utilitarianism.

Both Seawell (2004), and Wilburn (2020), opine that the Utilitarian approach is the most common as most people apply utilitarian ethics in their daily lives. The approach is concerned with the consequences of an action and its motto is "the greatest good for the greatest number". Utilitarianism suggested by John Mill and Jeremy Benjamin involves the thought that the morally correct action is the one that brings the most happiness, pleasure and well-being in the world or reduces pain/suffering (Wilburn, 2020).

While other scholars use "happiness" and "well-being" as a determining factor of the rightness of decisions, some scholars have used the word "utility" (Hooker, 2014). Hooker (2014) adds that "Utility" has been used to refer to "benefits minus harm", "welfare" or "aggregate personal good". Despite the use of different terms, they are still referring to the same ideology, that a decision is right if it results in maximal happiness or well-being.

The section below gives a brief outline of the two types of utilitarianism:

i) Act utilitarianism

With act utilitarianism, an act is right if it brings as much happiness/well-being as other acts performed by the individual, meaning that if an individual's act maximally brings well-being, it is considered right, and wrong if it does not (Eggleston, 2014). Similarly, according to Hooker (2014:2), act utilitarianism requires an individual to perform an act that produces as much utility as any other acts he could have performed.

ii) Rule utilitarianism

Smart and Williams (1973), opine that rule utilitarianism is a view that the rightness or wrongness of an act is to be assessed based on the goodness or badness of the consequence of that rule that everyone should perform in similar circumstances. Rule utilitarianism assesses the consequences of adopting a rule in particular (Simões, 2009).

2.4.1.2 Deontological ethics

As opposed to Utilitarianism, German philosopher and Deontological Ethicist, Immanuel Kant, did not believe that human beings could predict future consequences, but he did believe that if humans used their ability to reason, they could determine their ethical duty. Therefore, deontology is the study of duty, and deontological ethics are important in helping us understand our duties in a team (Seawell, 2004). Deontology argues that an act is morally correct if it is done out of duty, in addition, Kant's argument was that "ethics" and ethical "reasoning" involve the human ability to make free and rational choices from a number of alternatives (Freeman, Werhane & Sonenshein, 2008).

In his work, as discussed by Fisher and Dimmock (2020), Kant elucidates that there are things/tasks that we have to do despite our desires, because it is required of us, this is what he refers to as "duty". What inspires individuals to complete such duties, despite their desire not to, is what Kant refers to as "good-will". The scholars add that performing an action out of duty is what gives the action "moral worth". Although this may be controversial to some and opens room for further discussion, in Kant's view, as highlighted by Fisher and Dimmock (2020), an action only has moral worth if an individual has committed it out of duty.

To finalise this discussion of what deontology/duty is or how I understood it in this study, there's a few questions highlighted by Freeman, Werhane & Sonenshein (2008) that one may ask from a Kantian perspective, these are as follows: i) Does the action set a good/bad precedent? ii) Is the action acceptable or unacceptable to other like-minded persons (assuming that the person committing the action is reasonable)? iii) Is it legislative? Meaning, is it acceptable to other similar circumstances? iv) Does it respect or diminish human dignity?

2.4.1.3 Virtue ethics

"Virtue" refers to the excellence of a thing, ethics in this sense are referred to as the discipline of discovering and practising virtue (Seawell, 2004). Virtue ethics are also referred to as

"Aristotelian Virtue Ethics", and are the work of Ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Virtue ethics are based on assessing the human being's broad characters rather than single acts in isolation (Fisher & Dimmock, 2020). In Gronum's (2015) view, a good way to understand virtue ethics is to contrast it with deontology; deontology focuses on one's duty. Ainley (2017) opines that three concepts, in Aristotle's work, that define what virtue ethics are, are moral excellence (*arête*) like practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and flourishing (*eudaimonia*).

Fisher and Dimmock (2020), add that the fact virtue ethics focus on dispositions and character as opposed to actions in isolation, is what has earned its title of being an "agent-centred moral theory" as opposed to "act centred" moral theory. Virtue ethics asks the question "how should i be" as opposed to "what should i do". Seawell (2004) discusses that Aristotle asks "what people desire", followed by responses like wealth, honour, physical and psychological security, to which he acknowledges that these are not the ultimate desired end, these are means to the end.

According to Seawell (2004), Aristotle's teachings are that the end should be one that includes self-sufficiency, happiness with fulfillment and flourishing. In a nutshell, this also contributes to understanding the concept "eudaimonia" as it runs beyond just translating to "happiness". In addition, Aristotle's Virtue ethics depict that something is good when it lives up to its function, and the purpose/*telos* of human beings is to reason (this is what sets humans apart from animals). Ultimately, when humans combine action with reasoning, it will lead to eudaimonia (Ainley, 2017; Dimmock & Fisher, 2020).

2.4.1.4 Communitarian ethics

The three Ethical frameworks discussed prior have a focus on the individual, either in their duties or the consequences of their actions. Communitarian ethics are centred on the community. According to Seawell (2004), a communitarian asks the question about what their duties are in the community that they are a part of. One of Aristotle's students, W.D Ross, is said to have asked the question about "where duties come from" and in response to this question, duties come from relationships that one has (Seawell, 2004)

2.4.2 Afrocentric ethics

In my attempt to define and understand ethics from an African context, I have followed a paper by Molefe (2016), on African ethics and partiality. In the paper, Molefe (2016), explains the concept, as laid out by Kwame Gyekye, an African Philosopher, as follows: i)

African ethics are the common moral beliefs and presuppositions among the people living below the Sahara, and ii) refers to the intellectual reflections on the moral intuitions. Molefe (2016), along with Metz (2013), has further acknowledged that while there may be differences in the African way of thinking, there are also similarities among the people below the Sahara, giving justification to the concept "African ethics".

https://cdn.britannica.com/67/3867-050-F385E388/Sahara-world-most-part-Africa.jpg

Figure 3: Demarcation of the Sahara desert.

Metz (2017), has noted that African ethics, which, during the conceptualization of this chapter, were referred to as "Afrocentric ethics", are a fairly new field having emerged in the 1960s, post-colonialism, which was when African scholars started writing more about African philosophy. After following the work of Niekerk (2011), Metz (2013), and Majeed (2017), I have acknowledged that Afrocentric ethics, though diverse, are rooted in Ubuntu/Personhood and communitarianism. In this chapter, the terms "Ubuntu" and "Personhood" were used interchangeably to fit the Southern African and Sub-Saharan context. Ultimately, the two concepts refer to the same idea (Molefe, 2020).

In the section that follows, I discuss *Ubuntu*/personhood and communitarianism as Afrocentric ethics.

2.4.2.1 Ubuntu/personhood and communitarianism

As an African child, I was taught from a young age to practise *Ubuntu*. Ubuntu has always meant showing kindness and compassion to my friends and people who I may have never met in my life, being loving, exchanging greetings whenever I meet people on the street and treating all elders as parents (and thereby running errands for them if they need me to). These are the teachings I could share on what *Ubuntu* is/what it has meant for me in my life.

In my attempts to learn more about *Ubuntu*, and discuss it in this study, I have followed the work of scholars in the field to help clarify what it is. Matolino (2011), gives various descriptions and explanations of what *Ubuntu* is and is not as an Afrocentric ethic. He cites Ramose (1999), who shares that the word *Ubuntu* can be broken into two words, with *ubu* as the prefix and *ntu* as the stem. The word itself is Nguni, and is used amongst the Nguni speaking of South Africa.

In discussing *Ubuntu* and taking into consideration the evolution of society, its moral practices and beliefs, I acknowledge Metz's (2011) submission that it is up to those living in contemporary Southern Africa to refashion their interpretations of *Ubuntu*. This is to ensure that its elements are constructed on what is currently viewed as "morally right". Metz's (2011) submissions have included an analogy that a perspective can be recognized as *Ubuntu* if it is grounded in ideas and beliefs that were dominant in pre-colonial South Africa, even if it does not fully reproduce all of them.

Shutte (2001), states that at the centre of *Ubuntu* is the idea, *"umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu"* which translates to a person being "a person through other persons", or in Metz's (2017) view, "I am because we are".

In light of the aphorism, "A person is a person through other persons", it was incumbent that I mention how African philosophers have defined the idea of "a person", prior to elaborating further what *Ubuntu*/Personhood is/entails. According to Gyekye (1995), a person consists of three entities; namely the soul, spirit and the body. The scholar further states that an individual is regarded as "a person" if they have a disposition which is viewed by the community as largely ethical.

Similarly, both Wiredu (2009) and Molefe (2018) suggest that a human being is called "a person" if they are leading a genuine and truthful life, and that calling them such is a moral judgement that they are indeed leading a life that qualifies them to be "a person". Leading an honest life qualifies a person as having achieved their "personhood", as it is not attained

merely because one was born a human (Menkiti, 1984). This clarifies that "personhood" ought to be achieved.

According to Metz (2013), personhood, from a sub-Saharan context, is indicative of virtue or human excellence, variable among different individuals. Molefe (2020), opines that in African Philosophy, personhood refers to an individual who leads a life that is morally fulfilling. Similar to Majeed (2017), Matolino's (2011), discussion goes a step further by detailing that an individual with *Ubuntu* is one that lives in harmony with their community, exists together with their community, pursues interests that are aligned with those of the community's, and the community can turn to them in times of need and vice versa.

In strengthening the discussion of what/who a person is in the community, Majeed (2017:30) states the following:

> *"The moral foundation of personhood to a large extent links the individual with the community. For the one described as a person does not act with total disregard for the well-being of the community".*

This quote highlights that an individual with *Ubuntu*/personhood is one that cares about their community. In my interpretation of this quote, I have come to understand that *Ubuntu*/personhood is intertwined with communitarianism. In having *Ubuntu* or portraying qualities linked to it, one is also practising communitarianism. Majeed (2017) refers to communitarianism as the principle that the focus on activities performed by individuals is determined by their community. In efforts to understand/outline what communitarianism is, the quote below by Metz (2011:538) stood out:

> *"To identify with each other is largely for people to think of themselves as members of the same group - that is to conceive of themselves as a 'we', for them to take pride or feel shame in the group's activities as well as for them to engage in joint project, co-ordinating their behaviour to realise shared ends".*

In my attempts to further clarify personhood, I have noted that the African Philosopher, Kwasi Wiredu has identified two different concepts of Personhood; namely the ontological and the normative (Wiredu, 2009). Wiredu (2009) elucidates that the ontological concept of personhood makes reference to the idea of being human or human nature. Molefe (2020) cites Menkiti (1984), Gyeke (1992), and Wiredu (1992), who all submit that the normative concept

refers to grading a human's level of excellence, virtue and relates to the quality of the moral agent's performance.

Gyekye (1992), and other African philosophers hold similar ideas of what constitutes one's personhood; this is not to say that a person is expected to be morally perfect because human beings can make mistakes (Majeed, 2017). In reiteration of Matolino's (2011), submissions on personhood, it is important to note that Majeed (2017), through following some of Gyekye's work, has clarified that one's personhood status in the community is assessed on the basis of their conduct. Thus, Afrocentric ethics are considered character-based ethics as one is evaluated based on their character/conduct and the quality of their character is important for the community's moral life (Gyekye & Zalta, 2011).

According to Metz (2017:64), "Traditionally speaking, one's selfhood is partly a function of communal relationships with ancestors". In addition to this, an individual's personhood may also be developed by relating positively with animals, or other aspects of nature that are considered to have religious importance like totems. This shows that acts of personhood are not restricted to individuals only, but to the environment around us too.

Munyaka and Motlhabi (2009) have termed *Ubuntu* ethics as "anti-egoistic". This is so because *Ubuntu* discourages individuals from acting selfishly, without the regard of others or to the harm of others. *Ubuntu* promotes the spirit of one living for others. In attempts to further discuss Ubuntu, Tutu (1999), Molefe (2018), and Molefe (2020), have shared moral virtues that are associated with *Ubuntu*. These include (not limited to) kindness, friendliness, sharing and compassion. An individual possessing these virtues is considered to have a good character, whereas an individual is considered to have a bad character if they are dishonest, cruel and wicked (Gyekye & Zalta, 2011).

This section has clarified what *Ubuntu*/Personhood is (as an Afrocentric ethic) and its links with communitarianism.

2.5 Eurocentric ethics in research

In this section, I define and detail how Eurocentric research ethics have evolved throughout the years. The ethical codes outlined here have had a significant influence on research ethics as we know them today, from the Nuremberg trials that led up to the declaration of the Nuremberg code, to current discussions questioning the applicability of some of these guidelines in the social sciences field and in African indigenous knowledge to be exact.

These were important to highlight as they helped me identify the gaps in research ethics and why the adoption of these ethics in research can never be a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Resnick (2020), asserts that ethics may be referred to as the methods, procedures or perspectives that guide an individual's moral compass and analysis of complex problems and issues. The scholar has discussed several reasons why adhering to ethical norms in research is important, among others, the reasons include that ethical norms encourage accountability, social responsibility, trust, respect and they promote the aims of the research such as the truth, knowledge and avoiding errors.

Similarly, Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė (2018), also reiterate ethical principles that are essential in research like morality, objectivity, prudence, openness, honesty, respecting intellectual property, confidentiality, social responsibility, responsible publication, responsible management, respecting colleagues, legitimacy, competence and security of the individuals involved (Smith, 2003; Sieber, 2004; Canterbury Christ Church University, 2005; William, 2006; Shamoo & Resnick, 2015).

Schoeman (2019) cites Dingwall (2012) on the history of ethics in research and how the previous models were centred on self-governance, and not so much on informed consent. Ensuring that a research is conducted ethically was the responsibility of the researcher based on their judgement as a member of the scientific community (there were no formal measures in place).

However, the ill-treatment of research participants has played a vital role in the introduction of and moulding current research ethics, requirements and norms of protection (Washington, 2006; Schoemann, 2019). This included the introduction of codes and guidelines like the Nuremberg Code, The declaration of Helsinki, Belmont report and the New Brunswick declaration.

The Nuremberg Code of research ethics was formulated in 1947 as a response to the unethical experiments that were conducted during the second world war by Nazi scientists (Schoemann, 2019), the code has since had an influence in the international research ethics space in various ways, including the introduction of voluntary participation of participants in the Human Rights Charter of 1948 (Ndebele, Mwaluko, Kruger, Ouwe, Oukem-Boyer & Zimba, 2014).

Shuster (1997) asserts that the Nuremberg Code is the most important document in the history of ethics in medical research and has served as a blueprint for present day principles that play a role in guiding the rights of participants in medical research. The code's principles emanated from the Nuremberg's doctor's trial (Schoemann, 2019). Whilst the Nuremberg Code is acknowledged as the first international document in the advocacy of principles like voluntary participation and informed consent in research, it further outlines non-maleficence, the autonomy to withdraw and weighing the benefits against the risks in a study (Schoeman, 2019).

Ghooi (2011) notes the similarities between the Nuremberg code and the 1931 Guidelines. The 1931 Guidelines outline principles like the provision of full information on a study to acquire consent, benefits of the study outweighing risks, and it discourages the exploitation of poor/disadvantaged individuals.

The Nuremberg trials have further led to the introduction and development of the Declaration of Helsinki by the World Medical Assembly in 1964 and the Ethics Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving Human subjects (CIOMS Guidelines of 1982), both have had a vital influence on the African research ethics space (Israel & Hay, 2006; Ndebele et al., 2014). Schoeman (2019), acknowledges a debate questioning the relevance of Euro-Western ethical principles among African scholars and the factors shaping research ethics governance in Africa. The Declaration has also been described as a document which has influenced the formulation of international, national and regional codes of conduct and is fundamental in the field of ethics (CIOMS, 2002).

Schoeman (2019) asserts that the Helsinki Declaration expands on the Nuremberg Code through its inclusion of a regulatory framework on research ethics governance. The regulatory framework stipulates that research protocols should be developed, reviewed and approved by an independent Research Ethics Committee (REC). In addition, the research protocol should be inclusive of ethical considerations, the kind of benefits accessible to the participants, funding and the institution linked to the study. Similar measures could be put in place for digital content creators.

Another influential document in the history of ethical governance as noted by Israel and Hay (2006), has been the Belmont report of 1979, which was developed by the United States' Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research

(NCPHSBBR). According to Israel and Hay (2006), the Belmont Report connected the gap between biomedical and social science research as the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki's application proved to be challenging in non-biomedical settings, with the report giving in-depth attention to ethical principles such as respect for persons, beneficence and justice, its principles have served as an indispensable influence in developing other approaches to ethical governance in the Western world.

Schoeman (2019) acknowledges the difference between the development of biomedical and social science research ethics, although both are embedded in similar research procedures and principles. Comparatively, research ethics in biomedical and social science research, have been prompted by studies like the Tuskegee-Syphilis, where black men were denied treatment for syphilis (Schoeman, 2019) and Laud Humphrey's 1970 tearoom sex study, which was a classic example of unethical conduct that has violated participants rights and privacy (Sieber, 1978).

The extent to which each incident has violated participants in its respective field of study is different, but both have caused harm. In addition, Schoemann (2019) notes that incidents that prompted social science research ethics are classified as moral wrongs, while events that led to biomedical research ethics are regarded as life threatening. Conversely, Huggas (2010) warns against the downplaying unethical conduct in social science research, by simply considering that it's the least risky compared to biomedical research.

The most recent turning point of research ethics is the New Brunswick Declaration which was developed at the Ethics Rupture Summit (2012), underpinned by a debate questioning the relevance of adopting a "one size fits all" in social science and biomedical research ethics review. The New Brunswick Declaration, amongst other resolutions, outlined that research ethics committees ought to treat researchers in the same manner they would expect them to treat their participants (Hoonard, 2016).

2.6 Afrocentric and Afro-sensed research ethical guidelines when working with indigenous communities and knowledge

As I read more on Afrocentric research ethics, I also learnt about the term "Afro-sensed". This section discusses both Afrocentric and Afro-sensed research ethical guidelines to be considered when working with indigenous knowledge/communities. I am of the opinion that both advocate for the same ideology, that is, the understanding and interpretation of African practices, beliefs and norms through an African lens. I use them both in solidarity and as an attempt to appreciate the work of scholars in the field.

The concept of Afro-sensing was coined by Masoga in 2017, and was defined as a way of thinking that is embedded in African paradigms with the aim of understanding African people's experiences (Masoga, 2020). In addition, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), and Owusu Ansah and Mji (2013), have alluded that the process of Afro-sensing in research is not exclusive of scientific epistemology, but amalgamates different ways of knowing and knowledge dissemination. Shokane, Masoga and Blitz (2020), have acknowledged that despite the difference in paradigms and culture when conducting research, beliefs, values and traditions of the local African community should be observed.

Masoga, Shokane and Blitz (2020), have described Afro-sensing as "an on-going process of seeing others and ourselves clearly", and not an event that is limited to a place or time. According to Shokane, et al., (2020), the Afro-sensed approach, among other factors calls for: i) Respect, ii) Acknowledgement, iii) Fair play, and iv) Balancing act, all of which are vital to the co-creation of Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines in this study.

As this section of the study digs deeper into Afrocentric and Afro-sensed research ethical guidelines for working with indigenous communities, I would like to shine a light on the late Reverend Mario Mahongo's quote from the San code of research ethics report by Chennels and Schoeder (2018:3) as follows:

> *"I don't want researchers to see us as museums who cannot speak for themselves and don't expect something in return, as humans we need support"*.

This quote not only strengthens the discussions in the fourth chapter of this study, but highlights the importance of reciprocity and relational accountability, Indigenous Knowledge

Holders need support and engagements with them *should* go beyond being conducted for convenience for the convenience of researchers.

Masoga et al., (2021), posit that research and knowledge production processes can no longer be administered as if indigenous communities' voices and experiences do not matter, and their voices interpreted through westernised norms of knowledge. In addition, researchers who conduct their research with indigenous communities have to adhere to ethical principles and practices of research (Masoga, et al., 2021).

The South African San Institute (2017) outlines in its code of ethics, a set of values that researchers should follow when doing research with the San people, which includes care, honesty, respect, justice and fairness, and processes stipulating that researchers have to follow the principles set out by the code. While Chilisa (2009), proposes an on-going process of looking back, reflecting and analysing the research steps taken on practices and interaction between researchers and their stakeholder from conception of the study as one of the ethical principles researchers should observe.

According to Ramsey (2006), an Afrocentric approach of the code of conduct for researcher's ethical behaviour should emphasise truth, justice, harmony, righteousness/propriety, balance and reciprocity. I have noted that this is similar to ethical guidelines for engaging with indigenous communities formulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (2018), which include spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, reciprocity, equity and respect.

Reading about these ethical guidelines by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia helped me reflect on the similarities of challenges experienced by Indigenous communities/peoples in different parts of the world. Comparatively, Ramsey's (2006) suggestion of researcher's ethical behaviour, also shares similarities with the South African San Institute's (2017) ethical code. Similarly, they have outlined respect, reciprocity, and justice as key ethical guidelines for engagements with indigenous communities.

In Ramsey's (2006) view, the Afrocentric research approach recognizes researchers as healers with an ethical responsibility to transform and heal the community while realigning them to the universe's natural order. In my understanding of this, the scholar's view is in consideration of colonial discourses that have confronted indigenous communities in the past,

and an Afrocentric researcher's responsibility is to emancipate and let the voices that have been silenced for so long be heard.

Chilisa (2009) asserts that as more scholars delve into areas of indigenous knowledge that were previously associated with sorcery under colonial epistemologies, they are confronted with ethical limitations perpetuated by Eurocentric dogma, like informed consent as an individual decision versus informed consent as a collective community decision as it normatively applies in indigenous communities. In conducting research with indigenous communities, Auger (2016), suggests the use of Indigenous research methodologies that include approaches like cultural continuity, the term has been defined as the inclusion of traditional/indigenous knowledge and culture in research methods to promote knowledge transmission and maintenance.

In one of Chilisa's (2017)'s articles, she cites Kaphagwani's work on philosophical beliefs that can foster decolonial and indigenised research from an African context. This makes reference to concepts like "ethno-philosophy, philosophical sagacity, professional philosophy and the nationalistic-ideological philosophy". Discussions in these concepts have ranged from the use of African philosophy to inform theoretical and methodological frameworks in knowledge production, recognition of indigenous knowledge holders as scholars in literature, decolonised social science research that does not construct human conditions as informed by western leadership and the reflection and analysis of indigenous knowledge through universal knowledge tools.

Chilisa (2017) outlines how indigenous knowledge's contribution to discussions like sustainability is oftentimes excluded unless it has been "validated" through formal academic processes. Validation of indigenous knowledge through "formal academic processes" are among some of the challenges faced in the field. Most of these processes are Eurocentric in nature, and thereby not applicable to indigenous knowledge. Masoga (2018) and Mkabela (2005), posit that indigenous knowledge has been tainted by Eurocentric assumptions and prejudices. Western scientific knowledge is held to a higher standard and regarded as the highest-ranking standard of research Masoga et al., (2021), and the use of non-African epistemologies towards learning indigenous knowledge affects the quality of the knowledge (Chilisa, 2017).

In concluding this section of the study and what I have learnt from different scholars in the field of Afrocentric and Afro-sensed research ethical guidelines, I noted the view of scholars Billan, Starblanket, Anderson, Legare, Hagel, Oakes, Jardine, Boehme, Dubois, Spencer, Hotomani, McKenna and Bourassa (2020), who opines that colonisation is not yet a concept of the past, the inclusion of traditional/indigenous knowledge in research methodologies addresses the historical implications of unethical research and current colonised research practices through the self-determination and capacity building research.

Through my reflections, at the end of this section, I hope for the full integration/recognition and inclusion of Afrocentric and Afro-sensed research ethical guidelines, and that these would also be supported fully by Research Ethics Committees (RECs) as more scholars aspire to conduct research with indigenous communities in ways that are respectful and make sense to the communities.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter presented the contribution of other scholars on digital content creation, indigenous knowledge and digital content creation, and ethics. These were discussed in attempts to make sense of the study and contextualise the issues outlined in this study's problem. The literature has also provided a background on Eurocentric and Afrocentric ethics, and existing gaps in each of these fields. From the background provided, this chapter has challenged the applicability of Eurocentric research ethics in studying indigenous knowledge, in strengthening this argument, the literature has provided discussions on the significance of studying Indigenous knowledge from Afrocentric and Afro-sensed paradigms.

I have also noted similarities between Eurocentric and Afrocentric ethics. For instance, Communitarianism in Afrocentric ethics depicts that an individual has a duty to lead a life that is beneficial and morally-right according to their community. This is similar to deontology, where an individual has duties in their community too, and actions have "moral-worth" if they are performed out of duty.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

"The realisation of possibilities"

3.0 Introduction

This chapter was titled "the realisation of possibilities" because all the goals and research questions that had been set out for this study were achieved through the decisions made here. As such, the methodology and research designs are presented in this chapter. This has included the stakeholder sampling technique, data generation methods, data analysis and the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Methodology

Igwenagu (2016) asserts that research methodology provides a guide to research, how it can be conducted, described and provides an analysis of certain methods and their shortcomings. As this study was centred on indigenous epistemology, it was also pertinent to define "research methodology" through an indigenous lens. Weber-Pillwax (2001), shares that an indigenous methodology includes principles like respect, reciprocity and responsibility.

The scholar has also added that "An indigenous methodology must be a process that adheres to relational accountability" (Weber-Pillwax, 2001:77). To achieve the research questions that had been set out in this study and with respect to indigenous epistemology and axiology, this study was conducted through a Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) methodology.

3.1.1 Participatory Action Learning and Action Research

Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), although not indigenous, possesses qualities identical to those of an indigenous methodology that have been included in the work of Wilson (2008), and discussed in Weber-Pillwax's (2001) submissions on indigenous methodology. In PALAR, the participants (who in this study were referred to as stakeholders) join the study and are involved in all the stages of the study –making them co-researchers (Kearney, Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). The scholars assert that PALAR opens a platform for research activities to be done collaboratively between the Community and the University.

The acronym PALAR was coined from abbreviations like Action Learning (AL), Action Research (AR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR), according to Zuber-Skerritt et al., (2015), Action Learning refers to shared learning experiences and collaborative problem solving towards mutual issues within a community or group. Participatory Action Research is aimed at bringing equality among stakeholders in a research project. It encourages bringing social justice and inclusivity.

Lastly, Action Research (AR) involves doing research to solve social problems and making the research output known to the stakeholders. These three concepts integrated together result in a methodology that perpetuates inclusivity, reciprocity, equality, and research that is emancipatory. PALAR focuses on engaging the stakeholders on problems and solutions for their community (Kearney, Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). In Kearney, Wood and Zuber-Skerritt's (2013) view, the outcomes of the PALAR methodology to a study's stakeholders include self – confidence and up-skilling (as stakeholders get in-depth exposure to research processes).

It is through these benefits that PALAR was employed in this study. This methodology was the blueprint behind the data generation process of this study. Its nature enabled me (the researcher) to host a series of participatory engagements with the stakeholders throughout the conceptualisation of the study, negotiation of preferred methods of data generation, its analysis and finally, reporting back to the stakeholders on the data generated. In using the PALAR methodology, stakeholders were engaged in the form of workshops as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder workshops

PALAR phases	**Engagements**
	• Observation of Protocols (negotiations to enter the community/engage with stakeholders)

Phase 1: Introductory engagements	1.1 Introductions and intentions 1.2 Ethical protocols - How confidentiality would be ensured - Defining the problem - Conceptualising the study 1.3 Negotiating timelines for engagement
Phase 2: Co-creating ethics	2.1 Negotiating methodology (towards exploring Afrocentric ethics) 2.2 Engagements towards responding to research questions
Phase 3: Reporting back	3.1 Reporting back on gathered data (acquiring stakeholder views on it) 3.2 Joint analysis of Afrocentric ethical guidelines 3.3 Draft of digital content creation ethical guidelines.

3.2. Qualitative Research

Creswell (2014) explains qualitative research as an approach where one seeks to explore participant's perceptions, experiences, and ideologies attached to certain circumstances. Astalin (2013) asserts that the qualitative research framework houses a variety of designs and describes it as one of the most flexible amongst other techniques. The scholar adds that it comprises different research designs, namely ethnography, phenomenology, case study and grounded theory. Research design is referred to as the glue responsible for holding together all the components within a research project (Inaam, 2016).

Considering the qualitative approach's flexibility and its nature in enabling the exploration of experiences and insights; this study employed the approach to explore the experiences of stakeholders on digital content creation for IK-based content, to discern the ethics adopted by digital content creators and finally, co-creating Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation on indigenous knowledge. The qualitative research approach enabled the gathering of valuable, in-depth stakeholder insights and provided opportunities for a better understanding of this study's problem and its research questions. Through adopting the qualitative research approach, this study employed a phenomenological research design.

3.2.1 Interpretive Phenomenology

Not only am I a researcher in this study. I also identify as a digital content creator. In the past, I have created YouTube content on heritage sites and storytelling, and currently, I create TikTok travel content. This coupled with my experience of working in Community Engagement and exposure to engaging with indigenous knowledge holders has led to my adoption of interpretive phenomenology in this study. Interpretive phenomenology has enabled me to describe, interact (in-depth) and interpret the experiences of indigenous knowledge holder's on digital content creation and those of digital content creators when producing IK-based content. I say that this has given me insight into the best of both worlds, and finally into the co-creation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation.

The roots of phenomenology are traced back to the era of Plato, Socrates and Aristotle as a philosophy of human beings (Fotchman, 2008, cited by Qutoshi, 2018). In the first decade of the 20th century, the German Philosopher Edmond Husserl was successful in his efforts to establish phenomenology as an approach to study the experiences of human beings (Fotchman, 2008). The term phenomenology refers to the study of phenomena (Moran,

2000). A phenomenological study gives a description of the meaning of a phenomenon in the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2007). In addition, Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa and Varpio (2015) share that the goal of phenomenological research is to describe the meaning of the experience, in relation to what and how it was experienced.

Phenomenological research strives to describe as opposed to explaining, and encourages perspectives that are free from preconceptions or hypotheses (Husserl 1970, cited by Lester, 1999). However, Lester (1999) also cites Plummer (1983) and Stanley and Wise (1993) in their submissions that recent feminist and humanist researchers have refuted the possibilities of commencing without preconceptions or bias, and have highlighted the importance of making the researcher visible in the "frame" of the research as an interested actor rather than a detached observer.

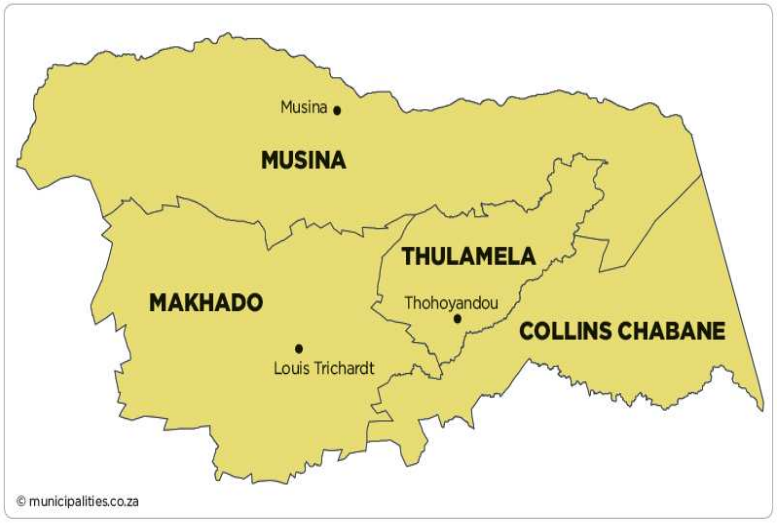
Phenomenology can be used both as a philosophy or methodology, and it also consists of two approaches; descriptive (transcendental) and Interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). In this study, the interpretive phenomenological approach was adopted. Tuophy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy and Sixsmith (2013) assert that the aim of interpretive phenomenology is to describe, understand and interpret stakeholder experiences. Interpretive phenomenology differs from descriptive phenomenology in that in descriptive phenomenology the researcher ought to bracket their assumptions and interpretations, separating oneself from the experiences described.

In interpretive phenomenology, the researcher is a part of the research, the stakeholder's world and their knowledge and previous understanding (known as the fore-structure) helps with the interpretation, concepts like "bracketing" do not fit into interpretive phenomenology (McConnell-Henry, Chapman & Francis, 2009). This study has explored the experiences of indigenous knowledge holders on digital content creation, and those of digital content creators when working with IK-based content and the ethics they have adhered to when producing the content in the past. These objectives are what made phenomenology a suitable research design for this study.

3.3. Study Area

In the beginning of this study, I conducted engagements through online platforms like Google Meet and Ms Teams due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As the restrictions were eased off, I began engaging with one of Dzomo La Mupo's knowledge holders' in-person in Vuwani.

Vuwani is a town located in the Vhembe district under the Collins Chabane Municipality and is approximately 27 kilometres from the University of Venḓa. Households around this area are dominated by contemporary architecture with the majority of the people speaking Tshivenḓa and following *maitele a Tshivenḓa* (Tshivenḓa way of doing things, like practices and norms). While most people I met in Vuwani speak Tshivenḓa, they also happen to be fluent in Xitsonga. Engagements with the 5 digital content creators were still conducted virtually due to the difference in locations and commitments.



https://municipalities.co.za/img/maps/vhembe_district_municipality.png

Figure 4: Map of the Vhembe district

3.3.1 What is Dzomo Ḽa Mupo?

Dzomo Ḽa Mupo (DḼM), based in the Vhembe district, and looking to expand to the Mopani district, is a non-profit organisation founded in 2007 by Mphaṱheleni Makaulule. The organisation brings together Indigenous Knowledge Holders, from communities like Vhutanda, Tshidzivhe and Vuvha - knowledgeable in different areas of the Vhavenḓa cultural heritage. Dzomo Ḽa Mupo values the heritage of the Vhavenḓa and encourages its preservation and transfer through intergenerational learning activities between elders and the youth.

The intergenerational learning activities usually include ecological mapping. Beyond this, one of the organisation's aims is to conserve the environment through the protection and advocacy of indigenous forests, wetlands and sacred sites. DḼM also offers many young

Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) students - like me opportunities to acquire hands-on experience in their studies. The image in Figure 5 is an example of some of the learning engagements provided by Dzomo Ḽa Mupo. In this activity, Vho-Mphaṱheleni educated us on the importance of indigenous sacred sites and why it is important to pay homage to them.

Figure 5: Some of the knowledge transfer activities conducted by Vho-Mphaṱheleni Makaulule through Dzomo Ḽa Mupo at Fundudzi Lake.

3.4. Population

Population refers to a group of individuals, communities or institutions that have certain characteristics that are suitable for a study and are within the interests of the researcher (Kumar, 2014). This study's population included indigenous knowledge holders and digital content creators. This study's population consisted of female and male indigenous knowledge holders and digital content creators.

3.5. Sampling

The nature of this study is qualitative, and will thus adopt a non-probability sampling design as its purpose is not to acquire data that can be generalised to the wider population (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990).

Kumar (2014) has described sampling as the process of selecting stakeholders from a larger population, selecting only those who match the predetermined criteria as preferred in the interest of the study. Purposive sampling design was used to identify stakeholders which will be suitable for this study.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

The key element in purposive sampling is who, according to the judgement of the researcher can provide information essential to the study (Kumar, 2014). The scholar further adds that purposive sampling is considered useful in studies that are focused on constructing historical realities, describing a certain phenomenon and developing something that has limited information. In this regard, firstly, it was suitable for identifying indigenous knowledge holders who had interacted with digital content creators and were willing to share their experiences, and secondly, identifying digital content creators who had produced IK-based content.

I referred to the concept "inclusion criteria" to help me select/identify suitable stakeholders who could participate in this study. The concept "inclusion criteria" refers to a set of features regarded as suitable for a certain study (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013), this may include experiences, their age, gender or location. The inclusion criteria applied is outlined below.

Table 2: Stakeholder inclusion criteria

Stakeholder inclusion criteria		
Type & number of stakeholders	**Age Range**	**Suitability**
1 Indigenous Knowledge	54	Experience in working with

Holder		digital content creators on IK based content.
5 digital content creators	20-30	Digital content creators who have created IK based content (Indigenous knowledge system students were included).

3.6 Data generation methods

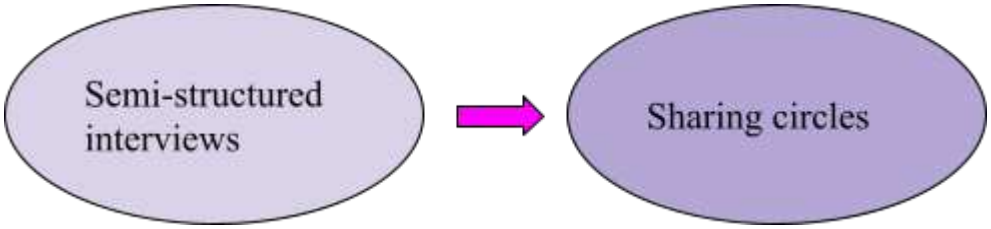


Figure 6: Overview of the application of the data generation methods in the study

These methods were used in respect to Afrocentricity and Appreciative inquiry. In the data generation process, AI's 5-D cycle - Define, Discover, Dream, Destiny and Design was used to guide the direction of the engagements.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Burgess (1984) describes interviews as a "conversation with a purpose". The semi-structured interview refers to a one-on-one interview that consists of open and closed-ended questions, including follow-up questions. The conversation can be focused around topics relating to the study in no particular order, which sets it apart from a survey (Adams, 2015). Kakilla (2021), opines that semi-structured interviews are suitable for conducting in-depth conversations and the interactive nature of this method provides room for interviewees to converse freely.

Semi-structured interviews are also said to enable a researcher to go deeper in a discovery (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). Semi-structured interviews were adopted in this study. This method was used in conversations with the Indigenous Knowledge holder whose experience was deemed crucial for this study. The use of this method aided in the

generation of in-depth data when engaging with stakeholders, and made the conversation flexible as I could ask follow-up questions when needed.

3.6.2 Sharing circles

Kovach (2009), describes sharing circles as a methodology that has been/is applied by indigenous communities as a way of engagement that provides a platform to share stories, and is conversational, further described as "open structured". Sharing circles have also been referred to as sacred, and their aims include bringing cultural growth, transformation and building a sincere relationship among research teams (Lavallée, 2009; Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Tachine, Bird and Cabrera (2016), add that the setting of sharing circles adheres to protocols relating to a community's practices or culture.

In this study, engagements that were hosted (as supported by PALAR methodology) were conducted in the form of sharing circles. The platform was used to introduce the study and the researcher's intentions. This also assisted in building rapport. As the study proceeded, I started an engagement called "All Things IKS Content!" In the engagement, I invited fellow Masters Students' in the African studies programme who are as passionate about indigenous knowledge systems, participate in community engagement and circulate IK-based content from their work with indigenous knowledge and communities.

Through this engagement, I generated data on our experiences in the field, the content I found myself sharing with the world, what I think we could do better when sharing content in the future and the Afrocentric ethics that should be considered when producing IK-based content.

3.7. Data analysis

Thorne (2000), describes data analysis as the most "complex and mysterious of all phases in a qualitative project", and opines that it receives the least thoughtful discussions in the literature. Data analysis involves breaking down collected data into manageable pieces for interpretation (Kawulich, 2004), while Merriam (2009), refers to it as "the process of making sense of the data" and Butina (2015), suggests that the process involves a researcher sifting through the collected data to recognize recurring patterns or themes.

As I prepared to analyse the data generated, i referred to a few principles for qualitative data analysis discussed by Denscombe (2010) as follows: (i) Compacting diverse and raw data

(gives the researcher an opportunity to identify and compare data to focus on) (ii) Establishing and making the relationship between the research objectives and summary clear, and lastly, (iii) Concluding by developing a model and improving the conceptual basis for the research.

This study has adopted a thematic analysis technique. Braun and Clarke (2006), and Alhojailan (2012), have referred to a thematic analysis technique as a qualitative analytical method that is used to identify and report recurring themes/patterns in a study's data. In addition, thematic analysis is a method that can be used to describe data, involves interpretation in the process of selecting codes and constructing themes, and its flexibility to work across varying theoretical and epistemological frameworks is what sets it apart from other techniques (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

With this study using the interpretive phenomenological design, it is worth mentioning that one of the factors that have made thematic analysis a suitable technique is its suitability in analysing data on experiences of stakeholders and compatibility with phenomenology as highlighted by (Joffe, 2011). While this study's data was organised into themes in Chapter 4, in my attempt to draw myself back to what mattered in this study, I use the diagram below to sort through the data I generated, to remind myself of the study's objectives and gather my thoughts.

Figure 7: Visual representation of how the study's themes were organised.

The themes in the study are organised through the diagram displayed in Figure 7, and with consideration of the study's conceptual framework.

3.8. Delimitation

The beginning of this study was around the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, plans to meet-up (in-person) with stakeholders that I wanted to be a part of the study from its inception were halted, and we could only meet virtually. This took away the experience of engaging, delayed the study itself and the process of building rapport. In the end, engagements in this study took place, both, physically and virtually, as an attempt to adjust to the new normal and also catch up to the time that was lost. The hybrid mode of engagements has enabled me to generate data for the study regardless of whether meeting in-person is possible and despite the stakeholder's busy schedules.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

This study referred to the 1979 Belmont Report (Office of the Secretary, 1979) and the South African San Institute's (2017) code of ethics for researchers (the choice was influenced by each of their contributions to ethics, I viewed them as the "then" and "now" of research ethics) to gather insights on the key ethical principles that a study must have. The ethical considerations adopted in this study are informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, justice and fairness, avoidance of harm and voluntary participation.

3.9.1. Informed consent

Arifin (2018) reiterates that a study's stakeholders ought to be given full information before they can commit to participating. The study was introduced to the stakeholders prior to the data generation process, they were given full information on the background of the study, its aims and research questions, and the methods that would be used to gather the data (if they were to their satisfaction). The informed consent forms were handed out after full information about the study had been provided, and stakeholders were informed of their right to withdraw the consent if, at any point, they no longer felt comfortable participating.

3.9.2. Confidentiality

Kaiser (2009), refers to confidentiality as the act or ethical response of protecting stakeholder's privacy, in addition, ensuring that trust is maintained and ethical standards or integrity are not compromised. I kept the data and the identities of the stakeholders confidential, the intention of introducing the study prior to the data generation was to gain the

trust of the stakeholders and that their information would be kept confidential. To maintain confidentiality, the audio recordings, transcriptions, my notes and this dissertation were safely backed up on Google Drive, with access granted to the supervisor only.

I also ensured that the engagements took place in private and safe space. Engagements that took place virtually were conducted through Google Meet and Microsoft Teams and were only accessible to the stakeholders.

3.9.3. Anonymity

Anonymity refers to the principle of not disclosing research stakeholder's identity in a study (American Psychological Association, 2003; British Sociological Association, 2004; Giertsen, 2009; Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). The purpose of maintaining anonymity is to protect a study's stakeholders against harm. In this study, I initiated the conversation of anonymity to the stakeholders, and we discussed their preferences (whether they preferred to be referred to in pseudonyms or their real names). Seeing that the use of their real names would not endanger their lives and that the study posed no harm, the stakeholders preferred the use of their real names.

3.9.4. Justice and fairness

The South Africa San Institute (2017), has centred "Justice and Fairness" on informing stakeholders about the benefits of participating in a study, although this may not be monetary, it is important for researchers to be upfront about the skills or learning opportunities that their study is to provide. The benefits of this study were that the indigenous knowledge stakeholders realised that they can also tell their own stories through digital content creation and Afrocentric ethical guidelines of digital content creation were co-created.

3.9.5. Avoidance of harm

Kumar (2014) highlights the significant value in ensuring that a study does not pose harm to participants (stakeholders in this study). The scholar has raised caution on collecting data in ways that may constitute anxiety, discomfort, harassment and/or endangering the stakeholder's lives. To avoid harm, engagements were held in a safe area (ones that stakeholders had identified as comfortable for them). Prior to the data generation,

stakeholders were asked to disclose if there were any topics related to the study that could cause them distress and anxiety in any way.

3.9.6. Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation involves a stakeholder's ability to decide to participate in a study. After I had provided the stakeholders with full information on the study, they were given a week to decide if they'd like to participate in the study before consent was acquired.

3.10. Measures to ensure trustworthiness

3.10.1. Credibility

According to Shenton (2004), credibility refers to the relevance of a study's findings to real life experiences. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have argued that credibility is one of the most essential measures in ensuring trustworthiness of a study. The credibility of this study's findings was ensured through repeated engagements with the stakeholders.

3.10.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the viability of transferring and applying one study's situation to another (Merriam, 1998). Tobin and Begley (2004), refer to transferability as the transfer of a study's findings from one case to the next, hence it is important for a researcher to give dense descriptions of the findings to ensure that the next person/reader would be able to realise the transferability of the findings. The methods used in this study (semi-structured interviews and sharing circles) aided the researcher in acquiring a dense description of stakeholder experiences, and in the end compiling the co-created ethics that could be applied beyond the study.

3.10.3. Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the availability of evidence to back up the researcher's findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). Tobin and Begley (2004) have highlighted that this could be ensured through documentation of the details that lead up to the progress of the study. I ensured dependability through documenting (in audio recordings and notes) every engagement, updates to data generation methods, analytical techniques and the research design used in this study.

3.10.4. Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the establishment that the study findings and interpretations by the researcher are indeed the experiences of the study's stakeholders and that they represent the data which has been acquired from them (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985), allude that the confirmability of the interpretations and findings is established once credibility, transferability and dependability have been achieved. Beyond ensuring the four measures to trustworthiness mentioned above, two methods of data generation were applied to ensure triangulation and that the findings were not misconstrued. During the documentation of engagements with stakeholders, I repeated back their statements to them to ensure that what I heard was what they said. In efforts to mitigate the misrepresentation of findings, the interpretations of the findings were done collaboratively.

3.11. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology adopted in the study. Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) enabled me to conduct the study in a manner that was respectful and appreciative to the knowledge holders and their practices. The use of PALAR was inspired by its alignment and applicability of indigenous paradigms. It enabled relational accountability and benefit sharing, thus it was emancipatory and amplified the voices of the stakeholders in the study. Through the methodology I was able to use the data generation methods to their highest ability to acquire in-depth and descriptive data that has led to the presentation of the findings in chapter 4.

**** Disclaimer****

The knowledge presented in the following chapter is not my own, despite it being generated through my dissertation, it belongs to the stakeholders. I merely amplify their voices on the challenges experienced.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

"Telling the stories"

4.0 Introduction

The findings of this study are presented and discussed in this chapter. The findings presented are aligned to the all three objectives of this study. The data is organised and analysed through themes that emerged in the data generation process in accordance with the thematic analysis technique. Words, experiences, and insights that were shared by the stakeholders are presented in the form of quotes. The findings in the chapter amplify the experiences and voices of the stakeholders under Dzomo Ḽa Mupo, and the insights of digital content creators with a background in indigenous knowledge. Finally, the co-created ethical guidelines that emerged through the engagements are presented.

4.1 Biographical information

The data presented in this chapter was obtained from the study's stakeholders; that is, an indigenous knowledge holder and digital content creators through semi-structured interviews and sharing circles. The work that Dzomo Ḽa Mupo does made Vho-Mphaṱheleni Makaulule a suitable stakeholder for this study. As a student, passionate about Indigenous Knowledge, during the course of the study, I started an engagement called "All Things IKS Content", where I purposively sampled and engaged five (5) IKS postgraduate students (to be stakeholders in this study) who happened to have interest in fields like digitisation of indigenous knowledge, the use of social media for indigenous knowledge and Information Communication Technology (ICT) with indigenous knowledge. These stakeholders have, in the past, and currently, shared indigenous knowledge content on their social/digital platforms.

The data I generated through engaging with these stakeholders has been organised into themes, consistent with the thematic analysis technique, and their biographical information has been presented in tables below.

Table 3: Biographical information of indigenous knowledge holder

Names	**Gender**	**Who is she?**
Mphaṱheleni Makaulule	Female	Vho-Mphaṱheleni Makaulule was raised in Vuvha, in the Vhembe district. In 1998, she completed a Bachelor's degree in Teaching at the University of Venḓa. From then, Vho-Mphaṱheleni has been actively and passionately advocating for the preservation and transfer of indigenous knowledge to younger generations. In 2007, she founded Dzomo Ḽa Mupo, which through its membership of other knowledge holders has continued to advocate for and raise awareness on environmental conservation.

Table 4: Biographical information with Digital content creators with indigenous knowledge background

Names	**Gender**	**Who are they?**
Glen Maimela	Male	Glen Maimela is a 28 year old Tsonga man, raised by a Molobedu grandmother. He grew up speaking Khelobedu, Sepedi and Xitsonga. Glen completed a Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the degree fuelled his love for IKS. Currently pursuing his Masters in African Studies with a focus on digitisation of African Indigenous games, specifically focusing on how the digital divide affects access to digital African indigenous games. His passion within the field of indigenous

		knowledge is games. This is because they are one of the valuable cultural treasures that are worthy to be shared with the upcoming generations. Outside of his academic life, Glen is passionate about writing and hiking.
Rendani Ṋematswerani	Male	Rendani Ṋematswerani is a 35 year old Venḓa man. He is pursuing a Masters in African Studies. The focus of his study is on exploring the development of communication strategies for Indigenous Knowledge-based agricultural products. He was inspired to focus on this because the communication of indigenous products has been done orally. His study is being conducted in collaboration with Dzomo Ḽa Mupo and University of Venḓa's Community Engagement. Rendani's passions include communication and branding.
Lufuno Ṋetshiavhela	Female	Lufuno Ṋetshiavhela is a 23 year old Venḓa woman; she recently completed her Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge Systems degree. Her research project explored the socio-cultural effects of social media on indigenous marriages in South Africa. While doing the course, she developed the desire to learn more about where she comes from and culture. This is the reason why she is still in the field of Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Outside of her academic life, Lufuno enjoys hiking, cooking and baking, and travelling.
Rovhofhololwa Mandiwana	Female	Rovhofhololwa Mandiwana is a 24 year old Venḓa woman, a former Graduate Research Trainee and

		an Indigenous Knowledge Practitioner. She holds a Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge Systems degree from the University of Venḓa. Rovhofhololwa is currently furthering her studies through a Masters in African Studies, focusing on indigenous knowledge management.
Unariṋe Ṋevondo	Female	Unariṋe Ṋevondo is a 25 year old Venḓa woman from Sibasa, Ṯhohoyanḓou in Block Q. Unariṋe is a Masters student at the University of Venḓa, the focus of her study is on the use of Information Technology and Communication (ICT) as a tool for preserving Tshivenḓa proverbs. Her inspiration to further her studies comes from wanting to be one of the people in the field who will make IKS well-known through her efforts because it is still taken for granted by various people. Unariṋe shared that she is also passionate about taking risks and uplifting others.

4.2 Presentation of findings

During the generation of this study's data, engagements were centred around three core areas (as outlined in Figure 6), this was because the study is some-what a melting-pot of three distinct (but integral) areas, namely digital content creation, ethics and indigenous knowledge. As a result, stakeholders were engaged, and the data organised on the basis of their understanding on digital content creation, their experiences with it and the co-creation of Afrocentric ethics.

4.2.1 Digital content creation

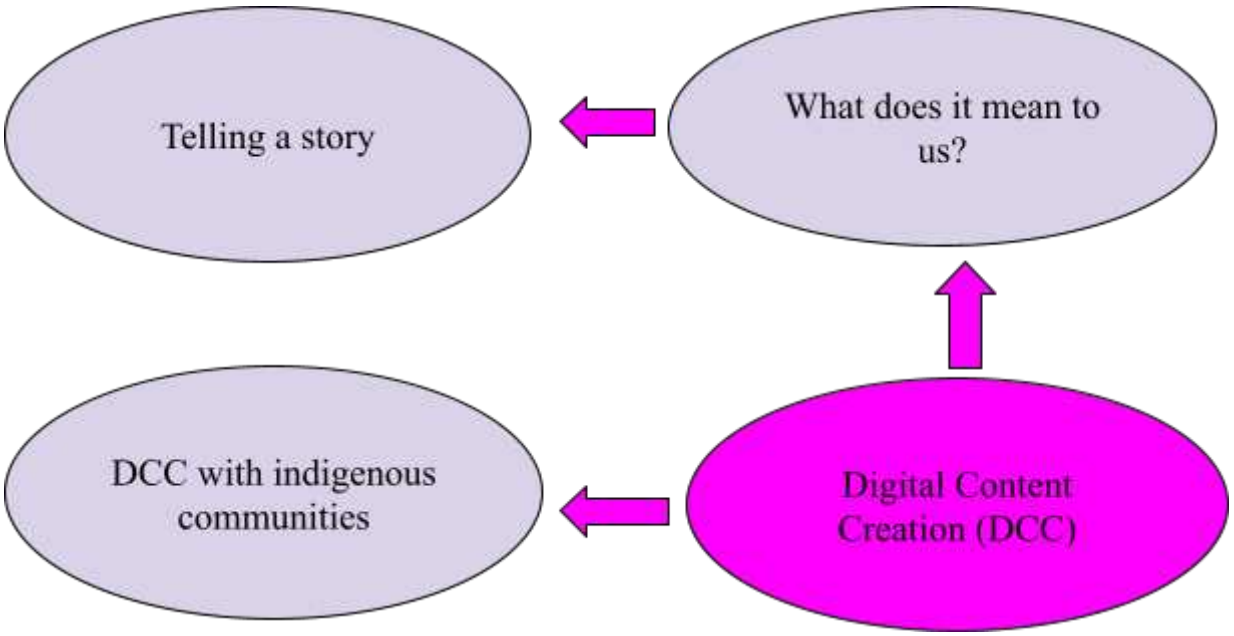


Figure 8: Visual representation of themes and sub-themes in focus area 1

The data presented in this section of the study was generated through sharing circles with the five postgraduate students in IKS. The emerging themes are presented in the section below.

4.2.1.1 What does it mean to us?

In the beginning of our discussion on digital content creation, the biggest question we asked ourselves was "What does it mean to us?" It is a question we all reflected upon, myself included, because I identify myself as a digital content creator. I also shared this information with the stakeholders before the commencement of the engagements. Prior to digging deeper into the discussion of what it means to us, we acknowledged that digital content creators vary, the kind of content produced varies and we defined the concept. There are content creators, who, for them, they need to produce content consistently and frequently. For us, it is a random activity, but that does not make us any less of what we identify as: digital content creators.

The kind of content we produce is for different platforms, and sometimes it is IK-based content. For me, I produce my content on TikTok (travel content), YouTube (this is content based on Heritage sites and Xitsonga storytelling), WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn. The stakeholders in the sharing circles generally hopped between WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and LinkedIn, sharing content about different parts of their lives.

From this engagement, digital content creation was viewed as the pieces of information that we share on platforms like TikTok and YouTube, or any other platform that one is on. In Glen's view:

> *"When you look at the term itself you have to break it down, there is content, there is digital. When you look at digital itself, it's just taking things from analogue to digital. With content creation, we all know about TikTok and we're always creating content*".

In attempts to define what digital content creation is, Glen also acknowledged how the term "digital" is all about taking things from analogue to digital, and content is not exclusive to a certain platform, it could be produced/shared for any social/digital platform. The content can also be in the form of articles, podcasts, infographics, and videos. The process behind creating or producing the content is referred to as "content creation"

In Lufuno's view, digital content creation includes the ideas that we share on social media platforms, and she shared this:

> "*digital content creation is an umbrella term that we break down and explore the type of content that we share on media platforms, on social media platforms, this can be… and since we have a lot of social media platforms that we have access to now, we have TikTok, YouTube, and we've seen a lot of information being shared, based on different ideas and topics on this various platforms. Especially TikTok and YouTube, because everybody, I think everybody loves TikTok, regardless of the type of content that we consume on it*.

From this engagement, Lufuno's words emphasised that different content appears on the timelines of social/digital media users. Regardless, of the kind of content we would like to consume, when one logs into these platforms, you see different types of content, either from those you follow or content influenced by algorithms (on TikTok, for example) according to what you have consumed in the past (or your online activity - with this, once content is posted you can't control who sees it). To the stakeholders, digital content creation means being able to tell their stories to the world. They acknowledged that sharing stories to the world requires one to be comfortable with vulnerability.

(i) Telling a story

The engagements with the stakeholders have indicated that digital content creation is all about telling a story. Glen has shared that, "*digital content creation is the kind of stories that we make for uploads on the digital platforms*". Every piece of content that is shared on social/digital media platforms tells a story. It just depends on the kind of story one would like to share and the consumer target. Content can be created for educational, financial and entertainment purposes. Creators keep this in mind when producing their content and the type of goals they would like to achieve through the shared stories.

4.2.1.2 Digital content creation with indigenous communities

As the discussions proceeded the stakeholders touched on engaging with indigenous communities for digital content creation and the kinds of protocols they follow and are required when one is working towards accessing an indigenous community (these have been presented under section 4.2.3, on the co-creation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines). Stakeholders indicated that there should be protocols in place to be followed by digital content creators when attempting to gain access to the community, in the process of engaging with the community and after engaging with the community, and there should be efforts to document these. This discussion came about as a result of their experience of having engaged with the communities and observing other engagements with creators from outside the communities.

Rendani mentioned this during the discussion,

> "*I think it's something that is unfortunate that before one goes to the community, some of the protocols you might not be familiar with. But then you should be flexible as soon as you are right there because there are some instances where you go to the community and find, like chairs put there for maybe, like visitors or like residents to come and sit. But you will sometimes find this unique chair that you will see that this one is unique and is not like other chairs and if you fail to observe them you might find that you're sitting on a chair that is preserved for the chief of that area*".

What he discussed here highlights the importance of flexibility and being observant when going into an indigenous community. For people who might be new to the setting and never having been exposed to it, it is a lot harder to know what to observe, hence flexibility is important.

4.2.2 Stakeholder experiences of digital content creation

In the engagements with Indigenous Knowledge holder, Vho-Mphaṱheleni Makaulule, she shared her experiences and challenges that she and her community (elders of Dzomo Ḽa Mupo) have experienced in attempts of digital content creators using their knowledge to produce content.

This is what she had to say:

> *We've had people who take audio and video recordings of us, including film-makers. They come to our communities, we spend time with them, they record us and ask deep questions about our knowledge and our sacred practices. They go create films, and post on their YouTube channels and there is no benefit to us. No ethics, they post these as if it's their own and with no acknowledgement of the holders. In respect of Ubuntu, we can't deny them the assistance when they come to us. It is because of Ubuntu that we always assist them.*

To give context to her quote, the production of digital content creation through indigenous knowledge has become common. However, Indigenous Knowledge Holder (Vho-Mphaṱheleni Makaulule) has expressed her concerns around digital content creators engaging with them and presenting their knowledge on YouTube or other social/digital media platforms. Her concerns are that the knowledge they acquire is presented to the creators benefit and without the acknowledgement of the custodians. This Knowledge Holder has also advocated for the need to create their own Afrocentric ethics that should be adhered to when digital content creators engage with them and present their knowledge, as current ethics are of Eurocentric origin and do not favour indigenous knowledge/communities. Thus, this study was carried out.

The following themes and sub-themes emerged from my engagements with the stakeholders:

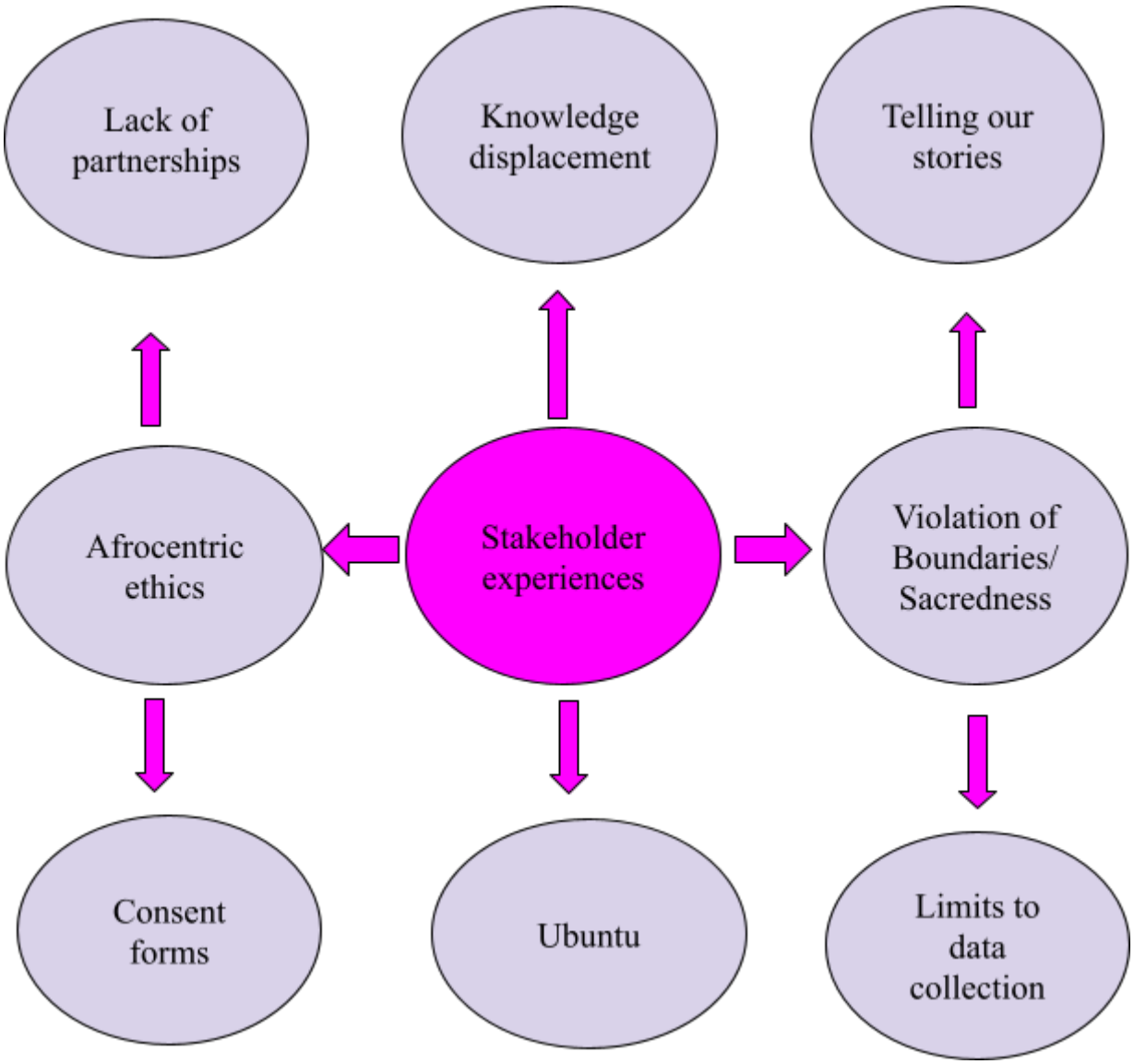


Figure 9: Visual representation of the themes and sub-themes in focus area 2

4.2.2.1 Afrocentric ethics

Digital content creators coming from outside the community are unfamiliar with the ethics of the community, oftentimes, they never fully fulfil the requirements, or rush through the processes required to interact and be respectful to the practices of the community. According to the stakeholders, there are protocols in place that a digital content creator, or any researcher or outsider, has to follow when attempting to seek entry, engaging with the community and after the engagement.

Another concern highlighted in this area is the lack of proper documentation of these ethics and protocols. If these were documented; the community would be able to share them with

digital content creators, and they could familiarise themselves with those ahead of time, in an effort to learn about the community. One of the important wishes of the stakeholders was to see these ethics and protocols documented.

Below are some of the sub-themes that emerged when discussing the issue of having Afrocentric ethics.

(i) Consent forms

Consent forms are considered as one of the prerequisites for data generation. Stakeholders who are indigenous knowledge researchers have confirmed that they hand these out when engaging or exploring knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge Holders also confirm that these are handed out to them to sign. The consent forms usually highlight that the stakeholder/participant consents to the engagement and that they are aware of their right to withdraw if they wish to do so.

Vho-Mphaṱheleni has negative views on the use of consent forms. She has indicated that consent forms are used to steal their knowledge and to rob people. These consent forms, in her view, are always to the benefit of either researchers/digital content creators and not to benefit knowledge holders. In instances where they have attempted to get acknowledgement for their knowledge or claim ownership of it, they have been alerted that they consented to the engagement. This is also some-what controversial because no one should be able to use a consent form to claim ownership of knowledge that is not theirs.

In addition, Vho-Mphaṱheleni mentioned that, "*people need to be informed why they are signing this paper instead of just giving people to sign it*". This statement was mentioned in the context that sometimes the consent forms are handed without a clear indication of what they mean. According to Vho-Mphaṱheleni,

> "*The consent form is a thief which does not recognise the importance of the knowledge holders. It is driving the western/European way of digging information that is holy, sacred and deep in a way that you don't have to dig, dig and uproot everything"*.

(ii) Lack of partnerships

According to Vho-Mphaṱheleni, Dzomo Ḽa Mupo elders wish that there could be long-standing relationships and partnerships that would come out of the data collection

efforts by digital content creators. This is because once the digital content creators have achieved their goals, and acquired the knowledge they wanted from the elders, they never return back to the community for an update on how they have used the knowledge, or even to confirm if how they understood the knowledge was what the elders meant. Ubuntu, to Dzomo La Mupo, also involves building long-standing relationships. For the elders, once they have spent time with a person sharing their life stories, it means that they are building a relationship that needs to be nurtured.

4.2.2.2 Violation of Sacredness and Boundaries

The stakeholders indicated that digital content creators often present their knowledge with disregard of its sacredness and boundaries of what they should share and shouldn't. Vho-Mphatheleni has indicated that she has seen many videos of their knowledge that have been presented on the internet and some of the things were not supposed to be shared with the world. This is the example she gave:

> *Initiation schools are a celebration of life and the growth of children, what you are taught there is not supposed to be shared with people who have not gone to initiation and people who are yet to undergo initiation. But now, you find that there are people who are writing about these initiation schools and sharing everything about them. A child grows through levels, and now a child who has not reached the level to go to this initiation school is reading about what happens in the initiation school, and it is sacred.*

It is concerning for stakeholders that sacred information can now be accessed on the social/digital media platforms and this goes against the norms of how the knowledge should be transferred.

(i) Telling our stories

The engagement with the stakeholders revealed that it is time for IK Holders to tell their own stories. This also highlighted the importance of intergenerational learning and digital content creators respecting their boundaries.. If indigenous knowledge is passed down to the younger generation, they, more than anyone, have the right to tell these stories and share their knowledge with the world. They would have lived in that world/community, gained a life-long experience and have a better understanding than content creators from outside their communities.

What follows is a quote shared by Vho Mphaṱheleni to highlight why it is important for them to tell their own stories:

> *An experiential person is very different from a person who reads and writes from other books. An experiential person has the knowledge and it was passed down by their ancestors. Those who read and write books just get the knowledge and write as their own, they will never understand it.*

This was to emphasise that even though people may write books with the knowledge, it's never theirs, and they will never present the knowledge like an individual who is a custodian of the knowledge.

(ii) Limits to data collection

For clarity, data collection was referred to as "data generation" in this study. However, Vho-Mphaṱheleni, in sharing her experiences, used the word "data collection". She used this term to indicate that while collecting data, individuals should heed instructions that there are certain issues that should not be exposed to the world because of their level of sacredness. If a creator is trusted with the knowledge (to give context to the story they are being told), they should keep that confidential, a violation of confidentiality is unethical.

4.2.2.3 Displacement of Knowledge

Stakeholders have indicated that digital content creators coming from outside their communities explore their indigenous knowledge with the intention of learning more about it, or for research purposes. The content is presented on their YouTube channels/digital social media platforms as their own and without the acknowledgement of its custodians. Their concern is that digital content creators coming from outside their community have their own worldview and explore the knowledge with their own assumptions. This displaces the knowledge, because creators present the content as their own, the knowledge is misrepresented and plagued with their own misinterpretations and bias.

Their concern with the displacement of the knowledge or it being misrepresented, is that the correct way of African norms and practices becomes lost, and future generations might never know the correct way of doing things in a way that their ancestors did them. Vho -Mphaṱheleni shared this:

> *In the future, my great-grandchildren and my descendants will walk into a library and read my knowledge and not know that it is the knowledge of their ancestors because somebody would have presented that knowledge as their own.*

In this, she has highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge being documented and documented in the right way. This also sparked the discussion about confrontations that she and the elders of Dzomo Ḽa Mupo have had in the past where they confronted digital content creators who have used their knowledge for financial gain without their acknowledgement. With this, she shared that digital content creators have termed the knowledge from Indigenous Knowledge Holders as assumptions that ought to be validated against further research, and they have further responded that they are the ones who do all the hard work to make sure that the knowledge is presented to the world and not the Indigenous Knowledge Holders.

Vho-Makaulule has also shared how heart-breaking this response is, that *"the content creators are the ones who do all the hard-work"*, because her and her elders have always made the effort to safely preserve this knowledge in their minds to the point that they are able to share it when asked about it.

4.2.2.4 Ubuntu

The stakeholders in this study have identified Ubuntu as an important part of their being as Africans. Through the semi-structured interviews and sharing circles I found that teaching and sharing are an important part of the lives of indigenous communities. When you are able to share, teach and show love to those around you, you are considered a "person", they say you have "*Vhuthu/Vu munhu/Ubuntu"*. For the stakeholders, this is a guiding principle of life. It is the reason why when people visit their communities they are always happy to welcome them with open arms and assist. Their *Ubuntu* prompts them to share their life experiences and their knowledge with people who take interest in it.

Through the semi-structured interviews and sharing circles, it was indicated that they feel that their *Ubuntu* is being taken advantage of. Digital content creators who come to explore their knowledge from outside of their communities know that they will be welcomed into the community and they can always get the assistance they need, even when they are not giving back much to the community.

4.2.3 Co-created Afrocentric ethics

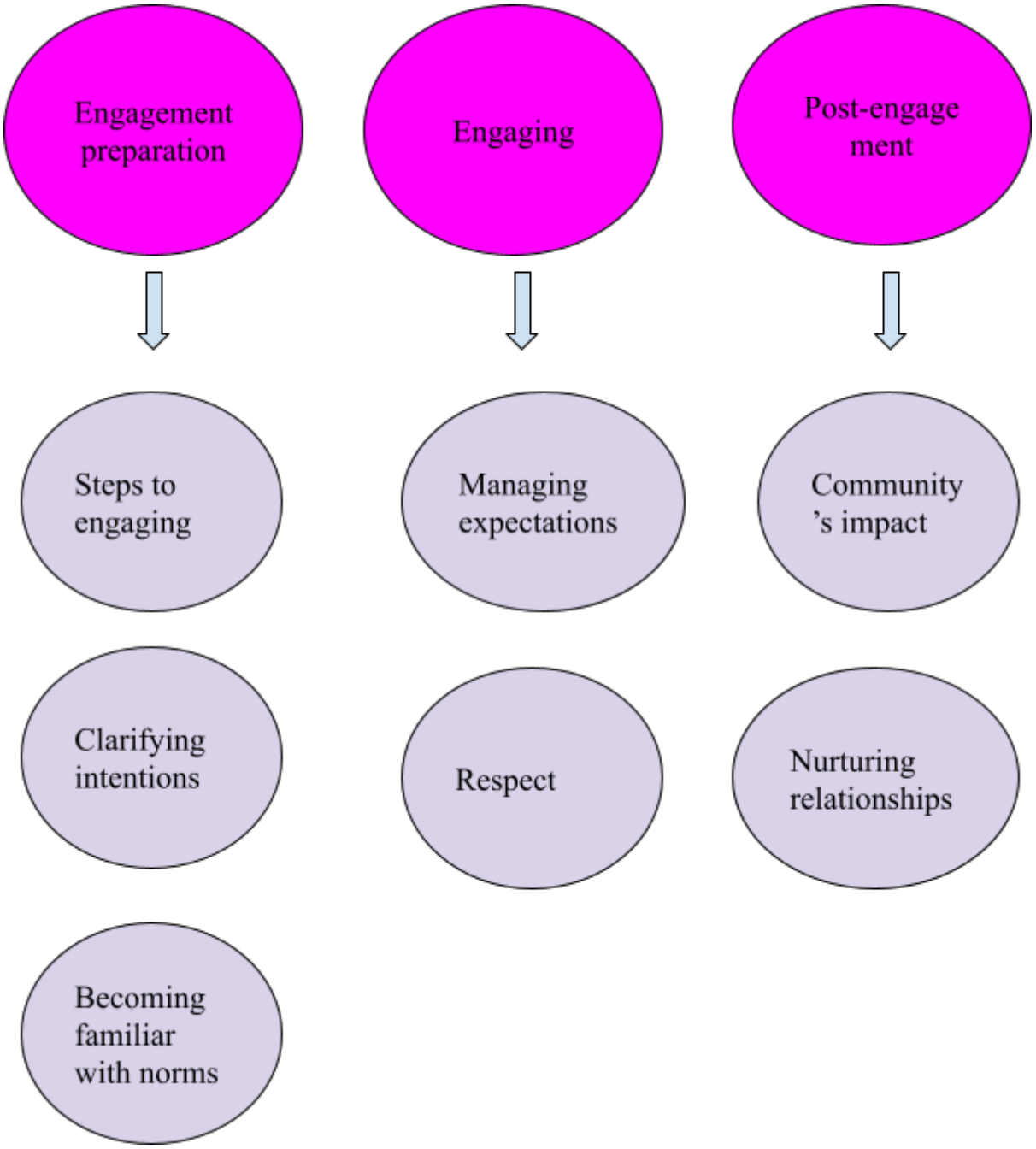


Figure 10: Visual presentations of the main themes on focus area 3

4.2.3.1 Engagement preparation

Flexibility and observing the scene in the field have already been highlighted by stakeholders in the study. They have also outlined steps that should be followed by digital content creators

when preparing to engage with an indigenous community. The stakeholders have also discussed the importance of following protocols that are in place in that community.

(i) Steps to engaging

Writing a letter was identified as the first step towards preparing to go to the community. A creator should write a letter to introduce themselves to the chief/leader/*Vha-Musanda*, what they do and what they need in the community. Language is at the core here, as Glen has discussed this: "*You can't write a letter to the chief of Vhavenḓa in Sepedi or another language other than Tshivenḓa*". This highlights that when hoping to go to a community, the use of language that is understood by the community is important. The use of a language that is either unfamiliar to the community or the creator can contribute to misrepresentations of knowledge or the loss of its meaning.

Writing this letter does not guarantee that one will be granted access to that community/that one will be allowed to go into the community. The leader may convene a meeting with the community's council before writing back. The stakeholders encouraged that the date and time is something that should always be decided by the community and not dictated by a creator. When creators go into a community with funding for a project, they will usually say the funds have to be "accounted for" and gift bearing was not included when applying for the funds.

In African culture, and in respect of Ubuntu, when going into a community or visiting, you have to bear gifts as a symbol of your good intentions. Rendani has shared this with regards to gift bearing:

> *Sometimes you might find that maybe the modern chiefs do not follow that anymore. But it's something that one should consider that I am going to the chief and I should at least have something as a gift to the chief or traditional leader of that community. So I think it's something that needs to be accounted for. When a funding has been awarded, you have to be accountable to every cent spent, and we should still include gift bearing in the budget for those funds*.

Gift-bearing is just as important like any other aspects included in the budget for a project.

(ii) Clarifying intentions

The stakeholders have outlined the importance of clarifying intentions when going into a community. This takes the introductions a step further from the letter, and the engagement is in-person as opposed to the letter. It is important to communicate clearly, why you're in the community, what you need from the community and how they could be of assistance. In clarifying intentions, a creator should also introduce their project and how this links with the community or its Knowledge Holders. With introducing the project, the community becomes aware and are able to decide whether they want to participate in it and if the knowledge required by the creator is something that they can provide.

(iii) Becoming familiar with the norms

After clarifying one's intentions, the stakeholders indicated that it is also important to get to know the community's norms and culture. This helps with developing a background of their practices and understanding the community, while building rapport with the stakeholders who are to participate in the digital content creation project. With a better understanding of the community, a creator has a better context of the knowledge or the topic they want to produce content on, most importantly, they know how to conduct themselves, and the boundaries and protocols in place.

- Boundaries and Protocols

  In the engagements with Vho-Mphaṱheleni, she repeatedly discussed the importance of boundaries. Once a creator has taken the time to know/understand the norms of that community, they will be able to understand that community's/knowledge holder's boundaries. This includes the kinds of questions to ask and what not to ask, what may be recorded and what not to record. Through the processes they would have followed when gaining entry, they should, at this point, know the protocols of the community. Both boundaries and protocols are important when engaging with the community. Glen gave an example of the *domba* initiation schools in explaining boundaries and protocols:

  > *We have the indigenous protocols for example, as i mentioned if you want to do the content about uhh…. content about initiation schools for example, Domba, considering the boundaries and protocols in place, i must know that as a man, i cannot record content about Domba (a girl's initiation school).*

4.2.3.2 Engaging

(i) Managing expectations

During the sharing circle, the stakeholders indicated that when a creator goes into the community, they have to manage expectations. By managing expectations they have to inform community members of what they can expect in/from the project. Transparency and honesty are crucial. Glen shared the story below about one of his experiences that emphasised managing expectations:

> *When we were introducing ourselves the Vhakoma was the one listening so that he could pass the message to the chief. And he was saying that these people are involved in a project that's bringing in a lot of money, so we have to be involved in it. From that point I want to emphasise the point of when you go to a community, just make it specific, just say that this is what I am doing, and there will be no monetary benefit. If there is any, this is how you will benefit. Because if you fail to address that part you might find that they are expecting monetary benefits or any other benefits from your project.*
>
> *Whereas your project does not make money, so you have to state everything like okay this is me, this is my project, this is the period that it's going to last and i am not going to make money out of these things. If i am going to make money from this i will definitely have to share with those who were involved in this project. Because if you fail to do that, you might find that you're going to receive a lot of calls after the project is done, saying that this person is a fraud and all this stuff. But you have to say these are my intentions, these are my plans. Be transparent so that everything is clear. Don't give people expectations*.

Managing expectations takes clarifying your intentions a step further, as the community knows what to expect from you.

(ii) Respect

Through engagements with the stakeholders, respect was commonly referenced as a quality that should be maintained throughout engagements for content of any kind or any research conducted for content. Respect can be portrayed through a number of ways. Dressing appropriately, is one of them. For women this could be through clothing that covers

shoulders, a long dress and learning how to greet the elders. Oftentimes, younger people tend to think introductions are just saying your name and surname. But, this is deeper and detailed information about who you are, where you come from and who your parents are and where they come from.

In the discussion and reflection with the stakeholders who are students, we have also shared experiences about how, with IK Holders, you can never ask a question and expect to get the answer right there and there. Due to IK Holder's immense life experiences, they tell stories about what you ask, the stories show the beauty and depth of the knowledge they have acquired throughout their lives, and take you on a tour to their world. One has to be patient and flexible, because that is respect, and one also has to be open to seeing through the lens of the elders.

4.2.3.3 Post-engagement

(i) Community's impact

In the discussions with stakeholders, the significance of producing content for impact was highlighted. Acknowledging IK Holders was also highlighted under this theme. Not acknowledging IK Holders for their knowledge and contribution takes away their voices, because one would have claimed their knowledge, which is an integral part of their lives. Acknowledgement is the start to producing content that is emancipatory and impactful to the community.

Producing IK-based content should be beneficial to IK Holders. In the past, DLM has received digital content creators who have made films, videos or written books with the knowledge. They were able to use the knowledge to their benefit, but the IK Holders did not receive any benefits, even though they are the sources of the knowledge and it is their knowledge that they have lost ownership of, all because of their effort to assist and practise Ubuntu.

In light of this, Vho-Mphaṱheleni shared this:

> *It's been long we have been sharing our knowledge to people, they produce films and books and make money, with our knowledge, they say they can't pay for documentaries, but the films and the books are in the market, we have to pay to access them, and it's our knowledge and there is no cent to Dzomo Ḽa Mupo*.

To this research, this has also highlighted the need to provide workshops/information sessions on Intellectual Property Rights. Beyond providing workshops, and considering that payments are regarded as unethical to certain Ethics Regulating Councils, it is unfair and should be unethical to acquire knowledge from a community, benefit from that knowledge and not give back in any way to that same community.

(ii) Nurturing relationships

The stakeholders have shared how much relationships and partnerships matter to them. Digital content creators should nurture relationships with indigenous communities beyond the projects that they worked on with the communities. Another issue that was indicated on this theme was the importance of reporting back on how creators have documented the findings before producing/presenting content on social/digital media platforms. Reporting back was preferred during the engagements because the stakeholders would be able to clarify misunderstandings, potential misrepresentations and help the creator make sense of what they have documented.

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented the study's findings on digital content creation, stakeholder experiences on digital content creation and has co-created Afrocentric ethical guidelines for digital content creation as outlined by the stakeholders. The co-created Afrocentric ethical guidelines give a digital content creator a guide on how they could approach the indigenous community, engage with indigenous knowledge holders and how they could present those findings ethically. These ethical guidelines were co-created and documented through the lens of Dzomo Ḽa Mupo knowledge holders and can be applied to communities with similar experiences.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The beginning of another journey"

5.1. Conclusion of the study

This study was aimed at co-creating Afrocentric digital content creation ethical guidelines. The objectives were as follows: i) To discern the Afrocentric ethical guidelines considered by digital content creators when creating IKS based digital content, ii) To explore stakeholder experiences on digital content creation of indigenous knowledge (IK)-based content, and iii) To co-create the Afrocentric ethical guidelines preferred by indigenous knowledge stakeholders in the creation of indigenous knowledge based digital content. The focus of this study was identified through the engagement with the elders of Dzomo Ḽa Mupo, and their sharing of the challenges they had experienced regarding the exploration of their knowledge from a Eurocentric perspective. Thus, the aim was crafted in respect of the experiences of the stakeholders.

In conducting the study, the gap in the ethics of digital content creation with indigenous communities from an Afrocentric perspective was identified. It was for this reason that digital content creation ethical guidelines from the perspectives of this study's stakeholders were co-created. The co-created ethical guidelines consisted of three steps and were discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. The co-created ethical guidelines included the following as guidelines: Engagement preparation, Engaging and Post-engagement. These detailed the fundamental steps that digital content creators should keep in mind when producing IK-based content.

In the findings, "telling a story" and the documentation of indigenous knowledge emerged as important activities for both the digital content creators and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, this has emphasised the need for stories of indigenous knowledge to continuously be told, but in an ethical manner. The study has concluded that the proposed ethical guidelines are a fundamental contribution to the literature, and will provide guidance on the ethical guidelines that should be followed by digital content creators in the future.

While I felt that the objectives of this study had been achieved, there is a need for continuous discussions on the production of IK-based content and how IK Holders can be supported in their attempts to tell their stories by themselves. Beyond this, the participation of the youth is also important in the efforts to document and share stories on indigenous knowledge, but

first, the knowledge has to continuously be passed down to them and they have to be willing to learn more about the knowledge of their elders and ancestors.

5.2. Recommendations of the study

Based on engagements with the study's stakeholders, the following recommendations are made:

(i) The involvement of Indigenous Knowledge Holders in the production of Indigenous Knowledge-based content

In the exploration of the stakeholder's experiences on the production of IK-based content, this study has recommended that IK Holder be involved in the production of IK-based content to ensure that the process is collaborative and emancipatory. This recommendation was made on the basis that the indigenous knowledge shared that they are not involved in the content production with their knowledge. This study's findings have noted challenges like knowledge displacement, loss of knowledge ownership, the lack of benefit-sharing and violation of boundaries and sacredness due to the exclusion of IK Holders. The voices of IK Holders matter and their involvement in the production of this kind of content will ensure that their stories are not misrepresented and that they are known as the owners of the knowledge.

Their involvement would also be beneficial for the IK Holders because they would develop the skill-set and be able to independently tell their own stories, and contribute to their knowledge preservation according to their own terms.

(ii) Production of toolkits with ethical guidelines preferred by Indigenous knowledge holders

During the engagements conducted in this study, stakeholders expressed concerns about lack of documentation of Afrocentric ethical guidelines, thus this study has recommended the production of toolkits with Afrocentric ethical guidelines outlined by the IK Holders. While this study has documented Afrocentric ethical guidelines for Dzomo La Mupo, and will create a toolkit, more toolkits should be created for other indigenous communities with similar experiences.

(iii) Intergenerational learning to ensure that knowledge is passed down

Stakeholders in this study have expressed the need for the younger generation to participate in sharing the knowledge passed down by their elders. They are the rightful owners to tell

these stories. They would have lived the experience and are familiar with the knowledge, and in a better position to ensure that the knowledge is not displaced. Their contribution to sharing this knowledge will be directly beneficial to their communities.

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Annexure A: Ethical clearance

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms TE Nyoni

STUDENT NO:
16020899

PROJECT TITLE: **Co-creation of culturally congruent ethical guidelines for digital content creators: A case of Baleni cultural camp and Dzomo La Mupo sites.**

ETHICAL CLEARENCE NO: FHSSE/22/MER/03/1309

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof VO Ralifhanabanna	UNIVEN, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies	Supervisor
Adv. Dr PE Mashilabe	UNIVEN, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies	Co - Supervisor
Ms TE Nyoni	UNIVEN, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Heritage Studies	Investigator – Student

Type: **Masters Research**
Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)**
Approval Period: **September 2022 – September 2024**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
  - Without delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that could/ought to) affect ethical principles during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Should any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Should there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, this ethics approval is immediately forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Should the project need to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the REC with new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC reserves the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
  - To ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
  - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
  - Any required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
- Your institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions if it necessary.

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: July 2022

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2022 -09- 13
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou 0950

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature

Annexure B: Interview guide with Indigenous Knowledge Holder

1. Please share information about the work that you do
2. What are your experiences as an indigenous knowledge holder with digital content creation?
3. What impact has digital content creation/creators had within your work?

Annexure C: Sharing circles guide (With IKS Postgraduate students)

Establishing context

1. How do you define digital content creation?
2. What does digital content creation mean to you?

Delving into data generation

3. How have you/did you negotiate access in an indigenous community?
4. What ethical guides/principles have you adhered to?
5. How have you presented your content/data collected?
6. What platforms have you used to disseminate it?
7. What kind of relationship do you have with the community post the digital content creation process?
8. What outcome/impact did you hope to achieve, and was it achieved?