THE ROLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS IN SUSTAINING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF   MUVHANGO

by

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DEDICATIONS

In memory of my grandfather Mr Piet Sepamo Maseeme, may his soul rest in eternal peace. I witnessed him fighting for his life, which made it not to be easy to return to my books and laptop after paying him a visit at Mankweng Academic Hospital, but I realised how proud he would be to see me coming home with my master's degree. *"A moya   wa gago o robale ka khutso, Mphele'a Mmaswi le Pheladi*."

My grandmother Mrs Seke Selina Mashiloane, taught and continue to teach me to pray, to love, to respect and to humble myself, no matter how provocative a person or situation can be. I am grateful to be the kind of woman that I am becoming because of her guidance and wisdom. *"Phela o re phelele Mologadi' a Mmaswi le Mahlako."*

To my mother Mrs Shirley Mosedi Mokomane, God bless her beautiful womb. Amongst all, she taught me to be responsible, disciplined, work hard and above all, to have perseverance. I am hoping to give her the pride of her lifetime. *"Ke a go rata Mahlako 'a Mphele le Mologadi."*

DECLARATION

I declare that THE ROLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCAST CORPORATION TELEVISION IN SUSTAINING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF MUVHANGO (dissertation) hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Arts (degree and field of research) has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that is my work in design and in execution, and that all the material contained herein has been dully acknowledged.

Maseeme T (Ms)   10-11-2021

Surname, Initials (title).   Date

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ABSTRACT

Culture gives identity to the people, that which should run from one generation to another. In this information age, media are expected to be carriers of culture to help sustain its transmission through generations. This case study explored the role of the South African public broadcaster in sustaining African traditional culture concerning SABC 2 soap opera named *Muvhango*. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample of 25 participants from Tshakhuma village in Vhembe District. The study hypothesised that there is a misrepresentation of reality in soap opera. However, the findings of the study prove that media representations about tradition are a true reflection of the culture impersonated. The results have shown that there is a good relationship between the media and culture, which the media as transmitters of culture are fulfilling. The findings of the study have proven sustainability of culture. However, thorough research is encouraged for content producers to have more accurate and truthful representation.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1. Abbreviations

1.1 BCCSA-Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa

1.2 CFO- Chief Financial Officer

1.3 COO- Chief Operating Officer

1.4 DDG- Deputy Director-General

1.5 IBA- Independent Broadcast Authority

2. Acronyms

2.1 ICASA- Independent Communication Authority of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

1.1 Background to the study

The culture of people is what defines them and differentiates them from other groups of human beings and for them to be identified amongst others. Culture is regarded as a building block of a society, which entails social norms, values and traditions of the society. Hence Africa has its umbrella identity known as African traditional culture. This culture is embraced and valued by Africans. However, culture varies from country to country and from different ethnic groups within a given country.

South Africa, as part of Africa, is a multicultural society where diversity is acknowledged. Despite the multiplicity of cultures and traditions in South Africa and the African continent, there are notable universal values that are shared by many, among which include respect for the elderly, the chieftaincy, as well as a sense of human kindness [Ubuntu]. It is common knowledge how Africans present themselves before the royal authority. A chief is regarded as a strong authoritative person whose words rule and are obeyed. Notwithstanding that there are advisors, his words remain powerful (Mmbara, 2009).

Another instance of universal African norm is that the royal family and relatives usually live in a cluster and are protected by a powerful traditional healer. Moreover, African women, especially the royal wives are in most cases expected to cover their heads and their shoulders with headwraps. These women bow whenever they approach their husbands or the chief (Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015). These distinctive traits should be carried from generation to generation (Emeakaroha, 2002). In this regard, the media are expected to carry a role of transmitting beliefs, traditions, norms and values of a society to the other or the next generation of the very same ethnic group to instil them, and to be familiar, with that culture. Thus, media present culture to society.

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There is a metaphor in media studies that states that the media are the mirror of society. The literal meaning or use of a mirror is to reflect what is held up to (O'shaughnessy & Stadler, 2012: 23). However, this notion seems to be diverging from its original meaning since the media appear to be misrepresenting the universality of African values. In the media context, the 'mirror' refers to the true representation of the society (Gurevitch, Bennett, Currun & Woollacott, 2005: 287), which raises a question of whether what is being portrayed in the media about culture is a true reflection of that culture, societal norms and values.

Moreover, the fundamentals of the media are to educate, entertain and transmit information. However, in their process of serving these fundamental functions, the media should not misrepresent reality. Among the media, television has been found to have a significant influence on culture because of its informative and persuasive nature which is supported by audio-visual quality (Nwaolikpe, 2013). The portrayal of culture on television is predominantly carried through entertainment content such as soap operas. This may be due to the sustainable and endless nature of episodes, which make them be considered as a representation of reality. The fictitious characters and plotting appear to be true in giving soap operas a sense of reality. However, they are cultural commodities (Ahmed, 2012). The study looked at whether the representation of African traditional culture on television is a true reflection of that culture as people know it.

It is the mandated responsibility of public service broadcasters such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation to educate, inform and entertain the public. In so doing, the emphasis should be on public interest and public good representation. The mandate binds them to provide relevant, fair and balanced information and to provide diversity of programmes and services (Tomaselli, 2011: 211). The SABC is the South African public broadcaster which was, according to the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 153 of 1993, transformed from a state-controlled broadcaster into a public broadcaster after

1994. This transformation intended to ensure an institution of a public forum that truly reflects a political, social and economic outlook of the country and to serve as a pillar for the regeneration of the South African society (Muswede, 2016).

1.1.1 *The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a public broadcaster*

The SABC provides public broadcasting services in South Africa and was established on the 1st of August 1936 through an Act of Parliament. The SABC's mandate as a public broadcaster comes from the Charter, which defines its objectives. The Charter is laid down in chapter IV of the Broadcasting Act of 1999 (as amended) and requires the SABC to encourage the development of South African expression by providing, in the official languages, a wide range of programming that: reflects South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity; displays South African talent in educational and entertaining programmes; offers a plurality of views and a variety of news, information and analysis from a South African point of view; advances national and public interest.

The SABC's powers and functions, as well as its rights and obligations, are derived from a number of sources. These sources include legislation, the Charter, licence conditions of each SABC station and channel, and regulations issued by the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) from time to time, including the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters set by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) (Dibetso & Smith, 2012).

According to Fourie (2010), South Africa's broadcasting legislation provides for a three-tier licensing structure for broadcasting services: public, commercial and community. The SABC is South Africa's only public broadcaster. For public accountability purposes, it consists of two separate divisions controlled by the board: a public service division and a commercial service division, in each of

which the SABC runs nineteen radio stations and five television channels. Each has a set of licence conditions that impose obligations, including quotas for local content, and requirements for geographical coverage and language services. These are laid down by ICASA, which is responsible for monitoring compliance with licence conditions and objectives of the Charter.

The soap opera *Muvhango* is aired on SABC 2, and is created, written and produced by Duma Ka-Ndlovu. This soap opera, which started as a drama, was first aired on the 7th of April 1997. When it started, the storyline was about a conflict between two families, the *Mukwevho's* from Venda and the *Mokoena's* from Johannesburg. The conflict started after *Chief Mashudu Mukwevho* died from a heart attack. He was married to two wives- a Venda wife in customary marriage and a Tswana in a civil marriage. The conflict was about which family was responsible to bury *Mashudu*. Ultimately his body was buried in Venda after long legal battles. Soon after his burial, another conflict started over the successor. Hence the drama is titled *Muvhango* (the conflict). Tshivenda was then the main language of the drama. As the drama proceeded and prolonged, the storyline started to change, so is the representation of the Vhavhenda culture in which it is impersonated. This study, therefore, questions the role the media is playing in sustaining African culture. Should society depend on the media to guide them about cultural practices?

In some African cultures, a man is not expected to shed tears in front of women and children despite the fact that he is a human being. Nonetheless, Chief *Azwindini Mukwevho,* which is played by Gabriel Temudzani, who is expected to be brave, is portrayed as a weak man who often cries in front of his mother and wives. He is married to a commoner *Susan Mukwevho,* which is played by Maumele Mahuwa. In reality, the chief should marry a woman from another royal family so that his first-born son could be his successor. As part of VhaVenda culture, the wives, *Susan* and *Vele,* played by Maduvha Madima as well as *Pfhuluwani,* played by Azwi Malaka are expected to wrap their heads and

shoulders with scarfs. However, they often appear with their heads uncovered and with sleeveless dresses. Women, including royal wives, usually do not have eye contact whilst talking to the chief. However, in *Muvhango* they have all the freedom. The mother of the chief *vho-Masindi Mukwevho,* played by Regina Nesengani, who also appears often with her head unwrapped, enjoys the freedom of speaking to the chief. She is keeping eye contact and giving him orders as her son, not the chief.

A royal house is expected to be a big yarded place. Within this yard, there should be houses for each wife in which one of which should be the main one, where the chief stays. In this regard, the royal family and the relatives will be living as a cluster with powerful security formed by the royal council (mainly men) which will make it difficult for "trespassers" to reach the chief himself. Among the royal council, there should be a strong traditional healer who, in most cases, will be able to detect and foresee any problem in the royal house. In the very same yard, there is often a reception or a kraal known as *Khoron*i in Tshivenda. That is where royal related issues are discussed, and problems are solved. However, in *Muvhango,* in the royal house named *Thathe* there is only one house in which the living room serves as *Khoro.* All the chief's wives stay in that very same house. The relatives seem to be staying apart from the royal house while others are staying in the cities. The table below shows the names of the characters that are referred to in this study, their roles in *Muvhango* as well their real names.

Table 1. Key character names used in the study

Character names	Description of the role played	Real names
1.1 Chief Azwindini Mukwevho	He is the chief of Thathe royalty, a successor of his father the late Mashudu Mukwevho	Gabriel Temudzani
1.2 vho-Masindi Mukwevho	She is the chief's mother, Mashudu's first wife	Regina Nesengani
1.3 Susan Mukwevho	She is the chief's 1st wife, but not from the royal family	Maumele Mahuwa
1.4 Vele Mukwevho	She is chief's 2nd wife from the royal family	Maduvha Madima
1.5 Pfhuluwani Mukwevho	She is the chief's 3rd wife, also from royal family	Azwi Malaka
1.6 Makhadzi	She is the chief's aunt. Her role in the royal family is very important. There are no decisions that are taken without her	
1.7 Rendani Mukwevho	She is the chief's cousin who will succeed the Makhadzi	Innocentia Makapila (Manchidi)
1.8 Mulimisi	He is a royal traditional healer	Humbulani Tsharani

1.9 Mulalo	He is the chief's cousin but calling each other brothers	Sydney Ramakuwela
1.10 Tebogo	She is Mulalo's wife, from Lesotho	Liteboho Molise

Usually, fictional names such as the characters' names and the title of the programme or show are italicised in academic writing. Since such names have been italicised in the main content, the researcher found no need to italicise them in this table.

Chief *Azwindini* appears to have no control over his people, including his wives. This makes him compromised. One of his wives- *Vele* does as she pleases, such as staying away from the royal house, taking decisions without consulting the chief and outsmarts him in most cases. The chief's wives have the freedom of making contact with other men. Furthermore, outsiders can enter the royal premises without any summons, others kidnap royal children and succeed without being noticed. The tribal practices and the chieftaincy are misrepresented in this television programme *Muvhango*. These misrepresentations are exposed and perceived by society as they are portrayed. This may ultimately create the wrong impression and stereotype in other ethnic groups.

From the literature, little has been done in Southern Africa in terms of the media representation of African traditional culture. Most studies focused on the organisational culture and so forth. However, in Northern Africa, especially Nigeria, several studies are undertaken from various perspectives in media studies. Most use print media as the area of study.

In this study, the researcher investigated how the South African Broadcasting Corporation as a public broadcaster plays a role in the transmission of traditional African norms and values by focusing on the television soap opera *Muvhango*.

The study outlined the background to the study which provides a detailed description of the soap opera as another type of television genre. It also outlined the problem statement which gave rise to the study, as well as the key concepts in which the study is laid.

* *Maladministration and financial mismanagement in the SABC*

Seemingly, the SABC was reported to have had maladministration and financial bankruptcy which was led by political interference, the irregular appointment of the executives and abuse of power (Fourie, 2013). Although the ministry of communications in South Africa has got the power the appointment of the executive directors within the public broadcaster, the minister does not have the right to act on behalf of the SABC nor to manage its affairs (Matojane, 2017). However, according to a report by the former public protector which the investigation was conducted about the allegations of maladministration and systemic corporate governance deficiencies in 2013/2014, it was found that:

> "1) the former Minister Pule acted improperly in the manner in which she rejected the recommendation made by the Board for the appointment of the CFO and orchestrated the inclusion of Ms Duda's CV. Her conduct accordingly constitutes a violation of the Executive Ethics Code and amounts to abuse of power. 2) Mr Phiri the Acting DDG of Department of Communication, acted unlawfully in submitting Ms Duda's CV to Mr Motsoeneng for her inclusion in the subsequent interview by the Board after the selection process had been concluded and recommendations already submitted to the Minister for approval of the CFO's appointment and his conduct in this regard was improper and constitutes maladministration" Madonsela, 2014.

According to Madonsela (2014), there has been an irregular appointment of the former Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mr Hlaudi Motsoeneng who allegedly misrepresented his qualifications by falsifying a matriculant certificate. The report states that there have been irregularities in the appointment of former chief financial officer (CFO) Ms Gugu Duda and Ms Sully Motsweni to the position of General Manager: Compliance and Operation and Stakeholder Relations and Provinces from 30 June 2011 to 31 January 2012; Head: Compliance and Operation on 01 February 2012 to date; Acting Group Executive: Risk and Governance in June 2012.

Furthermore, it was alleged Mr Motsoeneng irregularly increased the salaries of various staff members, including a shop steward, resulting in a salary bill increase of more than R29 million. Moreover, the former COO of SABC was allegedly involved in the purging of senior staff members of the organisation which resulted in unnecessary financial losses due to CCMA, court cases and out of court settlements. All these allegations were substantiated by the public protector and proved to have caused financial mismanagement, improper conduct, as well as maladministration (Mandosela,2014).

* *The effects of SABC maladministration and financial mismanagement on productions services.*

Poor management may hinder the SABC production services and services of the organisation as a whole. It can disadvantage the public broadcaster from employing the relevant people for crucial roles particularly in the production department. According to Duncan (2013) as cited in Fourie (2013) the strategy of corporatising the organisation with the purpose to free the state from having to fund it resulted in SABC having to rely more on advertising, which in turn confused the public broadcaster's mandate and caused institutional instability. The SABC' effort of centralising its operations saved cost however led to, among

others the closing of regional offices, less local content, and making the broadcaster less accessible to audiences (ibid).

1.2 Problem statement

Media representations are ways in which the media portray groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from an ideological perspective. These representations involve more than just a representation. However, there should be accurate, fair and truthful representations, among others. Folarins (2012) as cited in Ogbonna (2016), argues that contents in the mass media are expected to be abstractions from reality. Television as a form of media appears to misrepresent minority ethnic groups whereby culture seems to be inaccurately represented in soap operas (Hargrave, 2002).

Muvhango's storyline is about the vhaVenda tribe and its culture. However, its storyline about culture appears not to be a true reflection of the Venda cultural practices. In real traditional practice, chieftaincy is guided by ancestral beliefs whereby they often consult with divination bones *(Thangu)* when they want to make a particular decision that is also approved by the ancestors. However, in *Muvhango*, Chief *Azwindini* appears to be questioning the divination bones (*thangu*) in terms of whether the healer is sure of what they see. A traditional healer normally has a designated place at which he can connect with the ancestors or ancestral powers. However, *Mulimisi* played by Humbulani Tsarani carries his divination bones to the royal house.

According to Lukes (2005), media is a platform that powerful social classes use to maintain their control over society. Media ownership is used to privilege the views of the elite than those of the powerless minorities. This implies that social power is distributed throughout society at the expense of the less privileged. *Muvhango* represents the Venda people as the ones who appear to lack

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adequate leadership skills in the corporate world. They are often represented as arrogant and manipulative, thereby blackmailing others so that they win the argument. They are also represented as the ones who have discrimination towards other people from different ethnic groups.

One may argue that *Muvhango's* misrepresentations of the Venda characters may be due to the production team that is poorly informed about the Venda culture. The production team is non-vhaVenda. The executive producer, Duma ka-Ndlovu belongs to Zulu ethnic group, while his associate producers (at the time of writing) Sikhumbuzo Mbatha, Mmamitse Thibedi and Anna Lope belonged to other ethnic groups.

1.3 Purpose of the study

1.3.1 Aim

 The study aims to investigate the role of SABC television in sustaining African culture.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

1.3.2.1 To understand the relationship between media and culture.

1.3.2.2 To determine the role played by television in the transmission of culture.

1.3.2.3 To evaluate whether television content is a true reflection of culture.

1.4 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the study will help television producers, directors and copy writers or scripts writers to realise the importance of truth and accuracy in the representation of other cultures. It remains the responsibility of those key media

personnel to represent social norms and values truthfully, realistically, and fairly. It is hoped that the study will serve as a point of reference for Media Studies students, lecturers and add new knowledge to the existing body of literature in the media and communications studies.

1.5 Ethical considerations

1.5.1 Terms of participation

The consent form which gave the researcher permission or consent to conduct the interview was provided to all participants. The participants were assured that the interview was voluntary, and no compensation was to be paid for the interview. The participants were given a choice whether or not they wanted to be recorded.

1.5.2 Anonymity and privacy

Anonymity implies that the researcher cannot name a certain response as belonging to a specific participant (Babbie, 2013). In this study, anonymity for all participants was guaranteed before they answered questions during the interview. Participants were given assurance in terms of their identity disclosure, that their names will not in any way be revealed without their consent. They were also assured that they should feel free to pull out from the interview at any time in case they felt uncomfortable.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), during the data analysis process and report of research findings, responses should not be linked to respondents; codes, numbers or fictitious names should be used instead. In this study, the researcher reassured the participants that they would not be identified by their responses. The researcher explained to the participants that they will remain anonymous since the nature of this study does not require participants'

demographics. Their names or personal information will not be mentioned anywhere in the study.

1.5.3 *Harmfulness*

The study did not in any way cause harm or humiliation to participants. The researcher provided a letter of request to the participants which indicated that the study is not intended for anything other than the academic purpose. The participants were never penalised for withdrawing from the interview.

1.6 Summary of the chapter

This introductory chapter outlined the introduction and the background to the study. It stated the problem statement on which the study is based, the purpose as well as the significance of the study. It also outlined the criteria which the study followed to maintain quality.

1.7 Outline of chapters

1.7.1 *Chapter One*

It is the introductory chapter, which outlines the introduction and the background to the study as well as the problem statement. It also provides/contains the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, ethical considerations and definitions of key concepts.

1.7.2 *Chapter Two*

It is the literature review that discusses the literature and outlines the theoretical framework of the study.

1.7.3 Chapter Three

It is the research methodology chapter which outlines the methodological approach, design, sample, population, data collection method, data analysing method as well as the quality criteria of the study.

1.7.4 Chapter Four

It is the data presentation, interpretation and analysis chapter. It outlines the presentation and interpretation of data as well as its analysis.

1.7.5 Chapter Five

The concluding chapter, which discusses the findings of the study, provides the recommendations and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is an objective, critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration. Its purpose is to create familiarity with current thinking and research on a topic and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area. In this study, the researcher aimed to explore the role played by the media in sustaining African traditional culture as a way of finding out whether what is being portrayed in the media is a true reflection of the culture concerned.

For the success of the purpose of this study, the relationship between the media and culture needed to be investigated. The role played by the media as transmitters of culture as well as the meaning to the metaphor of the media as mirrors of the society were also examined as a way to achieve the goal of the study. These objectives were studied to validate these media representations. The researcher will, therefore, review the literature and discuss the theoretical framework of this chapter.

Although much has not been written about the topic of the study of this nature in South Africa, the literature reviewed in this study is mostly supported by studies done in Nigeria. In South Africa, studies about media and representation focus mainly on the representation of political and socio-economic factors, as well representation of women in soap operas.

2.2 The role of media in sustaining culture

Several studies (Nwaolipke,2013; Chioma,2013; Chen,2012; Showkat,2017) were done about the media representation of culture. There is agreement that

culture gives life structure and meaning. This is due to the fact that people act and react based on their cultural beliefs, norms and values. In 2013, Nancy Nwaolipke conducted a study titled: "Culture and Nigerian identity in the print media", which examined culture and the impact of globalisation on Nigerian cultural heritage. Her study also looked at the role that print media play in instilling Nigerian cultural heritage to the citizens and in its preservation. The findings of her study revealed that the print media carry current information and keep the reader up to date with current issues which have advantages over other forms of media. Such tends to be read several times and can be stored for future reference.

In the study, Nwaolikpe (2013) states that culture determines the developmental pace of society because traditional values of people are related to the pace at which they are acknowledged or reject the demand of the socio-economic developments. By so doing, they accept or reject the demands of socio-economic development, which permeate daily lives and can be used as the pivot of cultural campaigns. (ibid) further states that television and radio have been doing good work in promoting Nigerian culture, but not much has been said about the print media.

In 2013, Patricia Chioma also conducted a study named "Television local contents; conduit for cultural learning in Nigeria". The findings of her study disclosed that as far as the cultural learning through television local content in Nigeria is concerned, government-owned television is doing a good job for about 94.4% of cultural content, whereby 88% of it is local content. Private owned television, which is mostly watched by Nigerian youth, fall below 12% of the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission local content standard. This is because some programmes that would have been qualified as local content do not promote any element of indigenous Nigerian culture.

According to Chioma (2013), the imperialism of the privately-owned media by foreign content is, a major hindering factor in the use of local television content as a conduit for cultural learning in Nigeria and as such must be immediately tackled. On the other hand, Chen (2012) did a study titled: "The Impact of New Media on Intercultural Communication in Global Context", in which it is asserted that even though new media, with their distinctive features, have brought human society to a highly interconnected and complex level, yet they challenge the very existence of human communication in the traditional sense. Thus, new media not only influences the form and content of information/messages, but it also affects how people understand each other in the process of human communication, especially for those from different cultural or ethnic groups.

2.2.1 The relationship between media and culture

Media, society and culture have a sense of interdependence and interconnectedness, which makes it difficult for them to be treated or function in isolation (Showkat, 2017). Shabir, Farooq, Amin and Chaudhry (2013) refer to them as the ones that have togetherness whereby culture is a common denominator that makes the actions of individuals intelligible to other members of their society. Culture enables the society to predict how others are most likely to behave in a given circumstance, and it tells them how to react accordingly. Society is regarded as an organised group or groups of interdependent people who generally share a common territory, language, and culture and who act together for collective survival and well-being (Shabir et al, 2013). Furthermore, mass media are major transmitters of culture, which reflects stereotypes of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and values across race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, physical and mental ability, and sexual orientation.

* The concept of culture

One of the fundamental attributes of humankind is culture. The word culture is derived from the Latin 'Colere' referring to a human life that serves to protect, treat and do varieties of activities that can produce cultural action (Ramiah, 2014).

It can be regarded as an umbrella term for describing society. It entails a totality of traits and characters that are distinctive to people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies. Culture is said to consist of two branches of the thinking and behaviour patterns of a group of people or community.

It is a complex system of meaning and behaviour that explains the way of life of either ethnic group or community. Culture embraces a wide range of human phenomena, material achievements and norms, beliefs, feelings, manners, morals and so forth (Lebron, 2013). The issue of culture is so pervasive and critical in human lives that it has been described as a way of life of the people. In reality, almost everything about human life is influenced by its cultural environment (Idang, 2015).

According to Nwaolikpe (2013), culture is a lifestyle of the people within a group that signifies the values, beliefs, artefacts, behaviour and communication of that group. It is transmitted from one generation to another; and it is also distinct from another based on different values, beliefs, norms and other characteristics. According to Gurevitch, Bennett, Curran and Woollacot (2005:285), culture consists of a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour shared by members of a social unit. To know or understand a person, one needs to understand his/her culture. This means that one first needs to know where the person comes from, the language he/she speaks and the way one presents himself /herself to people. Culture is an element of society that identifies and classifies the social belonging of an individual or group of individuals. Therefore, one can identify which culture a person belongs to by observing his artefacts (Nwaolikpe, 2013).

Culture is a holistic part of human life that is entirely complex, which includes law, art, morals, customs, and other skills acquired by man as a unit of society (James,

2014). The normative nature of culture is considered as a means of cultural and human living arrangements, such as ideals, values, and behaviour. Approached from the sociological perspective, Loader (2015) contends that culture is a measure of human adaptation in the surrounding environment. It is seen as a structure, which discusses patterns, cultural organisation and functions. Mostly, culture is a result of acts whereby cultural intelligence is used to distinguish between humans and animals.

According to Onajabo (2005), culture has been classified into its material and non-material aspects in which material culture is concrete and takes the form of artefacts and crafts. These visible tactile are objects which man can manufacture for human survival. Non-material culture is abstract but has a very pervasive influence on the lives of the people of that culture. They usually comprise of social norms, values and morals of the people (ibid). Culture comprises art, language, rituals, and religion which distinguish people from others. One could say it is a collection of human traits due to a sense of multiple activities that occur within the culture (Arowolo, 2010). Music, poetry, dance, and hand crafting may be referred to as art, which defines and represents a particular culture. The notion of Africa being a multicultural society derived from the diversity of practices by different people from different countries. However, despite the multiplicity and divergence of beliefs, customs, tradition, practices and behaviour, people in the African continent remain attached to African culture (Anaeto & Jacobs, 2015).

A sense of morality in Africa is universal and common to almost all ethnic groups. Culture is neither an inborn nor inherited thing. It is something that people are born and grow into. It is passed from one generation to another and its values, beliefs and distinctiveness are, according to Nwaolikpe (2013), transmitted through generations. Therefore, people learn and accumulate culture by interacting with the community they are brought or grow into through agents of socialisation, including the media.

Mass media as an institution in relation to culture

Mass media are the means of public communication that reach large numbers of people in a short time, such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Furthermore, mass media are those media that are created to be consumed by massive populations worldwide and a direct contemporary instrument of mass communication (Showkat, 2017). Mass media are considered the fourth estate of society as well as the fourth pillar of any democratic government. Media are regarded as the voice and weapon of the people and the most critical part of human societies. Understanding mass media is usually a key to understanding a population and culture, which is why the field of media studies is so huge. Watching, reading, and interacting with a nation's mass media can provide clues into how people think, especially if a diverse combination of mass media sources are perused (Shabir et al., 2014).

According to Dakroury (2014), much as media and culture are interconnected, levels of understanding various cultures influence media content. Meanwhile, media platforms and contents impact cultural and day-to-day practices. Through the media, groups can create and represent cultural identities. Media narratives and discourses are created within different forms of texts and images that are complex and related to the cultural perceptions and practices of both those who produce and consume them. The media play an influential role in the day-to-day cultural practices of individuals. Media portrayal and debate are generated within various forms of texts and images that are complex and related to the cultural perceptions and practices of both those who produce and consume them.

According to Anaeto and Jacobs (2015), mass communication is the core of any culture. Culture and values are passed and kept alive from generation to generation through communication and socialisation. The media support culture through its coverage and reporting of people and activities of a culture, thus help people from other ethnic groupings to know and appreciate the culture. This is further supported by Simon and Ndoma (2016), who states that the concepts of

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culture and the media are interrelated. As such, culture is sustained through the media. So, the latter needs a cultural atmosphere to operate constructively.

However, Liu (2016) argues that within the advance of mass media, the massification and popularisation of culture is intensified and led to heated debates among intellectuals about the role of mass culture and mass media in a mass society, which are categorised into media and cultural determinism. Media determinism maintains that mass media change everything else in society. Anaeto and Jacobs (2015) and Darkroury (2014) argue that despite the content of media, media technology alone drives social changes. This process is called technological determinism. According to Ayakoroma (2017), the understanding of the receiver of a message in everyday communication is very much dependent on the medium and the field of experience of the message sender. Hence, content producers should constantly get the type of training that will make them familiar with the cultural background of their audiences.

Media globalisation of culture

Globalisation has been a common concept of study in various schools of thought. Even if the world has become overly shattered by specialised interests, it has concurrently become more global as well. As stated by Kraidy (2002), the globalisation of culture has become a conceptual magnet attracting research and theorising efforts from a variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary formations such as anthropology, comparative literature, cultural studies, communication and media studies, geography and sociology. Hence, various definitions have been adopted from different perspectives.

Globalisation is referred to by Shabir, Farooq, Amin and Chaundry (2013) as a composite set of social, political, and economic processes in which physical boundaries and structural policies that previously reinforced the autonomy of the nation-state are collapsing in favour of instantaneous and flexible worldwide

social relations. Kheeshadeh (2013) defines globalisation as the rapidly developing process of complex interactions between societies, cultures, institutions and individuals worldwide. It is a social process that involves a compression of time and space, shrinking distances through a dramatic reduction in the time taken, either physically or representational to cross them, so making the world seem smaller, and in a certain sense bringing human beings closer to one another (ibid).

Globalisation shrinks concepts of the distance between existing cultures by reducing the time taken to cross distances that physically separate them. On the other hand, it can also stretch social relations, removing the relations which govern our everyday lives from local contexts to global ones (Wang, 2008). Korotayev, Zinkina, Bogevolnov and Malkov (2011), Tausch and Heshmati (2011) have proved that globalisation involves several dimensions, in which the economic dimension seems to be the most important one. Shabir et al. (2013) maintain that:

> In the past few decades, the spread of capitalism has fuelled the rise of multinational corporations who wish to profit from untapped global markets. Hence, these corporations aggressively support free-trade policies that eliminate barriers such as trade tariffs between national and international markets. For the mass media, which are owned and controlled almost exclusively today by multinational corporations, globalisation creates opportunities to bring their cultural products to distant local markets.

It is undisputable that media could be some of the drivers of cultural globalisation (Kraidy, 2002). It is questionable that the mass media trigger and create the globalisation of culture or the globalisation of culture is an old phenomenon that has been intensified and made more obvious with the advent of transnational media technologies. Lyons (2005) states that the globalisation of media has been a logical extension of corporate development on an international scale, whereby

Post World War II reconstruction through organisations such as the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund helped to spread globalisation through financial investment (Lyons, 2005).

The effect of media in globalising culture

It is undisputable that media have a huge impact on the globalisation of culture. This notion has been challenged in various schools of thought. Babran (2008) argues that the fact that societies can preserve their identities and cultural values to determine the economic direction of the countries irrespective of external economic pressures does not mean that societies are impacted by the globalisation trend. However, there are more profound elements in national cultures that resist the uniformity derived from economic and political ideologies (Babran, 2008).

Media play an essential role and have a huge impact on cultural globalisation correlative manner. They have the potential of imparting a large scale of cultural products across national boundaries, and of contributing to the establishment of communicative networks and social structures. An instant growth in the precision of media products from the international media culture presents a challenge to existing local and national cultures. The total volume of the supply, as well as the vast technological infrastructure and financial capital that push this supply forward, have a considerable impact on local patterns of cultural consumption and possibilities for sustaining an independent cultural production (Hjarvard, 2014).

Global media cultures create a continuous cultural exchange in which crucial aspects such as identity, nationality, religion, behavioural norms and ways of life are continuously questioned and challenged. These cultural encounters often involve the meeting of cultures with a different socio-economic base, typically a

transnational and commercial cultural industry on one side and a national, publicly regulated cultural industry on the other side (Hjarvard, 2014).

According to Wang (2008), supporters of the idea that globalised media is cultural imperialism also view global mass media as a process of cause and effect, pointing out that the media convey opinions and ideas from one place to another, from senders to receivers. However, the media do not work so simply, except in certain cases of planned communication. Instead, the audience has much power to shape media content by assigning meaning to it as media producers do through creating it. Wang (2008) further states that the purpose of media suppliers is no longer the only element that can determine the characteristics of information flow within the media. However, the media must also respond to the wants and needs of receivers. New voices have recently supported media globalisation. On the contrary, Servaes and Lie (2003) suggest that:

> Cultural products reflect the cultural values of their producers and the social reality in which they were produced. Viewing a television programme or listening to the radio cannot be seen as a simple act of consumption; these acts involve a rather complex process of decoding or appropriating cultural meanings. Although competing prices may contribute to the wide availability of certain cultural products, the purchase of cultural products differs from the purchase of typical consumer goods in that consideration such as product quality may bear little significance in the decision to watch, or not watch, a television programme. Therefore, media globalisation is more than a process of domination by Western, or American media and, ultimately, of the Westernisation, or Americanisation of world cultures.

According to Ekeanyanwu (2009), the controversial nature of these issues cannot be isolated from their strange influence that affects peoples' lifestyles and their total way of life-culture. Technology has now created the possibility and even the likelihood of a global culture. Electronic media such as the internet, fax machines,

satellites and cable television are sweeping aside cultural boundaries. Global entertainment companies shape the perceptions and dreams of ordinary citizens, wherever they live. This spread of values, norms and culture undoubtedly tends to promote Western ideals of capitalism, yet to regard this as cultural imperialism in the 21st century may sound overly simplistic. This is because the disappearance of indigenous cultural values of society for a more flexible global norm may be self-inflicted and development oriented. It will mostly be possible when such indigenous values no longer support either the individual or the societal goals of that society. Secondly, empirical evidence abounds to support the argument that most media audiences of the 21st century are active participants in any communication process. Therefore, they have an active reading of any communication signal or message, which consequently interprets the signal or message to fit within their cultural environment (ibid).

According to Wang (2008), experts of globalisation presume that global communications mostly connected with notions such as cultural imperialism and media imperialism. They see global communications as a vehicle which aims at controlling, invading or undermining other cultures. The transmitted cultural or ideological patterns have often been an invasion of Western values, particularly those of America. Shabir et al. (2013) claim that for the mass media, which are owned and controlled almost exclusively today by multinational corporations, globalisation creates opportunities to bring their cultural products to distant local markets. This fact has raised fears about cultural imperialism, the imposition of one set of cultural values on other cultures. Daramola and Oyinade (2015) contend that globalisation is destructive and an encroachment on the African culture. It brought a threat to African culture that continues to erode the fabric of the African society which, as result, sounds like a death knell to what brought people together, tradition.

2.2.2 Media as transmitters of culture

Among the functions of media, there is continuity which, according to McQuail (2000) as quoted in Fourie (2005:188), the media can express the dominant culture and recognise subcultures and new cultural developments. The media can forge and maintain the commonality of values. For this study, television will be discussed in detail as opposed to other media types. According to Simon and Ndoma (2016), the transformation of indigenous cultures can best be done by the media once they are well mobilised and supported duly. They presume that Nigerian media are doing little or nothing as to the transformation of the indigenous cultures that characterise Nigeria. Simon and Ndoma (2016) further opined that:

> Most media practitioners are bent on western culture cum westernisation and globalisation trends of relegating, battering, damming and endangering anything indigenous. Following their reluctance and nonchalance, there seems to be a hostile, rough, un-enabling environment, within which they are carried away. They lack enough support from the government, local and international, various societal institutions and individuals. The globalised village is also hostile to anything Nigerian, African and Black. And the Nigerian press now joins 'the moving train' un-sceptically, in naivety, believing and showing that western culture mimicry and promotion is the ultimate.

Television as a mass medium broadcasts entertainment that reflects stereotypes of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and values across a wide range of dimensions, including race or ethnicity, class, gender, age, physical and mental ability and sexual orientation. However, the formats and contents of these programmes often invite viewers to laugh at, despise, or belittle cultures other than the dominant cultures (Shabir, Farooq, Amin & Chaudhry, 2013).

Western entertainment media productions thrive on magnified stereotypes of both the West and Muslim cultures. And while they feed consumers' hunger for entertainment, they starve them the understanding. While this programming serves to further humiliation and anger in the Muslim world, its impact on Western non-Muslims tends to be a hardening of their stereotypes of Islam and a dehumanisation of Muslims. Americans who watch more television serials than news, documentaries or educational television have been barraged since September 11, 2001, with television dramas about terrorism and counter-terrorism agencies. Most of these entertainment programmes rarely portray Arabs or Muslims as anything other than terrorists or somehow related to stories about terrorism (Howard & Idris, 2006).

According to Orbe (2012), all types of media function as cultural socialisation agents. However, television has an impact on personal, cultural and societal perceptions due to its rapid growth in the industry and its pervasiveness in everyday life. As a socialisation agent, the mass-mediated images that appear on television through the news, soap operas, situation comedies (sitcoms), dramas, talk shows and sporting events can have a tremendous influence on how people view themselves and others. In concurrence, Ahmed (2012) states that television has recently emerged as the most powerful and all-pervading force throughout the world, for it can disseminate information within a short period. Television has the potential of impacting and infusing viewers with images and values in a subtle and undetectable manner. Hence, television not only reflects the values of our society but also influences them. Due to its moving images, television requires viewers' attention and influence their thoughts and behaviour.

As stated by Iyorza (2014), television is among other mass media channels of communication and the most influential agent of socialisation between the developed and developing nations. It is supported by its structural characteristics of visual images, and motion and audio capacities that are creatively combined with the specific context of transmitting messages using electromagnetic waves.

Iyorza's (2014) study conducted in Nigeria found that 60% of the population of more than 160 million, including youths is reached through television broadcast with both positive and negative impacts.

Despite its powerful characteristic of audio-visuals, Onabajo (2005) argues that the television medium has not been perfect and needs to guard against broadcasting strange cultures and social activities. African culture has been portrayed in the past as being barbaric. The presence of too much Western culture broadcast should also be checked, as it could lead to cultural imperialism rather than cultural transformation.

Television as a developmental communication medium

Television is a telecommunication system that is widely used to transmit and receive motion pictures that can be monochrome (black-and-white) or coloured, with or without accompanying sound over a distance (James, 2014). The term may also refer specifically to a television set, television programming, or television transmission. The word is derived from mixed Latin and Greek roots, meaning 'far sight': Greek tele, far, and Latin vision, sight. Television does not refer to the set box as many people regard it, but the whole complexity of its technical operations and content productions(ibid).

Television is an expensive medium of communication that has contributed to the overall development of the nation in no small measure (Onajabo, 2005). Historically, when any developing country opted for television, it was because, among other functions, television has an important role to play in advancing the process of national development. According to Onajabo (2005), television is making a lot of impact on the economic, political, social, cultural and educational advancement of the nation. Chioma (2013) claims that television broadcasting in Africa began in Nigeria as a crucial initiative towards the modernisation of the traditional system of communication and the development of the continent.

Chioma (2013) contends that even though television contents represent real-life and fictional worlds to its viewers, its visual and aural nature allows its viewers to participate as they watch, and afterwards, as they can perceive, interpret, and accept or reject images as real or imaginary.

According to Orhja and Singh (2018), India is a country vast and diversified with a wide variety of cultures, rituals, food and attire and dance which varies from place to place within the country. Therefore, television serves the role of transmitting and exchanging cultures, customs and traditions from one cultural grouping to another. India can be likened to South Africa since they both have a diversity of cultures within, which vary according to ethnic groupings, and they both use television to impart information. Furthermore, television broadcasts reach out to a large number of audiences. Hence it is regarded as the best medium to shape and represent social beliefs, cultures and traditions (Ojha & Singh, 2018).

* The history of television in the world
As stated by Orbe (2014), the history of television dates back to the 1920s and 1930s, whereby many television shows were adopted from radio, including different quiz shows, soap operas, and situation comedies. Unlike radio, television did not start with experimental, non-commercial stations. However, like other media forms, initially, television was primarily used by a wealthy segment of society in which the middle of the 20th century (from the late 1940s to early 1950s) witnessed an explosion of viewers. With the invention of various new media technologies, the U.S. American viewers can now have access to hundreds of television channels. Notwithstanding the scientific history of television, Kortti (2011) discussed the Finnish social history of television use from the 'era of scarcity' which was the first period (from 1956 to 1987) to the era of availability from 1987 to 2001, and the current era, which is the era of plenty.

The history of television in South Africa

According to Bevan (2008), television first came to South Africa in 1929, not as a broadcast service but as a technological invention. It was exhibited to the South African Association of science at the engineering laboratory of the South African College in Cape Town by the Vice President of the Television Society, Lord Angus Kennedy. The 'Meyer Commission' was appointed in 1971 to investigate the probabilities of establishing television in South Africa. One of the commission's findings revealed that in countries such as South Africa where diversity of culture and variety of languages exist, television should be a platform for the advancement of societal development to promote their identity and culture (Fourie, 2007:14).

Nonetheless, the history of television in South Africa cannot be discussed without the SABC. After decades of negotiations and discussion of television as a broadcast service, Bevan (2008) states that television was officially opened in South Africa on the 05th of January 1976. Fourie (2007:14) concurs that the first test of the SABC started on 05 May 1975 and began to be operational eight months later on the 05th of January 1976.

It cannot be disputed that television came to South Africa later than other traditional media. This was due to the government's fears over what was seen to be corrupting influences (South African Press, Media, Radio, TV and Newspaper Forum, na). The SABC by then had three major channels, TV1, which broadcast daily in English and Afrikaans; Contemporary Community Values Television (CCV), which had programmes in African, Asian and European languages; and National Network Television (NNTV), which specialised in sports and public service programming. According to the South African Press, Media, Radio, TV and Newspaper Forum (na), SABC television fare was collected from local programming, as well as programmes coming from the United States and Britain. In 1996, SABC recognised three channels namely, SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3, which are to date still operating.

The SABC1 is known for broadcasting mainly in Nguni languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati and isiNdebele) and English. It provides mostly entertainment content. However, there is also informative and educational programmes. The SABC2 is known to be the SABC's family channel, which represents programmes that focus on nation-building and important national events. This channel promotes social cohesion by providing educational, informative and entertaining programmes, including soap operas and dramas. It also promotes edutainment and infotainment through documentaries. The SABC2 is the channel through which *Muvhango* is aired. The SABC3 uses English as the predominant broadcast language. However, it adopted new broadcast strategies which include some of the content from SABC2. The content includes the repeats of *Muvhango's* episodes which was aired the previous day on SABC2 (Clear, 2015: 99 & 100).

Other South African television includes the free-to-air channel known as eTV, which was launched in 1998. The channel is owned by the black empowerment groups, the Hosken Consolidation Investments Limited and Venfin Limited based in Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. Mnet is a private South Africa television channel that is subscription-based and broadcasts also in 49 African countries. There is also a Digital Satellite Television (DStv) which is also subscription-based owned by Multichoice. DStv provides channels with international and local content (Clear, 2015: 101).

* *Soap operas as a television genre*
Soap opera is the most popular form of television programming in the world with a large percentage of viewership and followership. Soap-operas usually dominate audience ratings over other programmes that are broadcast (Ahmed, 2012). Ungureanu and Georgescu (2013) state the commonalties on different definitions of soap opera are that they usually include 'television series and radio programmes', mostly about the daily life experiences of a particular group of characters. Barres (2008) opines that soap operas express a fictional reality that

is inserted into a concrete social reality. The fictional reality nature of soap operas makes them have dominant audience ratings over other television genres. According to Syde (2011), soap operas are not only dominant but only an ideal form of television narratives that have more than storytelling; they are knowledge sharing and information dissemination programmes.

Soap operas build representations that are associated with the daily life and social contexts in which they are immersed. The images transmitted in soap operas are highly related to social values and beliefs (Barres, 2008). Therefore, soap operas have a huge advantage of influencing day to day life reality. Ungureanu and Georgescu (2013) suggest that an analysis of the impact of cultural representations in soap operas require one to have a clear understating of this type of television genre. Usually, soap operas have a tradition of the continuous airing of episodes over a long period, daily or sometimes every week. Thus, the audience is captivated by the fictional reality.

There is a difference between a soap opera and a telenovela. Porto (2001) regards telenovelas as 'melodramatic serials' as they were produced in Latin America. Unlike soap operas which are broadcast during the day, telenovelas dominate primetime. Although soap operas and telenovelas have common features, they are two different genres. Soap operas are open forms, meaning that they broadcast for years or decades, telenovelas are closed, having a clear beginning and an end. Telenovelas last approximately 180 to 200 episodes or 6 to 8 months (Porto, 2001). However, Ojha and Singh (2018) opine that soap operas are a mixture of genres of melodrama, myth, realism and entertainment. They sustain the viewership for a longer duration by making series of episodes. Hence, people watch soap opera to unfold the climax which has been created in earlier episodes. Soap operas are usually made for entertainment, cultural exchange or some time to create awareness or to inform (Ojha & Singh, 2018).

History of soap operas in the world

According to Ahmed (2012), the term soap opera was formulated by the American press in the 1930s to characterise a popular genre of serialised domestic radio dramas. In 1940, the drama represented some 90% of all commercially sponsored daytime broadcast hours. The 'soap' in soap opera referred to their sponsorship by the manufacturers of household cleaning products, and 'opera' meant an ironic incongruity between the domestic narrative concerns of the daytime serial and the most elevated of dramatic forms. Harrington, Scardaville, Lippmann and Bielby (2015) concur that soap operas emerged on the radio in the 1930s and gained popularity as television serials from the 1970s to the 1990s. Porto (2001) regards soap opera as a term that originated in the the1930s by the entertainment trade press of the United States to designate the daytime dramatic serials that were broadcast on radio and aimed primarily at women. Porto (2001) supports that the term 'soap' was due to the sponsorship of the programmes, which were usually produced by the advertising agencies of the soap and toiletry industries.

According to Alonso (2012), the real impact of the weekly soap operas in Spain began in 1962 with *Ignacio Agusti's Mariona Rebull*. The television serials were regarded as telenovelas because they were shown daily at 3:30 pm with a duration of 15 minutes. The transformation and modernisation of technical and artistic resources in the production of television series followed suit. Hence, more soap operas were produced. According to Singhal and Rogers (2014), soap operas in India started in 1984 with the television serial called *Hum Log* on the *7th-of-7* TV channel. The soap operas had 158 episodes and had poor television ratings whereby viewers complained about didactic family planning sermons, indifferent acting, and a slow-developing storyline (Singhal & Rogers, 2014).

According to Syde (2011), most historical reviews about the initiation of soap operas refers to the 1930 American press in the United States of America. It implies that soap operas were initially produced and aired in the USA. This might

be one of the reasons why most soap operas are claimed to be westernised. However, countries like Malaysia have what they call non-western soap operas that started in the 1980s. These non-western soap operas gained popularity and more viewership ratings than other television genres (ibid).

2.2.3 Media as a mirror of society

Media are equated to the mirror due to their potential to reflect or represent the world to the people. Hodkinson (2011: 5) states that the predominant role of media is to reflect the social events, behaviours, identities, social relations or values that are already important to them. Media content relates closely to real events prevailing in social trends and cultural values. Gurevitch et al. (2005: 287) consider the media as the mirror that is held up to the society, but Hodkinson (2011: 5) argues that media do not offer a mirror to the society but a selective, manufactured set of representations of the world. This is because media are owned by groups of elites who are controlling the means of production, therefore the metaphor of media as a mirror depends on to 'whom and how' the mirror is held up to the society (Ekron, 2008). This implies that the media may perceive themselves as the mediator which might be meaning the opposite to the society as media products are influenced by the culture of those who own the means of production.

The way the media's versions of everyday events are communicated, or how 'the media facilitates our contact with social reality' can take various forms, depending on the situation (McQuail, 2005: 83). Each of these forms also correlates to either a larger or lesser degree of interdependence between the media and society. The role of the media as mediators can occur in the form of a window on events, enabling the audience to see without interference and in the form of a gatekeeper, determining which aspects to be selected and which to be discarded (van der Spuy, 2008).

* *The notion of representation in the media*

The ability of the representation to become a form or a tool for media relates to its reproducible character. It involves an understanding of how language and system of knowledge production work together to produce and circulate meaning. Media products consist of a selection of constructed ideas that are different from a real-life experience. The constructed version is based on the values of producers and the values of the larger society and culture. However, this media version is said to be not a presentation, but a re-presentation (Vukcevich, 2002).

O'Shaughnessy and Staddler (2012: 80), regard media representation as to the reality that is being reproduced in a mimetic way using impressions from the real world. A representation can be of individual people, social groups, ideas, or events and can also be a single image, a sequence of images or a whole programme, written words, spoken words or song lyrics. Every content in the media undergoes a production stage, which includes editing as a means of selecting what producers consider as a product to be consumed by the audience.

* *Television soap opera's representation of reality*

Studies about television soap opera's representation are mostly women representation due to the reason that many soap operas are set to have more female viewership than males. Croteau and Hoynes (2014: 170) suggest that television is considered to be ideologically charged because it relies on realist forms of image construction that disguises the work of cameras. The reality of television programmes such as soap operas is created and packaged by writers and producers attract viewers' attention. Ungureano and Georgescu (2013) claim that the media do present the world, stating that:

> Media cannot present the world to us, despite their assertions of truth, reality and verisimilitude. In practice, the media offer us perspectives or selected views on our world. They re-present that world to us by constructing images and behaviours for lots of different groups within, and indeed

outside, our society. So, we are aware of families represented in a range of television soaps.

However, Ojha and Singh (2018) maintain that the television programmes and formats of soap operas are influential and have a regional presentation of specific cultures and lifestyles. Television soap operas adopt many features and regional natures that vary from culture to culture, such as attire, the adaptation of the food and beverages, as well as the use of words and slang (Ojha & Singh, 2018). All these regional natures are influenced by different cultures of the society and they become one important reason for the cultural change in the society. Off-course, the source of this cultural change is television.

Nonetheless, Richen (2007) states that television has the potential of leading people to believe in media messages, and at the same time diminishing the capacity of the audience's understanding of the real intentions of producers. Richen (2007) claims that commercial advertisements are more embraced by the media because they generate more revenues. Syde (2011) states that the main aim of soap operas is to attract mass audiences and to sustain their interest, but they have led to a commodified form of television commanding millions of viewers worldwide.

* *Ideology and representation in soap operas*
Ideology is defined by Croteau, Hoynes and Milan (2012) as a system of meaning that helps define and explain the world and that makes value judgements about that world; and has a broader fundamental connotation than the concepts of worldviews, belief systems and values as well as politics. Ideologies do not necessarily reflect reality accurately rather; it presents a distorted version of the world. The Marxist 's perspective of ideology often means belief systems that help justify the action of those in power by distorting and misrepresenting reality (Croteau et al., 2012).

2.3 Theoretical framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) refer to the theoretical framework as a blueprint that serves as a guide and support to a study. The problem statement, purpose, and significance of the study as well research question must be aligned and linked for the theoretical framework to serve its role as a foundation. The study has adopted 'The social expectation theory' which was proposed by Melvin Lawrence De Fleur and Everette E. Dennis. Furthermore, the study adopted Marx's theory of ideology which was proposed by the German philosopher Karl Marx in the 1970s in London, United Kingdom. These two theories both address how society can, directly and indirectly, be impacted by the media.

2.3.1 The social expectation theory

The social expectation theory postulates that through the media, people view, learn and familiarise themselves with social norms attached to certain groups as they are portrayed in the media. Through soap operas, social norms are represented as the ones that reflect reality to the society either 'accurately or poorly.' It confirms that viewers perceive information as it is, especially when it is exposed over a period about the culture that is attached to certain ethnic groups or organisations; and this results in viewers being guided by those actions (Fourie, 2005: 241).

The implication of this theory to the study is that no matter how poor culture is represented in the media, it is still the reflection of reality. Viewers may get exposed to a distorted reality, which may create wrong perceptions about social norms and values attached to other social groups. This may influence the development of stereotypes towards other ethnic groups or organisations.

This theory is concerned with the social norms and supports the fact that people observe norms of other social groups from the media, which may, over some time, be accumulated. Hence, it is applicable in the study. Although the study

does not oppose this, but rather questions how true these representations are, and that they could be acquired and used as experience in real life.

2.3.2 Marx 's realist theory of ideology

In as much as an ideology is a crucial concept in cultural studies, Marxism conceptualisation of ideology theorises that the elites maintain their position through capitalism and cultural institutions. These institutions include media as the most powerful apparatus to sway and indoctrinate the masses. The masses are then deceived by false consciousness without their conscience and ultimately engage with their oppression. Those who own the means of production (mass media institution) control culture and so the mind-sets of media users (Fourie, 2005: 287).

The false consciousness is, according to this theory, compromising true consciousness. This means that people are aware of their true consciousness. For instance, in African culture whereby rituals are to be practised, chieftaincy has to be respected, and African women adhere to the "universal" values. However, they are without their conscious deceived by what they are exposed to in the media, which is the culture of the capitalist (Taha, Zahra & Al-Khaoli, 2008). The media serve the interest of the ruling class in which the audience remain passive (Fourie, 2005: 287).

The relevance of the theory to the study is an indication that executive and associate producers, as well as directors who happen to own productions, have the power to control audiences about their own culture. They have the economic power to screen what they believe to be righteous regarding the behaviour of certain ethnic groups. The audiences are therefore exposed, and out of their consciences acquire the ideology of the elites.

2.4 Summary of the chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature and discussed the role played by the media in sustaining culture, the relationship between media and culture, the role played by the media in transmitting culture and the metaphor of media as mirrors of the society. It also detailed the theoretical framework, in which two theories are discussed: Social responsibility and Marx' realist theory of ideology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is a scientific way of solving a research problem whereby a researcher studies various steps adopted in his/her research. It incorporates not only the research method but also the researcher's understanding of the research method as well as the argumentation to support it (Khothari, 2004: 8). Argumentation means that a researcher needs to give a reason for choosing a particular method and how the is researcher going to apply such a method.

In this study, methodology refers to the procedure followed when conducting this study and its logical sequence to get the research problem solved as well as the research objectives accomplished. This chapter elaborates on the research approach, research design, population of the study, sampling, data collection method, the data analysing technique and quality criteria as used in the study.

3.2 Research approach

According to Sudeshna and Datt (2016), a research approach is a plan and procedure that consists of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed method of data collection, analysis and interpretation. There are three types of research approaches namely, qualitative research, quantitative research and mixed-method research, which is the combination of quantitative and qualitative. The study employed the qualitative approach because the focus is on the participants' perceptions of how the media represent their culture. According to Creswell (2013: 4), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This research approach involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the

meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure (Creswell, 2013: 4).

The study also aimed to investigate the satisfaction of ethnic groupings in terms of the way their culture is being depicted in the media. Hence, the study seeks to acquire ideas rather than quantity. The qualitative research approach is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribing to a social or human problem. In a qualitative approach, the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2008:16).

The study could not have used the quantitative approach because it is expressed in numerical data, which the study did not intend to gather. Moreover, a quantitative study has a low response rate due to the nature of its data collection tools. Thus, the qualitative approach was employed since it gives the reason behind the response, which assists in getting people's insights. Although the qualitative research is subjective, the data collection technique chosen in the study helped to avoid biases and gender-based data (Cassim, 2015).

3.2.1 Attributes of a qualitative study

A qualitative study is descriptive in nature as it covers arrangements of interpretative methods which attempt to describe the meaning attached to the phenomena in the social world (Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2005). The objectives of a qualitative study seek to explore areas where there is non-existence or limited information to describe certain trends and behaviours (du Plooy, 2014). Therefore, the objectives of this current study characterise the study as qualitative.

3.2.2 Advantages of the qualitative approach to the study

The qualitative approach allows the researcher to gather comprehensive commentaries of participants. This means that the participants are given a platform to share their understanding, knowledge and experiences about the phenomena studied (Rahman, 2017). Human emotions and experiences are difficult to be quantified. It is therefore advantageous to collect quality rather than numerical data. Qualitative data is preferable in cultural studies because it is intended to the in-depth information.

3.3 Research design

Research design is defined as an arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure (Khothari, 2014). It is a framework within which the research is conducted, and which guides the researcher to centre the research within a frame so that he/she does not lose focus. It is a fundamental necessity for a study to have a design because it gives a name to the study in terms of what type of study it is. And it also gives a hint to the readers. It as well reminds the researcher not to go astray.

The study employed an exploratory case study design because it is intended to explore how television represents culture. Exploratory research usually leads to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of detailed, accurate and replicable data. These kinds of studies usually employ in-depth interviews as well as case studies (Anderson, 2012: 80). Exploratory research studies are also called formative research studies. The main purpose of such studies is to formulate a problem for more precise investigation or for developing working hypotheses.

A descriptive design could be adopted in the study of this nature. However, it could not be used in this study because of its inflexible character. Unlike in exploratory research, interviewees are instructed rather than express their opinions. Hence the study is exploratory. At times, it is criticised for biasness due to its opinion-based data.

3.3.1 Case study

A case study refers to a research design that enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context, whereby a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals are selected as the subjects of study (Zainal, 2007). In their true essence, case studies explore and investigate real-life phenomena through detailed analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. According to Phelan (2011), case studies allow for an in-depth review of new or un-clear phenomena whilst retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.

* Types of case studies

As stated by Zainal (2007), case studies are categorised into three categories, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies

- An exploratory case study is set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher.
- Descriptive case studies are set to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question. For instance, what different strategies are used by a reader and how the reader uses them. The goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur.
- Explanatory case studies examine the data closely both at a surface and deep level to explain the phenomena in the data. These types of case studies are also deployed for causal studies where pattern-matching can

be used to investigate certain phenomena in very complex and multivariate cases

* *Advantages of case study*

According to Starman (2015), case studies have the potential to achieve high conceptual validity and strong procedures for stimulating hypotheses. They are useful for close examination of the hypothesised role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases. Lastly, their capacity for addressing casual complexity serves several advantages.

Conceptual validity, which refers to the identification and measurement of indicators that best present the theoretical concepts that a researcher wants to measure. The contextual comparison which social scientists often, requires a detailed consideration of factors. Although it is difficult to apply it in quantitative research, it is very common in case studies. This advantage is not applicable in a qualitative study (Starman, 2015).

The second advantage of case studies is that they derive new hypotheses that are suitable for serving the heuristic purpose. Usually, quantitative studies lack procedures for inductively generating new hypotheses. However, they can be used to analyse complex events and to consider numerous variables precisely because they do not require many cases or a limited number of variables (Starman, 2015).

3.4 Population

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) refer to population as a full set of cases from which a sample is taken. Therefore, the population of the study were the residents

of Vhembe District Municipality in Limpopo province, South Africa, because it is where Venda ethnic group resides.

3.5 Sampling

According to Kothari (2004: 50), sampling may be defined as the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality based on a judgement or inference about the aggregate or totality. In other words, it is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. The study used purposive sampling as non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is also known by different names such as deliberate or judgment sampling. Under non-probability sampling, the organisers of the inquiry purposefully choose the units of the universe constituting the sample on the basis that the small mass-selected out of a huge one will be typical or representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004: 55).

The researcher interviewed a total of twenty-five (25) participants from Tshakhuma village, in Venda under Makhado Local Municipality in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Tshakhuma is one of the areas inhabited by typical Venda people in Vhembe. The population of the study was therefore divided into five groups: five (05) high school learners; five (05) grade 12 graduates; five (05) Tshakhuma (fruits and vegetable) market vendors; five (05) taxi drivers and five (05) elderly people. The reason for the researcher to divide the sampled population was for the study to get a variety of viewpoints from the participants.

Qualitative studies use smaller samples because according to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbon (2015), the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth,

variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research.

3.6 Data collection techniques

The study employed a semi-structured interview because it comprises of open-ended questions, which Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009) support by saying that "they grant opportunity to engage into the more detailed discussion". In this type of interview, the researcher uses an interview guide to provide guidance and key questions which help to address the explored field. Moreover, an interview allows participants to engage in detailed and divergent responses (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008).

The appropriateness of this method to the study is due to the demographic background of the population. The study was undertaken in the rural areas where it is assumed that the literacy level is a challenge. Therefore, the participants must be put in a comfort zone to enable them to feel free as the interview proceeds (Du Plooy, 2009: 196).

A focus group could have been an alternative technique since it comprises semi-structured questions, and it is useful in the generation of information on collective views. It is a method for group norm related type of study. Nevertheless, a focus group could not have worked to the advantage of the study because it could have generated similar data from the participants. It also limits the participants to express themselves in a more detailed response, especially when they are uneasy with one another (Gil et al., 2008). Hence the study used semi-structured interviews.

3.7 Data analysis

Analysis of data in a research project involves summarising the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features. The study employed the interpretative data analysis method, which is commonly known as thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis which is used to analyse classifications and to present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. It illustrates the data in detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretations.

According to Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis allows the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and to compare them with the replicated data. By using thematic analysis, there is a possibility of linking various concepts and opinions of the learners and comparing these with the data that has been gathered in different situations at different times during the project. All possibilities for interpretation are possible. The researcher identified several texts that illustrate common themes or commonalities (Anderson, 2012:332).

3.8 Quality criteria

The quality of the research is determined by trustworthiness, the applicability of the study to the practice setting, consistency and objectivity. In qualitative research, quality criteria are measured through credibility, transferability, dependability, as well as confirmability (Frambach & Durning, 2013).

3.8.1 Credibility

This determines the extent to which the findings of the study were trustworthy and believable to others. The participants and the method chosen for this study brought reliable results (Frambach & Durning, 2013). The researcher ensured that data are presented honestly as it was gathered through semi-structured interviews.

3.8.2 Transferability

It is concerned with the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other situations (Shenton, 2004). In this study, transferability was established by making sure that the findings obtained from the sample produced results that can be generalised because the population chosen is believed to have a better understanding of the phenomenon.

3.8.3 Dependability

This refers to the extent to which the findings were consistent concerning the context in which they were generated (Shenton, 2004). This kind of study needs a researcher to gain insights into the phenomena studied. Therefore, the researcher believes that the data collection method chosen for the study produced accurate and meaningful results in the sense that should one apply the very same method in similar studies, she/he will be likely to produce the same results.

3.8.4 Confirmability

This refers to the extent to which the findings are based on the participants and settings instead of the researcher's bias. The data was presented as evidence to confirm the findings (Frambach & Durning, 2004). The researcher remained objective in the presentation of data to avoid manipulation of results.

3.9 Summary of a chapter

This chapter discussed the methodology and outlined key elements such as the design, approach, data collection method, sampling and population as well data analysis. It also detailed the quality criteria, such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on data analysis and interpretation. It included the discussion of the method used to analyse data and the themes developed in the process of analysing the data. The collected data was gathered from semi-structured interviews which took place at Tshakhuma village between 29 May 2018 and 10 June 2018.

4.2 Method of data analysis

This study used thematic data analysis as a tool for analysing the collected data. According to Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate method in any study that seeks to discover ideas using interpretations. It allows the researcher to associate analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole contents given the nature of the data collection tool. The study used interviews as the data collection method. The researcher found it suitable to apply this method as a route to address the objectives of this study are to (1) understand the relationship between media and culture; (2) determine the role played by the media in the transmission of culture; and (3) evaluate whether or not media contents are a true reflection of culture. The thematic analysis allows understanding the potential of any issue more widely, hence it is adopted in the study.

4.3 Data analysis

The researcher analysed and interpreted the data by following each theme and subthemes. This means that the themes and subthemes were not discussed separately.

4.3.1 Sampling characteristics

Table 2. Demographics of the participants

Gender	Male				Female
	Eleven (11)				Fourteen (14)
Age range	Between 15 and 75 years old				
Occupation	Hawkers (Tshakhuma market)	Taxi drivers	Pensioners	Post matriculants	High school learners
	Five (5)	Five (5)	Five (5)	Five (5)	Five (5)
Total number of participants	Twenty-five (25)				

4.3.2 Viewership

* The scheduling of the soap opera

Participants were asked if they ever watch *Muvhango*, as the opening question of the interview. Those who said they do watch, were interviewed. However, those who said they do not watch were disregarded and do not form part of the participants. Although few participants were concerned with the time slot that 9 p.m. broadcast time is not convenient for them sometimes because of their occupation. They said they are working during the day and when they get home in the evening, they are tired and need to rest. So 9 o'clock inconvenienced them, especially in winter. Several participants said that they can afford to wait for *Muvhango* since they will be watching other SABC television programmes following one another. Few participants said that if they miss it in the evening, they will watch the 'repeat' the following day "…I watch *Muvhango* every evening

and during the day (repeat). Although I prefer to watch it during the day because I sleep early. So, during the day I tell my daughter to remind me when it's time…" said the 10th participant.

Followership

In as much as the participants watch *Muvhango*, they stated that there is a difference between the old and the new episodes of *Muvhango.* The majority of participants said they enjoy watching every episode of *Muvhango* even though the recent changes were confusing. Although fewer participants said they are no longer enjoying the latest changes of storylines as compared to the old, eventually they are adjusting to it. Participant 20 said "…this new *Muvhango* is boring me because they just made a sudden change of storyline while we were still expecting a lot to happen on the previous storyline. When they brought this new one, we just saw James getting married to this woman called *Moliehi*, we don't even know how they met. Now *Tendamudzimo* is a new mayor, we do not even know how it came about, I am totally confused and bored, it makes me lose interest".

4.3.2 Interpretation of the soap opera itself

Promotion of culture in the media

Although Zulu and Sotho are also represented, the majority of participants stated that *Muvhango* is culturally based, representing mostly the culture of the Venda people. However, some participants mentioned that the soap opera does not explicitly show culture, but it somehow bypasses it. Participants 18 and 20 said that *Muvhango* used to portray their culture truthfully back then when it started but began to lose relevance in its storyline around 2000.

Cultivation of culture by the media

The participants stated that *Muvhango* teaches Venda culture and life at large. The majority of participants indicated that most of their cultural practices, they

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learn on *Muvhango*. According to some of the participants, *Muvhango* reminds them of who they are and where they come from as Venda people. Participant 10 said that she likes watching *Muvhango* with her grandchildren so that she can explain to them as they watch soap opera. She said as they are watching the soap opera, she will be teaching her grandchildren indigenous utensils and their use, for example. Few of the participants said *Muvhango* teaches them about life. They said that they have learned about life lessons that life can be full of cruel people as well as good-hearted ones, which requires one to be careful at all times.

* Relevance of the title to the story

The majority of participants said that *Muvhango* means the conflict in their culture and agree that the title of this soap opera suits exactly the meaning attached to it, because there are lots of conflicts happening in the royal house, such as the royal family fighting for the chieftaincy. However, few participants argued that even though there are conflicts in the royal house, they feel like *Muvhango* should only be about Venda, meaning they should only use the Venda language.

4.3.3 The boring and intriguing features about *Muvhango*

* Characterisation

The majority of participants said that they do not like the part where *Tebogo* poisoned *Rendani,* who was put as a regent for a period until they decide who is going to take over the chieftaincy. *Tebogo* poisoned *Rendani,* her husband's royal sister (sister-in-law) so that her husband *Mulalo* can be the rightful candidate for the throne. However, the participants concurred that such kinds of practices do happen in royal families around them. They have heard a lot about royal relatives poisoning of one another. Few participants mentioned that they like the part of Tebogo, even though poisoning someone is an evil thing to do. According to these participants, Tebogo is a very strong woman, an example of a woman who can do everything in her power to get what is best for her family. Nonetheless, fewer participants find it very bad about what Tebogo did because it does not

show a better way of how women should conduct themselves. They mentioned that in their culture, it is unacceptable for a woman to consult traditional healers without their husband's consent because it signifies that such kind of woman is capable of evil thoughts toward her husband.

* *Perception of the traditional belief*

The majority of participants agreed that in the real world, true and fake traditional healers exist. All participants confirmed that *Mulimisi* represents a true traditional healer, yet most of the participants mentioned that they do not like the way he hesitates to interpret the divination bones, because, in reality, traditional healers just talk to you without hesitation. However, few of them said that what *Mulimisi* does is real because culturally, reliable doctors will never disclose everything at once because they do not want to cause conflicts. They prepare you for what is going to be revealed to you.

4.3.4 The degree of gratification

* *Custom revitalisation*

The participants said that they are happy about how Venda culture is being represented in some of *Muvhango*'s storylines. The majority of them (youth) said they are fascinated by the scenes where they hold ceremonies and cultural gatherings at the royal palace. These events expose them to cultural activities such as traditional dances and traditional attire should be worn. They said these kinds of gatherings hardly happen nowadays. So *Muvhango* reminds them of the olden days when they were growing up.

However, few participants said that they are not happy about how some characters speak Tshivenda. Participant 20 said:

> *Rendani* speaks an awkward Tshivenda, I am surprised because she is a Venda, but her language is influenced by these Gauteng

languages, even if she was not a Venda, why would they give her such kind of a role whereas she cannot speak the pure language. She should represent us Venda youth so that we can be motivated, instead, I get bored….

Nonetheless, she said she likes the way *Rendani* is dressed up in Muvhango. According to this participant, *Rendani* represents a typical Venda girl. She hardly wears pants and leggings like some other girls. *Rendani* is mostly dressed in dresses and skirts, which shows that she is the real princess.

* The protocol of the royalty

The participants said that they are happy about the way culture is represented in *Muvhango,* particularly operations and protocol in the royal house. They said that they are interested in the conflicts that happen in the royal house. They said that it is true that in real life, royal family members always fight for the throne. Although some of the traditional houses are doing it, it is not appropriate to remove the right person in the chieftaincy and replace him while he is still alive. The majority of participants stated that the royal council should find a regent when the chief has departed, and the regent should be a man, not a woman. Few participants argued that a regent should be either a man or a woman.

The participants also said that even if they are happy about the representation, they are concerned about the character of *Makhadzi*, who plays an important role in the family. They stated that her character makes it look like Venda people do not have justice, especially the royal family members. She can keep a secret and cover-up for offenders, yet let innocent people suffer the pain. However, the smaller portion of participants revealed that in every family in Venda, *Makhadzi* (paternal aunt) plays a very important role not only in the royal house. Everything that is happening in the family, good or bad, *Makhadzi* should be told so that she can be able to make judgements and to give blessings where necessary. Her role is to make sure that the image or dignity of the family is well-reflected.

* The non-explicit adult games

All participants stated that they are impressed by the way *Muvhango* is represented in terms of morals because it does not portray nudity and sexual scenes like many other soap operas. They mention that there are plots of relationships, but they have less kissing and sexual activities. This means that *Muvhango* respects culture.

4.3.5 Cultural endorsement

* Superficial attributes

All the participants agree that *Muvhango* can be or is a good platform for other ethnic groups to learn peripheral artefacts such as language, traditional attire and another traditional accessory that can display Venda arts. They mentioned that watching *Muvhango* does not only help people from different ethnicities. There are people, especially the youth, who are not familiar with some of the traditional norms and values that exist in their culture yet belong to the Venda ethnicity. Participant 8 mentioned that she did not know how the throne looks like until she saw it on *Muvhango,* yet she has not seen it in real life. Participant 21 commented that it is useful for people who relocated outside the Venda territory not to forget their roots.

Besides, participant 22 said that she once went to a cultural exhibition in Durban wearing Venda traditional attire, and she attracted people's attention. Some began to imitate how Venda women greet others. She further mentioned that the people seemed to have been familiar with the attire, but they had never seen it physically. They touched it and they told her that they watch *Muvhango* even though they do not understand the language, they depend on subtitles for interpretations.

Fundamental operations

In as much as the participants agree that people can learn Venda culture, they believe that some of the cultural practices should not be shown on *Muvhango*. They said that there is a lot of witchcraft practices in *Muvhango*, whereby people poison one another. For example, *Nenjelele,* who abducted *Mushudu* while people thought he was dead, *(Nenjelele)* later resurrected. *Khakhathi Mulaudzi* was also seen dead and later resurfaced. The majority of participants said that they do not have a problem with such witchcraft being shown, because it is true that Venda people do practice witchcraft, and the issues of abducting the dead have been there ever since. However, fewer participants mentioned that such kinds of practices should not be explicitly shown because they create stereotypes. People from other ethnicities associate Venda people with witchcraft, as people who are having 'nine lives'.

4.3.6 Media recognition of minorities

All participants mentioned that they are grateful that the SABC has exposed their culture through *Muvhango* so that people can learn, familiarise and understand Venda culture. They argued that unlike other ethnic groups such as Sotho and Nguni, Venda culture is a standalone culture, but the SABC has managed to uplift their standard in the society. Participants 20 mentioned that even if she does not agree with some of the storylines in *Muvhango*, she commended the SABC for the wonderful initiative because now Venda culture is known nationwide.

4.3.7 Participants' evaluation of the representation
* Modernisation of the traditional lifestyle

Few participants stated that *Muvhango* attempts to portray Venda culture. However, some of the cultural practices are being modernised. Participant 8 mentioned that she does not think that their culture is well-represented. Instead, *Muvhango* is promoting suburban life, because they mostly show the royal family

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eating or dining in the table setting kind of lifestyle. However, culturally Venda women are not expected to sit on chairs, especially before their male counterparts. Participant 25 also mentioned that Muvhango is exaggerating because many household stuffs in the royal house are fancy, which is not true because he knows that chiefs are very traditional people. However, participant 16 does not think they are modernising anything because they show procedures and practices that were happening in the olden days, that which they are no longer doing now. He further said that there has always been a sense of appreciation in the royal house; that when you visit the royal house when it is time to eat. The chief will be dished first to show that the foods are edible.

Prejudices made to the cultural reflection

The majority of participants concur that they can see Venda culture through *Muvhango.* Participant 20 mentioned that *Muvhango* does not reflect true Venda culture, instead it is a mockery. She mentioned that Venda is a very beautiful and rich place that is full of plantations, landscape and it is well developing. As she raised her concerns, she said:

> …I do not understand why they always show those women who are always walking up the hill and that man who is herding the cattle's when they want to show us the scene in Venda, but when they show Johannesburg, they show us beautiful houses only especially *Thandaza's* place. We know that Limpopo is full of rural areas, but there are nice houses and places in Venda that they can use, for example, they can use *Tshakhuma* market or perhaps Thohoyandou circle, at least we will understand that they are appreciating Venda pride.

She further mentioned that she does not dispute the fact that *Muvhango* attempts to portray the culture, but it is portrayed as if the chief or royal family are the only people who are wealthier than the rest because they only show the royal house as if it is the only beautiful house with beautiful cars.

Nonetheless, participant 11 said that he does not find their culture being ridiculed. But they cannot be revealing everything because some of the cultural norms are secrets, they are not supposed to be seen or known. He talked about a part where the royal kids were abducted and taken to initiation school without their parents' knowledge. The abductor wanted to punish the chief so that he does not have one of his (chief's) kids becoming a successor for the throne because, in their culture, a chief should not be circumcised. The participant said that it is the truth in their culture. He also mentioned that throughout that plot, they talked about the initiation school, but it was never shown because it is a secret, not everyone can go there.

Participant 11 further mentioned that it does not matter how rich the person is or what rank you occupy in the community. For as long as you are not circumcised in a traditional initiation school, you will never enter the premises. Even the chief attempted many times to talk to the master so that he can get his children out of it, but he could not win. Instead, he ended up paying a fine for trespassing. Participants 11 said that he finds his culture truly reflected in *Muvhango.*

* *Cultural beliefs*

Participant 4 commented about superstitions that happen in *Muvhango.* She said that they are true reflections of their culture. She gave an example with one of the royalties around their area. She said that in that clan they get a warning sign from a baboon. When something bad is going to happen, a baboon will climb down the mountain and goes straight to the royal yard and sleeps right in the centre. Then the family will know that something bad is coming. They will then consult their healer. She explained that it once happened and after few days, they saw a very big snake in that royal house,

> "…hence *Muvhango* portray such features, although they use warthog as their clan name. I remember when *Gizara* was bitten by a warthog on his way to Johannesburg, which was the sign that ancestors are not happy about his relationship with

his deceased brother's wife without following the necessary procedure. It also happened when *Tshilefilimbilu* moved to the royal house, there was a snake that was warning them that she was up to no good, but the chief couldn't get the message when *Mulimisi* told warned them until she abducted a kid for ritual killing... ", said participant four.

Nonetheless, the majority of participants said that traditionally, Venda people have ancestral beliefs, unless they are Christians. They mentioned that Christianity is a foreign belief. That is why they never plot churches on the Venda part in *Muvhango.* They mentioned that when there are misfortunes in their families, they do rituals so that they can appeal to their forefathers and show practices of the Venda people. A few participants said they do not think *Muvhango* represents reality because it portrays Venda people as non-Christians, even though there are many churches in Venda. They say it creates a certain perception that Venda people are evil and ruthless.

4.3.8 Public's perception of Muvhango

The participants were asked to give their opinions on what might be the thoughts of the general public about *Muvhango.* Few participants mentioned that people find *Muvhango* interesting and stimulate their curiosity as to what is going to happen in the next episode. They stay awake up until 'their slot. Some of the participants said it creates stereotypes especially for people who do not belong to the Venda ethnicity. They said that they encounter negative treatment from other ethnicities in the workplaces and schools, because they associate them with witchcraft, especially when people see them excelling. However, the majority of participants think that *Muvhango* showcases their culture because they find appreciation from another ethnic group. People are learning their language and buying their traditional clothing unlike back in the days when they were treated as foreigners in their country.

4.3.9 Misconstrued features yet portrayed as truth

The participants were asked to state out storylines that do not form part of Venda culture yet portrayed as such on *Muvhango*. The participants did not find anything sceptical. However, few of them have identified few aspects. Participants 16 and 23 mentioned that in their culture, young ladies never contest for a chieftaincy position, neither as regents nor successors. If there is ever a need to fill up a space for the chief while waiting to place the most suitable one, an old woman will be chosen rather than a youngster.

Participants 19 and 25 stated that traditionally, there should be a private palace where the chief stays and not everyone is permitted to enter or stay there. Only the spouses and kids should be allowed to enter, but only when they are summoned. Then there is what they call "thondwana", which is where the whole family and close relatives stay. Apart from this, there is so-called "tshivambo", which is technically known as "Khoro", which is meant for the community or everyone who needs to visit the royal house or seek the chief's attention. This is where community gatherings are held, where community issues are discussed and solved. However, in *Muvhango* they use the royal house for every matter, people enter even when they are not authorised to do so, which is regarded as trespassing.

Participants 20 and 21 mentioned that chieftaincy is a very noble position in Africa that deserves huge respect and honour. Hence, chiefs carry the title wherever they go and will be addressed as chiefs. Everyone who approaches the chief should bow before him and do the praising which is called "udhovha" in Venda. Nevertheless, in *Muvhango* the chief is not respected at all, people quarrel with him. Other participants have mentioned that it is not true that an African man can cry in front of women, it is a moral principle, therefore a chief is not expected to cry in front of the kids and wives. They said even an ordinary father seldom cries in front of his kids. They mentioned that *Muvhango* is losing it when it comes to

this part. However, few participants argued that a man is also a human being, so they do cry in front of people, especially their wives.

4.4 Data interpretation

4.4.1 Viewership

* Scheduling of the soap opera

Results indicated that time allocation should be taken into consideration, especially for programmes or television soap operas that are meant for a variety of age groups. *Muvhango* is a soap opera that caters for almost different age groups, that is dominated by cultural storylines rather than corporate lifestyles, which mostly fascinates old people. However, the time slot inconveniences many people. Participants stated in 4.3.1.1 that their occupation does not enable them to have enough time to watch TV until late unless they are off duty. On the other hand, it might be because elderly people are most likely to sleep earlier. It is also because their bodies could not tolerate sitting for a much longer time especially at night, and their eyes could not as well tolerate watching TV for a long time until *Muvhango* is aired. Therefore, it will be more convenient if the time slot can be brought earlier than it is currently so that it can accommodate many people, specifically those who are working, the elderly and learners.

* Followership

The results indicated that there is continuity of followership in *Muvhango* due to their loyalty as audiences. This might be due to the perspective that they have been watching *Muvhango* for a longer period since it started and that it is dominated by the Tshivenda language, therefore it is worth their support. However, it cannot be overlooked that there is confusion caused by the sudden change of *Muvhango* episodes. Audiences are yet to understand how the transition came about. It makes them reluctant to watch it because they think that the loyalty of the audience is dependent on the consistency of the series.

4.4.2 Interpretation of the data

The results showed that *Muvhango* manifests the Venda culture and acknowledges cultural diversity because it does not only represent the Venda culture, but also the Zulu and Sotho cultures, and sometimes the Tsonga. This might be because South Africa is a multicultural country. Buys (2016) supports that multiculturalism requires a positive embracement of diversity on the right to recognition and respect to different cultural groups, therefore it cannot be as if Venda people live in isolation. Cultural groups have to integrate at a certain stage in life, hence there are parts where we see Venda men getting married to Sotho women. However, the embracement of cultural diversity should not discredit or alter another culture

*Cultivation of culture in the media

The results have shown that through *Muvhango,* people, especially youngsters, can learn their cultural practices and artefacts. From the perspective of media functions, it is believed that media have the potential of educating audiences. It means that people can rely on media content to familiarise themselves with the norms and values of their culture. This is supported by Nwekeaku (2014), who revealed that the media help to support and perpetuate the culture of people through a variety of channels.

* Relevance of the title to the story

The results highlighted that the title attached to this soap opera is relevant given the nature of the storylines. The fact that conflicts exist within the royal house is an explanation of why the soap opera is named *Muvhango*. However, some people are not satisfied with the inclusion of other ethnic groups in this soap opera.

4.4.3 Boring and intriguing features about Muvhango

* Characterisation of the soap opera

The results indicated that the audiences do not like the character of *Tebogo* due to her behaviour in the royal family. The character of *Tebogo* represents a woman who is from a different ethnic group married to another ethnicity. She is not of royal blood but is married to the prince. Therefore, she might not be able to understand the protocol and procedures in royal families, especially the one she is married to. Hence her behaviour is found unacceptable to society. It is within the African universal perspective that women are supposed to conduct themselves in certain ways and are expected to know their place when comes to solving issue regarding the chieftaincy as well as their roles as women. It has always been known that chieftaincy and the issues related to it are meant for men and the relevant female counterparts. However, it does not mean that people should not marry across different ethnicities, but in African culture, women are expected to adopt the culture and tradition of the ethnic group they are married to.

It is within the universal African culture that a prince should marry a princess because they both understand the royal agendas. This makes it easy for them to follow what they are ordered by the elders. They would not question everything they are ordered to do. However, participants have mentioned that the issue of poisoning does happen. It can be done by any other person irrespective of gender. Moreover, evil behaviour does not validate a strong character of a person who can do anything to get what he/she wants.

* Perception of traditional beliefs

The results indicated that people are fascinated by the way traditional healing is reflected. However, they question the accuracy of the representation because their experience or knowledge of traditional consultation is contradictory to the one in *Muvhango*. Others justify the cause of the contradiction. This implies a

sense of exaggeration, which means that there is a good portrayal of traditional healing practices. However, it is not necessarily how it is supposed to be.

4.4.4 The degree of gratification

* Custom revitalisation

The results have shown that audiences are fascinated by the entertaining cultural activities that are portrayed in *Muvhango*. According to the participants, *Muvhango* revives their lost memories, therefore it becomes joyful to watch such activities performed on screen since they are no longer happening in real life nowadays.

* The protocol in the royal house

The responses of the participants indicated that they are satisfied with the way the royal protocol is represented and respected in *Muvhango*. However, some roles are said to be assertive.

4.4.5 Culture endorsement

* Superficial attribute

The results have shown that *Muvhango* is doing well in terms of promoting the elements of the Venda culture on the surface, which is a good thing because the language and the attire are the most characteristics that describe culture before one gets to know the in-depth operation of such culture. Therefore, it does well in exhibiting the art of the Venda culture.

* Fundamental operations

The results have indicated that even though the majority of participants are following the content that portrays witchcraft, few participants believe that such portrayals create stereotypes and should not be plotted. It cannot be presumed that the issue of stereotype is created by the portrayal of witchcraft. People just

conclude that a certain ethnic group is known for such. A stereotype is opinion-based and does not make such perceptions to be facts. However, if the media overemphasise something, it will end up looking like it exists. This is in line with "Marx's theory of ideology" stated in Chapter 2, that media is the most powerful apparatus to sway and indoctrinate the masses, therefore the masses are then deceived by false consciousness without their conscience and ultimately engage with their oppression. Witchcraft is an African belief that is believed to exists in all ethnicities. However, it depends on how it is portrayed in the media. In this regard, if the writer decides to plot a witchcraft scene, it should happen at least once or maybe twice and should not always be negative.

4.4.6 Media recognition of minorities

The results indicated that audiences are very appreciative of the recognition that the SABC has given to their ethnic group. It is a mandate of the national public broadcaster to recognise all cultural groups that exist within the country. It should not seem like a privilege when a certain ethnic group is represented in the media. However, the data shows that Venda people are excited about their culture being represented in the media and mentioned that it brought exposure to it. To them, it does not matter whether what is being represented about their culture is accurate or not.

Rinchen (2007) supported that one may notice that members of ethnic and visible minorities are inadequately represented in most media content in entertainment shows and news media in Western countries. The portrayal of minorities is often stereotypical and demeaning. If the media's take on minorities is interpreted at face value, kids will grow up with a skewed vision of what it means to be part of a first people society. If they get the impression from the news, they are likely to perceive minorities as a negative force, inferior, and so on. Consequently, when the public at large compares themselves with those figures in the media and media's advertising, do not see their reflection in cases such as race, ethnicity,

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or physical ability. Such representations are found to be diminishing their self-worth.

4.4.7 Participants' evaluation of the representation

* *Modernisation of the traditional lifestyle*

The results have shown that in as much as this soap opera aims to represent the Venda culture, there is also the influence of western lifestyle. Substantially, the table setting dining style is known or associated with western life because it goes with table etiquette. On other hand, typical African families feast in a setting whereby everyone sits on the floor and is served their dishes. Nonetheless, it cannot be undermined that others believe that *Muvhango* is portraying ancient practices of their culture. Although their table etiquette is western kind of life, and the kind of food that they eat is more western, perhaps people nowadays cannot differentiate an indigenous life from the modern one, because they believe that they are living a standardised life, which is a consequence of globalisation.

This is supported by Daramola and Oyinade (2015), who state that American values and products are constantly featured and peddled through films, television programmes, seductive commercials and music. These are culturally discrediting programmes that are foreign to African culture but slowly are penetrating their culture and invading their tradition. It is therefore not surprising to see these changes in urban centres, inner-city youths, and rural areas, promising glamour and good life. However, its results are mind-boggling, including loss of identity, loss of traditional values, and loss of self-pride.

* *Prejudices made to cultural reflection*

In as much as the majority of participants are appreciative of the content about their culture in *Muvhango,* it cannot be denied that other audiences are concerned that *Muvhango* is more focused on bringing out humiliating features Venda culture, ignoring beautiful artefacts that can be showcased about Venda. It seems

as if chiefs, royal relatives and mayors are the only people who can afford fancy life, whereas there are people who are wealthier than the royalties. The data indicates that there is a clash of judgements among the participants. Participant 15 argues that *Muvhango* only portrays the bad side of Venda people, which makes it seems as if chiefs are greedy people who enjoy luxurious life while their people are suffering.

Other participants believe that they cannot showcase everything about Venda, the little that is being portrayed there is a reason or meaning attached to it. This is even though they show cattle and plantations, and not disputing the fact that Venda is full of rural areas. They should acknowledge the art and developments that going on there. It should not be as if chiefs are the only rich people in the community. Other people are richer than the chiefs themselves. Although *Tendamudzimo* represents one of the richest community members, his character creates an impression to the audience that if one holds a certain social standard which happens to be better than the royalties, you will lose respect towards these chiefs, which is not true because there are rich people who respect and honour the royalty. This is supported by Moniz, Saldierna, Maranon and Rodríguez (2013), who state that there are possibilities that the media can influence the prejudice shown towards a social group. The portraits of social groups will consequently tend to be considered valid and real by those who refer to the media frequently.

4.4.7.2 *Cultural beliefs*

The results have shown that it is true that churches are part of contemporary culture, and that there are so-called indigenous churches who also believe in Christianity. However, these churches are not shown in *Muvhango*. This might be because royal families use traditional healers as their support structures. They have ancestral beliefs. So, these traditional doctors help them to perform rituals. This does not mean that non-Christians are associated with evil spirits, hence there are truthful healers like *Mulimisi*.

4.4.8 Public's perception of Muvhango

The results have shown that *Muvhango* promotes diversity and stereotypes at the same time. Diversity in the sense that there is more than one ethnic grouping represented, though more focus is on the Venda culture. The implication is that the Venda people do not live-in isolation. They exist within the social groupings and corporate institutions in the country. Stereotypes as mentioned in 4.3.5.2, is that they are opinion based. But the media can also have an impact when a concept is overly emphasised since "The social expectation theory" confirms that viewers perceive information as it is, especially when it is exposed over a period about the culture that is attached to certain ethnic groups or organisations; and this results in viewers being guided by those actions.

4.4.9 Misconstrued features yet portrayed as truth

The results have indicated that the majority of participants agree with how their culture is represented in *Muvhango*. Few participants mention basic aspects and principles that exist within their cultural group. This raises the question as to whether the majority of participants cannot recognise such principles. It may be because they are not familiar with those aspects or they are overwhelmed by the excitement of having their culture being represented in the media to the extent that they cannot question such representation.

4.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of data. The chapter started by revisiting the data analysis method whereby it elaborated its integration with the objectives of this study. It is then followed by the analysis of data whereby the demographics of the study were tabled to indicate the variation of participants. Then the themes, as well as codes, were developed based on the data collected. Data were interpreted based on the theme and codes that were developed from the raw data.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, the conclusion and implications/ recommendations based on the results presented in chapter four of this study. The chapter outlines the summary of findings that involve the role of the media in sustaining African traditional culture to overcome the research objectives. The study is based on the following objectives:

- To understand the relationship between media and culture.
- To determine the role played by television in the transmission of culture.
- To evaluate whether or not television contents are a true reflection of culture.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 The relation between media and culture

From the description of *Muvhango,* it is clear that it is the story/ soap opera that represents the norms and values of the Venda culture, including conflicts that revolve within traditional leaders. The concept of media representation means that something existed/exists in a real life. The media present the existence of reality in a fictional form to express the representation. Dakroury (2014) has mentioned that "media screens have become essential elements in public and private daily-life practices in societies and cultures". This means that what is being represented in the media, the writers and content producers would have observed it in real-life situations, then found a need to be portrayed in the media as a source of information, education and entertainment. This implies that there is a relationship between media and culture.

5.2.2 The role played by the media in the transmission of culture

The study found that *Muvhango* has a good viewership given its timeslot. The time allocated to it does not cater for everyone, but it is not a barrier because people can still catchup with the omnibus or the repeated episode during the day. The soap opera has also good followership because, despite the sudden change in episodes and storyline, the audience still follows the story that represents their culture. Therefore, the message that is intended to be delivered by this soap opera has guaranteed recipients.

The study has discovered that *Muvhango* does well in terms of reflecting the culture of Vhavenda. It was also discovered that belonging to a certain ethnicity does not necessarily mean one has a full understanding of cultural norms and values adhered to by people who practise that culture. The media fulfil the desired knowledge about traditional culture through programmes like *Muvhango*. It was confirmed that most traditional tools were not known before (by youngsters in particular) because they are scarce these days. As they watch *Muvhango*, they refer to the elders for detailed explanations.

5.2.3 The truthfulness of the media contents in the reflection of culture

The study found that some of the storylines that are represented in *Muvhango* about culture are a true reflection of the Venda culture. Most cultural practices existed in ancient times and are hardly practised in modern times owing to the influence of socio-political and socio-economic factors. This implies that there is a truthful representation of culture in *Muvhango*. If most of the content displayed happened in the past, then true culture is being revived. It brings the roots of the culture to the people so that they can remind themselves about their true belonging.

Through media representations, society can reflect on how they conduct themselves culturally. However, media are also constrained to represent certain

cultural principles as a result of socio-political regulations. The study revealed that not everything on *Muvhango* about culture is a true reflection of the Venda culture.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The study had potential limitations. Firstly, the study could have sampled the population of at least thirty (30) people from three (3) different villages in Venda, from which 10 people will be coming from each sampled village. This could have brought a variety of understanding of culture or different perception of *Muvhango* about their culture. However, this could not have been possible because the study had no funding. From the researcher's place of residence to Venda is more than 100km, hence the study needed funding for travelling costs and a place to stay for three to four days. Secondly, the study could have applied methodological triangulation to find a statistical result to complement the insightful results. However, the timeframe allocated for the completion of the study could not have made it possible. Thirdly, as the researcher's experience of the data collection process, it was realised that the study could have brought more profound results if the researcher used focus group interviews.

In the process of collecting data in Tshakhuma village, the researcher found most of the participants seated in groups. However, the researcher resorted to choosing the person in the group who was willing to be interviewed. Lastly, it will be beneficial for future researchers who might want to pursue a study of this nature to focus on finding people's understanding of their culture and the reliability of the media with regard to that particular culture.

5.4 Conclusion

The relationship between media and culture exists. However, it cannot be ignored that media productions tend to compromise the quality of the message that was initially intended to be delivered to audiences through their content. These include dramas, soap operas etc. It cannot be disputed that even though they try showcasing something of high importance to society, their main aim is to make a profit. Therefore, content producers will try to prolong the episodes to keep the product going and the profit coming at the expense of the relevance and quality of the original message.

Media play an important role in transmitting culture. It cannot be overlooked that their programme allocation does not accommodate everyone. Some programmes are not for under-age people which are aired earlier than those that are educational. In as much as *Muvhango* is a soap opera, there are lots of ideas that people can learn from it. Therefore, the time slot of the programme somehow defeats the role of the media as a transmitter of culture.

There is a truthful reflection of the culture in the media. However, it is not everything that is portrayed in the media about culture is a true reflection of culture. There is a distortion of reality in the media. It can also not be ignored that out of the sample that concurred with the truthfulness of the media reflections of reality, few still feel that their culture is being ridiculed. Instead of representing all the positive and the negative, the focus is mainly put on the negative, hiding most of the beautiful assets that Venda culture and its territory possess.

Furthermore, in the process of representing indigenous culture, media can also create stereotypes due to their overemphasis on certain character traits of an ethnic group. This is not to dispute that such a character can be true. Moreover, there is also the influence of western culture in the media which people tend to accept unquestionably. The royal families are the most traditional people, they

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are the ones who lead or guide the society about cultural practices. However, in this regard, they are portrayed as the richest people who live a luxurious life. This might be a way of deluding the public or giving them false consciousness.

Nonetheless, the study has proven that what is portrayed in the media is a true reflection of reality. This justifies the notion of the media as mirror of society. It implies that what is portrayed in the media is a true reflection of culture. Therefore, there is the sustainability of culture through the media. The case study has proven that the SABC plays an important role in sustaining African traditional culture.

5.5 Implications of the study

The study confirmed that the representation of culture in the media means that there is connectivity between the media and culture. The study proposes that:

- Media play a huge role in transmitting culture, so content producers should do proper research about any culture they intend to portray. This will enable them to get relevant information and archive it for future use. It is presumed that elderly people have better knowledge of traditional culture.

- Therefore, proper research and accurate information must be gathered to help strengthen media contents in transmitting the cultural information that is truthful about each cultural grouping.

- Even though not everything that is portrayed in the soap opera is a true reflection, why should there be distortions? Few participants pointed out important points that some of the cultural practices in the soap opera are not correctly portrayed. The researcher found the comments important

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because most of the that were commented about were pronouns and the hierarchy of protocol in the royal house. Pronouns or names attached to a certain traditional object are mostly artefacts that one cannot be biased about them, but their irrelevant usage means that there is an error at some stage. If the majority of people cannot detect any misrepresentation, it is questionable whether people are well informed about their culture or they are just fascinated by the concept of their culture being represented in the media. Therefore, need to verify the correctness of terms and concepts to remain relevant in their productions.

- Few participants were concerned about the language. They indicated that Innocentia Makapila (currently Manchidi) speaks broken the Venda language. This is not satisfactory to them given the fact that she was born and bred in a Venda speaking family. The character that she plays and her role as *Makhadz*i need a girl/ young lady who is more traditional, for the youth to look up to. Therefore, content producers should cast people who are well informed and fluent in the language that is impersonated.

- For future studies, the researcher may interview traditional leaders, traditional advisors, royal family members and media production managers to get their insights as they are more experienced and exposed to cultural fundamentals.

- Future researchers may also adopt a different research method like methodological triangulation and/or different data collection tools such as questionnaires or focus group interviews to get data of the same nature.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Relationship between media and culture

1. Do you watch *Muvhango?*

2. How would you describe *Muvhango* as a soap opera?

3. What do you like or dislike about *Muvhango?*

4. Are you happy with the way the Venda culture is being represented in the storylines of the soap opera *(Muvhango)?* Please explain your answer.

The role played by media in the transmission of culture

5. Would you advise someone belonging to other ethnic groups to watch *Muvhango* for them to learn the social norms and values adhered to in your culture? Give motivation for your answer.

6. Should the SABC be commented on for showing *Muvhango* as part of cultural education? Please support your answer.

Reflection of culture in the media

7. Do you consider *Muvhango* to be representing or reflecting your culture fairly, truthfully or realistically? Why?

8. In your opinion, what does the general public think of *Muvhango?*

9. If you can, what are the things that can be pointed out in Muvhango storylines, which are not part of your culture, but are being presented as such?

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW REQUEST LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Tricia Maseeme, a student from the University of Limpopo. I am a registered Master of Arts Media Studies student in the Department of Media, Communication and Information Studies. I am doing a research study titled:

"The Role of South African Broadcasting Corporation Television Soap Operas in Sustaining African Traditional Culture: A Case Study of Muvhango".

I kindly request you to participate in this study as an interviewee. The interview will be conducted by me and all information that you shall provide during the interview is going to solely be used for my study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX III: CONSENT FORM

I appreciate your consent for participation in this study. This form outlines the purpose of the study, description of involvement required and your right as a participant.

The purpose of the study is:

- To find out whether or not *Muvhango* is a true representation of Vha-Venda culture.

The benefits of the study will be:

- To have a better understanding of the norms and values of Vha-Venda tribe.
- To develop some recommendations which will help improve the standard of sustainability and better representation of this culture.

The purpose of this study will be met by:

- Having a face-to-face interview with you as a participant.

You have the right to ask questions concerning anything that you do not understand or need to be clarified with.

Our interview will be tape-recorded so that it will help me to accurately transcribe words.

The tape will only be heard by the researcher for this study. You have the right to ask me to turn it off if you feel uncomfortable with it.

You are assured that your name will never be mentioned anywhere in the study though your direct words may be used and that the study will not be used for

anything other than the academic purpose in which the report will be read by supervisors and examiners in the department.

This interview is voluntary; you have the right to withdraw at any time if you feel you no longer want to proceed with it. In case you feel like withdrawing, the information given by you will be destroyed, including the recorded one and will not be included in the final report.

I_____signed   at _____on the _____agree that I have read and understood the terms of this form and that I will take part in this interview.

APPENDIX IV: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: The role of South African Broadcasting Corporation television in sustaining African traditional culture: A case study of *Muvhango.*

Your child is invited to participate in the above-titled study which is conducted by Maseeme Tricia. The purpose of this research is to explore the role of the media, particularly SABC television in sustaining African traditional culture. Hence, *Muvhango* is the case study for this research.

Your child's participation will run for 30 to 45 minutes of interview in which the researcher seeks to find out his/her understanding of Venda culture and how *Muvhango* helps in acquiring social values and norms of this culture.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known risks in the study. The study seeks insights into the child and nothing more. No harm will be made to the child.

Potential benefits

There are no known benefits of this study. No compensation of any sort will be made for the child by the researcher.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse your child to participate or to withdraw him/her from participation at any time during the interview. Your child will not be penalised for discontinuation and the recorded

interview will be destroyed. You have the right to allow the researcher to tape-record your child during the interview if you are comfortable with it or tell the researcher to take notes.

Confidentiality

The records of this interview with your child will only be used by the researcher. Names will never be mentioned in the study. The researcher guarantees you that the participation of your child will only be known by the researcher.

CONSENT

I have read and understood this parental consent form and its terms, I,, permit to my child to participate in this study.

Parents' signature: _____

Child s' name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX V: ASSENT FORM

Title of the study: The role of South African Broadcasting Corporation television in sustaining African traditional culture: A case study of *Muvhango*.

You are hereby requested to take part in the research study with the above-mentioned title, which will be conducted by Tricia Maseeme. The purpose of this research is to explore the role played by the media, particularly SABC television in sustaining African traditional culture. Hence, *Muvhango* is the case study for this research.

Your participation will involve a 30 to 45 minutes interview in which the researcher needs to find out your understanding of Venda culture and how *Muvhango* helps you in acquiring social values and norms of your culture.

Risks and discomforts

There are no known risks in the study. The researcher here is only looking for your understanding and nothing more. No harm will be done to you.

Potential benefits

There are no known benefits from this study. There is no payment or gift that will be given to you by the researcher.

Terms of Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary; however, you need to have permission from your parent if you have an interest. The researcher will not proceed with the interview if your parent does not want you to participate. Your parent will have to sign a consent form to prove that they allow you to take part in this study. You have the right to tell your parent that you do not want to continue to participate or withdraw from participation at any time during the interview. You will not be penalised for discontinuation and your recorded interview will be removed. The researcher will ask to tape-record only if you are comfortable with it. You are allowed to ask a question whenever you feel you need to be clarified.

Confidentiality

The records of this interview with you will only be used by the researcher. Names will never be mentioned in the study. The researcher guarantees you that your participation will only be known by her. Neither your parent, teacher nor your friend will have the recorded interview.

ASSENT

If you have read and understood everything and you feel you want to be part of this study, you may write your name below and sign.

Child's name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parents' signature: _____

Date: _____

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EDITORIAL CERTIFICATE

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DOCUMENT TITLE: **THE ROLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION TELEVISION SOAP OPERAS IN SUSTAINING AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF   MUVHANGO**

This document certifies that the above dissertation was edited by Dr J R Rammala (PhD, Linguistics). The document was edited and proofread for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling and overall style. The editor endeavoured to ensure that the author's intended meaning was not altered during the review. Track changes have been used in editing to allow the client to view the changes suggested.

Kind regards
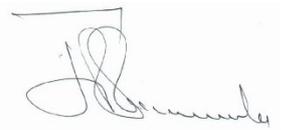
Dr J R Rammala

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 07 March 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/26/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: The role of South African Broadcasting Corporation Television Soap Operas in sustaining African Traditional Culture: A case study of Muvhango.

Researcher: T Maseeme
Supervisor: Mr MM Senong
Co-Supervisors: Prof SO Mmusi
School: School of Languages and Communication Studies
Degree: Master of Arts in Media Studies

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

> **Note:**
> i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
> ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
> **PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.**