

**RETHINKING THE ROLE OF *MAHUNDWANE* AS AN EDUCATIONAL GAME FOR
VHAVENDA SPEAKING YOUTH**

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DECLARATION

I, Thizwilondi Joanbeth Daswa, hereby declare that this dissertation for Master of Arts degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference material contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the late my son Rabelani Tilly Daswa and his siblings Mukovhe, Mutsireledzi, Mulondi and Musiki. You were such an inspiration to me.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to rethink the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth. Since time-immemorial, *mahundwane* has been an integral part in empowering the Vhavenda youth for marriage, sexuality education, moral behaviour and other African values. It has been noted that with the advent of modernisation and lack of documentation, *mahundwane* has been abandoned by the majority of Vhavenda youth resulting in many social-ills like teenage pregnancy and others. The overall objectives were to explore the nature and the process of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda youth, to identify the teaching acquired during *mahundwane* game and to examine the educational value of *mahundwane* in Vhavenda youth. The study was founded on the socio-cultural theory and modernisation theory to attain its findings. This study utilised the qualitative research design. Data collection methods included face-to-face semi-structured interviews, observations and focus group discussions. The study participants were selected using purposive and snow-balling sampling. To effectively document the nature, processes and the role of *mahundwane* in educating the youth, community elders and other knowledge holders were engaged. This study was of importance in reviving some indigenous games that are almost extinct. The study recommends an introduction and intensive expansion of social media technologies, inclusion of the indigenous games into the education curriculum and introducing copyright and intellectual property rights to effectively address the extinction of indigenous games and practices.

Key words: Culture, Indigenous games, *Mahundwane*, Youth

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IKS	:	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IK	:	Indigenous Knowledge
NGO	:	Non-Government Organisation
STDs	:	Sexual Transmitted Diseases

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study was framed within the Traditional African and Cultural Learning and Development paradigm. The Traditional African and Cultural Learning and Development paradigm was preferred so as to authenticate and empirically justify the findings of an undiluted African perspective. However, it is worthy to note that the researcher was trained in a Western scientific way of research, thus, the Traditional African and Cultural Learning and Development paradigm seemed integrated with the Western paradigm. This, however, should not be a hindrance as I am of the view that we cannot totally discard the Western methodologies if we are to successfully develop our African methods and paradigms. .

Nyota and Mapara (2008) reflect that the study of the cognitive development of the young has captured the attention of earlier and development psychologists such as Piaget and Vygotsky (cited in Berger 2000), Rogoff et al. (1990), Tharp and Gillimore (1988) and Berger (2000). Most of these scholars have studied the western and eastern child on the main, with little or no focus on the African child. Furthermore these scholars were interested in the social apprenticeship aspect of cognitive development which they also went through. This type of cognitive development takes place in a socio-cultural environment through activities such as games, riddles and songs. Having said this, I will put attention on why I adopted this paradigm in my research.

Modernisation process causes young children and youth not to be no longer exposed to traditional ways of doing things. Most people are no longer going to the river to fetch water and to the mountain to fetch firewood while most boys are not talking care livestock wherein they used to practice hunting by using their dogs and at the same time protecting the livestock from being attacked by wild animals. When sunset boys would bring back the meat they caught while hunting.

In these two different environments both boys and girls, s games were played or practiced in those environments. Children hardly know their culture and their cultural practices. They seem

to spend most of their time in modern technologies like computers, cell phones and televisions. The Eurocentric activities make them to miss some form of learning skills like story-telling and folklores that used to be practised or narrated by parents or elders while sitting around the fire. However, it was through traditional games, traditional schools and practices like mahundwane where children were guided on cultural matters. My search for ways in which children could learn responsible family life and responsible citizenship in general, influenced my interest to investigate *Mahundwane*. *Mahundwane* game entailed a process where youth who have come of age are allowed to stay away from home, usually at the fields during harvest, where they mimic family life. During their stay, boy learn to provide for the family whilst girls learn to cook, and care for the children. Parents would provide for, and assist in setting up pseudo-households, i.e. setting up traditional huts made of harvest wastes, usually maize plants as those were the common produce in the area. Depending on the different ages, each one would adopt a role, i.e. Older boys would play a role of the father, older girls a mother, younger boys and girls would adopts roles as children, etc. After consensus has been reached amongst themselves, each one would then play the assigned role out there for a number of days. Boys would wake up to hunt and look for food whilst girls would do all the household chores such as cooking and looking after the children, thereby mimicking real life situations.

My pre-liminary research interviews focused on ascertaining whether anything has been written and published about Mahundwane. As far as I could establish, no study has been conducted about *Mahundwane*. The references that I came across with is an article by Nyota and Mapara (2008) who wrote about *mahumbwe* in a Shona setup as well as Amusa and Toriola (2009:52) who raised concerns that indigenous games are traditional games that were played in the past and some were not recorded or published in books for learning purposes. I thus begun the study by seeking information about the origin of *Mahundwane* and the thinking there behind. I contacted three elders in the community and asked them about the meaning of *Mahundwane*. I found different explanations. One elder told me that *Mahundwane* refers to *nndu dza khole-khole* or *nndu dza madze* (pseudo houses or huts) whereas another one referred to it as *mahondwane*. Seemingly, the concept is a combination of two concepts (*Maho* or *Mahu*) which means madze and (*ndwane*) which means small huts. I further learnt however, that there is a deeper philosophical meaning in the word *Mahudwane*, which relates the society and its culture.

Mahundwane games entail a process whereby youth who have come of age are allowed to stay away from home, usually at the fields during harvest where they mimic family life. During their stay, boys learn to provide for their family whilst girls learn to cook and care for the children. An analysis of this seemingly simple drama shows that it has the capacity to instil in the youngsters those cognitive skills that are valued in Vhavenda culture. In fact mahundwane is a very important rites of passage in Vhavenda culture in that it teaches and establish in the children's mind the duties and roles they are expected to play when they have their own families. In other words, as small and temporary as they are, bigger cultural activities that reflect real societal life are taking place in these houses. This is a practice in which everything concerning a family is done, for example, child rearing practice and issues pertaining to reproductive health and hygiene are addressed.

Is mahundwane a game? This is the question which is still to be contested, in some cases, mahundwane is classified as a game, and others are in contestation that it is a role-play while some argue that it is a traditional school. Nyota and Mapara (2008) explored *mahumbwe* as a socio-dramatic play. This is how they view mahundwane in Shona. After conceptualising this with my supervisors, I decided to further inquire on what really happens in mahundwane. Mahundwane embraces all the popular games like *ndode*, *muravharavha*, *mufuvha*, *khadi*, *mudzumbamo*, and *tshiponono*.

1.2 Problem statement

The practice of Mahundwane role play is almost drawing to extinction. As far as I could establish, only one or two villages adapted version of *mahundwane* game. Furthermore, the processes and the practices of *Mahondwane*, like other similar games and role plays were never documented. As a results, not many youths and young adults know about *mahundwane*. Furthermore, most of the elders and indigenous knowledge holders who knew and practised it during their youth are dying and thus leaving a void of knowledge associated with *Mahondwane*. The implications are that no lessons can be drawn from such practices. My study sought to document the practice of *Mahundwane* such that the next generations would know how it is played, when it is played, why it is played and the location in which it is played as well as rules of engagement. This is done to raise awareness about the importance of *Mahundwane* and identify aspects that can be improved

for the current environment to enable children to continue to learn about their socio-cultural identity through this game. This view is supported by Van der Merwe (1999) who opines that localised ethnic and socio-cultural identity are preserved and transmitted from one generation to the other through indigenous games (*Mahundwane*).

1.3 Rationale of the study

The study is envisaged to add value to the body of knowledge through the education of principles about the importance of the game. It will help the youth to grow physically, socially, intellectually and economically with maturity. This will help to bridge the gap between the youth and the culture they are subscribed to.

The findings of the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game will help in the effective indigenous knowledge practices and sharing the nature, processes of the game with the Vhavenda speaking youth and all the youth who want to learn more about cultural activities. The study will propose the strategies that will help in the revival of the *mahundwane* as an educational game for youth.

The study will suggest adding the contemporary and relevant knowledge in the existing methods of documenting it for future scholars. The findings are expected to open up areas for further studies of *mahundwane* as an educational indigenous game. The recommendation of the study, guidelines of the documentation of *mahundwane* as an educational game will be useful to the academics.

1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to rethink the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth in the Vhembe district, Thohoyandou, South Africa.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore the original nature and processes of *mahundwane*
2. To identify the teachings acquired during *mahundwane*
3. To examine the values of *mahundwane* game amongst the youth.
4. To assess the relevance of *mahundwane* in the contemporary world
5. To develop a contemporary model game that replicates *mahundwane*

1.6 Research questions

The following are the research questions underpinning the study:

1. What was the original nature and processes of *mahundwane*?
2. What were the teachings acquired during *mahundwane*?
3. What were the values of *mahundwane* game amongst youth?
4. What is the relevance of *mahundwane* in the contemporary world?
5. What would a model game that seeks to replicate *mahundwane* look like?

1.7 Definition of terms

Below are the definitions of key terms used in the study:

1.7.1 Culture

Culture refers to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Odetola (1983:10) defines culture as a man's social heritage, all the knowledge, beliefs, customs and skills acquired by members of a society.

1.7.2 Indigenous Knowledge

Warren (1991) and Flavier (1995) present typical definitions by suggesting that Indigenous knowledge (IK) is the local knowledge – knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society.

IK contrasts with the international knowledge system generated by universities, research institutions and private firms.

1.7.3 Youth

South Africa's National Youth Policy, as well as its National Youth Commission Act (1996) and its Integrated Youth Development Strategy (Act No. 54 of 2008.) define youth as a person between the ages of 14 to 35 years.

1.7.4 Educational games

Educational games are games that are designed to help people to learn about certain subjects, expand concepts, reinforce development, understand an historical event or culture, or assist them in learning a skill as they play. Game types include board, card, and video games (Townsend, 2001).

1.7.5 Indigenous games

Indigenous games refer to traditional games that were played in the past and some are not recorded or published in books for learning purpose (Amusa & Torialoa, 2009).

1.7.6 Mahundwane

Mahundwane refers to a game played by young people, males and females aged fourteen to twenty-one years. The game is played by imitating the real family set-up where there would be a father, mother and a child or children (Lumadi, 1998).

1.8 Organisation of the study

The study consists of the following five chapters:

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and background of the study

Chapter One outlines the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, operational terms and the organization of the study.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review

Chapter Two presents reviewed literature on the role of indigenous games in the development of youth.

CHAPTER 3: Research design and methodology

Chapter Three presents the methods and the design used when conducting the study. This chapter also outlines the data collection method.

CHAPTER 4: Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation

Chapter Four focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation. The information will be presented in a coherent and orderly manner.

CHAPTER 5: Findings, conclusion and recommendations

Chapter Five includes the summary of the study findings, discussion, conclusions, and also makes recommendations. It also provides finding which arose from the objectives and the research questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviews the literature on indigenous games of Vhavenda and other cultural groups in South Africa as a cultural practice. This is done with the aim of validating them so that *mahundwane* indigenous game can be revived for moral regeneration among the youth. The first part of this chapter addresses the theoretical framework used in this study. The second part gives a critical analysis of literature on the topic under study to provide the reader with in-depth understanding of arguments put forth by the proponents and opponents of *mahundwane* as an indigenous game.

Literature review is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to one's selected area (Boote & Beile, 2005). Also, literature review should describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify literature and articulation of relationships between the literature and field of research. It should give a theoretical basis for the research and help you determine the nature of your own research. One is supposed to select a limited number of works that are central to one's area rather than trying to collect a large number of works that are not as closely connected to one's topic area (Brunett & Hollander, 2003). A literature review goes beyond the search for information and includes the identification and articulation of relationships between the literature and a specific field of research. While the form of the literature review may vary with different types of studies, the basic purposes remain the same.

The researcher reviewed relevant historical literature related to indigenous games to be compared and contrasted between previous and current studies. This review aimed to link the history of progress and modernity with the indigenous game of *mahundwane* with a view to better understand the impact of modernity on the indigenous game of *mahundwane*.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is one of the most important components in the research process. The value of a theory-driven thinking and acting is emphasized in relation to the selection of a topic, the formulation of research questions and the conceptualisation of the literature review. In this study, the choice of the framework reflects important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of indigenous knowledge. This knowledge is very important in child-rearing and instilling norms and values. However, the disappearance of *mahundwane* depicts the issue of cultural erosion, hence the research used the following theories in exploring the study of *mahundwane*:

2.2.1 Socio-cultural theory

The study was framed upon the socio-cultural theory. Socio-cultural theory is an emerging theory in psychology that looks at the important contributions that society makes to individual development. Cohen (2000:15) states that this theory stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture that these people live in. Piaget emphasises that the young children strive for understanding in a world that fascinates and sometimes confuses them. He tends to regard cognitive growth as a process of individual discovery propelled by personal experience and biological maturation. Vygotsky agrees with this and also emphasises that children do not strive alone since their efforts are embedded in a social context where the things they notice make them become inquisitive. Vygotsky further argues that parents and elder children offer assistance, present challenges, provide instruction and encourage the child's interest and motivation (Nyota and Mapara, 2008). According to Vygotsky (1978), socio-cultural theory is a form of learning process which originated from human intelligence in society or culture. He continues to say that interaction plays a major role in the development of human cognitive growth. He believes that everything is learnt through two levels of learning. The first learning is through interaction with other people. The second level is collaborative learning. The researcher, therefore, used this theory to assess the interaction and learning that *mahundwane* indigenous game brought to the developing youth. The African Vhavenda philosophy submits that indigenous games like *mahundwane* played a pivotal role in shaping the thought patterns of the youth and maturing them in decision making when it comes to family and life issues (Ngulube, 2002: 32). As such, the researcher assessed this

cultural game and its social significance in teaching the Venda youths morals and responsibilities in life. Thus, exploring the social and cultural practices of the people involved, the significance and educational nature of the games will be cleared.

2.2.2 Modernisation theory

In addition to the socio-cultural theory, the researcher adopted and utilised the modernisation theory. The modernisation theory describes and explains the process of abandoning old ways of doing things and adopting new ways which are regarded as modern and contemporary. In this regard, modernisation refers to a model of a progressive change from a traditional form to a modern form in society. This theory generally looks at different factors that can be used to attain a standard that many can comply with in the current era or epoch. Some proponents of the modernisation theory such as Parsons (2005) have stressed the need for cultural change if development has to be genuinely achieved and attained. However, this is critical as the modernisation theory is criticised for resulting in the erosion of the cultural values of the indigenous people (Huizinga, 1955). The researcher shall be arguing that the adoption of the modernisation theory should be done not to undermine these values and norms, but to reach out to the youths who, themselves, are modernised.

2.3 Historical background of children's games

Play has been regarded as a primary occupation of childhood (Ramugondo, 2009). Children's games gained presence in recent literature due to its evolutionary significance for ensuring human survival and its preparatory role for adulthood that took prominence. According to Ramugondo (2009:44 - 49), children's cultural worlds have been scantily reflected in history and research. This is so across all cultures as observed by Barnes and Kihely (2003).

In contrast, researchers like Nyota and Mapara (2008) have researched games, songs and play in their own Shona culture. They have given thorough analysis, guided learning, and psychologists' views on how children develop cognitive skills through the Shona Traditional Songs, games and play. They further emphasises *Mahumbwe* as a socio-dramatic play. It is a traditional children's play that is participated in by children in the age groups of about four to fourteen years. These are children of both sexes. It involves the youngsters camping near their homesteads. In this game, the

youngsters play house. They assign one another roles such as fathers, mothers and children. In addition, other members form the extended family like aunts, uncles, cousins, nephew and nieces. The plots of *mahumbwe* are both very simple and elaborate. For instance, the mother-baby scene may just consist of feeding the baby, sleeping and waking up, while the husband-wife plot is more elaborate. It involves for example, the husband gathering food and the mother cooking and serving the food.

An analysis of this seemingly simple drama shows that it has the capacity to instil in the youngsters those cognitive skills that are valued in Shona culture. In fact, *mahumbwe* is a very important rite de passage in Shona culture in that it teaches and entrenches in the children's psyche the duties and roles they are expected to play when they have their own families. Gelfand (1979) highlights the importance of this stage in the child's learning curve. They further explained that *mahumbwe* play provides a way for the children to explore and rehearse social roles that they shall occupy in the real adult life. As the children play in *mahumbwe*, they get a chance to convince others of ideas during petty discussions at a dare (family meeting place for men). The children also learn to control their emotions as they simulate serious issues such as parenting and adolescence in a playful manner. They also get enlightened and have chances to explore and examine personal concerns in a non-threatening environment of real parents and adolescents. The play also enables youngsters to create self-understanding as the play affords them to be active, interactive and imaginative. In other words, adult activities took dominance in research, thus leaving out children's activities which include games (Huizinga, 1955). The researcher argues that this has a negative impact on children's lives as the activities that build them in life and give them entertainment are ignored. Sutton-Smith (1997) argued that this neglect on the children's welfare, especially games and play, is a recipe for producing delinquent children who will in turn, become hardened criminals in the future. The researcher, therefore, is building on this view to develop the indigenous game of *mahundwane* as an educational tool for the youth. This will mark a milestone in history of developing indigenous games as they have been neglected at the expense of modern technological games.

Since time-immemorial, most developmental psychologists have shown interest in the manner in which parenting styles influence the social development of their children. Even though parents are

not the merely contributing agents to the socialization of children, the family has always been considered a main agent for socialization. Such decisions have a bearing on key issues such as societal norms and values, socio-economic issues such as socialisation of the young, food production, processing and preservation as well as natural resources management (Nyota and Mapara 2007), The researcher also submits that indigenous games should not be excluded for child rearing practices, especially in indigenous family setups. Webster (2005) defines child rearing as the process of taking care of and raising children. The researcher opines that using a variety of agents to raise a child helps the child as they will be shaped in all angles of life and not one. Child rearing practices have been highly esteemed and are mainly grounded in indigenous games and music (Sambo, 1998). By sending their children to go and play, mothers were promoting the social development of their children. They knew that the children were going to learn to control themselves in a social environment and to tolerate other children. Game-songs such as *mbita ya vulombe* (Venda – *tshidudu tsha mutoli*) develop courage and trust in Tsonga children's lives; a child that is thrown into the air trusts that their friend cannot let them fall on the ground. The counting game, *mbhalele wa mbhale* (Venda – *mbale, mbale, mbale*), develops mathematical skills. Mental development of critical thinking could be developed through game-songs which require quick decisions and working under pressure such as *xitimela-machoni* (Venda – *tshidimela haka matorokisi*). Aronoff et al. (1969: 154) convey that music-movement games for young children have the primary purpose of providing opportunities for practice and improvement of listening skill and muscular control. Indigenous Tsonga skipping and jumping games and game-songs such as *khadi* (rope-skipping) develop children's physical bodies and help in keeping them fit and healthy. Game-songs such as *jakopo* (child is blindfolded, searches for a partner by asking where are you) develop listening and planning skills.

Nyota and Mapara (2008) observed that the traditional Shona children's games and play songs provided an opportunity where the children learnt by guided participation in social experiences, in explorations of their world as they play. Such similar play has been found to instil in the young self-confidence, social skills and social understanding,

They further observed that many social skills can be learnt through Shona traditional children's games. For example, the children learn to share tools used for the games such as *nhodo* (a game

similar to Jacks) and ndondo where necessary. (These two games are explained later). They learn to manage conflict such as to respond to a playmate's accusation, for example, when a playmate says, "Wabira" (You have cheated), especially when the accuser has been beaten in a competitive game. They can also learn to keep friends and playmates. They can learn to manage and deal with those playmates who are not always understanding and self-sacrificing, for instance one who is always quick to denounce friendship, "Hausi shamwari yangu futi" (You are after all not my friend). These skills have consequences that teach the children about social interaction from youth to their adult years.

Some of the earlier published work on children and their place in society first emerged from within sociology and anthropology wherein authors like Aries (2008) traced the history of childhood from the middle ages to the end of the 18th century in his book 'Centuries of Childhood'. This author can be credited with having undertaken the quest to recognise that children did exist in the past (Aries, 1962). Some research studies have laid the foundation for the interrogation of childhood as a social construction, since a number of accounts are now regarded as untenable (Corsaro, 2005). Aries followed this lead and constructed their writing on childhood history based on indirect evidence such as paintings, philosophical works, religious publications, notes from professionals and letters (Mergen, 1992). Lately writers have improved on this and sought evidence from more direct sources such as narratives, diaries, and autobiographies.

Barnes and Kihely (2003:23) revealed that an exploration which includes considering kids' play, especially fables in detail, demonstrate that instead of an aggregate decay, there is a dynamic joining of contemporary pictures and encounters into verifiably inserted ones. Notwithstanding, Boyes (1995) is especially revered for having represented how certain play frames in the ordinary quest for British youngsters can be followed from the proof gathered from the 1950s to the 1990s by the Opies. What is by all accounts rising up out of recorded investigations of youth and research which investigates the advancement of play particularly, is that the thought of adolescence and in addition of youngsters' play are as one a co-making of the two grown-ups and kids. In Hannawalt (1993), Hannawalt's rich portrayal of children's play, recreations and cooperation in broad daylight ceremonies and festivities depict kids as social on-screen characters among their associates, in their families, and in their groups as from back in the fourteenth century. Grudgeon (1988), in help

of Hannawalt, additionally avers that a long way from being inactive, youngsters are viewed as dynamic operators of social change and congruity as they make diverse forms of recreations and rhymes that are frequently in light of social and social trends. In addition, Wilkie (2000) noticed that in the decision, utilisation, upgrade, and treatment of play objects, children likewise show their thoughts on certain societal patterns and their own status in the public arena.

For example, Formanek-Brunell (1992) in ‘Girls in their use of dolls during play’, noticed that the girls studied did not simply internalise their parents’ values of mostly preparing for motherhood, but displayed their own agenda, demonstrating a dialogue of control and resistance with the adult world. An analysis of the above statement shows that dolls during play developed an utopia in the child’s mind wherein they become involved and learn through realisable experiment which equips them for real life. This element of enculturation as seen in children’s folklore and games has been stressed by some to the point that adult roles in the continuation of these traditions have been underplayed (Grudgeon, 1988). The researcher then agrees with Barnes and Kihely (2003:30) who maintain that transmission of playground songs and games from one generation to another is initiated and moderated by children themselves, without any adult intervention. By this, it means an adoption of the *mahundwane* games for educational purposes can play a pivotal role in building children in terms of morals and practical experience without the involvement of parents.

2.3.1 Socio-cultural dimension phenomenon of the games

The acculturation process most common to play and games is known as syncretism and refers to a process by which ideas from one culture are adopted by another so that what ultimately evolves, are actually novel ideas and manifestations. According to Hirth (1991), culture is not static, and games and play forms will unavoidably change over time. The traditional label represents a time dimension of being preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next (Guttman, 1994).

Van der Merwe and Salter (1990) on the other hand observed that the socio-cultural dimension of play related phenomenon is reflective in the shared symbolism, collective values and meanings evident in the more traditional forms of functional play behaviour and games that are recognized as residual cultural products. The process of enculturation contribution to the inter-generational transfer of acculturation relates to the adaptation and influence of other cultures which led to the

modern Westernized versions of the traditional games such as African stick fighting (Wanderi, 1999).

2.3.2 Contemporary educational games

Toys and games have a substantial impact in the early improvement of children, absolutely in the more created nations of the world (Eyben, 1993). In such nations, the business creation of toys is in the alliance of huge business. Toy fairs are held, both national and worldwide, and the scope of toys and amusements cross global limits in their fame (Pong, 2003). From the local perspective, it is plausible that in a family with youngsters, the festive seasons give the best driving force to the giving and getting of toys and amusements. This in no way, shapes or forms another wonder. Archaeological findings have demonstrated that toy making existed more than 4000 years back, and huge numbers of the toys utilized around then are as yet being utilized today in some shape (Shin, 2009).

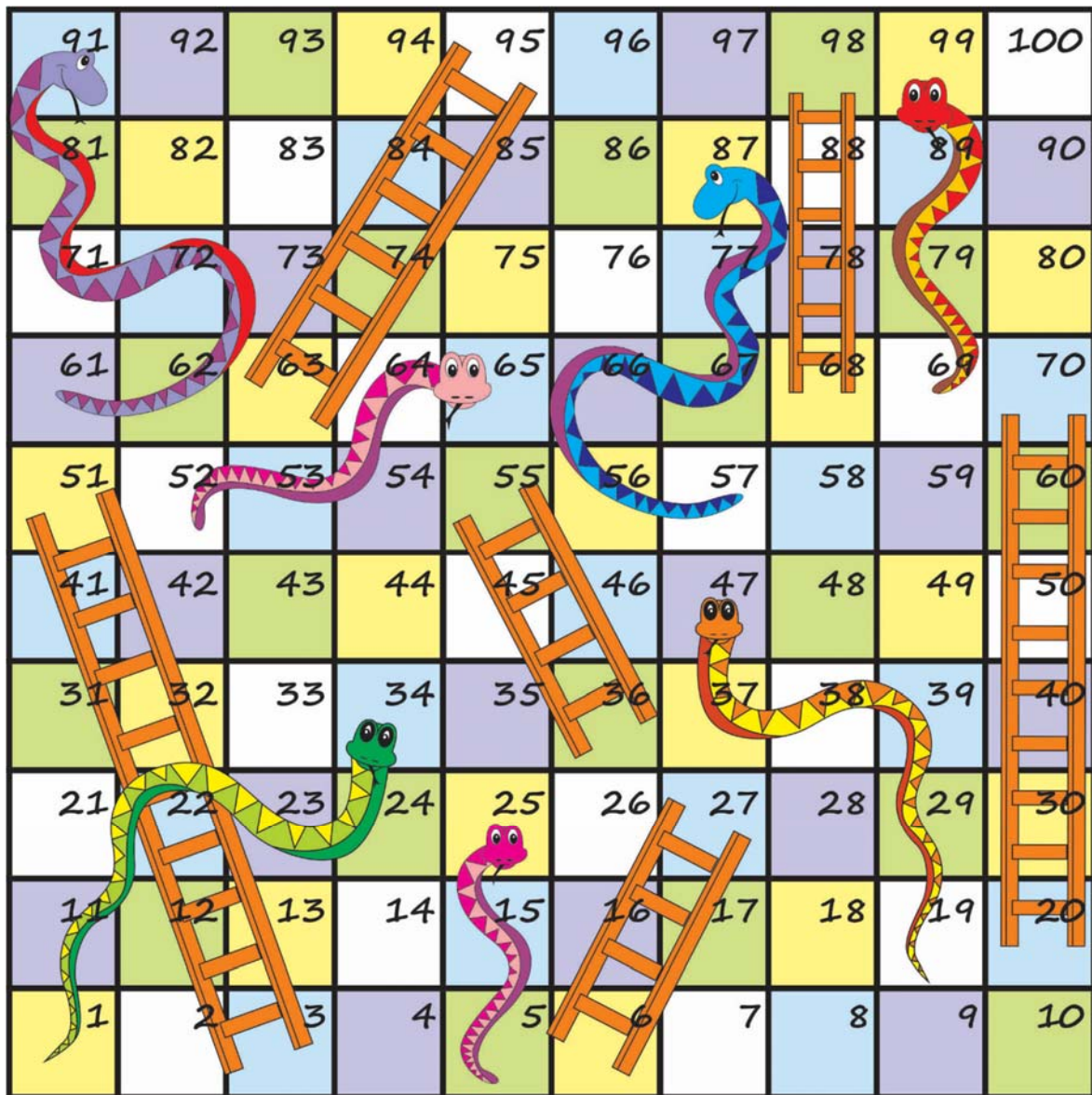
In this advanced period of computers, computer games have turned into a noteworthy programming part (Bostrom, 2009). It is contended that kids quickly figure out how to work the computer through presentation to games since they are spurred to do as such. In the event that this contention is acknowledged, then we have a solid case of learning through play. Regarding innovation, the increments accessible to the essential computers to expand their range is again a learning background for youngsters, who frequently wish to broaden the scope of their computers to perform more unpredictable recreations. In empowering the child through computer amusements, we may see the advantage in the classroom and research centre when the children advance to learning science as specializations in the later years of optional training (Cloughessy, 2013).

In spite of the fact that the lion's share of schools in the less developed countries are not liable to have computers within a reasonable time-frame, the school children in these schools can make the most of their initial encounters in learning science and innovation through toys and amusements (Croft, 2014). For some, the main organized learning of science and innovation is what they will get amid their elementary school training. By acquainting them with science and innovation through recognizable and charming encounters, their cravings might be whetted to proceed with

their learning by means of out-of-school instruction programs, and in this way, turn out to be more helpful to the group all in all (Heckman, 2000). This study therefore empowers knowledge holders, policy makers and teachers to re-appraise their teaching approach and, where appropriate, incorporate indigenous games into their teaching so as to create a more suitable learning environment for their pupils. Now that we note the importance of education imparted through contemporary games, below are some examples of contemporary games and toys which can, and are used for education purposes:

Health Education Snakes and Ladders

Below is a picture of the snakes and ladders game:

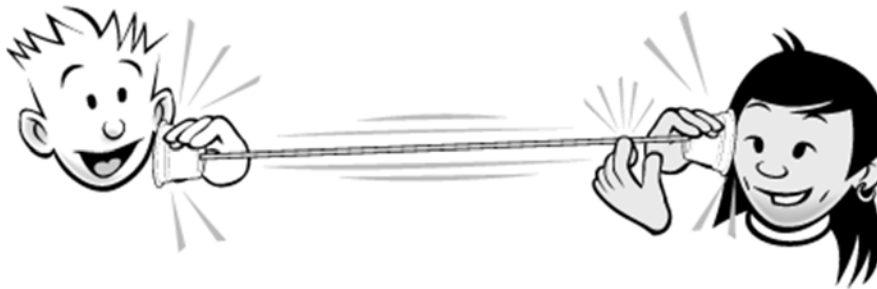


This example of Snakes and Ladders in Health Education was designed by P. Kneebone and D. Guthrie for the Disabilities Study Unit in co-operation with the Child-to-Child programme. This version was published in the Journal of Education in Science for Trinidad and Tobago (JESTT, February 1984) and the following was stated:

“The centre-page spread which follows is an idea which can be modified endlessly. Change some of the polio clues ... devise a similar game for gastro...for nutrition...for safety in the lab...”

After you have designed your board, you will have to photocopy and/or gestefax for the groups. 'A word of caution from our experience with classroom games: insist that children read, and can tell you why they went up and down ladders and snakes. That makes the difference between a game and a learning experience' (Hoff, 2007).

A string telephone



How does the Ear Guitar work?

“When you pluck the string on an Ear Guitar, the string starts vibrating. The vibration in the string starts the bottom of the cup vibrating, which starts the air inside the cup vibrating. The cup helps channel those vibrating air molecules into your ear-so you hear the sound loud and clear.

Your voice, like other sounds, is a vibration. (Put your hand on your throat as you talk and you'll feel the vibrations). When you talk into one of the cups, the vibrations of your voice travel into the cup, then from the cup into the string, and then back into the other cup. The cup channels your voice into your friend's ear.”

The above game has been noted to be effected in educational concepts or skills to be developed:

‘It teaches that sound travels through solid materials such as thread and wood, sound travels through water (liquids), communicating skills (one speaks and the other listens), designing and making (teaching innovation of making a telephone model) and also manipulating materials and equipment effectively’ (Hooge, 2012).

A critical review of the modern and traditional games unveils that one needs to know that learning can be fun since students are probably going to have been adapted to class being a position of diligent work and no play. This is supported by the modernisation theory that generally looks at different factors that can be used to attain a standard that many can comply with the current era or epoch. The teacher can do this by a cautious investigation of his educating techniques. In a case wherein the main requisite is to dynamically expand on past information, then the fresh debut in the school ought to begin his gaining from the point of view of his past experience which, as a rule, will be toys and amusements, and unquestionably so if the child has been sufficiently lucky to have been presented to pre-school instruction, for example, a kindergarten or play-gathering (indigenous games).

2.4 South African records on indigenous games and play

There is little documentation on South African indigenous play. This is consistent with an overall lack in the documentation of indigenous knowledge in the country (Burnett & Hollander, 2004). As a result, in 2000, the National Research Foundation established a research programme to support and promote research in Indigenous Knowledge Systems nationally. The South African Sports Commission also commenced with the development of a database on indigenous games and resurrecting these as part of sporting events in all provinces.

What is particularly missing in South African literature is how children's play has evolved across generations. Where research on indigenous play has been done, it has focused on games and looked at which games are played across several ethnic groups during a particular short period of time such as in the research done by Goslin and Goslin (2002) or taken a general perspective and looked at all aspects of children's lives in a particular region of South Africa as observed in Reynolds' (1989) study. The South African Sports Commission's efforts to promote indigenous games nationally are due to the recognition that South Africa as a nation has lost some of its traditional games that are indigenous to specific cultural groups and geographical areas (Burnett & Hollander, 2004). Although this initiative by the Commission is important, it might be a premature exercise if there is no understanding of the functions that these games or plays have in general and in the different cultures, what the patterns of change are and are becoming over time, and what brings about such changes.

Culture provides the context in which play and games occur (Corsaro, 1996). Culture thus exists in a dialectical relationship with play where culture shapes play. It is however, also reciprocally shaped by it. A focus on games rather than play generally is not strange to South Africans. Sanders (1978), having noted that games have been the mostly researched subject, argued that without separating play from games we could never really fully understand play. Without understanding the past and its implications, it is difficult to understand the present and to influence the future. With passing years, what could be learnt from children's play within indigenous cultures continues to fade into the unknown and becoming more inaccessible. If culturally relevant play has significance to society's health and well-being, we could be losing out on using play as a resource.

Hollander (2004), cited in Amusa and Toriola (2009), mentioned that social scientists, historians and anthropologists in South Africa undertook studies of different population groups. These groups existed in various cultural pockets under a political dispensation that first impose a class system, and then openly fostered separate development under apartheid regime from 1948 to 1994. According to Van der Merwe and Salter (1990), research has been conducted on physical culture and games of indigenous inhabitants as part of nurturing the youth as they grow. The government of South Africa is in a mission to revive indigenous games in all the nine provinces. The revival of indigenous games in South Africa evolved as a response to the national call to embrace African renaissance and is intended to polarize those cultural activities that have a particular appeal to vast sectors (Phaswana, 2000). In this regard, the researcher foresees *mahundwane* as a good game that should continue to be played and to be revived. Furthermore, something should be done in the community to revive this indigenous game. The researcher needs to readdress *mahundwane* as it is seen to be an umbrella game that embraces almost all characteristics of Vhavenda indigenous games in it. During *mahundwane* season, all children of different age groups play games of their ages. Those who are playing their role as children play the younger children's games like *ndonde*, *khadi*, *mudzumbamo*, and others. When they finish playing or during lunch time, they go to their respective homes. *Mahundwane* seems to cater for all youth of different age groups and gender in South African society, particularly the traditional rural people (Phaswana, 2000).

During *mahundwane*, youth who pose as parents would go to the harvested fields and look for the remaining maize or maize-cobs called *thalane*. Thereafter, the females grind the mealies at their

respective homes making preparations for the *mahundwane* game. Ramugondo (2009) agrees with Lumadi (1998) that mealies are ground by girls using a traditional grinder (*mutuli*) to make the maize fine and eatable. Parents do assist their children with utensils to cook and with dried vegetables (*mukusule*). The girls would clean and decorate their shelter using cow dung. The youth would practise everything done at home like cooking, sending children to fetch water, obey instructions from parents and helping with family chores.

According to Lumadi (1998), the main aim of the game is to prepare youth towards responsible adulthood. However, the youth were not expected to sleep in their make-shift houses during *mahundwane*. Amusa & Toriola (2009) mentioned that indigenous games are traditional games that were played in the past and some are not recorded or published in books for learning purposes. They are the core of culture, and are practised by a particular group of people. Indigenous games are played according to age group and gender during the developmental stages of a person. It is of importance for the society to preserve each culture since a society that does not preserve its culture destroys its own origin and identity. Indigenous games played a very significant role in the development of youth in the past (Amusa & Toriola, 2009).

Amusa & Toriola (2009) note that indigenous games cannot be separated from culture, and the new generation has to know its origin and language. There is no culture without language and all these games are played while language is in use. The indigenous games, particularly *mahundwane*, need to be preserved to add educational value to young people since it has been used to teach youth some morals and values. This idea was supported by Kwenda (1997) who reported that indigenous games were designed to preserve extremely important information about the details of African religion and culture that only the elderly have, and which is likely to disappear if it is not recorded. This was also supported by Spencer (1985) who pointed out that games should therefore be recorded for the benefit of future generations. It is obvious that whenever these games take place, participants learn something that is significant in their lives. The author further pointed out that those indigenous or traditional games are seen to be educating children toward adulthood in which they are expected to be wise, peaceable, serene, generous, and concerned for the good prestige of their village. Indigenous games need not to be neglected as they play an important role in shaping the behavioural patterns of young people.

Hendriks (2002), in Amusa and Toriola (2009), reported that indigenous games are persuasive symbolic representations of cultural expressions that convey messages of manifested cultural products, context and lived realities of the participants. The uniqueness of the creation and transference of indigenous games and cultural content through play is in the first instance, evidence of environmental influences, experiences and shared pool of knowledge among people. Children are bearers and creators of the culture that micro-cosmically reflects broader cultural dimensions and socialization over a time.

Furthermore, Blanchard (1999) avers that indigenous games carry a recognizable cultural footprint, tracing the lifestyle and knowledge system of a particular collection within certain geographical boundaries. It is to be analysed and understood as a recognizable pool of knowledge as a particular level of human existence (Blanchard, 1995:42). There is a need for nations and collectives to gain recognition for their unique cultural products that may contribute to a notion of nationhood (Warren, 2006). In this respect, there is an intangible cultural heritage of play, games and physical culture that reflects games in their unique and similarity across time and space. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) observed that previous works are informed by an interpretative approach, or make use of symbolic interactionist framework to make sense of multidimensional and varied game texts and context. Micro analysis and description place emphasis on the lived realities of participants, and may utilize other theoretical perspectives for understanding the phenomenon (Goslin & Goslin, 2002).

Furthermore, behaviourists and academics in the fields of psychology and education studied play and game behaviour with the focus on child development and socio-cultural learning. Avedon and Sutton-smith (1979) and Cohen (1993) in their research studied the relationship between play and child development and socio-cultural learning. Play theorists also tapped into psycho-analytical framework in order to explain the remedial and recreational impact of active participation in games and play (Levy, 1978). For them, the role of play lies in educational and formative value that can be understood and utilized in socialization and educational practices (Sutton-Smith, 1979). Games and play are manipulated, facilitated and taught in informal and formal settings to optimally aid the holistic development of the child through role modelling and skill acquisition (Calhoun, 1987).

The child is thus socialized into the values and norms of a particular society and equipped with the necessary skills to fulfil his or her role as a responsible adult within society.

2.5 Colonial education

What is colonial education? Colonial education had an impact not only on youth, but also on the whole of South Africa and the cultural practices of the native people (Sengani & Ladzani, 2011: 157). Barnouw (1934:19) and Mzamane (1999:63) assert that colonial education had a negative impact on youth with regards to issue such as identity and has limited the knowledge of what used to be done in indigenous education structures. However, Ramugondo (2009) outlined that missionaries played an important role in the promotion and extension of Western education in Venda. Education was described as an effective vehicle for evangelism, and all the different mission societies initiated their own education programmes (Benso, 1979:17).

Until 1910, when the four colonies of Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and the Cape were reconstituted as provinces and amalgamated into the Union of South Africa, the mission stations carried the most responsibility for education in the various native reserves, including Venda (Mathivha, 1985). The State only supported them through subsidies. Consistent with the apartheid ideology of controlling the African population under a separate administrative system and ensuring effective repression, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was passed. Through this Act, the State was able to tailor the education of the African child to suit its labour needs, especially in the mines, on farms and in white households. A black child was forced to learn Afrikaans so that he or she could communicate effectively with future employers. Partial primary education was regarded as good enough (DeLany, 1998). Even as Venda was declared a self-governing territory within South Africa in the 1970s, it retained the basic education programmes and systems launched in terms of the Bantu Education Act (Mzamane, 1999).

Many scholars recorded that modern education dates back from colonial period in Africa (Christie, 1988). This is called formal education. From this literature, one can state that the main aim of colonial education was to force African children to conform to the culture and the life-style of the colonisers and to strip away Indigenous learning structures. Colonisers introduced the formal education which was also regarded as western and made the schools to be attended inside the

church buildings. This justifies why this researcher is exploring the introduction of indigenous games, especially *mahundwane*, as educational tools for the youth. This is envisaged to result in the preservation and restoration of the cultural aspects and life-style that the colonisers stripped away from indigenous people through colonial education.

Rodney (1972:264) also opines that colonial education in Africa was education for subordination, exploitation, creation of mental confusion and the development of the under developed. Rodney saw the aim of education as the gradual destruction of skills done by colonial or modern education amongst Africans instead of emphasising a well-rounded education. The colonial scholars and planners of education paid no attention to people's cultures in the educational curriculum. Rodney was startled that traditional education was regarded as backward whereas he reaffirmed that it was through this education that Africans had built a respectable human being in a society. Uchendu (1979: 3) also supported that the purpose of all colonial education was subordination of Africans. Africans were regarded as people of lower rank or inferior people. Uchendu also noted that Africans were of less importance according to colonialists, and that is why the education given to them was of less importance.

In addition, Ajayi (1996:16-20) reported that colonial education caused Africans to lose self-respect and love for their race. Apple (2004: xxv), when arguing about this modern education, mentioned that modern education is the blockage of our formal institutions of education. This study also speaks of ways in which this process can be redefined. Instead of people who participate in the struggle to build and rebuild our educational, political, and economic relations, we are defined as consumers, but in education, it is truly disabling. This work requires participation of the guardians of tradition, who are true experts and are real knowledge holders.

However, there are positive aspects of modern education such as research, reading, writing, counting, all of which need to be integrated with African traditional education system. The scholars above are worried that colonial scholars did not integrate their system of education with that they found among Africans.

This type of education impacted the lives of the youth by giving them inferior education facilities (Msuya, 2007). According to Msila (2007) the main aim of Bantu Education was to create a

completely segregated society, to direct black or non-white youth to the unskilled labour market and to ensure white control and prosperity, all orchestrated and implemented in the name of God. Scholars like Gary (2006) and Sean (2009) reported that several youths died in 1976 because of Bantu education system that the youth of the country were opposing. They also noted that the results of this system of education led youth to abandon school since they were mistreated by police and did not receive equal opportunities for learning in their own languages like their white counterparts.

2.6 Moral degeneration among the youth

Moral degeneration is the decay of good morals and values (Silvestre, 2011). The president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma (2015), in one of his speeches supports Ladzani's (2014) submission that there is a perception of moral degeneration amongst the youth today in South Africa and around the globe. Parents feel this degeneration acutely as their children no longer obey their instructions and do not greet them in the traditional way of greeting for boys and for girls (*u losha*), even taking care of them in the spirit of Ubuntu (*vhuthu*). This is in complete contrast with Vhavenda worldview which encourages deep respect for elderly people who are referred to as those who brought us into the world (Khorommbi, 1996: 34). This moral decay can be attributed to the death of traditional games within the African communities. Some scholars maintain that during the subsistence of the indigenous games, morals were noted to have been observed (Lwoga, Ngulube & Stilwell: 2010). In this sense, the indigenous games of South African bears witness to the Afro-centric nature of the Nguni, Sotho and Venda speaking people which seeks to impart these morals and values whereas the Euro-centric and oriental knowledge bases will reflect the culture of European, Asian and Indian descents respectively. Before the advent of the church and formal Western-type of schooling among the Vhavenda, there were traditional institutions that played an important role in instilling good morals among the youth.

The justice and police departments as well as Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) are arguably said to be delaying and undermining the African System of Education in many communities. All these structures, if not properly utilized, seem to lack a good supporting basis of teaching morals and values. Also, the church has become too westernized and seems to neglect the African norms and indigenous games that impart morals (Ladzani, 2014). Some of the songs learnt

in initiation schools attended were sung during play time and during *malende* dance. *Malende* songs are very educative and informative, though Stayt (1931) and Blacking (1967) viewed them as beer songs, but these are just misinformed views.

Some of the songs that may be sung reminding the young women that they are no longer girls have been documented by Matshidze and Klu (2016: 43). The song below noted by Matshidze in her analysis of songs as an expression of Venda women's emotion clearly dismisses the submissions of Stayt (1931) and Blacking (1967):

Song 1

Ni songo ri ndi mulovha 'Do not think it is yesterday'

No ima dzikhoneni 'Standing at street corners'

Ni tshi amba nga lufuno 'Talking about love'

Namusi ni musadzi 'Today you are a married woman'

Na vhone ni vha vhudze 'You must tell them'

Uri namusi ni musadzi 'That you are now a married woman'

Na sa ralo a ni nga u fhati 'If you do not do that you will never have a family'

Namusi ni musadzi 'Today you are a married woman'

The submission of Stayt (1931) and Blacking (1967) still calls the researcher to view their analysis as Eurocentric and as clear misconception of African indigenous peoples' indigenous values and norms. These Eurocentric views that *Malende songs* are beer songs could have been based on the misinterpretation of the songs and the essence of them. Matshidze (2016: 44) also vehemently notes that whenever a jealous wife suspects infidelity of the husband, a song of courage would be sang;

Song 2

Heleli wee he leli

Kha vha vule gethe nne ri tshimbile

Vhasadzi vha fhano

vha na luambiso vha toda u ndzhiela

Heleli wee he leli

Open the gate I want to go'

These women propose

They want to take

<i>Khotsi aTaki</i>	Taki's father (my husband)'
<i>Vhasadzi vha fhano</i>	When you find women in a
<i>na vha wana halwani</i>	shebeen, they want to be given
<i>todou ri ni vha fhe zukwa</i>	a five-cent piece'
<i>Heleli wee he leli</i>	Heleli wee he leli'
<i>Kha vha vule gethe</i>	<i>Open the gate</i>
<i>nne ri tshimbile</i>	I want to go'

As noted from the songs above, these songs mould people and society in many ways. This is contrary to what Stayt (1931) and Blacking (1967) submitted. These songs need a contextual understanding of the teachings and a sense of indigenous flare to capture the meaning. To sum it up, it is pivotal that when studying indigenous games and songs, one should pay more attention to the given lyrics than listening to the song superficially.

2.7 Cultural traditional indigenous schools

Kim (2016) has defined culture as the 'characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.' On the other hand, Ravinder (2011) denotes it as 'a pattern of responses discovered, developed, or invented during the group's history of handling problems which arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment.' As such, culture has been defined by various scholars in different words, but all seem to agree that it is group oriented and can be developed. According to Harris (1968) quoted by Fetterman (1997: 17), culture is the sum of social group's observable patterns of behaviour, customs and way of life. Focusing on the cognitive approach, Fetterman (1997) asserts that culture comprises the ideas, beliefs and knowledge that characterize a particular group of people. Soanes and Stevenson (2005: 422) define culture as ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. Contrary to the latter, Gove and Webster (1961: 552) define culture as the total pattern of human behaviour and its products embodied in thought, speech, action and artefacts and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language, and systems of abstract thought. On the other hand, culture is the total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, social habits, etc. of the members of a particular society (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985: 70). Lastly, Hudson

(1980:74) describes culture as socially acquired knowledge: i.e. as the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society.

Looking at the definitions above, culture can be seen as that which a certain group of people have in common within a certain language such as behavioural patterns, beliefs and the way of doing things. According to Thornton (1988), perceptions about culture have changed due to the intellectual history of an era. In this case, the researcher agrees that culture is not static – as people develop intellectually, they always find ways of doing things differently. This aspect is very relevant to the issue of also trying to develop indigenous games for educational purposes for the youth in this era. This separates the view of the Romantic era which gave rude execution power to colonial authorities. Culture should thus, be understood as a resource shared by members of collectives and to which individuals have access (Harris & Park, 1983). Individuals and collectives are simultaneously cultural bearers and shapers as they develop new symbolic systems of values and beliefs governing their behaviour practices (Gibson, 2002). Smith (1993) observed that play patterns are part of cultural heritage that is socially constructed to symbolically reflect and communicate lived realities. However, culture is never static but contested, temporal and emergent as it is embedded in the symbols and metaphors of its products such as games and sport (Blachard, 1995). Now that the previous scholars have been in agreement that culture is not static, the researcher wishes to build on this foundation and proposes the upgrading of indigenous games for educational purposes. This will not tamper in the African values and norms of the indigenous people as the development is intended to meet the contemporary youth who seem to be out of touch with the bygone.

Culture plays a pivotal role in grounding this study for proper development of indigenous games. Functionalism as a school of thought in anthropology emerged in the early twentieth century. Structural functionalism or basically functionalism, is a structure for building hypothesis that considers society to be an intricate framework whose parts cooperate to advance solidarity and security (Pearson, 1985). This approach recognises society through a large scales level of introduction, which is an expansive concentration of the social structures that shape society. This approach recognises both social structure and social capacities. Functionalism addresses society in general as far as the capacity of its constituent components; in particular standards, traditions,

conventions, and organizations are concerned. The advocates of functionalism contend that all the aspects should co-exist to support its efficacy. As such, in indigenous education, there should be a link between its constituent components and other factors to standardise it hence, the researcher alludes to the development of indigenous games.

Woolman (2001, 30) notes that traditional or indigenous education is the education that was imparted to African children by Africans. Woolman described this education as very practical and relevant to the needs of the society. However, unlike modern education, the researcher notes that indigenous education on its own lacks some aspects that are needed. As such, African traditional education should not be taught in isolation, its curriculum should be targeted towards producing an individual who grows up being in touch with reality and well-grounded, skillful, cooperative, civil and able to contribute to the development of the community (Pollock, 1983). For example, if indigenous education is integrated with modern education, it can prepare youth to be active and productive members of their societies by implementing the skills necessary to achieve these goals.

Mathobo (2015: 28) noted that in Venda culture, boys and girls have to attend initiation schools when they reach puberty. Girls attend “Musevhetho”, “Vhusha,” “Tshikanda”, “Domba”, whereas boys attend *Thondo*, *Vhutamba vhutuka* and *Murundu* ceremonies. In all these initiation schools, boys and girls are taught how to respect adults and also how to conduct themselves sexually. These two scholars above noted with grave sadness that traditions in and around the Thohoyandou area appear to be on the decline as a result of embracing the mainstream modern cultures. However, traditional practices such as female initiation rites are still practised. In the changing socio-economic and political landscape of the study area, is the role played by female initiation schools still relevant? If social changes have eroded the relevance of female initiation schools, what have those roles been substituted with. In the same view of Mathobo (2015), the current researcher argued that there has not been anything which replaced indigenous games hence, a need to revive them.

Mahundwane game was played by imitating the real family set-up where there would be a father, mother and child or children. According to Benso (1979:32), youth were taught the relationship between males and females by means of *Mahundwane* game. The children who participated in this game were usually between the age of twelve and eighteen years of age and had already taken part

in initiation rites (Stayt, 1931: 99). They would build miniature villages in which temporary families were set up. They then acted out the role of adults. This game prepared them for the future life as responsible men and women.

The main aim of traditional education in every society is to prepare individuals to participate fully and effectively in their world (Nyana, 2009). Ladzani (2014) argues that most scholars have only addressed what traditional or indigenous education is and what it can do without giving practical application of it in the contemporary world where children are obsessed to video games. The indigenous educational structure in which life skills were imparted is fundamentally informal. On the other hand, modern education is formal but lacks the moral building as it is individualistic as opposed to communal education of indigenous education. The family, kinship, village group, and the larger community participated in the educational and socialisation process (Gomme, 1964). The African traditional school curriculum is relevant and practical to the needs of African society. In a bid to confirm the above about modern education, Wilson (1990: 175) distinguished informal tape-recording and avers that today's education does not allow teachers to get to know their pupils. Thus, the researcher opines that the integrating of these two forms of education produces the best results ever. In that vein, the researcher advocates for the inclusion of the *mahundwane* indigenous games in formal education for developing morals and life skills of the youth.

Kenyatta (1965:118) holds that education must maintain the traditional structures of family, kinship, sex and age grouping if African societies were to remain stable. This is done through societal or communal structures. Masoga (2004) asserts that traditional education aims to preserve culture of the learners and also enables them to deal with the community, society and environment that they live in. Moumouni (1968:15) affirms that the educational process was essentially based on gradual and progressive achievements, and conforms to the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child. Honestly, Kenyatta's emphasis is a clear reminder to modern educationists that if it could integrate traditional structures (African resources) of education, it will mean that there will be less moral decay amongst our societies since traditional education looks at moral values amongst its children. As such, integrating *mahundwane* in the educational structure for educating morals and values will balance up the child who will not only be a genius who cannot respect and honour simple behavioural traits.

Busia (1964: 17) also pointed out the relevance of African traditional schools which mainly focused on the whole human development by noting that traditional education sought to produce men and women who were not self-centred and individuals who put the interest of the group above personal interest. Busia (1964)'s findings confirm that African people were concerned about the well-being of their children, as such they put mechanisms in place to ensure that their children received education which focuses on total development. As a result, the qualification would be a woman or man of substance who cared about the interests of the whole society. The focus of education in Africa was social responsibility, political participation, work orientation, morality and spiritual values. Learning was by doing, such involved observation, imitation and participation (Fafunwa, 1982: 9-10). Mafenya (2002: 87) confirms Fafunwa's assertion and explains that children in African education learn by imitating and seeing. Both Mafenya and Fafunwa conclude that what children see and imitate is not easy to forget. So, this could be the reason for the importance and necessity of this type of education amongst African children.

Sajjad (2010) notes that;

“Change is the law of nature. Man undergoes changes and transformations from cradle to grave. These changes may be of different types such as physical, mental, moral and emotional. Two factors, training and environment condition every change. The original nature of man can be changed either by training or by his reaction to the environment. Whenever there is change there is growth. Through change, a living organism can take entirely a new shape and this again gives him powers to grow. Thus, growing is education and getting education is growing.”

Basing on Sajjad's submission, it is interesting to note how literature on education has developed over time. A critical view on the above literature and others below show a dramatic turn which typically focuses on how the education has started to incorporate cultural practices as a means of teaching the youth both in formal and informal settings.

However, Woolman (2001: 31) alludes that African traditional education is informal and occurs in the context of family, community, clan and cultural group, which makes it to be regarded as a life-long process involving progression through age groupings that are correlated with the acquisition of experience, seniority and wisdom. Woolman's observation is an indication that

traditional education does not involve the learner and the teacher only, instead it involves learners (the children), their families and all stakeholders of the society or community. In Woolman's view, building learners who would have a sense of responsibility throughout their life was the main objective where children were taught to distinguish between good morals and bad behaviour. According to Woolman (2001), being responsible means you have to be well-mannered because developing individual's responsibility in the community is the dominant objective of this education. Assessing Woolman's submissions gives this research leverage in trying to integrate indigenous games into the education system. This is important because today's formal education mainly focuses on equipping children with formal intellectual education and neglect the values and norms of behaving which plays a pivotal role in moulding societies that are free of corrupt intellectual people.

Traditional education integrated character building, intellectual training, manual activities and physical education (Woolman, 2001). The content in his view included all the activities, rituals and skills required to sustain the culture and life of the family and the community. Woolman's argument therefore, emphasises that traditional education concentrates on the whole person who will be able to face all challenges in life. Woolman (2001) opines that there should be a relationship between theory and practice. When noting the importance of traditional community structures and training children with good morals and values, Mungazi (1996: 40) also avers that a place in society was determined more by the contribution to society's well-being. The individual had to be trained to remain sensitive to the needs of the community as a whole and others as individuals.

Traditional education is different from today's education which is formalistic and which examines one as a failure or an achiever (Nwonwu, 2008). Moreover, Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) point out that traditional education plays a very significant role in the formation of a child's character. On the other hand, Stayt and others specified that in traditional schools, teachers make it a point to get to know their learners individually. Moral values in these schools are instilled to children by the whole community (Chick, 2001). This is done through different types of schools in which children were supposed to attend. As Stayt (1931) and van Warmelo (1960) indicated in their research, boys and girls were divided into categories and were expected to play different types of games and also attend different types of schools amongst Vhavanḁa community.

A good educational structure as seen from above should cater for the formal equipping of children with cultural values as well as their norms. It is because of this that the researcher argues that an incorporation of *mahundwane* in the modern school structure will greatly achieve this challenge.

Generally, Vhavenḁa as indigenous people have different types of initiation schools for girls. The following are schools that a girl child is expected to attend: *vhusha*, *vhukomba*, *tshikanda* and *domba*. Stayt (1931:112), van Warmelo (1960), Mathivha (1985), Mafenya (2002) and Mandende (2009) discussed schools attended by girls only. Both Stayt (1931) and van Warmelo (1960) mentioned that *musevhetho* was adopted by the Vhavenḁa people. Clarke-Stewart cited practices that are firmly watched. Moreover, these practices rarely talk about morals to the youth. Lusunzi (1997) as cited in Ramabulana (2000) detailed that absence of supervision from guardians and grandparents may add to awful ethics (impropriety). Ramabulana (2000) notes that schools are overshadowed by media in informing children. Media influences children to engage themselves in adult activities like sexual intercourse as they watch nude pictures and pornography from their cell phones

Tshikanda concentrates broadly on married life where girls are taught more on carrying themselves as a married women, conjugal rights, taking care of their families, and issues of child rearing practices. However, many scholars found that *domba* was the most celebrated initiation school. Stayt (1931:112) describes *domba* as a general preparation for marriage where boys (*madunana*) and girls who are usually separated, are brought together and by means of symbols and metaphors, are together taught to understand the true significance of marriage and relationship matters only among women, and by the same means are warned of dangers like Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STDs) that are likely to be encountered during the course of their lives. From the above, it is clear that much work carried out by both European and African scholars noted the importance of girls- and boy's education. The researcher found that the role played by schools is about cultural practices that came up as a package in empowering youth. The same knowledge gained from the above activities were the ones practised during *mahundwane* game.

2.8 Traditional indigenous schools for boys and girls

Murundu and *vhuṭamba vhutuka* are two schools to be attended by boys only among Vhavenda people. There are scholars like van Warmelo (1960), Mathivha (1985), Mafenya (2002) and Ntshitangani (1997) who have highlighted schools attended by boys only and agree that *murundu* and *vhuṭamba vhutuka* are only two important schools to be attended by boys only among Vhavenda tribe. Of interest is that these scholars note the responsibility placed upon the family. When there is a boy in the family, it is the responsibility of the elders to see to it that the boy is mature enough to attend initiation school. They also stressed that amongst Vhavenda, there is no specific age for boys to attend *murundu* except for *vhutambavhutuka* which is meant for teenagers.

It is in *murundu* or *muḷa* where these boys are taught patience, respect, perseverance, conjugal life, good behavioural patterns for teenagers and many other good moral values. *Milayo* (moral values) that they learn in this school also prepare them to be the responsible head of a family, how to handle women and also to respect them and not to see them as mere sexual objects (Mungazi 1996). In *vhuṭamba vhatuka*, according to these scholars, young males are made to perform rituals so that they can be responsible men in married life. Manabe (2010:28) argued that the dawn of modern technology and the industrial social-economic organization saw the decline of traditional practices that forced a social shift towards a mainstream modern culture. In her view, the emerging generation of children is being socialized into globalized communities where the interaction of cultures enhances the probability of the process of acculturation occurring.

It should be noted that education is a continuous process that does not end at one stage. This is deduced from the fact that man is the greatest wealth of the society. As such, education is not only a kind of learning and training, but it must become a guiding principle. Blacking (1962:70), and two female African scholars, Mathivha (1985) and Mafenya (2002) observed that education also took the form of games such as *mahunḍwane*, *ndode*, *mufuvha*, *dzhombo*, *tshigombela* dance, *givha* and *tshikanganga*. In *mahunḍwane*, as they report, children played as parents and children in married life. They all highlight that in this game, children are taught to visualise the future so that they grow-up knowing that they will be parents one day. Van Warmelo (1968:210) refers to the game *ndode* played mainly by girls with stones or pebbles as a way that helps children to count. He also included *mufuvha* which is played by boys and men as a way of learning how to count.

Van Warmelo (1960: 399) speaks of *tshigombela* as a dance that involves girls, but rarely states its major function except that of being a game. Sengani and Ladzani (2011:157) identify that *tshigombela* was a dance which covers sexuality education. Blacking (1962:71) writes broadly about *dzhombo*, a game in which boys and girls play together. One could conclude that all these findings stress that all games including *mahundwane* encourage children to learn not to discriminate, but to work together as a collective.

Some plays and dances are done by a certain gender group such as *tshigombela* for girls and *tshikanganga* for boys, however games like *mahundwane* do not exclude any gender. Stayt (1931:323) in his research also posits that *givha* or *tshikanganga* is a boys-only dance. He reports that it was through this dance that boys went to entertain people in other villages. Blacking and van Warmelo (2007) discovered that in the two dances for entertaining people, boys and girls were introduced separately in other villages. This, as they found out, was to encourage them to know and learn that marriage could take place elsewhere rather than in their own village. These scholars assert that amongst Vhavanḁa as a community, there were reasons for things done. Whether it is a game, dance or attending indigenous schools, all had an objective towards building a full responsible youth who will one day become a responsible wife (woman) or husband (man).

2.9 Conclusion

The researcher reviewed the literature on indigenous game of *mahundwane* as a cultural practice that has to be revived for moral regenerations. The first part of this chapter addressed the theoretical framework used in the study. The second part noted that there is now a rise in moral decadence which is attributed to the death of indigenous games and the erosion of cultural practices as a result of colonial education. The literature reviewed also indicated the importance of indigenous games in instilling morals and teaching life experiences. Now that the gaps in literature have been identified and the researcher has shown the questions that need to be addressed, the next chapter will address the methodology of the study to show how data for the study were collected.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design, research methodology, the methods of data collection and data analysis. In addition, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the study of rethinking the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda-speaking youth are also discussed.

3.2 Research design

Research design refers to the detailed plan of how research will be conducted. It provides a plan for assembling, organizing and integrating data (Westhuisen, 1999:63). It also provides the framework for collecting the data to investigate the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda-speaking youth. According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpport (2011:312), various designs used by qualitative researchers will differ depending on the purpose of the study, the nature of research question and the skills and resources available to researchers. In addition to what has been mentioned by Seliger and Shohamy (1989), research design is the structure of any scientific work. It gives direction to the research. In that regard, the study of rethinking the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda-speaking youth adopted the qualitative research design.

Qualitative research is the type of design that one would use for one's own observations and descriptions. It is used to assess knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and opinions of people depending on the topic of research. According to Leedy (1993:192), "if the data is verbal, the research design is qualitative." He adds that qualitative design is concerned with human beings, interpersonal relationships, personal values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts and feelings. It is for this purpose that the researcher was persuaded to opt for qualitative research design. Also, the study of rethinking the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda-speaking youth adopted the

qualitative research design because it allowed the researcher to focus and interpret the objects, behaviours and the phenomenon that were being studied (Creswell, 2003).

Furthermore, qualitative research design allowed for the collecting of data from the setting or environment of the participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 134-135) further indicate that qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purpose: description, interpretation, verification and evaluation. The researcher used the qualitative method because it is a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and experience events and the world in which they live. This design enabled the researcher to get profound information about people's feelings and reactions towards the game of *mahundwane*. In this study, the emphasis is on the educational nature of the *mahundwane* game; this was necessary in order to understand how this game can be developed for current use for modern day youth. This was what the researcher was focusing on; observing and interpreting the *mahundwane* indigenous game as people lived it. Also, this was followed as the researcher aimed to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures which followed *mahundwane* indigenous game (Macmillan & Schumacher, 1993).

3.3 Area of the study

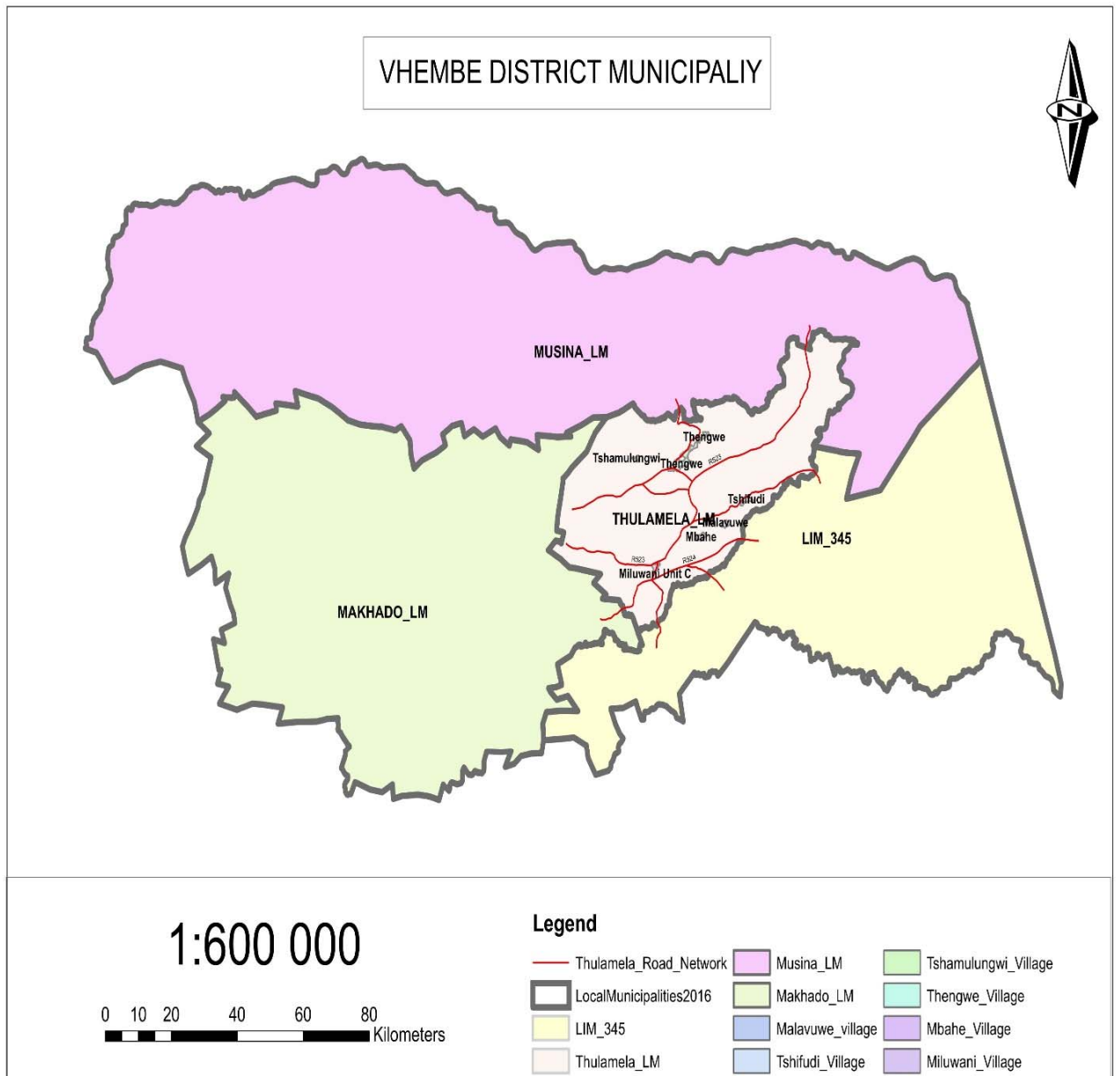
Limpopo province was the area selected for this study. Limpopo province is one of South Africa's nine provinces. It comprises five districts, namely: Capricorn, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg districts. Inside each region are local municipalities. Thulamela municipality is one of the four local municipalities in Vhembe district. The other three are Musina, Mutale and Makhado local municipalities.

The study was conducted in Vhembe district, Thulamela municipality of Limpopo province. Limpopo Area of South Africa is in the northern-most territory of South Africa. It has global fringes with Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. It additionally verges on the regions of Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West. It exists in the considerable elbow of the Limpopo Waterway. Heading further north into the territory there is the capital city, Polokwane, with a great and developing framework including a cutting edge global airplane terminal. East of the city is the subtropical piece of the valley of the Olifants; the verdant Makgoebaskloof valley. Further toward

the east are a portion of the finest diversion cultivates in Africa and additionally the world-well known Kruger National Stop. Given its rich leafy foods creation, the region could be depicted as the garden of the nation. Portal Worldwide Airplane terminal is produced as a noteworthy monetary development venture to be a getaway to whatever remains of the African landmass (Limpopo State of the Environment Report, 2000. Accessed 10 November 2016).

Vhembe district has developed enterprise, tourism and agricultural forestry. The motivation for choosing Vhembe was on the basis that it is a place where the Vhavenda speaking people are mainly located thus, have knowledge holders who know and once participated in the game. Vhembe comprises five local municipalities which are; Mutale, Makhado, Musina, Thulamela and Lim345. However, for the purposes of this study, Thulamela municipality was chosen. Thulamela municipality is the second largest municipality within Vhembe district. The municipality was chosen because it is predominately composed of traditional authorities and would be a good area as the preliminary findings showed that *mahundwane* was managed by traditional authorities for its running. Six villages were selected in Thulamela municipality and the villages are as follows: Thengwe, Mbahe, Sokotenda, Malavuwe, Tshamulungwi and Tshifudi. The researcher chose these villages because most of the elders known as the icons in *mahundwane* games reside in these villages. Above all, in these places, there were some few youths who were playing this game and/or once played it. These areas are accessible to the researcher and proximate to the university, hence they were chosen. The diagram overleaf shows the map of Thulamela municipality:

Figure 1 (Obtained from the Vhembe municipality on the 26th of June 2017)



3.4 Population of the study

The sum total of the sampling elements is called the population or universe (Sanders & Pinhey 1983: 97). Simply put, a population can be defined as the entire group of persons or set of objects and events the researcher wants to study. A population contains all the variables of interest to the researcher. In addition, Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 85); Brink (1996) and de Vos (1998: 190) argue that a population is sometimes referred to as “target population” or “universe. Similarly, Henning (2004) defines the population of research as “all conceivable elements, subjects or observations relating to a particular phenomenon of interests to the researcher”. Of the different cultural groups and dialects in the locale, there are two which dominate - that is, Venda and Tsonga people, and the researcher sampled and tested her respondents on the premise of the Venda cultural gathering, who accordingly constitute the examination populace.

The population targeted was the Venda population because *mahundwane* is part and parcel of the Vhavenda cultural games. Having chosen and pin-pointed the study population, the researcher moved on to consider its components for the study. The table below shows the chosen population groups and the reasons they were chosen.

Groups	Reasons
Elderly people	They played this game.
Traditional leaders	They were said to be the ones who oversee the running of these games.
Parents (Guardians)	They were to give insight on whether <i>mahundwane</i> game should be restored.
Children	They were to give views on the modernity that could be used in restoration of <i>Mahundwane</i> , whether they would be interested in it or not.
Traditional healer	He was part of community engagement project in the university and he linked us with other knowledge holders.

3.5 Sampling

Payne and Payne (2004) refer to sampling as the process of selecting a sub set of people or social phenomenon to the studies from a large universe to which they belong. Sampling is a selection of research participants from an entire population and involves decision about which people, settings, events, behaviour to be included in the study (Thomson *et.al* 2006). A non-probability sampling was adopted for the study.

Non-probability sampling is a procedure whereby the specimens are chosen in a procedure that does not give every one of the people in the populace meet odds of being chosen. In any type of research, genuine arbitrary testing is constantly hard to accomplish. As opposed to likelihood testing, non-probability sampling is not a result of randomized choice procedures. The subjects in a non-probability sample are typically chosen on the premise of their openness or by the purposive individual judgment of the researcher.

With non-probability sampling, populace components are chosen on the premise of their accessibility (e.g. since they volunteered), or due to the researcher's close to home judgment that they are illustrative. This sort of testing is regularly utilized while showing that a specific quality exists in a populace. It can likewise be utilized when the researcher points to lead a subjective report, or when randomisation is inconceivable, as when the populace is practically boundless. It can likewise be utilized when the research does not aim at generating results that are to be utilized as a part of approaches influencing the whole populace.

A purposive sampling, where the researcher could use her own judgments about which respondents to choose, was adopted together with the snowball sampling. For instance, in this study where the researcher wanted to establish the role of the girl-child, she sampled females who knew and had participated in the game. Anyone in that category could be asked to participate.

In this study, the researcher targets used 23 respondents; six (6) male knowledge holders, seven (6) female knowledge holders, (10) parents/guardians and (1) traditional healer. The above-mentioned groups were aimed because they are key participants in the *Mahundwane*. The elderly respondents were senior citizens strictly above the age of sixty found in Vhembe district. The study

adopted a non-random sampling. The selection methods used was purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The sampling methods used in the study are discussed below.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

This technique starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:95) notes that purposive or judgmental sampling is when the researcher selects a sample that can be judged to be representative of the total population. This judgment is made on the basis of available information or the researcher's knowledge about the population. Gilbert (1993:74) notes that "purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research and is entirely governed by the need to develop additional theories in social sciences."

In purposive sampling, the researcher samples because of a reason. The researcher would more often than not be looking for at least one particular predefined gatherings, and one of the principal things the researcher is probably going to do is to guarantee that the respondents do in reality meet the criteria for being in the example. Purposive examining can be exceptionally helpful in circumstances where targeted samples needs to be arrived at quickly and where inspecting for proportionality is not the essential concern. With a purposive example, you are still prone to get the feelings of your objective populace. Purposive inspecting begins considering a reason, and the example is in this way chose to incorporate individuals of intrigue and prohibit the individuals who sometimes fall short for the reason. Purposive examining depends on the judgment of the researcher with respect to respondents that are an illustrative of the phenomenon being considered.

In this study, purposeful sampling technique was used basing on the researcher's discretion. In that regard, the researcher purposed to ensure that respondents with the information of *mahundwane* and those that once played it be part of the study.

3.5.2 Snow-balling sampling

Snowballing involves approaching a single case that is involved in the phenomenon to be investigated in order to gain information on other similar persons. These refer the researcher to

another similar case and preferable more than one other case (Grinell 2008). Alston and Bowels (2003) posit that snowballing is a process whereby the researcher approaches the desired participants and those participants who are approached act as informants and identify potential participants. The nominated participants will then be contacted and interviewed, and the process repeated until the saturation of data is achieved. There were cases where it was not easy to collect data and the researcher depended on the snowballing technique.

This technique was used in a situation where it was difficult to locate members of the population. This technique was used by the researcher to collect data from few individuals who also helped the researcher to locate other individuals that they know. The nominated respondents were then contacted and interviewed, and the process was repeated until the saturation of data was achieved. In order to expedite this, the researcher identified elderly people to further identify others who could assist.

In snowball testing, one starts by distinguishing somebody who meets the criteria for incorporation in your examination. One at that point requests that the chosen individuals prescribe other people who they may know who additionally meet the criteria. Snowball examining is particularly helpful when one is endeavouring to achieve populaces that are difficult to reach or elusive. In any case, in the event that you go to a specific research territory and recognize maybe a couple people as tests, you may find that they know extremely well who other appropriate individuals might be in their region, and how to discover them.

In this study, the researcher reached one traditional healer who is likewise an expert partner who works hand in hand with the community engagement of University of Venda. In the wake of talking this traditional healer, the researcher at that point solicited him to recommend the name from other traditional healers, knowledge holders and traditional leaders that were known to him who could likewise give the data required. This strategy was taken after with all the distinguished participants who were interviewed. This was most useful, in light of the fact that there were sure members that would somehow, or another have been difficult to reach, but since the referral was made by somebody known to them, it turned out to be simple for the researcher to secure an arrangement for a meeting. It was not generally simple to secure an arrangement in spite of steady telephone calls to secure a meeting.

3.5.3 Appointment and training of research assistants

Upon arrival in the study area, two (2) research assistants were appointed in each of the communities for assistance in data collection. The research assistants were University of Venda Masters students and/or undergraduate students who had grown in the study areas/communities. The research assistants were also trained on how to behave and on protocols to be observed. They helped in the clarification of certain cultural practices and behaviours expressed during interviews. They were important in winning the trust of respondents and establishing rapport. They were subjected to brief training sessions to orient them to the study. Whatever they did in the field was coordinated and reported to the main researcher. They also participated in coding and putting themes for analysis.

At the beginning of the research appointment and training, the researcher showed the motivation behind the work and the significance and objectives of the investigation. All the research assistants comprehended what really matters to the meeting. They were additionally informed that the study was not for monetary profit, so they ought not to have much desires but rather only a token for the hours spend in the field and data analysis. That was unequivocally specified first and foremost when affinity was being built up. The research assistants were also trained with regards to indigenous knowledge protocols when collecting data from indigenous people. They were taught the greetings, way of communicating and how to behave.

Following such fundamental protocols was pivotal in light of the fact that the study and the meetings were led in indigenous villages. The way in which the researcher and research assistants addressed the senior citizens and other knowledge holders had at all necessary means to exhibit respect. Such regard incorporated the way the researchers dressed. A dress, or if nothing else skirt and pullover was required; pants worn by ladies are viewed as ill-bred to the African standards. In some indigenous villages, a lady wearing pants was not permitted. That was an unthinkable or a taboo. In any case, such things depended upon the villages. The researcher and assistants needed to conform to all the above as an approach to put away mistrust or to be completely acknowledged and fully accepted within the communities.

During data collection, numerous things that were done in the customary families were recognizable to the researcher since she grew up observing individuals acting the way they did. For instance, in conversing with the senior citizens, they were given all the respect they expected, however it was difficult to follow expected protocol because the researcher was in a customary family unit exceptionally commonplace to her or where individuals were used to her. As she was archiving data, she attempted not at all to leave data which appeared to be irrelevant. Whatever was done was deliberately recorded.

3.5.4 Data collection methods

Data collection method is the gathering of information needed by the researcher to address a research problem (Pilot and Hungler, 1993). The researcher visited the selected participants and those referred to by other respondents in their communities to collect data. The researcher used the following instruments; semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. The research instruments are discussed below:

3.5.4.1 Semi-structured interview

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured one-to-one interviews were conducted with the senior citizens. According to de Vos et al. (2011), semi-structured interview focuses on gathering as much information as possible from the interviewee, thus the researcher had a few set of questions prepared but allowed respondents to even digress. The few guiding questions used in this study are attached at the appendix section. Semi-structured interviews are also known as in-depth interviews or referred to as “conversation with a purpose”. Semi-structured interview allows an in-depth exploration. It is a face to face interaction between an interviewer and the study participant, which seeks to build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure. The advantage of in-depth interviews is to help the researcher to achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding as the study participant. The in-depth interview technique is generally used when detailed information is needed from individuals in the study.

In-depth interviewing was the first methodological procedure applied to collect data for this study. The aim of the interviews was to explore the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for

Vhavenda-speaking youth. The participants showed great interest in the research and as it progressed, they frequently provided additional information regarding their knowledge of Vhavenda indigenous games and the embedded values and norms.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher with seven (7) traditional leaders in their households. The interviews were conducted during winter (, June and July and August 2017). This time proved to be good as most traditional leaders opened doors to the researchers as they were concerned and ready to address the issue of initiation schools. Each interview took approximately an hour to complete. This group of participants was particularly difficult to interview because many traditional leaders were reluctant to commit to the interviews. They were suspicious that the information may be used by other people to make money from their own knowledge. The researcher clarified the suspicion and the healers were willing to provide responses.

In semi-structured interview, the interviewer asked a set of similar questions to participants and from there probed for more information. In semi-structured interview, the questioner solicited a set from comparable inquiries to members and from that point tested for more data. The semi-structured interview was utilized on the grounds that, while the first content for a meeting ensures the consistency of themes over the entire specimen, every specific meeting might be distinctive because of the new inquiries inspired by the specific answers given by the interviewee. For this examination, a respondent could be posed an inquiry and might give an answer which would require a development and this sort of meeting permitted that. For example, in the meeting guide, there was the accompanying inquiry.

The researcher, in using semi-structured interviews, had the opportunity to be flexible with the respondents so as to elicit richer information about their attitude and behaviour towards the broader questions of the researcher (Miller & Brewer, 2003:80). After the list of the knowledge holders (elderly people of the community and traditional leaders) had been compiled, these participants were contacted and asked for permission to carry out the study. Participants were selected by means of the purposive sampling method because this method involves selecting participants on the basis that they will be able to provide information data to the study. The majority of the participants accepted without much questions as soon as they learnt that it was for academic purposes. Fortunate enough, most of the participants were happy that the indigenous game of

mahundwane was going to be documented. These participants were also asked to name and help linking the researcher to other knowledge holders known to the participants. The participants' contacts and details were indicated.

Before the commencement of every session, the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (refer to appendices) so as to ensure the protection of the participants, the interviewer and the university. Illiterate participants were asked to put a cross (x) on the designated space. The consent form also indicated the willingness of the participant to take part in the study. In that regard, the participants were assured of the confidential treatment of their responses and that their names were not going to be used in anyway in the research reports or publications flowing from the research report. All the interviews were done on a one-on-one basis and the times differed depending on the information that the participant was giving. Interviews which involves personal contact between the interviewer and the participant represents an appropriate way to understand the world from the subject's point of view and unfold the meaning of their experiences. All interviews were conducted in Tshivenda as most knowledge holders could speak well and fluently in this language. Later, the language was translated into English.

Hereafter, the way toward gathering information relied upon fastidious time keeping and steady arranging and re-planning, continually looking forward so as to be prepared for redirection. It was the researcher's experience that redirections do rise and regardless of how all around arranged; occasions do not really create as indicated by design (Henning, 2004:53). In view of how ease the timetable was, it was imperative initially to circle and make arrangements for interviews with the two village heads before they accessed the villages. This required a lot of explaining and following protocols; paying of *nduvho* (indigenous fee of respect). Through this arrangement, the researcher figured out how to think of a period table of meetings with various respondents.

Amid the meetings, an advanced recorder was utilized. Utilizing an advanced recorder empowered the researcher to give complete consideration to the interviewees with eye to eye contact and they were urged to give point by point information. Amid the procedure, the researcher warily took notes, being careful not to mutilate the meeting. The notes were useful as they served as a reminder to return to earlier where more elucidation was looked for. Notes additionally caused in recommending how to outline consequent inquiries. As the researcher engaged with information

accumulation and information investigation, she could explore and probe subtleties of importance and process (Charmaz, 2006:35).

3.5.4.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group are group interviews. They are a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue, participants are selected because they had certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group. Leedy (1993) suggests that the purpose of the focus group interview is to obtain information of a qualitative nature from a limited number of people. Only one focus group interview was conducted. The focus group interview consisted of ten (10) people and emphasis was on understanding the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for the Vhavenda speaking youth. Five (5) participants were elderly men and women who had played *mahundwane* during their youth, one (1) traditional leader, two (2) modern day parents and two (2) youths.

The research assistants in liaison with the main researcher made arrangements for the focus group interview. As such, the session took place in the community hall that was booked by the researcher from the local authorities. The participants were drawn from different backgrounds as a way of capturing all different views in the society. The focus group interview lasted for at least two (2) hours. All the participants were made to sign consent forms before the commencement of the interview. The purpose for the interview was outlined to them and copies that explained the purpose of the gathering were also given to them. The researcher meticulously set the ground rules as a way of allowing a smooth interview to avoid more than one person responding to the given question at the same time. They were also taught to respect each other's views and to be polite when dismissing one's view(s).

In order to record as much data as possible in the easiest but most effective way during the interviews, electronic audio recording equipment was used. This method of capturing data was chosen because everything was recorded as is and it also enabled both the interviewer and interviewee to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed.

With the era and aggregation of data, there was a requirement for information administration. The researcher dated the interpretations utilizing a computer word processor and saved them in computer records for simplicity of recovery. As a type of move down, the researcher printed versions for less demanding perusing and opened document organizers for their capacity. Transcripts and notes were unmistakably listed in the records for simple access. As in some other procedures, information accumulation had its own difficulties. A few members did not turn up for their meeting arrangements. Apparently, some who attended showed signs of tiredness from work in the fields or family unit work in spite of their readiness to partake in the study. The researcher had an occurrence where she missed meetings in light of the fact that the street was blockaded as individuals were striking. As the researcher redirected to another route, she had to make another rearrangements with the participants. The other route was very long and it took time for the researcher to arrive at the venue. At the point when the researcher understood that she had missed an arrangement, she immediately searched for the following accessible members in the unaffected range and consulted for some meeting time.

It can be contended that the information gathered were proper with the end goal of this study particularly on the off chance that one considers the way that there was sound cooperation between the members and the research participants. In addition, some participants enthusiastically welcomed the study as long awaited avenue to express their views and be heard. For instance, the accompanying remark was made by Tshepo:

“Sometimes we don’t know who to tell our feelings and observations; we are happy that you have given us the opportunity to express our feelings...”

The researcher could tell from the remark that whatever else the gathering talked about was authentic. Also, in light of the foregoing, the researcher was content with the gathering's concentration that was coordinated at the analyst's exploration questions. Thirdly, information gathered had thickness. Richards and Morse (2007:110) characterize thickness as when ‘one interview at least in part confirms or builds on other interviews’.

3.5.4.2 Observations

The researcher asked some households to stage how *mahundwane* was done. This was done for two (2) days as a means of observing the proceedings of *mahundwane*. The children who participated in *mahundwane* were coached by some surviving elderly people who during the youth stages had played *mahundwane* game. Participant observation was unique because it enabled that study participants to be approached in their own environmental settings than the other way around. The general outlook is that the researcher tried to realize what life resembles for participants while remaining definitely a non-participant. While in these group settings, researchers made meticulous observations, write notes about what they see, recording all records and perceptions as field notes in a field scratch pad. Casual discussions and associations with individuals from the examination populace was additionally, essential parts of the strategy and was recorded in the field notes, in however much detail as could reasonably be expected.

Fruitful accumulation of ethnographic information required a nearby and managed perception of the examination respondents, which can be accomplished by cooperation in neighbourhood traditions. Coordinate perceptions were done to build up a logical, all including surrounding feelings of parts of the indigenous information and practices utilised for indigenous recreations. Perception was useful in the portrayal and clarification of indigenous frameworks utilised for enculturation. The analyst's part in this investigation was essentially perception and talking. There are different occurrences where member perception was embraced, for instance, on Saturday mornings over the span of following how *mahundwane* recreations were played to watch how the procedures were unfolding. Consent to record and watch the procedures of the *mahundwane* indigenous games were obtained. Consent was also obtained from parents and guardians of all the youths that were staged in the *mahundwane* indigenous games. Pictures were captured during this phase to enable the researcher to use the pictures as aids in analysing data.

One day at a particular research site, the elders and other community members in the village were busy removing stalks from the fields and busy building the *mahundwane* houses and instructing how the chosen participants were going to go about the game. The researcher participated in the activity and at the same time was busy observing and conducting interviews. A lot of information about the *mahundwane* was obtained that day, while the mood was a quite relaxed one and the

interview was conducted informally. In the course of these activities, permission to take photographs of the homesteads and of some of the informants was sought, and permission was granted.

The researcher has positively been part of the Venda society since her introduction to the world. She has likewise been related, however, freely with the establishment of conventional administration. There was in this manner nothing extremely strange that would influence her sources to fake a response or data, aside from under exceptionally uncommon episodes. Truth be told, she in some instances interfaced with sources, with whom we share working conditions. Having known them and given her collaboration with them, it guaranteed her of the veracity of the data that she got.

As an observer, the researcher expected to see through the eyes of the subjects or the objective gatherings. The researcher invested much energy in the customary phenomenon, and this delayed drenching fit better understanding the emblematic riddle behind the *mahundwane* amusement. The researcher could have a top to bottom contact with the general population that shaped the subject of her investigation. There was no compelling reason to translate the language since the researcher and assistance were Venda speaking and had learnt the casual parts of the way of life and how individuals interfaced with each other. She could recognize what was underestimated truly and what was taken seriously. There were sure things that individuals would not generally discuss, for instance, who were the supervisors of this game. By being in the study area more often than not, it built trust and some elderly individuals from the town started to believe the researcher and the research assistants. The time spent expanded the researcher's capacity to arrange activities in setting within the context.

3.5.5 Data analysis

This study employed thematic data analysis method. The researcher used theme identification method to analyse data. According to Ryan and Barnard (2011), theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. Theme can be described as “umbrella” constructs which are identified by the researcher before, after and during data collection. Within the ethnography tradition, Wolcott (1994) proposed that data could be transformed within a process

that can be divided into description, analysis, and interpretation of the culture-sharing group. However, Wolcott (1994) cautioned that these three processes were not to be viewed as mutually exclusive. In the same vein, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) describe a recursive process of constant questioning which starts when the ethnographer decides what of the cultural group will be observed, and continues throughout the research process as emerging formulations are continuously modified. Distinguishing between the three processes merely serves to vary the emphases placed on how data would be handled at different stages of the research process (Wolcott, 1994).

In examining information, efforts were made to set up how respondents made importance of the *mahundwane* games by investigating their observations, states of mind, understanding, learning, qualities, emotions and encounters trying to approximate their existence. This was best accomplished through inductive examination of subjective information where the principle object was to permit the successive, overwhelming or critical topics that were intrinsic in the crude information rise. To this end, the researcher recognized that as the curve fashioner of information gathering, the scientist additionally submitted herself to rising examples of information and was allowed to draw in deliberately with substances that went past her underlying topics (Holliday, 2007:92). As the study continued with information examination, she depended intensely on Holliday's (2007) topical investigation as methods for sorting out information. Holliday (2007:93) contends that 'adopting an absolutely topical strategy in which information is taken comprehensively and adjusted under subjects which develop as going through its totality, is the exemplary approach to keep up the standard of rise.'

The researcher identified all the data that were related to the above mentioned pattern and entered the data appropriately. The researcher drew themes from the research objectives of the study. The researcher used this approach because it is the standard and generally acceptable method for analysing qualitative data. To achieve this, the following steps were followed:

Step 1

In step 1, the analyst began by arranging and sorting of transcripts.

Step 2

In step 2, the researcher read through the transcripts as a method for getting a general picture over all transcripts. She re-read the transcripts yet again keeping in mind the end goal to get nearer to the information (Richards & Morse, 2007:135). The best favourable position the researcher had was that she accumulated the transcripts, a procedure that encouraged her deliberations. The researcher found getting inside the information considerably less demanding (Richards & Morse, 2007:136). As she read through parts of the transcripts, she started to acknowledge area/divisions. She looked into transcripts, looking for repeating subjects and basic reactions (Powell et al., 2003). Reactions were viewed as basic in their relationship to the exploration inquiries in so far as they were shedding either positive or opposite perspectives. Then the researcher started shading code sections of information and furthermore began to think about the implications and ramifications of the content divisions. By shading codes, it was conceivable to decide informational collections that bolstered or negated each other regarding the topics that developed (Hramiak, 2005:88).

Step 3

In step 3 the analyst started to discover headings that suited these divisions. These headings were subjects that she appended to these divisions. As insinuated before, topics produced from the hypothetical research which compare with the headings of the divisions of the meeting plan, were utilized as a part of showing information.

Step 4

The last stride 4 was in a way a propel coordinator for Chapter 5 as the recognized subjects gave structure to information introduction. Step 4, as Holliday (2007:90) notices, was a connection from information to composing. In introducing information, thick depictions were accomplished through enunciation of interconnections of various information removed from the three sources demonstrating how these added to the contention.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethics is defined as “the branch of philosophy dealing with values that relate to human conduct, with respect to the rightness or wrongness of specific actions, and to the goodness or badness of the motives and ends actions” (Chandler & Plano, 1988). Chaplan (1993) argues that ethics is concerned not only with distinguishing right from wrong and good from bad, but also with commitment to do what is right or acceptable. Giving attention to the lens used in collecting information and approaching analysis, namely ethnography, and the fact that this is grounded in postmodernism, the approach to verification takes the premise that there can be no easy way of judging its findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). At the centre of this difficulty is scepticism that there can be any method or theory with a general claim to authoritative knowledge (Denzin, 1998). There are, however, principles that were followed in this research that were useful as a guide to pursuing ethnographic research so that the findings could be useful.

The following ethical consideration were addressed in this study:

3.6.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is a statement, usually written that explains aspects of a study to participants and for voluntary agreement to participate before the study begins (Lawrence & Neumann: 2014:151). The participants were fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in the study and they were allowed to give their informed consent. The researcher made sure that the participants were completely free to express their feelings. The researcher ensured that the research participants were not exposed to physical or psychological harm, and that they were not subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem.

3.6.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity is the ethical protection that participants remain nameless, their identities are protected from disclosure and remain unknown (Lawrence & Neumann 2014:154). Anonymity is one important ethical consideration which encourages participants to give information freely. Anonymity is a good foundation for confidentiality where respondents know that the information

given will not be misused. To achieve this, informants' identities such as their names were not used in the analysis. The names mentioned in the analysis process are all pseudonyms. All pseudonyms that are preceded with Vho- are for the elderly whereas the ones that are not preceded with Vho- are for the youth.

3.7 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Trustworthiness entails measures that should be taken to make sure that the research findings are worth paying attention to and taken into consideration (Lincon & Guba, 1985). Mouton (2012) indicates that the principles of a good qualitative research are based on trustworthiness where a researcher persuades his or her participants that findings of the investigation must be worth taking account of. The researcher applied measures to ensure trustworthiness by ensuring validity and reliability of the research in an Appreciative Inquiry approach (AI) which is a subject under qualitative research. The following measures were applied: credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability.

Hofstee (2006:112) contends that all techniques have constraints. Like some other subjective request, the issues of inclination and generalizability rapidly go to the fore. Concerning inclination, the contention is that individual encounters, convictions and esteem loaded accounts are one-sided and subjective. However, inside the postmodern subjective research system, subjectivity is quality since truth is relative. To that degree - no story can have more believability than some other; all stories are similarly substantial, being so approved by a group that lives by them (All about Philosophy Series, 2009). Nieuwenhuis (2007:52) battles that qualitative specialists acknowledge esteem loaded accounts as valid for the individuals who have survived the experiences. Focus was on the profundity and nature of data given by respondents relating to instructing and learning of instructor training understudies, with real accentuation being on the uniqueness of every specific commitment. In the light of the prior elucidation, the researcher can contend that discoveries were advantageous.

3.7.1 Credibility

According to Shenton (2003), credibility is mainly concerned with the question of, “How congruent are the findings with the reality”. On the other hand, Guba and Lincoln (2002) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The researcher was aware that some of the participants cannot read and write, but they are knowledge holders (KH) who are useful in the study. The researcher catered for these participants by simplifying the questions and/or by translating the questions to the local language. Also, the researcher ensured that the translation is accurate by liaising with experts in the field of the language being translated.

3.7.2 Confirmability

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2001), confirmability as a way of establishing efficacy of the research. In other words, it refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data. Furthermore, this objectivity and neutrality is sought to ensure that the checks and balances on the data are relevant and meaningful. The researcher ensured that the findings of the study are true reflections of the participants’ responses during interviews. In addition, the researcher previewed the findings by replaying the recordings and reading responses with the participants to ensure that the findings were given accurately.

3.7.3 Transferability

Mouton (2012) indicates that in a qualitative study, transferability rests on those who will be willing to use it appropriately at the receiving context. The researcher ensured that the findings are easy to be applied to related studies from similar environments. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the data collected from the participants and recorded were analyzed at the best of the researcher’s ability. This was done to ensure that those who wish to use the findings for policy and other things would find it easy to use.

3.7.4 Neutrality

The Oxford English Dictionary (2001) defines neutrality as not supporting either sides or being impartial. It implies that the researcher will not take sides when conducting the research. The findings of the study were influenced by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, interest and motivation during an interviewing process. So, during the study and compilation of the findings, the researcher kept the duty of good faith and reported the findings without any attachments of the feelings to the research.

3.7.5 Truth value

According to Oxford English Dictionary (2001), truth value refers to the trait given to a proposition in respect of its truth. The researcher did not interfere with the findings of the study to suit personal outcomes. The researcher applied all relevant methods to make the study speak for itself.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research design, research methodology, the methods of data collection and data analysis were outlined. Also, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the study of rethinking the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda-speaking youth were discussed. The justifications were also given respectively why certain methods and procedures were preferred above the others. Now that the methodology has been outlined, the following chapter presents data and analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings about rethinking the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth. The study was conducted in six villages of Thulamela Municipality; Thengwe, Mbahe, Sokotenda, Malavuwe, Tshamulungwi and Tshifudi. I explored the literature pertaining to *mahundwane* and similar traditional Venda games, conducted in-depth individual and focus group interviews to gather data from the participants. Participants were elderly people, traditional leaders, parents (guardians) and their children including the youth. Data were subjected to thematic analysis. The findings are organized and presented in this chapter as follows: First, I will discuss the meaning of *mahundwane*, groups that attended the game, people who are behind the running of the game, reasons for time and place preference, time-frame for the game, activities that were done there, disappearance of the game and finally, the restoration of the game. I conclude this chapter by exploring the prospects of restoring the games so as to map the conclusions and recommendations.

4.2 Findings and interpretation

4.2.1 The art of *mahundwane*

During the interviews, I first had to find out if the participants had an understanding of what *mahundwane* is. This was to ensure that the conversations premise on a similar understanding of what it entails.

The first conversation I had was with Vho- Nyaluvhengo, a 60-year-old woman who convened and mentored young girls and boys through a staged *Mahundwane*. Vho- Nyaluvhengo is known in the community as a proponent of *Mahundwane*. She pointed out that *Mahundwane* practices taught her a lot as she grew up. Her rough estimate is that she may have done it more than 5 times then, and every time was a different learning experience.

This is what she had to say:

Vho- Nyaluvhengo¹: “*Mahundwane* is an activity that teaches rules and norms of youth and children’s play, starting from the age of 2 years till the age of 13 years. These children gather and build houses in farmlands, they know each other by names and know their slots too. During *mahundwane*, these children teach each other ways of living, respect towards one another, self-respect and ways of communication.”

The study could not be well understood without first understanding the concept “*mahundwane*.” As such, the researcher had to engage the knowledgeholders to define, explain and break the concept for better comprehension. Participants were asked what *mahundwane* was or is. The aim for posing such a question was to first understand the term and see how it could be adopted contemporarily as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth and the nation at large.

Different participants gave different views which were more or less the same. The researcher observed that the information slightly differed depending on the age group. The general understanding that the researcher got was that most of the youth were unaware of the game. The few that knew it had never participated in it but heard of it through folk tales and the stories that their grandparents spoke of. Of the youth that knew of *mahundwane*, almost all of them had traces of constant touch with their rural areas as opposed to their counterparts who now dwell in urban areas. The responses that the researcher got are as follows;

Mudau²: “*Mahundwane* is a form of play for boys and girls from the age of 7 years to the age of 22 or 23 years. They gather and play *mahundwane*, this play was done any time during the same season when people have harvested maize in their farmlands. The boys and girls first pick the remains of maize after harvest and vegetables, the girls will grind it into maize meal and cook maize porridge with the vegetables. The false houses are built by boys posing as fathers as they imitate their fathers at home.”

¹ Pseudonym for an elderly female research participant

² pseudonym for a male research participant

Ramagoma³: “*Mahundwane* is an institution which prepares children before marriage. The people of the olden days were very wise and always planned ahead, they used games such as *mahundwane* to teach and preserve the culture and norms of Vhavenda people and teach children about the future.”

Tshivhase⁴: “*Mahundwane* was played when children would be acting as husbands and wives while they imitate a real home. *Mahundwane* was done in the following way; a house and kitchen were built using dry maize stem (*matanga*), the children then posed as mother, father or kids. The home also had a washing line made from wires and sticks from trees. This play taught youth about handling a home in future. Parents were allowed to give their children utensils such as clay pot (*zwidudu*), jug (*khavho*), *lufhaho*, *luselo*, pot (*tshibikelo*), *tshinzhomela*, plates (*ndilo*), bowl (*dongwana*), wooden spoon (*lufo*), *lufheto*, dishes (*tshidongo*), pestle and mortar (*mutuli* and *musi*), sieve (*sefo*), clay tank (*tshibvuhelo*) so that they can use them during *mahundwane*.”

Although participants approached the description of the concept differently, the responses enabled me to build a common narrative about what it is, at least based on their understanding and experiences of how it is supposed to be practised.

The above responses clearly show the similarities that were noted in the responses. Even though some indicated that the children were teaching each other while there was also no consensus on the age group that attended, most aspects explained were similar. Moreover, others noted that it was meant to prepare children before marriage. In that regard, the researcher also noted that *mahundwane* had different practices and would be practised in different ways depending on the place. Because of such inconsistencies and lack of uniformity, the research compiled a distillate of what all participants in the different research sites agreed on as to what *mahundwane* was and how it was conducted;

“*Mahundwane* was a game that was designed for the community children so that they be taught norms and values of the *Vhavenda* people. This game was mainly and exclusively for children to learn the family setup and lifestyle management of households in the absence of parents. Elderly

³ Pseudonym for a male research participant

⁴ Pseudonym for a male research participant

boys and girls who would have attended ‘initiation schools’ (for girls - *vhusha* and for boys – *vhutamba vhutuka*) were the ones who would be in charge of the small ones so as to instil discipline and arrange how events unfold. *Mahundwane* was played any time after people have harvested maize and other crops in their farmlands. The announcement was made by *Vhakoma* that *mahundwane* should start through a meeting at the chief’s kraal. At the same time, he would announce when it would end. As such, *mahundwane* was done in the farmlands, but not far from where there are houses and homes. The boys would go to the farmlands and build ‘houses’ from dry maize stems (*matanga*). Furthermore, the inside ground of the ‘houses’ were polished with mud or cow dung. The roofing would be made out of grass which the girls would have gathered. The girls would go in the fields and pick the remains of maize after harvest and vegetables. These were ground into maize meal and cooked maize porridge with the vegetables. The children would divide themselves amongst the elderly children who will be governing *mahundwane* to form different family units. It was now in these family units that children will then assume the roles as a father, mother and/or as children. During *mahundwane*, boys would learn to be fathers as they would go to look for food through hunting and protecting the family. On the other hand, girls would be learning to be mothers as they would take house chores such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, fetching water and fire-wood, and learning to interact with their neighbours. Parents were allowed to give their children utensils such as clay pot to enable them to cater themselves during this game. The game would start in the morning until late in the night wherein they would return to their respective homes. Early in the morning, they would go back to their game and continue with it until night again. This was repeated for three to four (3-4) weeks. At the end of the game, the children would burn the built ‘houses’ and disperse. If there were matters that arose from the game, the children would report to their parents. This would result in the matter being settled between the two families. If the matter was too serious, the matter would escalate to *Vhakoma* so that he would settle the matter. This would end up being settled either by being fined or any other sanction imposed by *Vhakoma*. To mark the end of *mahundwane*, a celebration was held by the community. The community members would prepare traditional beer for elders to drink. Also, some people would slaughter goats and chickens as they celebrate that the children have returned from *mahundwane*.”



Figure 1: *Picture showing a family that is attending the mahundwane traditional game (make-shift)*

The above analysis is generally an agreed version of how *mahundwane* was played. Despite the minor discrepancies that were noted in different places of the game, the above was confirmed as a standard choice line of the game. Having agreed on how the indigenous game of *mahundwane* was played, the researcher went on to inquire about the parties that were responsible for the administration of the game.

Age group of children who attended

Children in the Vhavenda communities were and are still regarded as a vulnerable group. As such, strict customary rules were adhered to as a measure to ensure their safety. It is because of this that the researcher wanted to know the age groups that attended the *mahundwane* game. The participants who were asked gave diverse views. Below are some of the responses to the question: Which age groups attended *mahundwane*?

Vho-Tambudzani⁵: “*Mahundwane* is an activity that teaches rules and norms of youth and children’s play. Because of that, children who attended ranged from the age of 2 to 13.”

Vho-Murunwa⁶: “*Mahundwane* is a form of play for boys and girls from the age of 7 years to the age of 22 or 23 years.

Thendo⁷: “*Mahundwane* was played by children who would be husband and children while they imitate a real home. This did not include small children who would not have reached puberty.”

Lutendo⁸: “I started attending *mahundwane* when I was very young. Maybe 4 or 5 years of age. It depended mainly on the parents’ approval.”

The responses given by the different participants made the issue very confusing. Even participants in the same community gave different age groups that were expected to attend *mahundwane*. Upon asked by the researcher why these age groups differed, the participants supplied numerous reasons

⁵ Pseudonym for a female research participant

⁶ Pseudonym for a female research participant

⁷ Pseudonym for research participant

⁸ Pseudonym for research participant

to such inconsistencies. Some noted that it mainly depended on the parents' views and norms. However, I discovered that in IKS, the age assignment of counting is not similar to that of English. The age differences usually seem inconsistent to the outsider, but those within the cultural group seemed to understand it as it is understood in terms of IKS framework. Also, if the parents had one girl or only games as children, the parents would at times be skeptical to release them thinking that the absence of the male child in the family would make them vulnerable. Some noted that some parents strongly subscribed to the *mahundwane* and would want their children to attend when they are at an early age. On the other hand, some parents knew that their children can misbehave there, thereby stopping them until they reach a certain age so as to avoid being taken to Vhakoma and answer many issues thereby desecrating the family name. Finally, because of the reasons submitted, the age groups that attended the game were made not to be uniform. This was, however, made voluntary to children and parents – a cornerstone of the ethical cultural sanctity.

4.2.2 The running of *mahundwane*

Now that the design of the game has been mapped out, this section of the study focuses on the administration of the game. This comes up from the issue that children are the ones who were participating in the game, as such their safety and the running of the game need to be assessed. To carefully and fully comprehend this part, the following categories were assessed: supervision of the game, age group of children who attended and preferred time.

The administration of the game entail supervision, length of the game and time preferences. I will now describe each process according to the inputs of the participants. I will conclude this section by lifting out the educational encounters for the youth.

4.2.3 Supervision of the game

After having been informed of how the game would go about, the participants were asked to inform the researcher of the people who would be in charge or supervising the game. This was important because the issue at hand was relating to children. As such, the researcher wanted to see and know how supervision of the children was done. Some participants gave the following responses to the answers given:

Lufuno⁹: “During *mahundwane*, the children will pose as fathers, mothers or as children. So, once they are fathers, they would be the ones to supervise the game.”

Tshilidzi¹⁰: “Everything that would have happened during *mahundwane* would be reported to the parents when they go home or after the game is finished. So, you see, this game was not left out to the children to do whatever they wanted to do because they would face the consequences. Parents were always supportive and would even give out their goods to be used there. So, in short, parents supervised this game in an indirect way to enable the children to learn.”

Shonisani: “Like I told you from the beginning, *Vhakoma* was the main person behind the running of *mahundwane*. He would tell the community when *mahundwane* starts and when *mahundwane* ends. If there were minor or serious cases that happen at *mahundwane*, *Vhakoma* would be informed and would want to hear how it was resolved. You see, *Vhakoma* is busy with many things at times and would expect us as his subjects to update him as he is the supervisor of the community game.”

After asking this question, the researcher began to see how different people viewed *mahundwane* supervision differently. Despite their different views of the supervision aspect, the researcher began to note how rich the African setup was on issues of taking responsibility and matters that governed the community. The researcher concluded that the networking system of the *Vhavenda* in managing the *mahundwane* indigenous game was watertight and procedural. It had different structures of management that would all converge at one central aspect.

Firstly, every child who attended the game was expected to be a brother or sister’s keeper. If anything did not go well, either with the observer or the other party expected to report either to the ‘mother, father, brother, sister or neighbours’ at their made to believe households of the *mahundwane* game. If they felt justice was not done, they would either escalate the matter to the biological parents at home.

⁹ Pseudonym for a young female research participant

¹⁰ Pseudonym for a young female research participant

Secondly, the elderly children who are oftentimes personifying the parents are the ones with the responsibility to see that the children are well, and all things were moving according to their plans and within African values and norms. If anything happens, they had the power to chastise the younger children as if they are the parents. If they felt more action was supposed to be taken, they would later report the matter to the respective biological parents of the child or children so that more reinforcement be given to discipline the children.

Thirdly, the biological parents were also the supervisors of the game in that they had to make sure they take stock of the day's happening at the *mahundwane*. This was done by awaiting for the children to come and before they retire to bed they would have a report of how the game went and if there was any need of reinforcement in terms of food or materials. Lastly, *Vhakoma* was also the chief supervisor who would be expecting to hear the reports of how the game would have gone to find out if there are things they should be aware of. These included the safety of all children, misbehaviour and mainly adherence to Tshivenda cultural demands. Because of all these, it can be noted that the supervision of the game was in all levels so as to monitor the shortcomings of the game. Now having grasped the supervision that was given to the *mahundwane* game, the researcher probed into the reasons of time preference to attend the *mahundwane* game.

4.2.4 Reasons for Time Preference: After harvest

Deducing from the other questions that were posed, the researcher noted that *mahundwane* was attended after the harvest time of maize and other crops. The researcher therefore asked why the *mahundwane* game was mainly attended at the specified time. The researcher wanted to know whether there were spiritual connotations to the selection of the time or other reasons that are cultural. The following are the responses that the researcher got from the participants:

Khethani¹¹: “*Mahundwane* is an activity that teaches rules and norms to the youth. As such, the time after harvest was ideal as many people would be resting and there would be no work to do.”

¹¹ Pseudonym for research participant

Khuliso¹²: “This was a good timing as children would not be attending school. It was also holiday time and it was good to teach them our cultural ways.”

Takalani¹³: “That time of the year was a good time in terms of weather. It would not surprise us with rains and other calamities that would endanger our children as there would be a full moon. Safety was guaranteed as they would have to travel back home.”

Denga¹⁴: “It would be after harvesting maize so the materials to use for building their houses would be plenty. This time, many food will have remained in the fields. So, they would benefit with getting such food before it’s eaten by animals. It was also ideal for boys to hunt because most wild animals would be coming for the food in the fields.”

The above responses were very satisfactory to the researcher.

4.2.5 Why was *mahundwane* done in farmlands and not elsewhere?

The researcher was very curious about the setting which was preferred by the cultural practice. The researcher was concerned whether the farmlands were not a danger to the children, bearing in mind the presence of snakes in the fields. In addition, the open field would not be safe for the children if they are exposed to the scorching sun. Having all these things at the back of the mind, the researcher asked the knowledgeholders why such a setting was preferred for this cultural game. The responses below were given:

Vho-Azwinnidini¹⁵: “The houses were built of dry maize stems (*matanga*) and grass and polished with mud or cow dung obtained in the farmlands.”

Vho-Ntshavhiseni¹⁶: “*Mahundwane* was done in the farmlands away from parents so that children can learn how to take care of their own households.”

¹² Pseudonym for research participant

¹³ Pseudonym for research participant

¹⁴ Pseudonym for research participant

¹⁵ Pseudonym for research participant

¹⁶ Pseudonym for research participant

Mulisa¹⁷: “The children did not want any disturbance from their parents as this activity was part of growing up. The family setting included a father, mother and children.”

The responses given seemed genuine and were clear as to why the setting was chosen for this particular cultural game. The resources much needed for the game were plenteous in farmlands. Also, the distance to the farmlands provided the much needed independence of the children who were playing the game. With regards to safety, the knowledgeholders and former participants indicated that the farmlands were not a dangerous place to be as it would have been cleared of the crops. The scorching sun was said not to be a challenge as most farmlands were surrounded by a few trees where children would hide from the sun.

4.2.6 How long does *mahundwane* take before participants go back home?

In that same vein, the researcher asked why the game had to last for 3-4 weeks. The responses were as follows:

Mpho¹⁸: “The 3-4 weeks were designed to allow that the children would have ample time to learn the cultural values they were expected to learn in that time. However, if the weather was going to change unexpectedly, the *Vhakoma* would send a message to stop the game for some time. This did not usually happen.”

Vho-Muditambi: “It was also a time of relaxation and allowing children to rest and interact with each other. That was the only setup wherein children would have an opportunity of that nature. As such, the time frame suited them to really have time together. It would at times exceed this, but the *Vhakoma* would also need the children to go back and help parents with household chores and avoid them to be alone for too long.”

From the responses that the researcher got, it was clear that the *Vhakoma* would really have consulted with some of the key members of the family so as to determine the time frame that the game was supposed to last. In essence, it shows that at the centre of African games was

¹⁷ Pseudonym for research participant

¹⁸ Pseudonym for research participant

consultation, collaboration and vigilance in the manner in which games were played in the African setup. There was proper coordination of events and this was mainly remote-controlled through cultural astronomy. The African people excelled much in studying their environment and changing of events through means of birds, harvests and other things. Some respondents noted that this was carefully checked to see if the lives of the children would not be jeopardised.

4.2. 7 What activities and practices are performed and are learnt during *mahundwane*?

From the other questions asked, the researcher had come to know that *Mahundwane* was a game that was designed for the community children so that they be taught norms and values of the *Vhavenda* people. This game is said to mainly and exclusively cater for children to learn the family setup and lifestyle management of households in the absence of parents. It was through these responses that the researcher asked the participants the activities and practices which are performed during *mahundwane*. In addition, what were the lessons that the children were being taught or teaching each other. The participants noted a lot of aspects that were being taught during *mahundwane*. The responses of the participants are listed and discussed below:

4.2. 7.1 Taking care of the family

During *mahundwane*, children were placed in an environment where they were given responsibilities and taught to take care of the family. In that regard, the children would divide themselves amongst the elderly children who will be governing *mahundwane* to form different family units. It is in these new family units that they formed what they would learn from each other under the guidance of the elderly children, how to take care of the family. The children would do diverse activities that allowed them to learn the following:

4.2.7.2 Cooking and household chores

The girls would go in the fields and pick the remains of maize after harvest and vegetables. These were ground into maize meal and cooked as maize porridge with the vegetables. Below is a picture that shows how the children were taught to prepare the maize after picking it from the field.

Figure 2: *Picture showing children preparing maize picked from the fields (make-shift)*



On the other hand, girls would be learning to be mothers as they take household chores such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, fetching water and fire-wood, and learning to interact with their neighbours. The elderly children would be the ones who would be taking the lead and teaching the younger ones how food was prepared. It is alleged that most parents would not find time to really teach their children some of the household chores, thus, it was done during *mahundwane*. Also, this was an opportunity of them to teach others the right places and right trees to bring home for firewood. One of the participants said the following:

Vho-Mukwevho¹⁹: “It was through *mahundwane* where I was taught how to cook. I was embarrassed as my mother was most times too busy to teach me how to cook because we were from a polygamous family. My other step-sisters were good cooks. My exposure at *mahundwane* allowed me to ask why some other things were done when cooking. This did not only help me, but it also helped other girls who were my sisters in our house at *mahundwane*. It’s only me left in the society who can cook some other dishes that we were taught there at *mahundwane*. In my view, it was more than a school because what I learnt there I never got anyone to teach me of it anywhere.”

¹⁹ Pseudonym for research participant



Figure 3: Mahundwane picture of a family being taught how to cook by the mother (make-shift)

The participant was an elderly woman who indicated in the interview that she learnt a lot from *mahundwane* and some of her receipts are gone to the grave.

4.2.7.3 Hunting

During *mahundwane*, boys would learn to be fathers as they would go to look for food through hunting and protecting the family.

4.2.7.4 Buildings

The boys would go to the farmlands and build 'houses' from dry maize stems (*matanga*). Furthermore, the inside ground of the 'houses' were polished with mud or cow dung. The roofing would be made out of grass which the girls would have gathered.



Figure 4: *Picture showing a family structure seated outside the 'house' (nndu) built by 'men' (make-shift)*

4.2.7.5 Singing

During the time when the children would be at *mahundwane*, there was also an opportunity for them to gather and sing. Diverse cultural songs were sung by participants that carried different significance to their cultural beliefs. Accompanied by the songs were dances that the children would dance. The songs and dances carried rich cultural norms of the Vhavenda people that the children would learn. It was at this platform that children learnt the diverse dancing moves of their culture and what it meant. Children were noted to learn quickly and freely during the *mahundwane* game. This is supported by Manford's (1983: 23) assertion that:

“Music should not be taught in any form that will cause children to love less. Music teaching should be linked with play, for children do not need a reason to play; they do it for intrinsic interest. Participation in music should therefore have the same quality as a play. It should be observed that every child should be given the opportunity to explore and develop his capabilities in music in such way as may bring him happiness and a sense of wellbeing; stimulates his imagination and stir his creative activities; and make him so responsive that he will cherish and seek to renew the aesthetic feelings induced by music.”

Relating to music and dance was the issue of playing the musical instruments. Most of the participants noted that they started learning to play drums at *mahundwane* games. In that regard, the elderly children who could play the instruments were noted to pick anyone who showed interest and sometimes motivated those who had no interest and taught them how to play musical instruments. Although the researcher found it hard at first to comprehend how they were teaching each other, but after they explained it made more than sense. The researcher also found and noted through the participants that the *mahundwane* participants were more caring and gracious, possessing a love of life and an appreciation for what they had – not what they did not have.

4.2.7.6 Playing games

Mahundwane was also a central place where children would play other indigenous games. The games were noted to entertain, give physical fitness and provoke the thinking of the children. Games played during *mahundwane* include skipping the rope, visiting each other's houses, *ndonde* and *tsingannededede*.

4.2.7.7 Respect

The game was highly esteemed for its ability to command respect. Also, the participants pointed out that the children's songs at *mahundwane* commanded moral lessons to all who participated in them. The different family units under which the children would be put would ensure that seniority is highly respected, and punishment would be attached for failing to adhere to it. That was the platform where all manners of disrespect were crushed to promote and instil discipline at peer level. It was at these games that when children are served food the senior were the first ones to pick meat followed by the younger ones. This was maintained to indicate that the one who is senior always has to take decisions and the younger ones comply with what the elders would have decided.

4.2.7.8 Sexual life

It was now in these family units that children will then assume the roles of a father, mother and/or children. Now with regards to elderly children who were preparing to marry, this was their platform to now begin to learn of the sexual life they would expect in case they marry. They would get to know how managing a marriage would be. Elderly boys and girls had some opportunity of practicing non-penetrative sex there. These were children who would have attended initiation school and were well bred on the parameters of their act. Those who would not have attended initiation schools were not allowed in any way to engage in this practice. As such, the only ones who got the opportunity of being appointed as fathers and mothers were the ones who would have attended these initiation schools.

Murendeni²⁰: “During *mahundwane* the children never had sexual intercourse because they were not exposed and didn’t know about it. Children were told that children were bought or found from the lake and not through sexual intercourse. They would teach each other about family and they were given rules by their parents at home. The older children were responsible for maintaining peace and stability. Some of the boys who participated in *mahundwane* were already in their puberty and had experienced wet dreams, so they were taught not to penetrate girls but to masturbate or play on the thighs without reaching the vaginal section.

4.3 Why *mahundwane* disappeared?

Having established the learning activities of children during the *mahundwane* games, the researcher was surprised as to why such a rich and fruitful activity just disappeared. In that regard, the researcher was more concerned on establishing why the game disappeared. The participants who were interviewed gave diverse views with regard to the disappearance of the *mahundwane* game. The participants indicated modernity, the death of knowledge holders and increase of misbehaviour of children as the main cause of the disappearance of the game.

4.3.1 Modernity

Most of the participants interviewed noted that modernity was the contributing factor for the disappearance of *mahundwane*. These participants noted that modernity which was brought by colonisation aided the breakdown of the traditional family structures and functions. Furthermore, the issue of modernity was said to have led to the African culture to be seen as evil. Christianity alongside modernity was accused of having caused many African people to denounce their roots through salvation. This abandonment of the culture left few participants in it, thereby resulting in its abandonment. Participants interviewed in the study indicated the following:

Dzanga: “Modernity became our number one enemy after colonisation disrupted our culture. We used to love our culture, had joy in it and our ancestors had designed a good root for the generations. I am hurt with how this good and exciting game which was passed on from generation

²⁰ Pseudonym for research participant

to generation just came to a stop because people were made to believe that modernity had something better to offer.”

Tshifhiwa²¹: “*Mahundwane* became outdated when colonisation came. Who would have liked spending time in the bushes when someone brought us a radio where we could hear what others were doing in other places? I am one of the people who started not going for the game because we wanted to watch television programmes that the whites brought. It was bringing pleasure to me and other youths. We should understand that culture changes. So, it was our time to see change coming and we had to leave it.”

Vho-Madzinge²²: “*Mahundwane* was campaigned against by the schools where our children were attending. All of a sudden, they started disliking going there and seemed to know better than us. Some children were saying they had school work to attend to, but it was on holiday. I think they just designed these schools for our kids so that they can erode our culture – that is why these kids again led the revolution.”

Vho-Tshabuse²³: “I say modernity and Christianity took away indigenous games. *Mahundwane* was nice to everyone before they came. Immediately they arrived, they started turning us against our culture. They said playing *mahundwane*, was associated with the devils. Some of the people who joined this Christianity by the time stopped their children from attending *mahundwane*. Vhakoma’s power was weakened by this modernisation. Had it not been for modernisation, our cultural practices would still be in one accord and we would be living in peace and harmony.”

Moreover, some participants noted that migration to urban areas and mingling of different cultural groups is contributing to the disappearance of *mahundwane*. It is because of mixing of cultural norms that people differ in their behaviour and also in different cultural subscriptions. Culture reflects the ideas and meanings people share and everything that is human made. In evolutionary terms, culture gives a tremendous vantage over all other organisms. As such, the coming of other cultural groups in areas where *mahundwane* was practised made it seem unfamiliar and with time

²¹ Pseudonym for research participant

²² Pseudonym for research participant

²³ Pseudonym for research participant

it became unpopular. This, as some participants noted, could have been made so because those who were passionate followers of *mahundwane* were shy or feared to be judged.

4.3.2 Death of knowledge holders

Some participants noted that the disappearance of *mahundwane* games was attributed to the death of knowledge holders in the place. These knowledge holders were role players in governing *mahundwane* and would ensure that such cultural games are kept for the children to be acculturated in the Vhavenda ways. The researcher also noted that it was even difficult to find the knowledge holders who knew how the game was done. This was also evidence to show that the knowledge holders are all dying with the information that should be used to teach the children so as to know what to do in life. The participants who were interviewed were noted to have given the responses that are below.

Mbavhalelo²⁴: “Almost all the old ‘*madalas*’ we had in the community who liked promoting these games are dying. Their death can be said to have contributed to the disappearance of this game. During their existence, they would make sure that the game was done, and they had pleasure in it being performed. Unfortunately, their time ran out and they joined the ancestors. We knew little about the game, so we could not continue carrying them out. If we had tried, we would have diverted from how it was done and attracted consequences.”

4.3.3 Increase of misbehaviour and safety of children

The increase of misbehaviour and safety of children was reported by participants as one of the factors that led to the disappearance of the *mahundwane* game. Some participants noted that the increase in crime such as rape of children was becoming rampant thus, made parents not to release their children for fear of rapists. In addition, this was also because some of the girls and boys were having sexual intercourse and getting pregnant during the indigenous games that were meant to educate children. Some of the responses noted the following responses:

²⁴ Pseudonym for research participant

Vho-Maungedzo²⁵: “*Mahundwane* had to be stopped because boys and girls were taking this opportunity to commit dirty things. Some girls were getting pregnancies there. Also, there were some few accidents where children would be bitten by snakes and attacked by other animals in the fields. This started to make other people see this game as dangerous.”

Vho-Dombo²⁶: “In the olden days, children used to stay in their slums where *mahundwane* is done, but later on because of the increase of crime and rape, the children would return home at night. This was also because some girls and boys were having sexual intercourse and getting pregnant. The dress code of modern fashion has also encouraged rape and therefore discouraged *mahundwane*.”

Mulimisi²⁷: In the olden days, traditional leaders were in control and disciplined people. Now, there is no adequate space where the children can build their slums and most children go to schools.”

Now that the researcher had managed to get insight of some of the causes that led to the disappearance of this game, the researcher probed in its restoration. The researcher wanted to know if there would be prospects of restoring the game for the benefit of today’s youth and/or design a model that would serve as a replacement for *mahundwane* and benefit the youth from the wisdom of the game.

4.4 Restoration of *mahundwane*

A great deal of traditional knowledge, comprising of *mahundwane*, customary laws and folklore, has been undermined and destroyed by colonisers and post-colonial states who imposed their own systems of law, knowledge and worldviews on indigenous peoples. Today, there is an increasing appreciation of the value and potential of traditional knowledge.

²⁵ Pseudonym for research participant

²⁶ Pseudonym for research participant

²⁷ Pseudonym for research participant

To bring back *mahundwane*, children should be educated about the right way a Venda child must live and the culture they subscribe to. This was noted by participants to be done through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, television, films, Whatsapp and newspapers. Most participants indicated that the majority of the youth are always on social media, thus, to be able to win them to such cultural values and games, the youth should be captured through their ways. Some participants interviewed gave the following responses to the questions:

Vho-Simba²⁸: “For *mahundwane* to come back, there should be negotiations between youth, communities, municipalities and traditional leaders. Bringing back *mahundwane* can be a challenge because the government has influence over people. In the olden days, traditional leaders were in control and disciplined people. To bring *mahundwane* back can be challenging because there is not adequate space where children can build their slums and most children go to schools nowadays. The best way could be to preserve our cultures and belief. New ways to do *mahundwane* can be implemented, this include use of new building materials such as wood and change of dress code for girls such as wearing trousers instead of skirts. Traditional leaders should perform rituals to protect the place where these children can play *mahundwane* safely.”

Maseda²⁹: This activity must be brought back, this can be done by coming together of universities and traditional leaders. Traditional healers can also be consulted to protect the communities to reduce crimes.

Makamu³⁰: To bring back *mahundwane*, children should be educated about the right way a Venda child must live and their culture through social mediums such as Facebook, twitter, television, films, Whatsapp and newspapers.

Zamokuhle³¹: For *mahundwane* to come back, there should be negotiations between youth, communities, municipalities and traditional leaders. Bringing back *Mahundwane* can be a challenge because the government has influence over people. The best way could be to preserve

²⁸ Pseudonym for research participant

²⁹ Pseudonym for research participant

³⁰ Pseudonym for research participant

³¹ Pseudonym for research participant

our cultures and belief. There should be new ways in which *Mahundwane* can be implemented, this include using new building materials such as wood and change of dress code for girls such as wearing trousers instead of skirts. Traditional leaders should perform rituals to protect the place where these children can play *mahundwane* safely.

Verwoerd, the then minister of the Native Affairs, made a statement in parliament that:

"When I have control on Native Education, I will reform it so that the Native will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them" (Christie, 1985:12).

This minister found no reasons why indigenous peoples should obtain training, which would generate competition with European community. People's education system was meant to replace the inferior, segregated, prejudicial and undemocratic apartheid education. Thus, the promotion of indigenous culture (like *mahundwane*) will help to cultivate the sense of responsibility amongst learners. As such, teachers need to practice this knowledge and cascade it to the learners. In addition, the government and other institutions should promote and participate in cultural festivals and observe cultural days so promotion of such cultural games and practices.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to rethink the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth. In that regard, the following research questions were asked and answered: What was the original nature and processes of *mahundwane*? What were the teachings acquired during *mahundwane*? What were the values of *mahundwane* game amongst youth? What is the relevance of *mahundwane* in the contemporary world? The chapter noted that *mahundwane* was a game for the youth. This game was attended by the youth under the supervision of elderly boys and girls who were answerable to parents that owe the account to the village headmen. This game was done during the day and at night children would go back home. Furthermore, the game lasted for a time determined by the village head. In that regard, children would learn household duties and other games during the time. The study also showed that various facts are leading to the disappearance of the game; modernity, death of knowledge holders among others. It was because of this that the participants suggested the incorporation of indigenous games into the educational

curriculum and raise the passion of it in children through the media. The following chapter shall now give the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the conclusion of the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth. A thorough look at the literature review and data collected in the research area were used in coming to the conclusion and recommendations of this study. It is important to reflect at the objectives that the study embarked on so as to clearly outline the latter.

5.2 Conclusions

The study of *mahundwane* amongst the Vhavenda speaking youth noted that there is a growing consensus that indigenous knowledge is fundamental to the social and life-developmental skills of the youth in Africa. However, this knowledge that is in the form of indigenous games is in serious jeopardy of disappearing if proper steps are not taken to document it, preserve it, and make it accessible to current and future generations. This is so as most knowledge holders are going to the grave with the knowledge and the influence of modernisation amongst other reasons. However, I came to the realisation that it is vital to ensure that the rapidly emerging information society should not intentionally or negligently deprive the Vhavenda youth of the indigenous knowledge embedded in indigenous games that form part of their birth-right as indigenous people.

The study's objectives were as follows; to explore the original nature and processes of *mahundwane*, to identify the teachings acquired during *mahundwane*, to examine the values of *mahundwane* game amongst the youth, to assess the relevance of *mahundwane* in the contemporary world and to develop a contemporary model game that replicates *mahundwane*. The findings of these are outlined below:

5.2.1 The original nature and processes of *mahundwane*

The original nature and processes of *mahundwane* have been significant to explore how this was done to learn from it. *Mahundwane* was a game that was designed for the community children to be taught norms and values of the *Vhavenda* people. This game was mainly and exclusively for children to learn the family setup and lifestyle management of households in the absence of parents. Elderly boys and girls who would have attended ‘initiation schools’ (for girls - *vhusha* and for boys – *vhutamba vhutuka*) were the ones who would be in charge of the young ones to instil discipline and arrange how events unfolded. *Mahundwane* was played after people have harvested maize and other crops in their farmlands. The announcement was made by *Vhakoma* that *mahundwane* should start through a meeting at the chief’s kraal. At the same time, he would announce when it would end. As such, the boys would go to the farmlands and build ‘houses’ from dry maize stems (*matanga*). The children would divide themselves amongst the elderly children who would be governing *mahundwane* to form different family units. Parents were allowed to support *mahundwane* game through giving their children utensils such as clay pots to enable the children to cater themselves during this game. The game would start in the morning and end late in the night where after the children would return to their respective homes.

5.2.2 The education acquired during *mahundwane*

The study unveiled that besides being a recreational game, *mahundwane* was an indigenous game that was designed for the community children to be taught norms and values of the *Vhavenda* people. To be specific, this game was exclusively designed to cater for children to learn the family setup and lifestyle management of households in the absence of parents. As such, activities and practices which were performed during *mahundwane* were diverse and informative for the youth and they included the ability to fend and take care of the family, cooking and doing household chores, hunting, building, singing, respect and sexual life. These had been noted to play a vital role in empowering the youth to grow as responsible citizens.

Having established how the game was done (nature and processes) and how pivotal and relevant it was in grooming the youth to adulthood, the following recommendations are given since the game has disappeared and nearing extinction.

5.2.3 The disappearance of *mahundwane*

Having established the learning activities of children during the *mahundwane* games, the researcher was surprised as to why such a rich and fruitful activity just disappeared. In that regard, the researcher was more concerned on establishing why the game disappeared. The participants who were interviewed gave diverse views with regard to the disappearance of the *mahundwane* game. The participants indicated modernity, the death of knowledgeholders and increase of misbehaviour of children as the main cause of the disappearance of the game.

Modernisation process causes young children and youth not to be no longer exposed to traditional ways of doing things. Most people are no longer going to the river to fetch water and to the mountain to fetch firewood while most boys are not talking care livestock wherein they used to practice hunting by using their dogs and at the same time protecting the livestock from being attacked by wild animals. When sunset boys would bring back the meat they caught while hunting. In these two different environments both boys and girls, s games were played or practiced in those environments.

5.2.4 Restoration of *mahundwane*

A great deal of traditional knowledge, comprising of *mahundwane*, customary laws and folklore, has been undermined and destroyed by colonisers and post-colonial states who imposed their own systems of law, knowledge and worldviews on indigenous peoples. Today, there is an increasing appreciation of the value and potential of traditional knowledge. To bring back *mahundwane*, children should be educated about the right way a Venda child must live and the culture they subscribe to. This was noted by participants to be done through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, television, films, WhatsApp and newspapers. Most participants indicated that the majority of the youth are always on social media, thus, to be able to win them to such cultural values and games, the youth should be captured through their ways.

5.3 Recommendations

The study of the role of *mahundwane* as an educational game for Vhavenda speaking youth seeks to make the following recommendations:

5.3.1 Modernise the game

The study recommends an introduction and intensive expansion of social media technologies in introducing the *mahundwane* indigenous games as a way of luring the youth to like the game as it is now regarded as archaic and outdated amongst most youth. It is submitted that most youth are more inclined to social media thus, modernizing the game will whet the youths' involvement in *mahundwane* indigenous games, thereby indirectly bringing the teachings and significance that *mahundwane* carried. In this regard, responsible stakeholders should document and disseminate *mahundwane* for children's sake to ensure that the next generation benefit from it. In the same way that many other people, especially the youth, follow live shows like 'The Big Brothers', it is envisaged that the youth would follow *mahundwane* indigenous games if it is disseminated.

5.3.2 Inclusion of indigenous games in education curriculum

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Arts and Culture should work together with indigenous knowledge holders to effectively introduce indigenous games in the school curriculum. These games should be introduced as part of life orientation to equip children about the realities of life. This would give effect to the adage that says that 'All work and no play makes John a dull boy.' If a pilot study can be carried out from grade R, it could be helpful to orientate children on African indigenous life skills, norms and values at a practical level as modern schools focus more on theory and are more likely to produce half-baked graduates. The inclusion of indigenous games is projected as a stepping stone to balance theory and practical life.

5.3.1 Intellectual property

Another challenge affecting documentation of indigenous knowledge such as *mahundwane* indigenous games is addressing copyright and intellectual property rights issues that are included

in the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2007). The Economic Commission for Africa recommended that “oral tradition and indigenous knowledge in African communities should be exploited in all their forms of expression, giving cognizance to the protection of intellectual property rights” (United Nations, 2001, p. 3). The challenge to the protection of traditional creative expressions is that copyright is Eurocentric, placing emphasis on individuality and material, contrary to traditional and indigenous cultural norms (Greyling & McNulty, 2011). Knowledge holders should also be encouraged to partner with researchers to document *mahundwane* indigenous games and work together to protect and benefit from the joint work (benefit sharing) while disseminating vital information that will remain benefiting the future generations.

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