

**MASTERS RESEARCH THESIS/ DISSERTATION**

**An analysis of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature in the 21st century**

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study explores the initiation process of ukuthwasa among young individuals, including the personal experience of a researcher with an ancestral calling. The research investigates how oral literature has influenced African culture despite the challenges posed by the convergence and divergence of civilizations, languages, lifestyles, and environmental dynamics. Data were collected from ten participants who shared their frustrations with ukuthwasa, revealing that people are on different paths and destinations, and that healing is not possible until individuals are willing to learn and understand. The study focuses on intwaso, highlighting the presence of uninformed, sceptical, and inspired individuals who approach it differently. Overall, the study sheds light on the challenges of preserving oral literature and the importance of adaptation and understanding to ensure its continued significance in the modern era.

**Keywords:** *Intwaso, Idlozi, Youngsters, Iphehlo*

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this study, titled “An analysis of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature in the 21st century” has not been previously submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree, diploma, or qualification. The content presented in this dissertation is entirely my own work, and all sources of information and ideas used have been duly acknowledged and referenced.

Every significant contribution to this study from the works of other individuals has been properly attributed, and all direct quotations have been cited and referenced in accordance with the established academic standards. I affirm that I have upheld the principles of academic integrity and ethical research throughout the process of conducting this study and writing this dissertation.

Initials: N.S Mtombeni

Date: 6 November 2023

## **Dedication**

In loving memory of my late grandmother, Liziwe Beauty Mtombeni. Your unwavering support, boundless love, and profound wisdom have been a guiding light throughout my journey. Your stories and teachings have shaped not only my understanding of our cultural heritage but also my approach to life. This work is a tribute to your legacy and a reflection of the values you instilled in me. Though you are no longer with us, your spirit lives on in every word, every thought, and every step I take.

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## Chapter 1: Research background

### 1.1 Focal Research Question/ Problem

- How has *ukuthwasa* (Ancestral calling) affected the youth of today?

*Ukuthwasa*, the process of being called by one's ancestors to become a healer or *sangoma*, can have a significant impact on the youth of today. Those who are called to undergo *ukuthwasa* may face challenges such as discrimination and stigma from their peers and family members who do not understand the significance of this ancestral calling. Additionally, the training and initiation process can be challenging and time-consuming, potentially affecting the youth's education and career opportunities.

Furthermore, the cultural beliefs and practices surrounding *ukuthwasa* and ancestral healing may clash with Western medical practices, creating challenges for those who seek both forms of healing. This can lead to a lack of understanding and support from the wider community, which can have negative consequences for young people who are called to become healers.

It is important for further research to be conducted on the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today, in order to better understand the challenges they face and to develop appropriate support and guidance for those who are called to become healers. Implementation initiatives, such as community education programs and mentorship opportunities, can also be developed to help support and guide the youth through the *ukuthwasa* process.

### 1.2 Research sub questions

- How does the journey of *ukuthwasa* differ with each person?

- What are the hurdles that youth with ancestral callings face?

The journey of *ukuthwasa*, or ancestral calling, can differ greatly from person to person. While some may experience a clear and direct calling from their ancestors, others may struggle to understand and interpret the signs and messages they receive. Additionally, the process of undergoing *ukuthwasa* can be different for each individual, as it may involve various rituals, ceremonies, and periods of training and initiation.

One of the main hurdles that youth with ancestral callings face is a lack of understanding and support from their peers and family members. Many people in modern society may view traditional healing practices as outdated or even superstitious, which can lead to discrimination and stigma against those who are called to become healers. Additionally, the process of undergoing *ukuthwasa* can be challenging and time-consuming, requiring a significant commitment of time and resources.

Another hurdle that youth with ancestral callings may face is a clash between traditional beliefs and practices and Western medical practices. This can create a dilemma for those who seek both forms of healing, as they may feel torn between the two and struggle to find a balance between them.

Overall, it is important for society to better understand and support those who are called to become healers through *ukuthwasa*. By promoting a greater appreciation for traditional healing practices and providing more resources and support for those who undergo the process of *ukuthwasa*, we can help to ensure the preservation of these important cultural traditions for future generations.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

- To discuss *ukuthwasa* as a whole, in its different aspects and dynamics
- To outline how oral literature and traditional customs align
- To illustrate how each person's *ukuthwasa* journey differs

- To depict how/why *intwaso* is widely accepted among today's youth
- To describe the primary influence that *ukuthwasa* has.

For this research to achieve its objectives, it should answer the following question:

Does oral literature still have an impact on the youth of today? And as part of oral literature, how does the journey of *ukuthwasa* impact the youth of today?

To answer these questions, the research would need to gather data from the youth themselves about their experiences with oral literature and *ukuthwasa*. This could involve conducting surveys, interviews, or focus groups with young people who have been exposed to oral literature and/or who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. The data collected could then be analysed to determine the extent to which oral literature and *ukuthwasa* have an impact on the youth of today, as well as the specific ways in which these practices affect them. The research could also explore potential factors that may enhance or hinder the impact of oral literature and *ukuthwasa* on the youth, such as social and cultural factors, access to resources, and levels of education and awareness. Ultimately, the goal of the research would be to provide insights into the continued relevance of oral literature and *ukuthwasa* in contemporary South African society, as well as to identify potential ways to strengthen the impact of these practices on the youth of today.

Oral literature is still used now, and it plays a role in imparting wisdom to generations that were young at the time, and who are now our elders. Sharing of past experience in regard to *amasiko nezithethe* have become more popular as a means of passing on knowledge and imparting wisdom in the youth. The researcher does have a case to make that oral literature is one of our language's indigenous components and how it resonates with the topic of the research which has everything to do with *intwaso*. The word indigenous is chosen primarily since oral literature is the source of African education. Oral literature has had a significant impact in shaping our African culture. It is, in a way, our basis as Africans. The purpose of this research is to seek and emphasize the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today, and in relation to oral literature *ukuthwasa* is part of *amasiko nezithethe* and how oral literature plays part in this ancestral journey. *Amasiko nezithethe* fall under oral literature because there is no particular formula that is followed as the journey differs with each person.

The journey of *ukuthwasa* is unique to each individual who experiences it. While the overarching purpose is to answer the ancestral call and become a healer, the specific path and challenges encountered during *ukuthwasa* will differ from person to person. Some may experience physical and emotional struggles, while others may encounter social and familial hurdles. However, one common factor is the reliance on oral literature and traditional practices in the training and initiation process.

Through the sharing of stories and experiences, oral literature plays a significant role in preparing young people for the journey of *ukuthwasa*. Elders and experienced healers share their knowledge and wisdom, providing guidance and insight into the spiritual and cultural significance of *ukuthwasa*. This knowledge is passed down through generations and has been preserved through the use of oral literature. It is through this sharing of knowledge that the younger generation can learn and understand the importance of their ancestral heritage and the journey of *ukuthwasa*.

Furthermore, the journey of *ukuthwasa* can also present challenges for the youth, particularly in modern society. The pressures of societal expectations and Western cultural influences can often clash with the traditional beliefs and practices of *ukuthwasa*. This can lead to feelings of isolation and confusion for those who are called to become healers. However, through the use of oral literature and the guidance of experienced healers and elders, the youth can navigate these challenges and find meaning and purpose in their ancestral calling.

Oral literature plays a crucial role in the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge and practices, particularly in the context of *ukuthwasa*. It provides the necessary foundation for young people to understand and embark on their ancestral journey, while also presenting a unique perspective on the importance of traditional practices in modern society. The journey of *ukuthwasa* differs with each person, but through the use of oral literature and the guidance of elders and experienced healers, the youth can overcome the hurdles they face and find fulfilment in answering their ancestral call.

The reason for this is that little research has been done on *ukuthwasa* of the youth, how elders' ignorance impedes their children's ancestral journey, resulting in the new generation being misinformed or knowing less about the importance of oral literature in relation to *intwaso*. The healing ailment known as *intwaso* will be the focus, which is viewed as an ancestor's summons to become a healer. The transpersonal approach sees these initiatory callings as spiritual crises as well.

The researcher's discovery of the problem that led to the aforementioned enquiry was influenced by a practice issue. It is founded on the researcher's own experiences with *ukuthwasa* and how it impacts today's youth. This question was chosen to address, analyse, and expound on the challenges the youngsters had in accepting *intwaso*, how acceptance of *intwaso* affects their daily lives, and how their path has been moulded.

This study attempts to explore the perspectives of present adolescents who have an ancestral calling, as well as whether or not they received support for the journey they will be or have done, as well as the problems it has brought. The main goal of this is to record all perspectives of both teachers who work with kids who have a calling and youth (students) on how *intwaso* impacts them, then compare and analyse the material in relation to the subject at hand.

The research topic of whether oral literature, specifically the journey of *ukuthwasa*, still has an impact on the youth of today is an important and timely one. Oral literature is a vital part of African culture and has played a significant role in shaping the traditions, beliefs, and values of various communities. In particular, the journey of *ukuthwasa*, which involves a spiritual calling to become a healer, is an important aspect of African culture and is often regarded as a rite of passage for many young people.

However, in recent years, there has been a decline in the number of young people accepting the call to *ukuthwasa*. This may be due to a lack of understanding of the significance of this journey, a disconnection from their cultural heritage, or the influence of westernization and modernization. As a result, the importance of oral literature in relation to *ukuthwasa* may be in danger of being lost or forgotten.

The research aims to explore the impact of oral literature on the youth of today in relation to *ukuthwasa*. This involves examining the experiences of young people who have undergone the journey of *ukuthwasa*, as well as the perspectives of teachers who work with them. The study seeks to understand the challenges faced by young people in accepting their ancestral calling and how this impacts their daily lives.

Furthermore, by examining how the journey of *ukuthwasa* differs with each person, the research can provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities of this ancestral calling and how it impacts the youth of today. It can also highlight the unique challenges that young people with ancestral callings face and provide recommendations for how they can be supported and guided through their spiritual journey.

The study can also contribute to the broader field of transpersonal psychology, which recognizes the significance of spiritual experiences in human development and well-being. By exploring the spiritual and transformative aspects of *ukuthwasa*, the research can contribute to a better understanding of how spiritual experiences can promote personal growth and healing. Overall, the research can make an important contribution to the preservation of African cultural heritage and the promotion of holistic healing practices. By recognizing the importance of oral literature and *ukuthwasa*, the study can help to promote greater awareness and understanding of African traditions and spirituality among young people, and contribute to the maintenance and celebration of African cultural identity.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform policy and practice in promoting the acceptance of *ukuthwasa* among young people. By highlighting the importance of oral literature and the journey of *ukuthwasa*, the study may contribute to efforts to preserve African culture and traditions. It may also provide valuable insights into how best to support young people on this journey and ensure that they receive the guidance and resources they need to navigate this important rite of passage.



## 1.4 Research Background and introduction

The oral tradition has been a vital component of African culture for centuries. It encompasses stories, songs, and proverbs passed down from generation to generation, often in the absence of a written language. The role of oral literature in African societies cannot be overstated, as it serves as a means of preserving history, cultural values, and identity. However, with the advent of modernity and the spread of western culture, oral literature is under threat of extinction. This study aims to examine the impact of the ancestral calling, or *ukuthwasa*, on the youth of today and its connection to oral literature in South Africa. The ancestral calling, or *ukuthwasa*, is a traditional African initiation ritual where a person is called by their ancestors to become a healer or diviner. This process often involves extensive training and can last several years. In South Africa, the practice of *ukuthwasa* is still prevalent, especially in rural areas. However, as society becomes more westernized and urbanized, the number of youth who answer the ancestral call is decreasing (Xaso, 2015).

The oral tradition has been a cornerstone of African culture for centuries, encompassing stories, songs, proverbs, and rituals that have been passed down through generations. This tradition serves as a vital means of preserving history, cultural values, and identity within African societies. However, the advent of modernity and the influence of Western culture have led to a gradual erosion of this rich heritage. As globalized media and urbanization reshape the cultural landscape, traditional practices, including oral literature, are facing the threat of extinction (Attwell and Attridge, 2012).

One such traditional practice that holds a unique place in South African culture is the ancestral calling, known as "*ukuthwasa*." This initiation ritual, deeply rooted in the beliefs and customs of indigenous communities, involves individuals being called by their ancestors to become healers or diviners. *Ukuthwasa* is a multifaceted process that encompasses rigorous training, spiritual experiences, and the acquisition of specialized knowledge. While *ukuthwasa* has historically played a crucial role in transmitting oral literature and cultural wisdom, the practice is now at a crossroads

due to the changing aspirations and influences on the younger generation (McGiffin, 2017).

In the rich tapestry of South African cultural heritage, oral literature has been a vital thread, weaving together stories, traditions, and identities across generations. The stories told around campfires, the songs sung during ceremonies, and the proverbs shared in everyday life have all contributed to the fabric of this oral tradition. However, the winds of change blowing through modern society have cast a shadow over these age-old practices, raising concerns about the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations. Central to the narrative of cultural transformation in South Africa is the phenomenon of *ukuthwasa*, an ancestral calling that beckons individuals to take up the mantle of healers or diviners. Rooted in the spiritual beliefs and practices of indigenous communities, *ukuthwasa* has not only served as a conduit for passing down oral literature but has also been a vessel for the transfer of ancestral wisdom and the embodiment of cultural identity (Soko, 2014).

As urbanization accelerates and global influences become more pronounced, the allure of *ukuthwasa* has dimmed among the youth, leading to a decline in the number of initiates. The allure of modernity, with its promises of progress and opportunities, often clashes with the commitments and demands of this age-old initiation process. This shift raises critical questions about the interplay between tradition and modernity, the impact on the transmission of oral literature, and the broader implications for South African cultural resilience. In the diverse cultural landscape of South Africa, oral literature occupies a significant place as a historical and identity-shaping tradition. Rooted in the pre-colonial era, oral literature encompasses a rich array of storytelling forms, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, songs, and rituals. These narratives have served as a vessel for passing down cultural values, historical accounts, and communal wisdom from one generation to another. Reflecting the nation's ethnic diversity, different communities such as the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, and Venda have contributed their own distinct oral traditions to this narrative mosaic. Through its diverse forms, oral literature not only imparts moral lessons and ethical insights but also reinforces a sense of belonging and shared heritage among community members (Magoqwana, 2018). However, as South Africa undergoes

modernization, urbanization, and the digital age, the age-old practice of oral transmission faces new challenges. The traditional initiation ritual of *ukuthwasa*, which calls individuals to become healers or diviners, emerges as a pivotal connection between oral literature and contemporary dynamics. Understanding how the decline in *ukuthwasa* participation impacts the transmission of oral literature is essential for safeguarding cultural identity and heritage in a rapidly changing world (Daniels and Isaacs, 2023).

This study seeks to understand the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today and how it relates to the preservation of oral literature. Specifically, the study will investigate the challenges faced by the youth who undergo *ukuthwasa*, the ways in which society responds to their calling, and the role of *ukuthwasa* in preserving oral literature. The study will employ an ethnographic approach, using interviews with both youth who have undergone *ukuthwasa* and teachers at a selected school to gather data. The data will be transcribed, analysed, and interpreted to identify themes and patterns related to the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today and its connection to oral literature. The findings of this study may have implications for education and cultural preservation policies in South Africa. By understanding the challenges and benefits of *ukuthwasa*, the study may provide insights into how the education system can better support and integrate *intwaso*, or those who have answered the ancestral call, into schools without compromising their cultural practices. Additionally, the study may highlight the importance of preserving oral literature as a means of maintaining cultural identity and history (Izu and De Villiers, 2022.).

According to Mlisa (2019), the journey of *ukuthwasa* is a rite of passage in many African societies, where individuals undergo spiritual initiation to become traditional healers, or *sangomas*. It involves a period of seclusion, rigorous training, and initiation rituals, which are integral to the process of becoming a *sangoma*. The journey is often challenging and can have a profound impact on the individual's life, as well as their community.

Despite its cultural significance, the journey of *ukuthwasa* is often stigmatized in modern society, particularly among the youth. The aim of this research is to investigate the challenges associated with *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today, including the societal

responses to one's calling and the ways in which schools have adapted to having students and/or teachers who have undergone the journey. Furthermore, this study will explore ways in which the importance of *intwaso* can be instilled in the youth, without leading to bullying or discrimination towards those who have undergone the journey. This research will employ qualitative research methods, including interviews and focus group discussions, to gather data from participants who have undergone the journey of *ukuthwasa* or have a calling to do so (Chinyama, 2017).

The research findings will provide insight into the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today and its connection to oral literature in South Africa. This study will also highlight the need to protect and preserve oral literature, as it continues to play a critical role in African societies. The initiation process of *ukuthwasa* among young individuals and its relevance to oral literature preservation is a topic that has received limited attention in previous research. Oral literature is an art form that has endured the weather and storms of time, and its significance in shaping our African culture cannot be overstated. However, with the increasing focus on technology and modernization, the preservation of oral literature has become a challenge.

In the context of *ukuthwasa* initiation, *intwaso* is considered an ancestral calling to become a healer. The initiation process is a spiritual crisis that is deeply rooted in African culture and tradition. However, the lack of understanding and awareness about the significance of *intwaso* among young individuals and the broader society can impede the preservation of oral literature.

Thus, there is a need to understand the challenges faced by young individuals in the *ukuthwasa* initiation process and their perceptions about the relevance of oral literature. By exploring the experiences and perspectives of young individuals who have undergone the *ukuthwasa* initiation process, this study aims to provide insights into how oral literature preservation can be adopted and practiced in the context of *intwaso*. This qualitative study seeks to fill the gap in the existing literature by exploring the lived experiences of ten participants who have undergone the *ukuthwasa* initiation process. The study aims to shed light on the challenges faced by young individuals in the initiation process and how their perceptions of oral literature influence their

understanding of *intwaso*. The findings of this study can contribute to a better understanding of the relevance of oral literature in African culture and provide recommendations for its preservation in the context of *intwaso*.

## **1.5 Rationale**

Oral literature has progressed to the point that it is considered obsolete in our day and age. The researcher has experienced and grown to observe this herself when it comes to ancient rituals like *intwaso*, just for the sake of practicing them. The researcher believes that the worth of traditional rituals and practices will always be high and dignified, but it relies on how individuals interpret and use them. It should also be revered as a holy component of African culture because it is a journey only undertaken by the selected ones. The researcher is to offer two instances in this statement that will give a deeper and broader picture of what she has identified as an issue and has become the motivation for doing this study.

Research is a methodical process for producing new information and validating current knowledge. Primary and secondary data collecting are the two ways used by researchers to perform research. Oral literature is a performance-based subject since its research is field-based, which means it depends heavily on original data obtained directly from the source. The primary goal of research is to discover previously unknown truths or to confirm previously established truths. According to Kothari (2004), research is a process of deliberate, in-depth inquiry of a specific subject that follows a specified organized strategy to find answers that develop comprehension and better awareness of a concept, hence obtaining more knowledge meaning.

When this research is done and its goal has been met, the researcher strongly feels that it will be a significant contribution to the youth of today in taking pride in their culture and embracing their ancestral calling.

As Africans, we strongly believe that recognizing one's identity and honouring one's origins and heritage leads to greater success in life. Most significantly, this research will emphasize the significance of honouring our ancestors as Africans, as they are the wellspring of our religion.

Not performing cultural rituals and embracing your calling may cause a significant disturbance in an individual's life, which many are unaware of due to cultural neglect. Depending on the power exerted by ancestors, these disturbances have varying effects on a person. Some of the consequences might be physical, mental, or psychological.

However, most people are unaware that cultural neglect is causing disturbances in their life owing to a lack of awareness or familiarity with culture. Some merely regard it as a chance to consult a traditional healer after failing to find a medical remedy. It is typical for ancestors' wrath to pass down from generation to generation. As a person with experience in the field, the researcher hopes to expand on this in this part.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

The researcher intends to unpack more of what scholars have not yet unpacked about the selected topic. Little study has been conducted on the influence of *ukuthwasa* on today's young as contrasted to our elders, who may be considered the youth of yesterday. The researcher intends to build on existing scholarship and perform new study. This is an important aspect of the research as it aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by examining the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today. By conducting new research, the researcher can provide a more up-to-date and nuanced understanding of the subject matter. Moreover, the research can contribute to existing scholarship by identifying new perspectives and insights that may have been overlooked or not considered before.

Oral literature, according to Ajibade (2005;38), has always held a special position in people's lives since it consists of culturally distinctive participatory activities, whether visual or verbal. This is accurate in the sense that oral literature has a distinctive role in people's lives because it preserves the uniqueness of their cultures, which consist of practical activities. The researcher will then elaborate on this, focusing on the link between oral literature and *ukuthwasa*, how they may play a special role in one's life, and the high regard our elders have for oral literature.

*Ukuthwasa* is the ancestors' calling to learn and become a traditional healer, and its training comprises of a variety of rites that the novice healer must complete before graduating and becoming fully fledged healers. The calling first appears throughout adolescence in the form of "*inkathazo*," or difficulties. These difficulties afflict the individual with the calling until they recognize it. This is a tradition that predates colonization and has lasted despite showing evidence of development. The changes that have transpired in South Africa have had an influence on "*ukuthwasa*," with some members of the community perceiving these as a danger to its existence. The research demonstrates that, despite the changes, the practice is surviving and prospering, with evidence of evolution. Hence this research is aimed at exploring all the challenges that *amathwasa* are faced with.

The challenges faced by *amathwasa* can range from financial difficulties to societal and familial pressures. Many young people today may not have the means to pay for the required training and ceremonies, which can be costly. Additionally, there may be pressure from family members who do not support the calling or do not understand its significance. Society's modernization has also made it challenging for *amathwasa* to balance the demands of their calling with the demands of everyday life, such as work and education.

The research can provide insight into the unique challenges that young people face in pursuing their ancestral calling and how they can be addressed. It can also shed light on the importance of traditional healing and how it can be integrated into modern society. By exploring the experiences of *amathwasa* and the obstacles they encounter, the research can provide valuable information that can be used to support and promote the practice of *ukuthwasa* among young people.

The researcher believes this is irrational and unjust because what people do in their personal places have no effect on others, and how accepting an ancestral calling does not necessarily involve anybody other than the selected person. Due to judgments from the neighbourhood, this has been a key factor contributing to individuals abandoning their cultural customs and not recognizing their ancestral calling. Since the advent of globalisation, the movement of rural-urban migration has altered the lifestyle of Africans and has not been easy to bear. As people adapted to urban life,

they turned a blind eye on their ancestral ways and adapted to western ways of doing so, to the point where judgements are passed on those who embrace their culture and accept their calling.

The researcher may also want to explore how the media's portrayal of traditional healing practices and ancestral calling may contribute to these negative perceptions and judgments. Media has the power to shape people's perceptions, and negative portrayals of traditional healing practices and ancestral calling may create stigma and discourage young people from accepting their calling. Additionally, the researcher may want to examine how the lack of institutional support for traditional healing practices and ancestral calling may also contribute to the challenges faced by young people who have accepted their calling.

The research can provide insights into how the community can support young people who have accepted their ancestral calling, and how cultural heritage can be preserved and promoted among the youth. It can also inform policymakers and institutions about the importance of recognizing and supporting traditional healing practices and ancestral calling.

We are aware that in the olden days, resources such as livestock were easily accessible as farming was a way to make a living. As time and periods passed, means of living became increasingly prevalent in places where work possibilities were accessible. The layout of townships in urban regions will never be the same as in rural settings. Because of poverty, some people moved to cities and never returned to the countryside; nonetheless, this should not be an excuse for people to ignore their culture. Indeed, the urbanization of African societies has brought about changes in the way of life for many people, and this has influenced their connection to their culture and traditions. Economic factors, such as the availability of work opportunities, have forced many young people to move away from their rural homes and settle in urban areas, which are often far removed from the traditional practices of their ancestors. As a result, there is a risk that cultural traditions, including the practice of *ukuthwasa*, may be lost or forgotten.



However, it is important to note that cultural preservation and identity can be maintained even in urban settings. The younger generation can learn about their cultural practices through the sharing of oral literature and traditional stories, and by actively seeking out knowledge and guidance from traditional healers and elders in their community. Additionally, efforts can be made to create spaces for cultural events and ceremonies in urban areas, which can serve to strengthen cultural ties and reinforce the importance of ancestral traditions. While urbanization and modernization may present challenges to the preservation of cultural traditions such as ukuthwasa, it is still possible for young people to connect with their ancestral heritage and embrace their calling. The research can provide insight into the hurdles and opportunities that exist for the youth and how they can embrace their cultural heritage in a changing world.

The study recognizes the significance of oral literature in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. However, it also acknowledges the challenges that exist in protecting and preserving oral literature. The researcher aims to shed light on these difficulties and explore their impact on the youth of today in relation to ukuthwasa. The study will identify the barriers that prevent young people from accepting their ancestral calling and provide insights into how these barriers can be overcome. The research intends to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how to protect and preserve oral literature and cultural heritage in general.

### **1.7 Conceptual /Theoretical Framework**

This research was based on analysing conceptual issues observed and experienced. As an African person born and grew up in a township in an urban area, the researcher will be unpacking first-hand experience with regards to culture and *intwaso* and the importance valuing it.

Furthermore, this research will provide a theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting data and research outcomes. The relevant publications identified by the researcher to analyse the required study theoretical framework are Bodunde's article on Oral literature: Research Strategies and Documentation Problems, and Okpewho's article on African oral literature: Background, Character, and Continuity. It is important

to note that the theoretical framework of this research is essential in guiding the researcher's data collection, analysis, and interpretation of research outcomes. The researcher will utilise the theoretical framework to gain a deeper understanding of oral literature and *ukuthwasa*, as well as their significance to the youth of today. The article by Bodunde on oral literature will provide insights into research strategies and documentation problems associated with the study of oral literature. On the other hand, Okpewho's article on African oral literature will provide a background on the character and continuity of oral literature, as well as the cultural significance of oral literature in African societies. These articles will be crucial in guiding the researcher's analysis of data collected and interpreting research outcomes.

As Okpewho (1992:3) defines oral literature as literature obtained through word of mouth, this study will be a real depiction of his statement because it will be based on information gathered by literal word of mouth. As the researcher may experience problems when doing the research, Bodunde's paper will provide help. The article includes instructions for doing research on oral literature as well as problems to expect. Following the completion of the investigation, the researcher will argue if the recommendations were beneficial and how the obstacles posed were solved.

Additionally, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of oral literature, specifically the journey of *ukuthwasa*, on the youth of today. It is important to document and understand the experiences of the youth with regards to *intwaso* and how it impacts their lives, as they are the future custodians of African culture. The findings of this research could potentially inform policy makers and educators on how to better support youth who have an ancestral calling and how to integrate oral literature into education systems.

To gather data, the researcher will use qualitative research methods, specifically interviews and focus group discussions. The participants will be selected based on their age and whether they have undergone the journey of *ukuthwasa* or have a calling to do so. The research will be conducted in a township in an urban area in South Africa. The researcher will first seek ethical approval from the relevant research ethics committee. Once approval is obtained, the researcher will identify and approach potential participants through community leaders and networks. The participants will

be informed about the study, its purpose and their rights as participants. They will also be asked to sign a consent form before participating in the study.

The interviews will be conducted one-on-one with each participant and will be semi-structured, allowing for open-ended questions and exploration of individual experiences and perspectives. The focus group discussions will be conducted with a group of participants to encourage dialogue and discussion on the topic. The data collected from the interviews and focus group discussions will be analysed thematically, with common themes and patterns emerging from the data.

The researcher will ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants by assigning pseudonyms to each participant and storing data in a secure location. The researcher will also ensure that the data is accurately transcribed and analysed without any bias or preconceptions. The results of the study will be disseminated through academic publications and presentations, and will also be shared with the local community through community engagement sessions.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

As someone who has had experience with having an ancestral calling, the researcher was a participant in this research. The ethnographic approach will be employed in this research, which allows for the observation of individuals in a cultural environment and the production of a narrative description of that culture. It includes writing down every information noticed that corresponds to the intended study conclusion. The ethnographic approach is a suitable methodology for this research as it enables the researcher to understand the cultural context and lived experiences of those who have undergone *ukuthwasa* or have a calling to do so. Through observation, the researcher can gather information on how individuals navigate the challenges and opportunities that come with accepting their ancestral calling, as well as the impact of cultural beliefs and practices on their daily lives. Additionally, conducting interviews and focus group discussions will allow the researcher to gather in-depth information and perspectives

from participants, thereby providing a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic. The use of multiple data collection methods also allows for triangulation, which enhances the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

As a participant in this research, the researcher will bring a unique perspective and understanding to the study. By drawing on personal experience, the researcher can provide insight into the challenges and benefits of undergoing the journey of *ukuthwasa* and how it impacted their life. This can add depth and richness to the research, as the researcher's own experience can be used to validate or challenge the findings from other participants. Additionally, as a participant-researcher, the researcher can establish trust and rapport with other participants who have undergone *ukuthwasa* or have a calling to do so. This can lead to more open and honest communication, as the participants may feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives with someone who has undergone the same journey. Moreover, the researcher can use their personal experience to ask more nuanced and detailed questions, resulting in a more comprehensive and accurate portrayal of the experiences of those who have undergone *ukuthwasa*.

The ethnographic approach is a suitable method for this research as it allows for a deep understanding of the culture and context in which the journey of *ukuthwasa* takes place. Through observation and participation, the researcher can gain an insider's perspective on the cultural practices and beliefs associated with *intwaso*. This can lead to a more nuanced understanding of how the journey of *ukuthwasa* impacts the youth of today and the role of oral literature in this process.

In conducting the research, the researcher will document every observation made and note every detail that corresponds to the intended study conclusion. This will involve recording field notes, which can include written descriptions of events and interactions, as well as reflections on the researcher's own experiences and feelings. The researcher may also use audio or video recordings to capture interviews and focus group discussions.

By employing the ethnographic approach, the researcher can capture the complexity and diversity of experiences related to the journey of ukuthwasa and oral literature. This can help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of these cultural practices on the youth of today. Additionally, it can help to identify potential areas for intervention or support, such as providing education and resources for parents and caregivers to better understand and support their children's ancestral calling.

### **1.9 Data Collection Method**

In terms of ethics, the researcher will conduct interviews with teachers at the chosen school to learn how they deal with students who have a calling and how that presents a challenge to them, as well as their acceptance of what comes with teaching a student who has to sometimes wear beads because of their calling and the challenge the school faces with adapting to these. The researcher will also interview youth/students who have gone through the *ukuthwasa* journey to learn how it impacts them. The researcher will need to distribute paperwork to interviewees to ensure that they realize they are not being compelled to participate in the interview and that nothing will be revealed against their will and permission. Additionally, the researcher will obtain informed consent from all participants, ensuring that they understand the purpose and scope of the research and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured, and the researcher will only use pseudonyms in reporting the findings. The researcher will also ensure that the study adheres to ethical principles, such as respect for persons, beneficence, and non-maleficence, as well as ensuring that the study does not cause harm to the participants. Furthermore, the researcher will obtain ethical clearance from an institutional review board or relevant ethical committee before commencing the study.

The researcher will collect data using transcription and videography. Permission will be sought from the adolescents and teachers to participate in the research. Details about holy portions that participants do not want to divulge will be scrutinized. If the researcher holds a ceremony, information will be shared as a participant, and the necessity of not discussing holy portions of the event will be explained. A series of

interviews will be performed to acquire information regarding major *ukuthwasa* process experiences.

Additionally, the researcher will ensure that all participants' identities are kept anonymous, and any personal information shared during interviews will be kept confidential. The researcher will also obtain informed consent from all participants before conducting any interviews or collecting any data. Informed consent includes providing clear explanations about the research purpose, the type of data to be collected, how the data will be used, and any potential risks or benefits of participation.

Furthermore, the researcher will ensure that the research is conducted in an ethical and culturally sensitive manner. This will involve respecting the cultural beliefs and practices of the participants, and not imposing any personal beliefs or values onto them. The researcher will also make sure that the research process does not cause any harm or offense to the participants.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, the researcher will use multiple methods of data collection and analysis. The data collected will be analysed using a qualitative data analysis approach, which involves interpreting and making sense of the data through themes and patterns. The researcher will also seek feedback and input from other experts in the field of oral literature and ancestral calling to validate the research findings.

Overall, the researcher will ensure that ethical considerations are taken into account throughout the research process, from data collection to analysis and reporting of findings. This will help to ensure that the research is conducted in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner, and that the findings are trustworthy and valuable to the wider community.

## **1.10 Limitations To The Study**

The research is not limited to only students and teachers at the chosen school it is inclusive to other youth who have a calling, those who have accepted their calling and have undergone *intwaso* and those who are yet to undergo their ancestral journey. Expanding on the point, the researcher understands that *ukuthwasa* is a common practice across various regions and cultures in Africa, and as such, it is not only limited to the students and teachers at the chosen school. Therefore, the research will be inclusive of other youths who have accepted their calling, undergone *intwaso*, or are yet to undergo their ancestral journey.

To achieve this inclusivity, the researcher will consider the geographical location of the research and choose participants from different regions that practice *ukuthwasa*. The researcher will also make use of social media and online platforms to reach out to youths who have undergone the journey or are yet to undergo the journey.

In addition, the researcher will engage with traditional healers and elders who are knowledgeable about the practice to gain insights into how *ukuthwasa* has evolved over time and its significance in today's society. This engagement will help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today.

It is important to note that the inclusion of a diverse range of participants in the research will help to provide a broader perspective on the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today. The researcher will ensure that all participants are treated with respect and that their cultural practices and beliefs are upheld throughout the research process.

### **1.11 Ethical Considerations**

Participants in this study will neither be segregated nor discriminated by gender, nor will they be restricted in terms of age. Because the goal of the research is to analyse

the effect, obstacles, and how it inhibits the youth of today, it is open and has no gender or age limitation. The ethnographic technique of research necessitates a hands-on process in which the researcher visits individuals. Considering the presence of COVID-19, stringent precautions will be implemented. In this case, if a participant does not agree to complete the interview physically but is willing to participate, virtual methods will be used to do the interview. It is important to ensure that all participants are comfortable and their privacy is respected throughout the research process. In addition, the researcher should obtain informed consent from all participants before conducting any interviews or focus group discussions. This includes informing participants about the purpose of the research, how their information will be used, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity should also be assured, and any personal identifying information should be kept secure. Finally, the researcher should adhere to ethical guidelines and principles, such as those provided by the ethical review board, to ensure that the research is conducted ethically and with integrity.

Research demands not just skill and dedication, but also honesty and integrity. This is done to recognize and safeguard human subjects' rights. The rights to self-determination, anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent were all preserved in order to make the study ethical. Participants in this research project will be adequately informed about the study, will understand the material, and will have the option of participating or declining. Participants consent to participate in this study only after receiving a detailed overview of the research procedure.

Participants' confidentiality and anonymity are ensured, and the Institution's ethical approval will be requested. Participants will be informed that they may withdraw at any time throughout the investigation. It is important for the researcher to obtain ethical approval from the relevant institution before commencing with the study. This approval process will ensure that the research project adheres to ethical guidelines and safeguards the rights of the participants involved. In addition to obtaining ethical approval, the researcher must obtain informed consent from each participant before conducting interviews or focus group discussions. This means that the participants must be made aware of the purpose of the study, the methods of data collection, the potential risks and benefits of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Furthermore, the researcher must ensure that the confidentiality and anonymity of the



participants are protected throughout the study, which can be achieved by using pseudonyms or coding responses to ensure that no individual can be identified.

## **1.12 Data Analysis**

The researcher will transcribe the obtained data into writing and offer explanations and elaborations on the research findings. The researcher will next compare the influence discovered on the journey of *ukuthwasa* on all those engaged, as well as the holiness of *ukuthwasa* in all its dimensions. After transcribing the data, the researcher will perform a thorough analysis to identify themes, patterns, and relationships within the data. The analysis will be guided by the research questions and theoretical framework. The researcher will organize the data into categories and subcategories to facilitate interpretation.

Once the data has been analysed, the researcher will develop a written report that presents the research findings. The report will include a detailed description of the research methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques used in the study. The report will also provide a summary of the key findings and their implications for the study's research questions.

The researcher will then compare the experiences and insights gained from the participants to identify commonalities and differences. The analysis will consider the challenges and benefits of the *ukuthwasa* journey and how it affects the youth of today.

The researcher will also evaluate the holiness of *ukuthwasa* in all its dimensions by examining how it is perceived and understood by the participants. This will include an exploration of the spiritual and cultural significance of *ukuthwasa*, as well as its role in promoting social cohesion and preserving cultural heritage. Finally, the report will conclude with recommendations for future research and practical applications of the research findings. These recommendations may include suggestions for further

investigation of specific themes or issues raised in the study, as well as strategies for promoting cultural awareness and understanding among youth and within the wider community.

In transcribing the obtained data, the researcher will carefully listen to the audio recordings and watch the video recordings to ensure that every detail is captured accurately. The transcription process will be done manually or using software programs, depending on the researcher's preference and the complexity of the data. Once the data is transcribed, the researcher will review the information to ensure it accurately represents the intended message.

Next, the researcher will analyze the data to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between different factors. The researcher will use theoretical frameworks such as Okpewho's article on African oral literature and Bodunde's article on research strategies and documentation problems to provide a theoretical basis for the analysis. By comparing the experiences and perceptions of those who have undergone intwaso with those who have not, the researcher will identify commonalities and differences in how the journey of ukuthwasa affects individuals. The researcher will also examine the significance of ukuthwasa in different dimensions, such as cultural, spiritual, and social.

The research findings will be presented in a clear and concise manner, highlighting the key themes and patterns discovered in the data. The researcher will use visual aids such as graphs, tables, and charts to present the data in an easily understandable format. The researcher will also provide explanations and elaborations on the research findings, making sure to tie them back to the theoretical frameworks used in the analysis. Finally, the researcher will draw conclusions based on the research findings and make recommendations for future research and practice.

### **1.13 Research Ethics**

This proposal has been approved for ethical clearance. Which means that:

- it has been submitted to the designated supervisor,
- and has been reviewed as the research involves human subjects.
- An ethical clearance form has been filled, submitted and granted.
- That had contained all details of the proposed research outline,
- including methodologies to be used.

## 1.14 Conclusion

A conclusion of this research will be made upon discovering the following:

- What are the major challenges associated with *ukuthwasa* on the youth of today?
- A brief description on the journey of *ukuthwasa*
- Ways in which the society responds to one's calling
- How the specified school has adapted to having students and/or teachers who have a calling.
- Are there ways for *intwaso* to be included in the schooling structure and system, without it being against the school's code of conduct?
- How can the importance of *intwaso* be instilled on the youth of today, so much that it does not lead to *amathwasa* being bullied for their ancestral calling?

## 1.15 Chapter Outline

### 1.15.1 Chapter 1: Introduction, Background, and Significance

This chapter serves as the gateway to the exploration of *ukuthwasa's* impact on the youth within the context of South African culture. It begins by introducing the research topic and posing the central questions that guide this study. The background of *ukuthwasa* is presented, highlighting its roots in ancestral beliefs and its role as a rite of passage. This background sets the stage for understanding its significance within the cultural fabric of South Africa. The chapter emphasizes the importance of investigating the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth, given the challenges posed by

modernization, urbanization, and the coexistence of traditional practices and contemporary dynamics.

The findings from the study may also provide practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders on how to promote and preserve African cultural heritage and values among young people. Overall, the research has the potential to make a significant contribution to the fields of oral literature, cultural studies, and youth studies.

### **1.15.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Building on the introduction, this chapter delves into the existing body of knowledge related to *ukuthwasa* and its effects on the youth. It explores the broader context of *ukuthwasa* within African cultural traditions, emphasizing its role as a means of preserving cultural heritage and transmitting oral literature. The literature review also examines the interplay between ancestral beliefs and Christianity, shedding light on the tensions and coexistence of these belief systems. Additionally, the chapter delves into contemporary challenges faced by the youth undergoing *ukuthwasa*, such as discrimination and clashes with Western medical practices. The literature review forms the foundation for understanding the multidimensional aspects of *ukuthwasa* and its implications for the youth (Stephenson, 2018).

### **1.15.3 Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods**

This chapter details the methodological approach employed to study the impact of *ukuthwasa* on the youth. The research design is outlined, showcasing the qualitative nature of the study, which involves in-depth interviews and participant observations. The rationale for using qualitative methods is explained, highlighting their suitability for capturing the nuances and personal experiences associated with *ukuthwasa*. The chapter elaborates on the process of participant selection, data collection, and ethical considerations. It emphasizes the importance of respecting participants' identities and ensuring a safe and respectful research environment. The methodology chapter

serves as a roadmap for understanding how the study was conducted and the rigor applied to ensure valid and meaningful findings.

#### **1.15.4 Chapter 4: Preliminary Suppositions and Implications**

This chapter provides a platform for delving into the preliminary findings of the study, drawing from the data collected through interviews and observations. The suppositions formulated based on the participants' experiences are discussed, shedding light on themes such as identity construction, challenges faced, and the role of traditional practices in contemporary society. The implications of these findings are explored, considering their impact on individuals, communities, and broader cultural dynamics. This chapter acts as a bridge between the empirical data and the theoretical concepts, offering insights into the real-world implications of *ukuthwasa* on the youth.

#### **1.15.5 Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The concluding chapter synthesizes the insights gained from the research journey. It revisits the research questions, highlighting the key findings and their significance. The chapter reflects on how the study contributes to the understanding of *ukuthwasa's* impact on the youth within the broader context of African culture. It discusses the implications of the findings for cultural preservation, intergenerational relationships, and the coexistence of traditional and contemporary beliefs. The conclusion also addresses the limitations of the study and suggests avenues for future research. Ultimately, this chapter provides a comprehensive wrap-up of the study, tying together the threads of research, analysis, and implications.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The discussion on the discourse of spirituality and communication with spiritual mediums in many cultures has attracted widespread attention in the twenty-first century, including that of agnostics. This is true of *ukuthwasa*. It is becoming more frequent to see ceremonial rites and *amagqirha* performances on television screens, as well as in local newspapers and national periodicals. These media representations show the essence of the diviner-making process, namely practices, beliefs, dynamic shifts, and advances in *ukuthwasa*. Such media pieces occasionally involve diviners in disputes and difficult conversations with their equivalents, notably Western-trained physicians.

The researcher intends to unpack more of what scholars have not yet unpacked about the selected topic. Little study has been conducted on the influence of *ukuthwasa* on today's youngsters as contrasted to our elders, who may be considered the youth of yesterday. The researcher intends to build on existing scholarship and perform new study.

### **2.2 Oral Literature and Its importance**

Oral literature is used to convey ideas, emotions, beliefs, and feelings about life. This literature defines, explains, and elaborates on society's perception of reality and the world's hazards. It is about the human experience and triumph over adversity. Oral literature is a type of entertainment that creates sentiments of kinship with those who have gone through similar situations (Bird, 2010). To summarize, oral literature may span a wide range of language expression genres and serve a variety of societal tasks. The African oral tradition distills the essences of human experiences, transforming them into memorable, easily retrievable imagery with a wide range of applications and an incredible capacity for triggering emotional reactions (Finnegan, 2012).

Oral literature holds a profound significance as a cornerstone of cultural heritage and identity in societies worldwide, including South Africa. In regions where written language was historically absent or limited, oral literature emerged as a primary means of communication, cultural preservation, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. In South Africa, this tradition takes on even greater importance due to its rich cultural diversity and historical context (Yazan and Arwemi, 2018).

Oral literature encompasses an array of storytelling forms, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, songs, and rituals. These narratives serve multifaceted roles, acting as repositories of historical events, moral teachings, communal values, and artistic expression. Passed down through generations by griots, storytellers, and community elders, oral literature fosters a sense of continuity with the past and helps shape collective identities. One of the most remarkable aspects of oral literature is its dynamic nature. Unlike fixed texts, oral narratives adapt and evolve over time, reflecting changing social, political, and environmental circumstances. This adaptability ensures that the tradition remains relevant and resonates with contemporary audiences, while maintaining its core cultural essence (Rathi and Aravind, 2015).

Oral literature is not solely a mode of information dissemination; it is an immersive experience. The act of storytelling, accompanied by gestures, intonations, and communal participation, creates a bond between the storyteller and the audience. This participatory nature fosters a sense of community, shared understanding, and cultural cohesion. In societies facing challenges like urbanization, globalization, and technological advancements, oral literature becomes both vulnerable and resilient. While the allure of modernity might diminish the prominence of traditional practices, the power of oral literature lies in its ability to adapt and find new avenues of expression. Digital media, for instance, offers a platform for preserving and revitalizing oral traditions, bridging generational gaps and reaching broader audiences. In South Africa, where the legacy of apartheid and the complexities of multiculturalism persist, oral literature plays a vital role in uniting communities, healing historical wounds, and shaping a shared national identity (Adnan, Nawari, Istianingrum and Suryatin, 2022). Thus,

the preservation, study, and celebration of oral literature hold a key to understanding the past, navigating the present, and shaping the future of cultural heritage.

African oral art forms have an uninterrupted continuity, from engaging oral genres through literary compositions like as the book and poetry. The vitality of the oral tradition does not appear to have waned; a reciprocal relationship has developed various media into a distinct art form against which forceful influences from East and West have proven ineffective (Finnegan, 2018).

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The oral arts, which include this sensory residue of previous cultural life and the wisdom it generates, serve as a vehicle for organizing, evaluating, and interpreting an audience's interactions with present-day pictures, the custom has a long history. Sone (2001) highlights that there are both documented and unwritten traditions in Africa. The latter are pretty well known—at least, current texts in European languages are (much work remains to be publicized on earlier Arabic and local written literatures in Africa).

The unwritten forms, on the other hand, are significantly less well recognized and valued. Such forms do not easily fit into the conventional categories of literate cultures, are more difficult to capture and display, and, at least to a casual observer, are easier to ignore than the comparable written content. Most people are unfamiliar with the



concept of oral literature since they were raised in civilizations that, like those of modern Europe, place a premium on reading and written heritage (Ogunjimi, 2005). According to common belief, it conveys the concept of mystery on the one hand, and rudimentary and aesthetically immature formulations on the other. In reality, neither of these assumptions is universally true.

In the era that we live in, everything around us has changed and evolved. As Shitemi (2009) states that oral literature is art form that has withstood the weather and storms of time. Even so, oral literature has managed to survive through and adapt to the changes. It is a fact that oral literature can be identified as a form of entertainment that was used in the olden days and to date. We can advocate to say that in the olden days, oral literature was used to kill boredom and keep the youth busy, and we can also find that to date. *lintsomi* were used as a method of instilling wisdom into the youth by the elderly. This was not just done anywhere and anytime but it was done before bedtime in the kitchen.

The motive behind that was to try and enforce a better tomorrow on the youth so that they can have bigger dreams and a wiser tomorrow. This is still continued today as we do find day care centres who promotes the reading of stories to adolescents. This has even progressed to having children do role playing of the stories where teachers empower skills on the children and promote the enthusiasm of storytelling (Bird, 2010).

Culture is a people's way of life, and it is well portrayed in oral literature, for example, the way people were ruled, their type of religion, division of labour, rites of passage, method of clothing, and so on. People gain confidence in their culture after learning about it. They comprehend why a group lives the way it does. This is closely tied to learning about our history or background. The study of oral literature gives valuable connections to our ancestors (Mlisa, 2009). For example, the myth of origin recounts the history of the society from its beginnings to the present. This implies that the world of our forefathers has been exposed for future generations to behold. A connection to the past allows us to understand ourselves.

The present is a by-product of the past; in order to comprehend where we are and where we are going, we must first understand the past. Many young people now remember their names, which appear to relate them to a certain historic name of their clan or tribe. Understanding our culture provides a solid foundation for understanding

other people's cultures. As we comprehend and respect others, we create good neighbourliness and a sense of nationality (Mlisa, 2019).

### **2.3 The journey of “*Ukuthwasa*”**

Traditional South Africans define *ukuthwasa* as "coming forth" or "being reborn," and it is the calling to become a traditional healer. The summoning comes from the departed ancestors and takes the shape of a dream or vision. *Ukuthwasa* (initiation) is a procedure that someone goes through after receiving *ubizo* (calling) from their ancestors to become a healer. It has existed in the African society for millennia. *Ubizo* is commonly misconstrued and connected with "possession" or "bad spirits" due to the symptoms that arise. In contrast to the Western system, where anybody with a desire to become a doctor can continue medical courses and graduate, *ukuthwasa* is not for everyone. Those who go through this procedure, however, are regarded to be bestowed by their ancestors and must accept and embrace their healing abilities (Zuma, 2016).

Some people become *amathwasa* due to ancestral concerns that need the performance of particular rites. Among these are persons who may be going through a terrible time in their lives, such as losing valued possessions or loved ones. Intellectuals and professors are among the latest initiates who have made public statements, which is helping to dispel widespread assumptions and preconceptions that traditional medicine is solely for the poor and ignorant. Traditional healing has been a prevalent practice for ages, with many Africans from varied socioeconomic levels seeking help from healers with a variety of health issues. Following colonization, many individuals are increasingly turning to Western ways and professionals in psychological and emotional disorders (Mlisa, 2015).

*Ukuthwasa* is not a new concept; it has existed from the time of our forebears, with the only difference now being that it was more revered and correctly carried out in the ancient days or primitive times than it is today. *Ukuthwasa* is an acceptance of an *Idlozi* that previously existed, and because that *Idlozi* now want to return as a 'spirit' and continue fulfilling its tasks, it enters someone with a body in the physical world and begins to function via that body. *Idlozi* is an *ithongo* that possesses someone, and

it is termed *idlozi* since it has now acted in this manner. This *idlozi* is administered by *amathongo*, who are the caretakers of 'the *umsamo* or *Isigodlo*' as well as the proprietors of this '*ubunyanga*', which is '*impande*'- the healing art (van der Zeijst, 2021).

Kaschula (2001) in his study maintains that the *ukuthwasa* process has no set time period since it is up to the *isithunywa* to determine how quickly she/he grows and when he/she has gotten the *impande* he/she needed to mature. This is a continual process since the ancestors continue to initiate you even after you have graduated (*ukuphothula*), which we term '*ukukhula komsamo*.' Some persons are possessed by more than one *isithunywa*. There are several ancestor-*idlozi*, and these *amadlozi* function at various levels and are begun at different periods. They will now come or visit you once the entire procedure has been done and show you all of the *impande* that you will be using during the healing process. These herbs-*impande* are just for your therapeutic purposes.

The journey of "*Ukuthwasa*" holds profound significance within the cultural fabric of South Africa, offering a glimpse into the intersection of spirituality, tradition, and personal transformation. Rooted in the belief systems of indigenous communities, "*Ukuthwasa*" is a traditional African initiation ritual that calls individuals to embark on a sacred path, often leading to becoming healers or diviners. This journey is not just a personal endeavour; it is a profound connection to ancestral spirits, community, and the preservation of oral literature (Limbali, 2016).

The path of "*Ukuthwasa*" is far from a simple rite of passage; it is a transformative process that spans several years. Initiation involves the calling of the individual by their ancestors, a spiritual beckoning that marks the beginning of an intensive and rigorous training period. During this time, initiates are mentored by experienced healers, diviners, and elders who impart not only practical skills but also the wisdom embedded in oral literature. Stories, myths, songs, and proverbs are woven into the teachings, imbuing initiates with a deep understanding of cultural heritage, healing practices, and their role within the community (Parangu and Salim, 2018).

Central to the "*Ukuthwasa*" journey is the idea of interconnectedness between the living and the ancestral realm. Through various rituals, dreams, and visions, initiates establish a profound link with their ancestors, who guide and empower them to fulfil their destined role as healers or diviners. This spiritual connection becomes a wellspring of knowledge, a source of guidance, and a channel for preserving oral literature that spans generations (Shokri and Mereskandari, 2016).

However, the journey of "*Ukuthwasa*" is not without its challenges. In an era marked by urbanization, modern education, and changing cultural dynamics, fewer young people are heeding the ancestral call. The allure of contemporary opportunities and the demands of modern life can create a rift between traditional practices and the present reality. This decline in initiates not only threatens the future of healing traditions but also puts at risk the vital link between "*Ukuthwasa*" and the transmission of oral literature (Paschal, 2016).

Understanding the journey of "*Ukuthwasa*" entails delving into the delicate balance between tradition and change, spirituality and modernity, and personal calling and communal duty. It requires exploring the impact of this initiation process on individual lives, community cohesion, and the enduring vitality of oral literature. By tracing this journey, we gain insights into the resilience of cultural practices, the depth of spiritual connections, and the intricate threads that bind the past, present, and future of South African society (Bakow and Low, 2018).

Additionally, the *ukuthwasa* process involves a variety of rituals, including divination, ancestor veneration, and the use of traditional medicines. During the initiation, the initiate is isolated from the community and undergoes various tests to prove their readiness for the role of a healer. The process is believed to be a calling from the ancestors, and failure to heed the call can result in illness or other misfortunes. However, despite its significance in African culture, there is a lack of understanding and appreciation for *ukuthwasa* and its associated practices. This study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of young individuals who have undergone the *ukuthwasa* process and shed light on the challenges and opportunities for the preservation and promotion of oral literature and traditional healing practices.

Kaschula (2001) presents a perspective on the ukuthwasa process, shedding light on its fluid nature and the intricate relationship between the initiate, the ancestors, and personal growth. According to his study, the duration of the ukuthwasa journey remains flexible, as it is determined by the *isithunywa*, the individual being called to become a healer or diviner. The pace of growth and the attainment of the *impande*, symbolic of maturity, are guided by the *isithunywa*'s own development. Importantly, this process is ongoing, extending even beyond the formal completion known as *ukuphothula*, a state referred to as '*ukukhula komsamo*.' This suggests that the ancestral initiation continues to unfold, indicating a dynamic and enduring connection to ancestral spirits.

Kaschula's study highlights a fascinating dimension of the *ukuthwasa* process by emphasizing that an individual may be possessed by multiple *isithunywa* or ancestral spirits. These distinct ancestor-*idlozi* operate at varying levels and are initiated at different stages. This multifaceted approach reflects the nuanced relationship between initiates and their ancestral guides, suggesting that each ancestral spirit serves a particular purpose within the healing or divination practice. Furthermore, Kaschula's work introduces the concept of herbs-*impande*, which are integral to the healing process. These herbs are utilized for therapeutic purposes, emphasizing the holistic nature of the healer's role. These herbs are bestowed upon the initiate by the ancestors after completing the necessary procedures. This symbolic act not only underscores the importance of ancestral guidance in the healing process but also reinforces the connection between the physical and spiritual realms.

In summary, Kaschula's study underscores the intricate and evolving nature of the *ukuthwasa* process. It challenges a fixed timeline, emphasizing personal growth, ongoing initiation, and the multifaceted relationship between initiates and ancestral spirits. This perspective expands our understanding of *ukuthwasa*, revealing a journey that is deeply woven into the fabric of personal development, spiritual connection, and the use of natural resources for therapeutic purposes.

## **2.4 Ukuthwasa and Christianity**

Historically, *ukuthwasa* was seen as pagan and heathen, and as such, missionaries, colonization, and the apartheid government worked hard to eradicate African divination techniques such as *ukuthwasa*. Rather of healing and *ubizo*, it was commonly connected with sorcery, *ukuthwala* (gaining abilities for money), *ubugqirha* (witchcraft), and witch-smelling. However, the longevity of divination systems and the ongoing interest demonstrated by the very societies that were previously demoralized indicates the legitimacy, authenticity, and realistic character of *ukuthwasa*'s natural existence. Instead of dying, it is sprouting on the doorsteps of the so-called powerful faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, as well as the education system, which has functioned as religion's handmaiden. Christians and educated people now not only consult *amagqirha* but also undergo *ukuthwasa* initiation (Mlisa, 2015).

As formal learning institutions, the training schools are not regionalised, but they are highly personalized (each trainer has her own *iphehlo* school). There is a chance that *amaphehlo* (plural of *iphehlo*) will differ, regardless of trainers from the same *iphehlo*. As a result, just one *iphehlo* was chosen and utilized as a paradigmatic model for *amagqirha* training (Finnegan, 2012). Furthermore, the intersection between *ukuthwasa* and Christianity has created a unique cultural phenomenon in South Africa. Many Christians who undergo *ukuthwasa* initiation do so in order to reconcile their African spiritual heritage with their Christian beliefs. This has resulted in the creation of syncretic spiritual practices that combine elements of both traditions. For example, some initiates will incorporate Christian prayers or hymns into their divination rituals, or seek the guidance of both ancestral spirits and Christian deities (Xaso, 2015).

The intersection of "*Ukuthwasa*" with Christianity forms a complex cultural landscape in South Africa, where traditional beliefs and modern religious practices coexist and sometimes converge. This juxtaposition reflects the intricate ways in which indigenous spirituality and Christianity intertwine, shaping individual identities, community dynamics, and the preservation of oral literature. For many individuals undergoing the "*Ukuthwasa*" process, Christianity is a central influence due to its widespread presence in South African society. This influence has led to varying degrees of syncretism, where traditional beliefs and Christian teachings intertwine. The result is a unique blend that manifests differently in each initiate's journey. In some cases, initiates find ways to harmonize the ancestral calling of "*Ukuthwasa*" with Christian

beliefs. They navigate this path by interpreting ancestral spirits within the framework of Christian saints or angels, thus bridging the gap between the two belief systems. This syncretic approach enables individuals to engage with both their ancestral heritage and their Christian faith (Kleinhempel, 2017).

However, the coexistence of "*Ukuthwasa*" and Christianity is not always harmonious. Some Christian denominations view traditional practices as incompatible with their teachings, branding them as pagan or idolatrous. This perspective can lead to conflicts of faith for initiates who feel torn between honouring their ancestors and conforming to Christian doctrines. Despite these tensions, "*Ukuthwasa*" continues to persist alongside Christianity, serving as a testament to the resilience of cultural practices. Initiates often navigate this complex terrain with adaptability and creativity, finding ways to uphold both their traditional heritage and their religious convictions. This intricate dance shapes their experiences, beliefs, and ultimately contributes to the preservation of oral literature. The coexistence of "*Ukuthwasa*" and Christianity offers a unique lens through which to view cultural evolution, spiritual negotiation, and the intricate threads that weave the fabric of South African identity. This complex interplay underscores the broader narrative of how tradition and modernity intersect in a changing world, impacting the transmission of oral literature and shaping the narratives that individuals inherit and pass on (Mokhoathi, 2019). The relationship between *ukuthwasa* and Christianity is complex, with some Christians embracing it as a way to reconnect with their African roots, while others view it as a form of syncretism that dilutes the purity of their faith. Nonetheless, the continued practice of *ukuthwasa* among Christians is a testament to its enduring cultural significance and the resilience of African spirituality in the face of external forces.

The integration of *ukuthwasa* with Christianity has led to various syncretic practices, where elements of traditional divination practices are combined with Christian beliefs and practices. For example, some initiates may incorporate Christian prayers and hymns into their initiation rituals, or seek guidance from both their ancestors and Christian religious figures. This blending of traditions has sparked debates and controversies among both traditionalists and Christians, with some arguing that it dilutes the authenticity and power of both practices. Additionally, the colonial and

apartheid eras have had a lasting impact on the perception of *ukuthwasa* and traditional divination practices in South Africa. Despite efforts to preserve and legitimize these practices, there is still a stigma attached to them, particularly among Western-educated and urbanized South Africans. This has led to a sense of marginalization and invisibility among traditional healers and diviners, who often struggle to be recognized and accepted as legitimate practitioners in modern society.

Despite these challenges, the practice of *ukuthwasa* and traditional divination continues to play a significant role in the lives of many South Africans, particularly in rural areas. It serves as a source of cultural identity and continuity, as well as a means of healing and accessing ancestral wisdom and guidance. As such, it remains an important aspect of the broader cultural landscape of South Africa, and warrants continued research and exploration. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the preservation and promotion of African oral literature, including the *ukuthwasa* initiation process. This interest has been driven by the recognition of the importance of oral traditions in shaping cultural identity and the need to preserve these traditions for future generations.

The preservation of oral literature is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of written documentation, which makes it difficult to preserve and transmit oral literature to future generations. Additionally, the rise of modern technologies and the spread of globalization has led to the erosion of traditional values and practices, including those associated with *ukuthwasa*. In response to these challenges, there have been efforts to document and record oral literature, such as through the use of audio and video recordings. There have also been initiatives to promote the teaching and learning of oral literature in schools and universities (Kubeka, 2016).

Overall, the study of *ukuthwasa* initiation process and African oral literature is an important area of research that can contribute to our understanding of the role of culture and tradition in shaping human experience. It is essential that efforts are made to preserve and promote these traditions for future generations.



In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the preservation and promotion of African oral literature, including the *ukuthwasa* initiation process. This interest has been driven by the recognition of the importance of oral traditions in shaping cultural identity and the need to preserve these traditions for future generations. However, the preservation of oral literature is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of written documentation, which makes it difficult to preserve and transmit oral literature to future generations. Additionally, the rise of modern technologies and the spread of globalization has led to the erosion of traditional values and practices, including those associated with *ukuthwasa*.

In response to these challenges, there have been efforts to document and record oral literature, such as through the use of audio and video recordings. There have also been initiatives to promote the teaching and learning of oral literature in schools and universities. The way *ukuthwasa* is practiced and perceived in different regions and cultural contexts is unique, and its expression differs from place to place, from community to community. For example, in some areas, *ukuthwasa* may be seen as a sacred and spiritual calling, while in others, it may be viewed as a means of acquiring material wealth or a way to gain power over others. Moreover, the process of *ukuthwasa* initiation may vary depending on the *isithunywa*, the trainer, or the region.

Despite the challenges and controversies surrounding *ukuthwasa*, it remains an integral part of many African cultures and traditions. Its enduring relevance and popularity suggest that it continues to fulfil a crucial function in the lives of those who practice it. As such, it is important to continue researching and documenting the practice of *ukuthwasa* and its role in African societies to ensure its preservation and understanding for future generations. Furthermore, by understanding the challenges and experiences of those who undergo *ukuthwasa*, we can gain insight into broader issues within African societies, such as the impact of colonialism and the ongoing struggle for cultural preservation and identity. By exploring these issues, we can also gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of African cultures and their interactions with the wider global community. Ultimately, this knowledge can help

promote greater respect and appreciation for the diversity and richness of human cultural expression.

Overall, the study of *ukuthwasa* initiation process and African oral literature is an important area of research that can contribute to our understanding of the role of culture and tradition in shaping human experience. It is essential that efforts are made to preserve and promote these traditions for future generations.

## **2.5 The role of *ukuthwasa* in modern-day society**

The role of *ukuthwasa* in modern-day society is a topic of debate, with some arguing that it is outdated and should be abandoned, while others maintain that it has a significant place in contemporary culture. The process of *ukuthwasa* is seen by some as a way to reconnect with traditional cultural practices and spirituality, while others see it as a form of exploitation and abuse of vulnerable individuals. Some proponents of *ukuthwasa* argue that it provides a sense of community and belonging for those who participate in it. It is also viewed by some as a way to address mental health concerns, particularly in areas where Western medical practices are not readily accessible or trusted. On the other hand, critics argue that the process of *ukuthwasa* can be harmful, particularly for those who are forced into it or who do not fully understand what they are getting into (Mkasi, 2013).

There is also a growing concern among some traditional healers about the commercialization of *ukuthwasa* and the exploitation of young people seeking spiritual guidance. Some healers have spoken out against the trend of people treating *ukuthwasa* as a business venture rather than a sacred practice. Despite the controversies, *ukuthwasa* remains a significant part of many African cultures and traditions. As such, it is important to continue exploring its role and significance in contemporary society, while also acknowledging and addressing the potential harms and ethical considerations surrounding its practice (Shange, 2013).

Those who argue for the relevance of *ukuthwasa* in modern society maintain that it offers a way to connect with one's ancestors and cultural heritage. They believe that the process can help individuals to develop a sense of identity and belonging, as well as to gain insight and wisdom from their ancestors. Additionally, some argue that *ukuthwasa* can help to address issues of mental health and spiritual wellness, as it offers a form of healing that is rooted in traditional practices and beliefs. Furthermore, proponents of *ukuthwasa* argue that the process provides opportunities for social and economic empowerment, particularly for women. In many African cultures, women are excluded from certain roles and opportunities, but *ukuthwasa* offers them a chance to gain spiritual and social authority within their communities. As *amagqirha*, they become healers and mediators, playing a vital role in maintaining the well-being of their communities. In addition, *amagqirha* are often able to earn a living from their practice, providing economic independence and stability (Mthethwa, 2017).

On the other hand, critics of *ukuthwasa* argue that the process can be harmful, particularly for vulnerable individuals who may be exploited by unscrupulous practitioners. There are reports of individuals being coerced or manipulated into undergoing the initiation process, or being forced to pay exorbitant fees for services. There are also concerns about the lack of regulation and oversight within the practice, which can lead to abuse and malpractice. Moreover, some argue that *ukuthwasa* reinforces gender inequality and patriarchal power structures, particularly in cases where women are only valued for their reproductive and domestic roles. Critics also point out that *ukuthwasa* can be exclusionary, particularly for those who do not fit into traditional gender and sexual norms, or those who have been ostracized from their communities (Zono, 2022).

However, there are also concerns about the exploitation and abuse of individuals who undergo the process of *ukuthwasa*. Some argue that the process is often controlled by unscrupulous practitioners who take advantage of vulnerable individuals for their own gain. Additionally, there are concerns about the physical and emotional toll that

the process can take on individuals, particularly those who are not prepared for the rigors of the process.

Despite these concerns, there are efforts to promote the positive aspects of *ukuthwasa* and to ensure that the process is conducted in a safe and ethical manner. Some organizations have been established to provide support and guidance for those who undergo the process, and to ensure that practitioners are held accountable for their actions. Additionally, efforts are being made to educate the public about the process of *ukuthwasa*, and to promote a better understanding of its cultural and spiritual significance. Overall, the role of *ukuthwasa* in modern society is complex and multifaceted. While there are concerns about exploitation and abuse, there are also arguments for its relevance as a way to connect with cultural heritage and spirituality. Efforts to promote the positive aspects of *ukuthwasa* and to ensure its safe and ethical practice are important steps towards addressing these concerns and promoting a better understanding of this traditional practice. It is important to note that *ukuthwasa* is not a one-time event, but rather a lifelong journey of spiritual growth and development. The initiation is only the beginning of this journey, and the newly initiated *sangoma* must continue to work on developing their skills and abilities throughout their life (Rampho, 2019).

*Ukuthwasa* is not just an individual journey, but also a communal one. *Sangomas* are seen as important members of their community, and they are expected to use their skills and knowledge to help those in need. This includes providing spiritual guidance, performing rituals and ceremonies, and even providing herbal remedies for physical ailments. However, despite the importance of *ukuthwasa* in traditional South African culture, there are also many misconceptions and negative stereotypes surrounding *sangomas* and traditional healers. This has led to discrimination and marginalization of traditional healers, and many people are hesitant to seek their services due to fear or lack of understanding (Simmons, 2012).

Hoek et al., (2022) explain in their study that the role of *ukuthwasa* in modern-day society is a topic of nuanced debate, encompassing a spectrum of perspectives that reflect the evolving cultural landscape of South Africa. At the core of this discourse lies the tension between tradition and modernity, spirituality and scepticism, and the

preservation of cultural heritage in the face of changing times. Some argue that *ukuthwasa* holds an enduring place in contemporary society as a means of reconnection with ancestral wisdom and cultural roots. In an age of globalization and digital connectivity, the practice is seen by its proponents as a vital anchor to a sense of identity and belonging. It offers individuals an avenue to explore their heritage, seek guidance from their ancestors, and engage with a spiritual realm that transcends the boundaries of the material world.

Furthermore, *ukuthwasa* is viewed by some as a potential remedy for mental health concerns in areas where Western medical practices may be inaccessible or culturally distant. The process of initiation, guidance from ancestral spirits, and the therapeutic use of herbs all contribute to a holistic approach to healing that resonates with those who seek alternative avenues of care. In contrast, critics voice concerns about the potential exploitation of vulnerable individuals within the *ukuthwasa* process. They highlight instances where unscrupulous practitioners may take advantage of initiates, both financially and emotionally. This exploitation may be exacerbated by the commercialization of the practice, where the quest for profit can overshadow the sacred and transformative aspects of *ukuthwasa* (Maila, 2017).

Gender dynamics also come into play, as the process is often associated with traditional gender roles and patriarchal structures. Critics argue that *ukuthwasa* can perpetuate inequalities by reinforcing prescribed roles for women and men within society. Efforts are underway to address these concerns and promote ethical practices within the realm of *ukuthwasa*. Organizations have emerged to provide support for initiates, ensuring that the process is conducted in a safe and respectful manner. Additionally, public education initiatives seek to dispel misconceptions and foster a more informed and empathetic understanding of traditional healing practices.

Ultimately, the role of *ukuthwasa* in modern society is multifaceted, shaped by a complex interplay of cultural preservation, spiritual exploration, individual empowerment, and ethical considerations. As South Africa navigates its path through

the currents of change, it becomes crucial to strike a balance that respects tradition while upholding the rights and well-being of those who engage with its practices. The researcher aims to explore these issues in more depth and shed light on the true nature and importance of ukuthwasa and traditional healing practices. By doing so, it is hoped that a greater appreciation and understanding of these practices can be fostered, and traditional healers can be given the respect and recognition they deserve in South African society.

## **2.6 Challenges and Controversies Surrounding *Ukuthwasa***

According to Mji (2013), the practice of *ukuthwasa* is not without its challenges and controversies, reflecting the complex dynamics between tradition, modernity, and evolving social norms. Some concerns revolve around issues of consent, as there are reports of individuals being coerced or pressured into undergoing the initiation process. This raises ethical questions about the autonomy and agency of those who undertake ukuthwasa. Additionally, the commercialization of the practice has sparked debates about the exploitation of vulnerable individuals seeking spiritual guidance. Critics argue that some practitioners prioritize financial gain over the authentic transmission of cultural knowledge and spiritual connection. These controversies underscore the need for ethical guidelines and regulatory frameworks to ensure that *ukuthwasa* is conducted in a respectful and responsible manner.

Ngcuka (2012) further explains that the practice of ukuthwasa is not immune to challenges and controversies, which underscore the complexity of integrating traditional beliefs with modern society. One prominent challenge centres on issues of informed consent and coercion. Reports have surfaced of individuals, particularly vulnerable youth, being pressured or coerced into undergoing ukuthwasa against their will. Such practices raise ethical concerns about the authenticity of the initiation process and the agency of those involved.

Commercialization has also emerged as a contentious issue surrounding *ukuthwasa*. In some instances, the initiation process has become a profitable enterprise, leading to concerns about the dilution of its spiritual significance and the exploitation of initiates for financial gain. This commercialization runs the risk of reducing ukuthwasa to a

transactional experience rather than a sacred journey of growth and connection (Mthombeni, 2016).

Furthermore, the clash between ukuthwasa and modern medical practices raises concerns. While some proponents see *ukuthwasa* as an alternative healing method, critics argue that reliance on traditional practices can delay or deter individuals from seeking Western medical care for serious health issues. This raises important questions about the intersection of traditional healing with contemporary healthcare systems and the potential consequences for public health. Gender dynamics also play a role in the controversies surrounding ukuthwasa. Traditional gender roles are often reinforced through the initiation process, and some critics argue that this can perpetuate gender inequalities. The process of ukuthwasa may inadvertently contribute to the marginalization of women by reinforcing their roles as healers and diviners, while sidelining their participation in other spheres of society (Matlou, 2021:43).

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that respects the cultural significance of ukuthwasa while addressing its potential pitfalls. The establishment of ethical guidelines, transparent practices, and awareness campaigns can help ensure that the initiation process is conducted in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of initiates. Additionally, fostering open dialogues within communities, between generations, and with practitioners can help strike a balance between tradition and modernity, thereby preserving the spiritual essence of *ukuthwasa* while adapting it to contemporary contexts.

## **2.7 The Intersection of *Ukuthwasa* with Gender and Identity**

According to Scina (2017), the practice of ukuthwasa intersects with questions of gender and identity, casting light on the intricate interplay between traditional roles and evolving societal norms. Historically, ukuthwasa has often been associated with specific gender roles, with women predominantly assuming the mantle of healers and diviners. However, as gender perspectives evolve, the practice prompts a re-examination of these roles and their implications in a modern context. *Ukuthwasa's*

gender dynamics raise complex questions about inclusivity and empowerment. On one hand, the tradition has provided a platform for women to attain positions of spiritual authority within their communities, defying traditional gender hierarchies. The role of *amagqirha*, female healers, challenges preconceived notions of women's capabilities and contributions, and offers a space for them to exercise their skills and talents beyond societal norms.

Zondi (2018) conversely explains how the practice has also been critiqued for potentially reinforcing gender stereotypes. The exclusive roles assigned to women within *ukuthwasa* may inadvertently limit their participation in other spheres of society. As discussions surrounding gender fluidity and diversity gain traction, there is an emerging need to adapt *ukuthwasa* to accommodate a broader range of gender identities, ensuring that individuals can participate in the initiation process without compromising their sense of self. Moreover, the intersection of *ukuthwasa* with gender and identity extends to the experiences of transgender individuals. Traditional beliefs may clash with modern understandings of gender, challenging the compatibility of *ukuthwasa* with a diverse range of gender identities. The question arises of how *ukuthwasa* can be inclusive and respectful of transgender individuals while preserving its cultural authenticity.

Navigating these intersections requires a delicate balance between cultural preservation and social progress. Engaging in dialogue about gender roles within the context of *ukuthwasa* can lead to a reimagining of traditional practices that align with contemporary perspectives on gender equality and identity. By acknowledging and accommodating the diverse ways in which individuals identify and express themselves, *ukuthwasa* can evolve into a more inclusive and empowering practice, resonating with the complexities of modern life while honoring its cultural heritage (Duvenage, 2021).

The practice of *ukuthwasa* also intersects with questions of gender and identity. Traditionally, *ukuthwasa* has often been associated with specific gender roles, particularly with women taking on the role of healers or diviners. However, as societal attitudes towards gender roles evolve, there is a growing recognition of the need for



inclusivity and respect for diverse gender identities within the practice. This brings forth a conversation about the fluidity of gender roles within the context of *ukuthwasa* and how traditional beliefs can adapt to accommodate a more inclusive perspective on gender (Jones, 2019).

## **2.8 *Ukuthwasa* in Urban and Diaspora Contexts**

The migration of populations from rural to urban areas, as well as the dispersion of communities across international borders, has brought the practice of *ukuthwasa* into new and diverse contexts. In urban and diaspora settings, the dynamics of *ukuthwasa* often undergo adaptations that reflect the changing landscapes of culture, identity, and community. In urban areas, the practice of *ukuthwasa* can take on unique dimensions. Initiates in these settings may find themselves disconnected from the traditional support structures and mentors that are more readily available in rural communities. The challenges of urban life, combined with the allure of modernity, can influence the way *ukuthwasa* is approached and practiced. Initiates may navigate a complex interplay between their ancestral heritage and the fast-paced urban environment, leading to the emergence of hybrid expressions of the tradition (Nguse, 2020).

In diaspora communities, the preservation of *ukuthwasa* becomes intertwined with the preservation of cultural identity in foreign lands. Diasporic populations often face the challenge of maintaining their cultural heritage while adapting to new norms and values. *Ukuthwasa* provides a means for these communities to connect with their roots, fostering a sense of continuity in an unfamiliar context. However, diaspora communities may also grapple with the tension between upholding tradition and assimilating into their host culture (Scina, 2017).

Efforts to practice *ukuthwasa* in urban and diaspora contexts often necessitate creative solutions. Digital technologies, for instance, can facilitate connections between initiates and mentors, bridging geographical distances. Cultural organizations and community networks play a vital role in providing a supportive environment for initiates to engage with *ukuthwasa* while living in diverse and dynamic settings. The

experiences of *ukuthwasa* in urban and diaspora contexts offer a rich tapestry of stories that reflect the resilience and adaptability of cultural practices. As the practice encounters new challenges and opportunities in these settings, it prompts important discussions about how tradition evolves, how identity is negotiated, and how communities can sustain their connection to ancestral practices while embracing the complexities of modern life (Jones, 2019).

The migration of people from rural to urban areas and across international borders has brought the practice of *ukuthwasa* into new contexts. In urban settings and within diaspora communities, the dynamics of *ukuthwasa* can differ from those in traditional rural environments. Initiates in urban areas may face unique challenges related to cultural disconnection, limited access to mentors, and the influence of modern urban lifestyles. These shifts raise questions about how *ukuthwasa* is practiced, adapted, and preserved in these new settings, and how it evolves in response to changing cultural landscapes (Hoel et al., 2022).

## **2.9 *Ukuthwasa* and Cultural Revival Movements**

In response to the challenges posed by modernization and cultural erosion, there has been a resurgence of interest in cultural revival movements across Africa. These movements aim to reclaim and revitalize traditional practices, including *ukuthwasa*, as a means of preserving cultural heritage. Initiatives driven by community leaders, scholars, and cultural institutions seek to reinvigorate interest in *ukuthwasa* among the youth, fostering a renewed appreciation for ancestral practices and oral literature (Sirayi, 2012).

*Ukuthwasa* stands at the crossroads of cultural preservation and revival, playing a significant role in the broader context of efforts to reclaim and revitalize traditional practices. In the face of modernization, globalization, and the erosion of cultural heritage, there has been a resurgence of interest in preserving indigenous knowledge and reconnecting with ancestral wisdom. Cultural revival movements recognize the importance of *ukuthwasa* as a repository of cultural identity and a conduit for transmitting oral literature. These movements are driven by community leaders, scholars, and cultural activists who understand the need to safeguard traditional practices from fading into obscurity. By revitalizing *ukuthwasa*, these initiatives

contribute to the larger goal of preserving South Africa's diverse cultural heritage (Moketsi, 2016).

These revival movements often take on multifaceted approaches. They involve documenting oral literature associated with *ukuthwasa*, archiving narratives, songs, and rituals, and providing platforms for cultural exchange and education. Community workshops, festivals, and educational programs not only celebrate *ukuthwasa* but also serve to inform younger generations about its significance and meaning. Moreover, these movements bridge generational gaps by encouraging intergenerational dialogue. Elders, practitioners, and community leaders share their experiences and knowledge with the youth, ensuring that the practice is passed down in a context that resonates with the changing times. This exchange of wisdom and perspectives creates a sense of continuity and belonging, reinforcing the cultural importance of *ukuthwasa* (Moketsi, 2016).

As cultural revival movements gain momentum, they intersect with broader conversations about identity, heritage, and the role of traditional practices in contemporary society. By breathing new life into *ukuthwasa*, these movements not only contribute to the preservation of oral literature but also engage with the aspirations of younger generations who seek meaningful connections with their cultural roots. The efforts to revive *ukuthwasa* reflect the resilience of cultural practices and their enduring ability to evolve while remaining rooted in the past.

## **2.10 Future Prospects and Preservation Efforts**

The future of *ukuthwasa* and its connection to oral literature hinges on a delicate balance between adaptation and preservation. Efforts to address challenges like exploitation, gender inequality, and commercialization are essential to ensure the ethical and respectful practice of *ukuthwasa*. Education and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in dispelling misconceptions, fostering understanding, and encouraging informed engagement with traditional practices. Furthermore,

collaboration between generations, cultural institutions, and scholars can contribute to the documentation, research, and archiving of oral literature associated with *ukuthwasa*. By embracing the complexities of tradition and change, society can navigate the evolving role of *ukuthwasa* in a way that safeguards its cultural significance while embracing the aspirations and realities of modern life (Xaso, 2015).

The future of *ukuthwasa* is both a reflection of the past and a projection of evolving cultural dynamics. As South Africa navigates the complexities of modernity and globalization, efforts to preserve *ukuthwasa* and its connection to oral literature are pivotal for safeguarding cultural heritage while embracing the demands of contemporary society. Preservation efforts must begin with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that *ukuthwasa* faces. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, protection against exploitation, and gender inclusivity, should guide the evolution of the practice. Transparent and accountable practices can help address concerns and ensure that initiates embark on their journey with agency and respect.

Education plays a critical role in shaping the future of *ukuthwasa*. Raising awareness about the practice's cultural significance, its role in oral literature transmission, and its potential benefits can foster a deeper appreciation among both the South African population and a global audience. By dispelling misconceptions and promoting informed discussions, education paves the way for a more respectful and empathetic engagement with *ukuthwasa*. Collaboration between traditional practitioners, scholars, cultural institutions, and community leaders is paramount. Archiving oral literature associated with *ukuthwasa*, conducting research, and documenting personal narratives are essential steps in preserving this rich tradition. Initiatives to digitize and make these resources accessible can bridge generational gaps and ensure that the narratives continue to resonate with future audiences (Rampho, 2019).

In the age of digital communication, technology can be harnessed to revitalize *ukuthwasa*. Online platforms can provide spaces for discussion, exchange, and learning, creating a global network of individuals interested in the tradition. Digital media can also be a powerful tool for disseminating oral literature, capturing

performances, and sharing stories that might otherwise remain confined to local communities. While *ukuthwasa* adapts to changing times, its core essence remains anchored in the ancestral connection and cultural transmission it embodies. Striking a balance between tradition and modernity is crucial to its survival. By embracing the potential of *ukuthwasa* to remain a source of spiritual guidance, a repository of cultural identity, and a bridge between generations, South Africa can ensure that its cultural heritage continues to thrive in the ever-evolving tapestry of human experience.

## 2.11 Chapter Summary

This study is dedicated to providing a comprehensive exploration of the traditional Xhosa practice of *ukuthwasa*, as viewed through the lens of the *amagqirha*. The research investigates a range of facets within the *ukuthwasa* experience, encompassing the training process, the formation of individual identity, the intricacies of gender dynamics, and the intricate interplay between traditional ancestral beliefs and Christian religions—especially where participants engage with both belief systems. By adopting a descriptive approach, the study aims to offer an in-depth and nuanced understanding of *ukuthwasa*.

Central to the research is an examination of the challenges that often accompany *ukuthwasa*, including the presence of bullying and discrimination from individuals who hold differing religious viewpoints. This exploration seeks to shed light on the complex intersections of belief systems, as well as the broader societal implications and personal experiences of those undergoing *ukuthwasa*.

In summary, this study delves into the multifaceted world of *ukuthwasa* as seen through the perspective of the *amagqirha*. It strives to unravel the layers of training, identity formation, gender dynamics, and the convergence of traditional and Christian beliefs. Through a descriptive lens, the study offers a detailed account of *ukuthwasa*, aiming to contribute to a more profound and holistic understanding of this traditional Xhosa practice and its significance within the cultural and spiritual tapestry of South Africa.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The fundamental notions of ukuthwasa were covered in the preceding chapter. Three critical problems were identified: the ukuthwasa initiation process and practice; the building of healing identities by *amagqirha* during the *ukuthwasa* process; and the relationship between Christianity and the ukuthwasa ancestral realm. Despite the fact that there is a great deal of research on traditional healing techniques and traditional healers, none of these studies delve into detail on the training of *amagqirha*, the psychological background of ukuthwasa, or the bullying that amathwasa face.

This chapter described the research strategy for this investigation. It was divided into the following sections: paradigm and approach, design, sampling and procedure, data collection and analysis, and findings. The nature of the study topic and the issue under investigation determined the research technique or strategy. As a result, the research approach of the study should be viewed as a tool for answering the research question.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate and understand the participants' perspectives on the issue under consideration. This section has described the research technique as well as the theory that will be utilized to analyze the relevance of oral literature.

The following section outlines the research methodology used.

### **3.2 Methodology**

A research method adds credibility to a study and yields scientifically solid results. It also contains a clear method to keep researchers on track, making the operation smooth, effective, and manageable. A researcher's methodology assists the reader in understanding the approach and techniques used to produce conclusions (Snyder, 2019).

The research methodology is the path that researchers must take in order to do their research. It demonstrates how these researchers construct their problem and objectives and deliver their findings based on the data collected throughout the study period. The research design is meant to give a suitable structure for a study. The choice of research technique is a critical decision in the research design process because it defines how relevant information for a study will be gathered; yet, the research design process comprises several inter-related decisions (Sileyew, 2019).

Research methods play a crucial role in shaping the credibility, rigor, and outcomes of a study. They provide the framework and systematic procedures necessary for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to draw meaningful conclusions. There are three main types of research methods, each with its unique characteristics and applications:

### **3.2.1 Quantitative Research Method**

Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to uncover patterns, relationships, and correlations between variables. This method relies on structured data collection tools such as surveys, experiments, and observations to quantify phenomena and generate statistical information. Researchers use statistical techniques to analyze the data and draw objective conclusions (Goodwin, Mays and Pope, 2020). Quantitative research is highly structured and aims to provide empirical evidence that can be generalized to larger populations (Khaldi, 2017). Its strengths include objectivity, replicability, and the ability to establish causal relationships. However, it may not capture the depth of context and subjective experiences as effectively as qualitative methods (Budianto, 2020).

### **3.2.2 Qualitative Research Method**

According to Khladi (2017), Qualitative research focuses on exploring complex phenomena through in-depth examination and interpretation of non-numerical data. This method aims to understand the underlying meanings, motivations, and contexts that shape human behaviors and experiences. Researchers use techniques like

interviews, focus groups, content analysis, and participant observation to gather rich, textual, and visual data. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding the social and cultural nuances surrounding a topic and often involves thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. While it may lack the generalizability of quantitative research, qualitative methods excel in providing insights into subjective experiences, allowing researchers to explore complex phenomena in greater depth .

### 3.2.3 Mixed-Methods Research

Mixed-methods research combines elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research question. Researchers using this method collect and analyze both numerical and non-numerical data to explore multiple dimensions of a phenomenon. By integrating quantitative data for statistical analysis and qualitative data for contextual understanding, mixed-methods research provides a holistic view of the research topic. This approach is particularly useful when a single method might not capture the complexity of the issue or when researchers seek to triangulate findings to enhance the robustness of their conclusions (Dsouza, Vyas, Narayanan, Parsekar, Gore and Sharan, 2018).

In summary, research methods are integral to the research process, guiding the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. The choice of method depends on the research question, objectives, and the nature of the phenomena under investigation. Researchers must carefully select and apply the appropriate method or combination of methods to ensure the credibility, validity, and reliability of their study's outcomes.

For this research, a qualitative method was used in order to get insight and a complete grasp of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature in the 21st century. **Qualitative research** is a method for investigating and comprehending the significance that individuals or groups attach to a social or human situation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Researchers employ qualitative research approaches to investigate human behaviour and routine, it may also be used in product management to identify product qualities



that can increase sales. According to Silverman (2020), qualitative research method has the capacity to expose the nature of certain contexts, circumstances, processes, systems, and interactions, as well as individuals. It also allows the researcher to analyse the social phenomena in its natural surroundings (Anastasia, 2017). These phenomena include, but are not limited to, how people perceive elements of their life, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations operate, and how interactions shape relationships (Crabtree, 2022).

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### **3.3 Research Paradigm**

A research paradigm is a fundamental framework that guides the design, execution, and interpretation of a study. It encompasses the researcher's underlying assumptions, beliefs, and philosophical stance that shape how they approach research questions and gather knowledge. Paradigms provide a lens through which researchers view the world, interpret data, and make sense of their findings. There are two main types of research paradigms: positivist and interpretive (constructivist). For this study, an interpretive (constructivist) paradigm is chosen due to its alignment with the nature of the research topic and goals (Brooke, 2014).

#### **3.3.1 Positivist Paradigm**

The positivist paradigm is rooted in the philosophy of positivism, which asserts that knowledge can be obtained through empirical observation and objective

measurement. Researchers within this paradigm aim to discover universal laws and causal relationships by applying rigorous scientific methods. Key characteristics of the positivist paradigm include (Rieger, 2019):

Positivist researchers adhere to a rigorous commitment to objectivity, striving to eliminate any form of bias from their observations and measurements. Rooted in empirical inquiry, this paradigm places a strong emphasis on utilizing quantitative data collection methods as its foundation. Surveys, experiments, and statistical analyses are among the preferred tools, allowing researchers to gather data that is measurable and replicable. A key hallmark of positivist research lies in its dedication to hypothesis testing. Researchers formulate hypotheses and rigorously test them, aiming to establish causal relationships between variables. This approach seeks to uncover patterns and regularities within the data, contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, positivist research endeavors to achieve generalizability. The objective is to produce findings that are not limited to specific instances but can be applied and extended to broader populations. In essence, the positivist paradigm operates within a framework of systematic investigation, precision, and the pursuit of universalizable insights.

### **3.3.2 Interpretive (Constructivist) Paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm, also known as the constructivist paradigm, is rooted in the belief that reality is socially constructed, subjective, and influenced by individual experiences and cultural contexts. Researchers within this paradigm seek to understand the meanings people assign to their experiences and the multiple perspectives that shape those meanings. Key characteristics of the interpretive paradigm include (de Jager, 2017):

Interpretive researchers operate within a paradigm that recognizes and values the inherent subjectivity of human experiences. Central to this approach is the emphasis on understanding the diverse and unique perspectives of individuals, acknowledging that meaning is contextually situated. In this regard, interpretive research engages

with the complexity of human interactions and interpretations, seeking to uncover the layers of meaning that individuals attribute to their lived experiences. The subjectivity of participants is seen as an essential aspect of the research process, encouraging researchers to explore the intricate ways in which individuals perceive and make sense of their world.

Qualitative data collection methods serve as the cornerstone of interpretive research. Techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and content analysis are employed to gather rich and nuanced insights into participants' perspectives. These methods enable researchers to delve deep into participants' narratives, capturing the subtleties and intricacies of their experiences. Additionally, interpretive research places a strong emphasis on understanding the contextual factors that shape participants' interpretations and interactions. Researchers recognize that culture, societal norms, and personal histories play a significant role in influencing how individuals perceive and respond to different situations (Mertens, 2018).

An inductive approach is a hallmark of interpretive research. Instead of imposing preconceived theories or hypotheses on the data, this paradigm encourages researchers to allow theories to emerge from the data itself. This approach aligns with the exploratory nature of interpretive research, where the focus is on discovering patterns, themes, and meanings within the collected data. By adopting an inductive stance, researchers can better capture the richness and complexity of participants' experiences and viewpoints (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey and Lawless, 2019).

The interpretive paradigm also prioritizes the creation of rich descriptions that illuminate the participants' experiences. These detailed portrayals provide readers with a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, allowing for a more empathetic and comprehensive interpretation. Through these rich descriptions, researchers aim to convey the essence of participants' lived experiences, capturing both the explicit and underlying layers of meaning. Ultimately, interpretive research

aims to uncover the intricate tapestry of human experience by engaging with participants' narratives and the cultural contexts that shape their realities.

### **3.3.3 Critical Paradigm**

The critical paradigm emphasizes the critique of power dynamics, social inequalities, and dominant ideologies. Researchers within this paradigm seek to expose social injustices and advocate for social change. Key characteristics of the critical paradigm include (Idris, Za and Sulaiman, 2018):

Critical researchers operate within a paradigm that critically examines the pervasive influence of power structures and social inequalities on individuals and communities. Central to this approach is a deep exploration of how various systems of privilege and oppression shape experiences, opportunities, and access to resources. Critical research goes beyond the surface level of analysis to uncover the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate social injustices and inequities, shedding light on the often hidden dynamics that marginalize certain groups while privileging others (Asghar, 2013).

Advocacy and action are intrinsic to the goals of critical research. Beyond solely seeking understanding, critical researchers are driven by a commitment to effecting positive change and empowering marginalized groups. The aim is to amplify the voices of those who have been silenced, challenge discriminatory practices, and work towards dismantling oppressive systems. By exposing the injustices embedded within societal structures, critical research seeks to inspire advocacy efforts and create momentum for transformative change (Harrison, 2017).

Critical research embraces a range of methodological approaches, with a particular emphasis on qualitative methods that allow for an in-depth exploration of lived experiences. Interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic research enable researchers to engage directly with participants' narratives, unveiling the complexities of their

interactions with power structures. Moreover, critical research often employs mixed methods approaches, combining qualitative insights with quantitative analyses to comprehensively examine power dynamics and their consequences (Dammak, 2015).

Emancipatory goals lie at the heart of the critical paradigm. This approach is rooted in the pursuit of social justice and equity, aiming to challenge and disrupt systems of oppression. By critically analyzing societal norms, institutional practices, and power imbalances, critical researchers seek to expose the mechanisms that sustain inequality. Through their work, critical researchers contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding social change, advocating for the empowerment of marginalized communities and fostering a more just and inclusive society.

#### **3.3.4 Pragmatic Paradigm**

The pragmatic paradigm seeks practical solutions to real-world problems. It combines elements of positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory to address issues in a flexible and context-sensitive manner. Key characteristics of the pragmatic paradigm include (Morgan, 2014):

Pragmatic researchers operate with a problem-solving orientation, directing their efforts towards addressing real-world issues and offering practical solutions. This paradigm is characterized by a commitment to generating insights that can be directly applied to resolve challenges faced by individuals, organizations, or communities. Pragmatic researchers prioritize the development of actionable recommendations that can guide decision-making and lead to tangible improvements. A distinguishing feature of pragmatic research is its utilization of mixed methods. By combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques, pragmatic researchers aim to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This integration of methods enables researchers to capture both the intricacies of human experiences and the broader statistical trends, resulting in a holistic view that informs effective problem-solving strategies (Sil and Katzenstein, 2010).

Central to the pragmatic paradigm is a focus on application. Unlike research that remains purely theoretical, pragmatic research is geared towards producing findings that have immediate relevance and practical utility. The aim is to bridge the gap between academic inquiry and real-world implementation, ensuring that research outcomes can be readily integrated into various contexts to address challenges, make informed decisions, and achieve desired outcomes.

In choosing a research paradigm, researchers consider the nature of their research questions, the philosophical stance that aligns with their inquiry, and the methodologies that best suit their goals. Each paradigm offers a unique perspective on how knowledge is generated and how research should be conducted.

### **3.3.5 Chosen Paradigm: Interpretive (Constructivist) Paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm, also known as the constructivist paradigm, is rooted in the belief that reality is complex and socially constructed, shaped by individual experiences and cultural contexts. Researchers within this paradigm seek to understand the meanings and interpretations that individuals attach to their experiences, focusing on subjective realities and the exploration of multiple perspectives. In the context of this study on *ukuthwasa* and its connection to oral literature, the interpretive paradigm is particularly suitable.

### **3.3.6 Justification for Choosing the Interpretive Paradigm**

**Complexity of the Phenomenon:** *Ukuthwasa* is a complex cultural practice deeply ingrained in tradition and personal experiences. The interpretive paradigm acknowledges and values this complexity by allowing for in-depth exploration of individual perspectives, motivations, and beliefs related to *ukuthwasa*. This aligns with the study's goal of comprehensively understanding the significance of *ukuthwasa* within the context of oral literature (Wilson, 2017).

**Subjective Nature of Experience:** The interpretive paradigm recognizes that individuals bring their own interpretations and meanings to their experiences. By adopting this paradigm, the study embraces the subjective nature of *ukuthwasa*, giving voice to participants and allowing them to share their unique viewpoints. This approach resonates with the study's aim to capture the diverse range of meanings attached to *ukuthwasa* by the youth (Scotland, 2012).

**Cultural Context and Social Construction:** The interpretive paradigm places importance on cultural context and social construction of reality. In the context of *ukuthwasa*, where beliefs, practices, and identity are intertwined with culture, an interpretive approach provides a platform for exploring how cultural and social factors shape participants' understanding of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature (Putnam and Banghart, 2017).

**In-depth Exploration:** The interpretive paradigm encourages researchers to delve deeply into participants' experiences and stories, promoting a holistic understanding of the topic. Given the multifaceted nature of *ukuthwasa*, this paradigm enables the study to uncover layers of meaning, challenges, and implications associated with the practice.

In conclusion, the interpretive (constructivist) paradigm is the chosen research framework for this study due to its alignment with the complexities of *ukuthwasa*, its emphasis on subjective experiences and meanings, and its capacity to explore the cultural and social dimensions of the phenomenon. This paradigm will enable the study to achieve its goal of providing a comprehensive understanding of *ukuthwasa's* significance within the realm of oral literature in the 21st century (Putnam and Banghart, 2017).

Discussed below is the research context.

### 3.4 The Research Context

This research was conducted in Cape Town with 15 high school students who had or were undergoing *ukuthwasa*. The participants in this study are part of *amathwasa*, which is an acceptance of an *Idlozi* that previously existed, and because the *idlozi* now wants to return as a 'spirit' and continue doing its tasks, it enters into someone with a body in the actual world and begins desiring to operate via that body. These participants were specifically chosen because they live a lifestyle comparable to the planned research, are Africans with a vocation, and have a deep connection to the ancestral periods and ceremonies indicated in this study. Observations, questionnaires, and recordings were used in this study.

In addition to the qualitative research methods used in this study, the researchers also employed a cultural lens to understand the participants' experiences of *ukuthwasa*. This involved considering the historical and cultural context of *ukuthwasa* and its significance in the participants' lives. The study aimed to explore the participants' perceptions of *ukuthwasa*, the challenges they faced during the process, and how they navigated their identities as both modern individuals and *amathwasa*.

The findings of the study highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of *ukuthwasa*, with participants expressing a range of emotions and experiences. Some participants spoke of the benefits of *ukuthwasa*, such as feeling connected to their ancestors and gaining spiritual guidance. However, others spoke of the challenges they faced, such as social stigma and the difficulty of balancing their *ukuthwasa* responsibilities with their modern lives.

Overall, the study provided insight into the role of *ukuthwasa* in contemporary African society and the experiences of those who undergo the process. It also highlighted the importance of cultural sensitivity and understanding in conducting research on traditional practices such as *ukuthwasa*.

The data collection and analysis process are discussed next.



### **3.5 Data collection**

Data collection is a crucial phase of the research process that involves systematically gathering information to answer research questions or test hypotheses. The collected data serve as the foundation for analysis, interpretation, and drawing meaningful conclusions. The choice of data collection methods depends on the research objectives, the nature of the research question, the available resources, and the paradigm guiding the study. Data collection serves as a pivotal stage within the research process, encompassing the systematic accumulation of information essential for addressing research inquiries or validating hypotheses. The data amassed becomes the bedrock for subsequent analysis, interpretation, and the formulation of meaningful conclusions. The selection of appropriate data collection methods hinges on several key factors, including research objectives, the specific nature of the research questions, available resources, and the guiding research paradigm (Rashid, Rashid, Warraich, Sabir and Waseem, 2019).

The research objectives wield considerable influence over the data collection approach, dictating the types of information required to achieve these goals effectively. For instance, research endeavors aiming to understand participants' perspectives might favor qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups, which delve into nuanced experiences. Similarly, the inherent nature of the research questions plays a role in the determination of suitable data collection methods. If establishing cause-and-effect relationships is the objective, quantitative methods like surveys or controlled experiments may be preferable, while qualitative methods like observations or content analysis are well-suited for in-depth exploration. Practical considerations, such as the availability of resources, shape the feasibility of employing certain data collection methods. Factors like time constraints, financial limitations, and accessibility to participants influence the selection of methods that can be realistically implemented. Moreover, the chosen research paradigm significantly impacts data collection decisions. Positivist paradigms align with quantitative methods that prioritize objectivity and measurement, while interpretive paradigms favor qualitative methods that emphasize understanding subjective experiences and meanings (Richey and Klein, 2014).

Ethical considerations stand as a cornerstone of data collection, obligating researchers to uphold participants' rights, ensure confidentiality, and secure informed consent. The integrity of the data collected is paramount, ensuring the validity and reliability of findings. Triangulation and methodological pluralism are strategies employed to bolster data quality, often involving the integration of diverse data sources or methods to validate research outcomes. In essence, data collection forms the foundation upon which research insights are built, making its methodological selection a critical determinant of research success. The harmonization of research objectives, specific research questions, available resources, paradigm alignment, ethical adherence, and data quality assurance are integral to the effective execution of this pivotal phase. The following are some common data collection methods:

### **3.5.1 Surveys**

Surveys involve administering questionnaires to a sample of participants to gather standardized information. Surveys are efficient for collecting data from a large number of participants and can be used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys represent a systematic data collection method that entails the distribution of structured questionnaires to a carefully selected sample of participants. This approach is designed to gather standardized information across a range of topics or variables of interest. Surveys are characterized by their ability to efficiently capture data from a considerable number of participants, making them particularly well-suited for studies that aim to generalize findings to broader populations (Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera and Martimianakis, 2016).

According to McLafferty (2017), the versatility of surveys extends to their capacity to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, depending on the design of the questions. Quantitative data is garnered through closed-ended questions that offer respondents a limited set of predefined response options. These responses can be quantified and analyzed statistically, enabling researchers to discern patterns, correlations, and trends. On the other hand, surveys can also facilitate the collection of qualitative data via open-ended questions, allowing participants to provide detailed

narratives, explanations, or personal reflections. This qualitative data adds depth and context to the quantitative findings, enriching the overall understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. One of the primary advantages of surveys is their efficiency in terms of data collection and analysis. The structured nature of questionnaires ensures consistency in data collection across participants, minimizing the risk of bias and enhancing the reliability of findings. Additionally, surveys enable researchers to cover a wide array of topics within a single instrument, making them valuable for studies that encompass multifaceted research inquiries (Nayak and Narayan, 2019).

However, the effectiveness of surveys relies on careful questionnaire design, sample selection, and clear communication with participants. Designing clear and concise questions that avoid ambiguity or leading phrasing is crucial for obtaining accurate responses. Equally important is the process of selecting a representative sample that mirrors the larger population under investigation, allowing for generalizability of findings. Moreover, ethical considerations must be upheld throughout the survey process, encompassing informed consent, data privacy, and the protection of participants' rights. In essence, surveys are a valuable tool in the researcher's toolkit, offering an efficient means of gathering standardized data from a wide range of participants. Their adaptability to both quantitative and qualitative data collection, coupled with their ability to provide insights into large-scale phenomena, underscores their significance in contributing to empirical research across diverse fields (Mkandawire, 2019).

### **3.5.2 Interviews**

Interviews involve direct interactions between the researcher and participants, allowing for in-depth exploration of topics. Structured interviews follow a predetermined set of questions, while semi-structured and unstructured interviews provide flexibility to delve into participants' responses. Interviews constitute a dynamic data collection method characterized by direct engagement between researchers and participants. This interactive approach offers a platform for profound exploration and comprehensive understanding of the topics under investigation. Interviews offer a

depth of insight that extends beyond quantitative measurements, enabling researchers to capture nuanced perspectives, personal experiences, and contextual nuances that may not be apparent through other methods (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021).

Structured interviews adhere to a predetermined set of questions meticulously designed to extract specific information. This approach fosters consistency in data collection, making it conducive to studies requiring standardized responses for comparative analysis. In contrast, semi-structured and unstructured interviews provide a more flexible framework, affording researchers the freedom to adapt their questions and prompts based on participants' responses. This flexibility encourages participants to elaborate, reflect, and express their thoughts and feelings, enhancing the richness of data collected (Roulston and Choi, 2018).

One of the notable strengths of interviews lies in their ability to unveil the complexities of human experiences, motivations, and emotions. Through open-ended questions and follow-up probes, researchers can delve deep into participants' narratives, exploring underlying meanings and uncovering diverse viewpoints. The interactive nature of interviews promotes rapport-building, creating a conducive environment for participants to share candid and genuine insights (Mkandawire, 2019).

However, conducting interviews demands careful planning and execution. Effective interview design requires crafting questions that are clear, unbiased, and aligned with research objectives. Researchers must also consider the context and dynamics of the interview setting, ensuring that participants feel comfortable and respected. Establishing rapport, active listening, and maintaining a neutral stance are pivotal for generating authentic responses and avoiding potential biases. Furthermore, ethical considerations are paramount in interviews, encompassing informed consent, confidentiality, and ensuring that participants' well-being is upheld throughout the process. Transcribing, analyzing, and interpreting interview data requires rigorous attention to detail and thoughtful reflection to distill meaningful themes and patterns.

In summary, interviews offer an avenue for in-depth exploration, enabling researchers to capture the richness of human experiences and perspectives. The choice between structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews depends on research objectives and the depth of understanding sought. While interviews demand meticulous planning and ethical adherence, their capacity to unveil intricate insights makes them an indispensable tool for researchers aiming to uncover the complexities of human behavior and phenomena (Mkandawire, 2019).

### **3.5.3 Observations**

Observations involve systematically observing and recording behaviors, interactions, or events in their natural context. Observations can be participant-based (the researcher is actively involved) or non-participant (the researcher observes without direct involvement). Observations constitute a methodical approach to data collection that entails the systematic scrutiny and documentation of behaviors, interactions, or events within their natural context. This method provides researchers with a direct window into the phenomenon of interest, enabling them to gain valuable insights into how individuals or groups behave, interact, and respond within their real-life settings (Mkandawire, 2019).

Participant-based observations involve researchers actively immersing themselves in the environment being studied. By becoming part of the observed context, researchers can gain an intimate understanding of the dynamics, emotions, and intricacies that may not be evident through other data collection methods. This approach fosters a firsthand perspective and facilitates the establishment of rapport, allowing researchers to capture authentic behaviors and reactions. Conversely, non-participant observations involve researchers observing without active engagement. This approach is more unobtrusive, allowing for the collection of data without influencing the natural flow of the observed setting. Non-participant observations can provide a more objective and unbiased view of behaviors, interactions, and events, as researchers' presence does not impact participants' behavior (Smit and Onwuegbuzie, 2018).

Observations are particularly valuable for studies that aim to capture real-time actions and interactions that may not be accurately conveyed through interviews or surveys. They offer an opportunity to uncover nonverbal cues, social dynamics, and contextual factors that contribute to participants' actions. Observations can be particularly useful in fields such as anthropology, psychology, and education, where the study of human behavior in its natural habitat is essential. However, conducting observations requires careful planning and attention to detail. Researchers must decide on the appropriate level of involvement (participant or non-participant), select the observational setting, and determine what specific behaviors or events will be monitored. Rigorous note-taking or recording is crucial to ensure accuracy and reliability of the collected data (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland, 2022).

Ethical considerations play a vital role in observational research, especially in participant-based observations where researchers are interacting with the observed participants. Informed consent, privacy, and respect for participants' autonomy are fundamental principles that must be upheld. Observations offer a window into authentic human behaviors and interactions within their natural context. The choice between participant-based and non-participant observations depends on research goals and ethical considerations. Regardless of the approach, careful planning, meticulous observation, and ethical adherence are essential to generate valuable insights and contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study(Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland, 2022).

#### **3.5.4 Focus Groups**

Focus groups involve bringing together a small group of participants to discuss specific topics in a group setting. This method encourages interaction and can reveal diverse perspectives and group dynamics. Focus groups entail convening a select group of participants within a group setting to engage in structured discussions on particular topics of interest. This methodology fosters interactive discourse among participants and can unveil a multitude of viewpoints, insights, and intricate group dynamics that may remain concealed through individual interviews or surveys (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland, 2022).

The interactive nature of focus groups nurtures an environment where participants can engage in lively exchanges, building upon one another's ideas and sharing diverse perspectives. This approach has the potential to generate rich data that elucidates not only participants' individual thoughts but also the influence of social interactions on their opinions. Focus groups are particularly beneficial when seeking to understand shared experiences, collective norms, or consensus within a specific group. Convening a focus group requires a facilitator who guides the discussion using a predefined set of questions or prompts. These questions are designed to encourage participants to share their thoughts, reactions, and experiences related to the research topic. The open dialogue that unfolds enables researchers to capture the depth of participants' insights while also highlighting any disagreements, commonalities, or divergent viewpoints (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland, 2022).

Focus groups can provide valuable insights into participants' perspectives, motivations, and decision-making processes. By observing participants' interactions, researchers can identify emerging themes, patterns, and underlying attitudes that contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The group dynamic can stimulate ideas that participants might not have considered in isolation, offering researchers an opportunity to explore the complex interplay of individual and collective thinking. Nonetheless, careful planning and facilitation are crucial for successful focus groups. Facilitators must create an atmosphere that encourages open expression and respectful interaction. Balancing participation and managing dominant voices can be challenging, but skilled facilitation ensures that all participants have an opportunity to contribute (Millward, 2012).

Ethical considerations in focus groups encompass ensuring informed consent, respecting participants' confidentiality, and maintaining an environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Data analysis involves transcribing and categorizing participants' responses to identify overarching themes and insights. Focus groups offer a dynamic platform for group discussions that uncover diverse perspectives, interactions, and group dynamics within the context of a research topic.

Through skilled facilitation, researchers can capture a holistic understanding of participants' views while also delving into the intricate ways individuals influence and are influenced by group dynamics (Millward, 2012).

### **3.5.5 Content Analysis**

Content analysis involves systematically analyzing written, visual, or audio materials, such as documents, texts, images, or media. This method is useful for exploring themes, patterns, and meanings within the data. Content analysis is a systematic and structured method used to extract meaningful insights and patterns from various forms of written, visual, or audio materials, ranging from documents and texts to images and media. This approach offers researchers a way to delve into the underlying themes, meanings, and contexts embedded within the data, providing a robust framework for understanding complex phenomena and uncovering valuable information (Millward, 2012).

The versatility of content analysis lies in its applicability across diverse disciplines and research questions. Researchers can employ content analysis to explore a wide range of topics, from examining public sentiments expressed in social media posts to dissecting themes within historical documents or analyzing visual representations in advertising campaigns. This method enables researchers to go beyond surface-level observations and tap into deeper layers of meaning. Content analysis can be both quantitative and qualitative. In quantitative content analysis, researchers focus on quantifiable elements such as frequency counts or statistical patterns within the data. This approach is valuable when researchers aim to identify prevalent themes or trends objectively and numerically. Qualitative content analysis, on the other hand, involves a more nuanced exploration of textual or visual data, focusing on the interpretation of meanings, context, and underlying narratives (Millward, 2012).

To conduct content analysis, researchers follow a structured process that involves defining coding categories, developing a coding scheme, and systematically categorizing the data according to these codes. This process requires a high degree



of attention to detail and consistency to ensure reliable and valid results. Software tools may also be used to facilitate the organization and analysis of large volumes of data. Content analysis is particularly advantageous for its ability to uncover hidden patterns and nuances within the data, making it a valuable approach in exploratory research or when dealing with complex phenomena. By systematically examining and categorizing data, researchers can reveal emerging themes, identify shifts over time, and discern connections between different elements (Millward, 2012).

However, content analysis also presents challenges, such as potential researcher bias during coding and the subjectivity involved in interpreting meaning. To mitigate these challenges, researchers must adopt rigorous methods, ensure intercoder reliability (when multiple coders are involved), and maintain transparency in their coding processes. Content analysis is a powerful tool that allows researchers to uncover underlying themes, patterns, and meanings within a diverse array of textual, visual, or audio data. Whether conducted quantitatively or qualitatively, this method provides a structured approach to analyzing data that extends beyond surface-level observations, enabling researchers to generate deeper insights and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Mkandawire, 2019).

### **3.5.6 Case Studies**

Case studies involve an in-depth investigation of a specific individual, group, organization, or situation. Case studies provide detailed and context-rich insights into complex phenomena. Case studies entail a comprehensive and detailed exploration of a specific individual, group, organization, or situation. This research method is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena by delving deep into the unique context, interactions, and dynamics that shape them. Case studies offer researchers a holistic and nuanced perspective, allowing them to examine the intricacies of a single case within its real-life context (Mygind, 2016).

The strength of case studies lies in their ability to capture the complexity and richness of real-world scenarios. By immersing themselves in a single case, researchers can

unearth a wealth of information that might be overlooked in larger-scale studies. This approach is particularly valuable when the research question demands a thorough examination of contextual factors, processes, and unique characteristics that contribute to the phenomenon under investigation. Case studies often involve a variety of data sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts. This multi-method approach enhances the validity and reliability of the findings, as researchers can triangulate information from different sources to build a comprehensive and accurate picture of the case. Researchers also have the flexibility to adapt their methods to fit the specific context and needs of the case study (Mygind, 2016).

One of the key advantages of case studies is their potential for theory-building or theory-testing. Through in-depth exploration, researchers can identify patterns, relationships, and causal mechanisms that contribute to the development of new theories or the refinement of existing ones. Additionally, case studies contribute to the generalizability of findings by providing detailed insights into specific contexts that can inform broader theoretical frameworks. However, case studies also come with challenges. The in-depth nature of this method can make it time-consuming and resource-intensive. Researchers must strike a balance between depth and breadth, ensuring that the case study remains focused on the research question while also capturing the complexity of the phenomenon. There is also the potential for researcher bias to influence data collection and interpretation, underscoring the importance of maintaining transparency and rigor in the research process (Mygind, 2016).

In summary, case studies offer an immersive and detailed exploration of a specific case, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena. This method is valuable for uncovering rich contextual insights, identifying patterns and causal mechanisms, and contributing to theory-building. While resource-intensive, case studies provide a unique perspective that contributes to the broader understanding of complex real-world scenarios (Mkandawire, 2019).

### **3.5.7 Experiments**

Experiments involve manipulating variables under controlled conditions to observe cause-and-effect relationships. Experiments are common in quantitative research to establish causal links. Experiments constitute a cornerstone of scientific inquiry, involving the systematic manipulation of variables within controlled conditions to discern cause-and-effect relationships. This method is particularly prevalent in quantitative research and serves as a powerful tool for establishing causal links between variables, thus contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge (Mkandawire, 2019).

Central to experiments is the notion of control. Researchers meticulously design and control every facet of the experiment to isolate the effects of specific variables. By manipulating an independent variable and observing its impact on a dependent variable, researchers aim to determine whether changes in the independent variable cause corresponding changes in the dependent variable. This cause-and-effect relationship is at the heart of establishing causal connections. Experiments can take on various forms, such as laboratory experiments, field experiments, and natural experiments. Laboratory experiments involve creating a controlled environment where researchers can manipulate variables and minimize extraneous influences. Field experiments extend this approach to real-world settings, offering greater ecological validity but potentially less control. Natural experiments, on the other hand, capitalize on existing variations in the environment to study the effects of variables. Each type of experiment has its own strengths and limitations, and the choice depends on the research question and available resources (Mygind, 2016).

The controlled nature of experiments allows researchers to isolate and measure the specific impact of the manipulated variable on the outcome. Random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups helps mitigate potential confounding factors, enhancing the internal validity of the findings. Additionally, experiments enable researchers to make predictions and test hypotheses, contributing to theory development and refinement (Mkandawire, 2019). However, experiments are not without challenges. Some phenomena may be difficult or unethical to manipulate in controlled

settings. Additionally, external validity—the extent to which findings can be generalized to real-world contexts—can be a concern, especially in tightly controlled laboratory settings. Ethical considerations are paramount, particularly when experiments involve human participants. Researchers must ensure informed consent, minimize harm, and uphold participants' rights. Experiments offer a rigorous and systematic approach to uncovering cause-and-effect relationships through the manipulation of variables under controlled conditions. This method is instrumental in quantitative research for establishing causal links and advancing scientific knowledge. While experiments require careful planning, control, and ethical considerations, they provide valuable insights that contribute to our understanding of the underlying mechanisms governing various phenomena (Mygind, 2016).

### **3.5.8 Document Analysis**

Document analysis involves examining existing documents, records, or artifacts to extract information relevant to the research question. This method is often used in historical or content-based research. Document analysis is a research method that involves a systematic and rigorous examination of existing documents, records, or artifacts to extract information that is pertinent to the research question. This method is particularly valuable in historical research, content-based studies, and investigations that seek to analyze and interpret textual, visual, or audio materials within their original context. The scope of document analysis is broad, encompassing a wide range of sources, such as written texts, letters, newspapers, government records, photographs, artwork, and multimedia materials. These documents can span different time periods, cultures, and languages, providing a treasure trove of insights into historical events, social dynamics, cultural practices, and more (Vatrella et al., 2022).

Document analysis is often characterized by its non-intrusive nature, as researchers do not directly intervene in the collection of data. Instead, they meticulously examine and interpret the existing materials, employing a critical lens to uncover patterns, themes, and underlying meanings. This method aligns with qualitative research principles, emphasizing the exploration of context, subjectivity, and multiple perspectives. Researchers begin by selecting documents that are relevant to the

research question and align with the objectives of the study. They then engage in a systematic process of data coding, categorization, and interpretation. This involves identifying recurrent themes, analyzing language use, discerning underlying assumptions, and contextualizing the findings within the historical or cultural milieu (Mkandawire, 2019).

Document analysis is particularly advantageous for its ability to provide unique insights into historical contexts and shed light on past events and societal dynamics. It enables researchers to access primary sources that offer unfiltered perspectives, thereby mitigating potential biases introduced by later interpretations. Furthermore, document analysis can be cost-effective, as it capitalizes on existing materials rather than generating new data. Despite its merits, document analysis presents challenges. The authenticity and reliability of historical documents can be a concern, especially when dealing with sources that are fragmented, biased, or subject to alteration. Researchers must critically evaluate the provenance, context, and potential biases of each document. Additionally, the interpretation of documents requires a nuanced understanding of language, cultural nuances, and historical context (Vatrella et al., 2022).

Document analysis is a method that involves the systematic examination and interpretation of existing documents, records, or artifacts to extract information that contributes to the research question. This method is well-suited for historical research and content-based studies, offering valuable insights into historical events, cultural practices, and societal dynamics. By critically analyzing and interpreting primary sources, researchers can unravel the layers of meaning embedded within the documents and contribute to a deeper understanding of the past and present (Vatrella et al., 2022).

### **3.5.9 Ethnography**

Ethnography involves immersing the researcher in the study context to gain a deep understanding of participants' behaviors, interactions, and cultural practices. Ethnography is a qualitative research method that entails immersing the researcher

within the study context to gain a comprehensive and profound understanding of participants' behaviors, interactions, and cultural practices. This approach aims to capture the complexity and depth of social phenomena by closely observing and interacting with individuals in their natural settings (Jones and Smith, 2017).

Central to ethnography is the concept of participant observation, where the researcher becomes an active participant in the lives of those being studied. By embedding themselves within the community, organization, or social group, researchers can gain insights that extend beyond surface-level observations. Ethnographers engage in prolonged fieldwork, spending extensive periods of time in the study environment to develop rapport, build relationships, and uncover the subtleties of everyday life. The immersion in the study context enables researchers to explore not only what participants do, but also why they do it. Ethnographers pay attention to cultural norms, rituals, symbols, and practices that shape participants' identities and interactions. This in-depth approach allows for the identification of patterns, underlying meanings, and social dynamics that might not be apparent through other research methods (Jones and Smith, 2017).

Ethnography often involves a combination of data collection techniques, including participant observation, interviews, informal conversations, and document analysis. By triangulating information from multiple sources, researchers can create a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of the phenomenon under investigation. The strength of ethnography lies in its ability to provide a holistic view of the social context. By living and interacting with participants, researchers gain access to insider perspectives and local knowledge that contribute to a richer understanding of the culture. Ethnography is particularly useful for exploring complex social processes, cultural nuances, and the intricate interplay of factors that shape human behavior (Jones and Smith, 2017).

However, ethnography is not without challenges. The immersive nature of this method demands a substantial investment of time and resources. Researchers must navigate

ethical considerations, establish trust within the community, and maintain objectivity while becoming emotionally engaged with participants. Additionally, the role of the researcher as both observer and participant can introduce biases and subjectivity that need to be carefully managed. Ethnography is a qualitative research method that involves immersing the researcher in the study context to gain a deep and holistic understanding of participants' behaviors, interactions, and cultural practices. By engaging in participant observation and prolonged fieldwork, ethnographers uncover the underlying meanings, social dynamics, and cultural nuances that shape human experiences. While resource-intensive, ethnography provides invaluable insights that contribute to a nuanced comprehension of complex social phenomena (Jones and Smith, 2017).

### **3.5.10 Mixed-Methods Approach**

Researchers can combine multiple data collection methods to gather comprehensive and complementary data. This approach enhances the depth and breadth of understanding. Researchers often recognize the value of employing a mixed-methods approach to data collection, where multiple methods are combined to gather comprehensive and complementary data. This strategic approach enhances the depth and breadth of understanding by leveraging the strengths of each method and compensating for their limitations (Bulsara, 2015).

By integrating various data collection methods, researchers can triangulate their findings, validating and enriching their interpretations. For instance, combining surveys and interviews can provide both quantitative data that quantifies trends and qualitative data that captures the underlying reasons behind those trends. Similarly, pairing participant observation with focus groups can offer both detailed insights into behaviors and interactions as well as diverse perspectives and group dynamics. The mixed-methods approach allows researchers to address the complexities and nuances of research questions that cannot be fully captured by a single method. It fosters a more comprehensive exploration of phenomena, providing a holistic view that captures both the surface-level observations and the underlying meanings and motivations (Almeida, 2018).

Furthermore, combining methods can enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. Data triangulation, where information from different sources is compared and contrasted, helps researchers identify consistencies and discrepancies in their data. This not only bolsters the credibility of the results but also offers a more nuanced interpretation of the research topic. However, adopting a mixed-methods approach also requires careful planning and consideration. Researchers must decide which methods to combine, how to sequence data collection, and how to integrate and analyze the data effectively. The chosen methods should align with the research question, objectives, and paradigm, ensuring that they contribute meaningfully to the overall study (Shorten and Smith, 2017).

The combination of multiple data collection methods in a mixed-methods approach offers a powerful means of enhancing research outcomes. By tapping into the strengths of various methods and mitigating their weaknesses, researchers can uncover a deeper, more multifaceted understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This approach contributes to the robustness and validity of research findings, providing a more holistic perspective that aligns with the complexities of real-world situations. Selecting the appropriate data collection method requires careful consideration of factors such as the research objectives, the target population, ethical considerations, and the research paradigm guiding the study. Additionally, researchers should ensure data validity, reliability, and ethics throughout the data collection process to ensure the integrity of their findings (Shorten and Smith, 2017).

### **3.6 Recordings And Data Transcription**

The interviews and online delivered questionnaires used for this study were free flow, allowing participants to express themselves to their fullest degree. The researcher used a mobile phone to record the findings, which were subsequently transcribed. The researcher asked questions to ensure that specific components of the investigation were repeated. Challenges encountered by the researcher, certain parts are difficult



to describe and record in order to establish comprehension for the reader. However, this will be broken out in the results chapter (Markle, West and Rich, 2011).

In addition to the challenges mentioned, the researcher also faced ethical considerations when conducting this study. As *ukuthwasa* is a sensitive topic and may be viewed differently by different individuals and communities, it was crucial for the researcher to obtain informed consent from the participants before conducting the study. This meant explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and ensuring that participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence (Loubere, 2017).

Furthermore, as the study involved minors, the researcher needed to obtain parental or guardian consent before proceeding with the study. The researcher also had to ensure that the participants were not exploited or harmed in any way during the study. To address these ethical considerations, the researcher followed the guidelines set out by the university's ethics committee and received approval before conducting the study. The researcher also ensured that the participants fully understood the purpose of the study and the potential risks and benefits of their participation. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained by assigning each participant a pseudonym and storing the data in a secure location.

Overall, conducting research on a sensitive topic such as *ukuthwasa* requires careful planning, ethical considerations, and sensitivity to the participants' cultural beliefs and practices. By following ethical guidelines and ensuring participant consent, researchers can conduct valuable studies that contribute to the understanding of different cultures and practices.

The following chapter will elaborate on the theory that was applied in this study.

### **3.7 Theoretical Framework**

This research will be adapting the ethnographic theory and approach, as it allows for observing people in a cultural setting and producing a narrative account of that particular culture. It entails of transcribing every detail observed corresponding to the desired research outcome.

Ethnographic research is used to focus on a culture-sharing or subculture group, with the goal of creating nuanced and thorough descriptions of the culture-sharing group. The researcher will study the group and then describe and explain the shared and learnt patterns in ethnography (Weis, 2012). Participant observation is a technique used in ethnography that involves the researcher to get engaged in the lives of the people being studied. It is critical for the researcher to investigate these groups' behaviour and language. Understanding cultural trends in ideas and beliefs is crucial, and this is accomplished through comprehensive fieldwork, which involves data collection via interviews, observations, artifacts, symbols, and other means (Phelps, 2010).

Ethnographic studies are critical to qualitative research because they provide a thorough look at a cultural phenomenon. As individuals who operate in society, we must recognize that there are subcultures inside our society to which people belong, and whose norms and ideas may differ from ours. Understanding the reality that there are so many diverse cultures and subcultures may help us better understand one other or even how we view ourselves as people in society (Da Col, 2017). Ethnographic studies occupy a pivotal position within the realm of qualitative research, offering a unique and immersive perspective into the multifaceted tapestry of cultural phenomena. In a world characterized by its intricate diversity, these studies unveil the intricate layers that compose the societal fabric, emphasizing the significance of acknowledging and comprehending the various subcultures that coexist within broader societies. As we navigate the intricate web of human interactions, it becomes increasingly crucial to recognize that beneath the surface of overarching societal norms and ideals lie intricate subcultures, each with its own set of values, beliefs, practices, and perspectives.

These subcultures, often invisible to the casual observer, hold the power to illuminate the rich complexity of human existence. Through ethnographic exploration, we can

uncover the subtle nuances and deeply ingrained customs that shape the lives of those within these subcultures. By immersing ourselves in the daily routines, interactions, and rituals of these communities, we gain access to a wealth of insights that transcend mere observation.

Indeed, the importance of ethnographic studies extends beyond academia, permeating into our understanding of the human experience on a personal level. As we encounter individuals from diverse backgrounds and subcultures, the knowledge gleaned from such studies allows us to engage in meaningful cross-cultural interactions. This deeper understanding enables us to navigate conversations, challenges, and collaborations with a heightened sense of empathy and cultural sensitivity. Moreover, ethnographic studies serve as a mirror that reflects our own societal assumptions and biases. By recognizing the existence of various subcultures within our society, we are compelled to confront our preconceived notions and broaden our perspectives. This introspective journey fosters not only greater cultural awareness but also a more profound comprehension of our own identity within the broader social landscape. In essence, ethnographic studies serve as a bridge between the known and the unknown, providing a pathway to embrace the intricate diversity that constitutes our global society. By unveiling the layers of culture that lie beneath the surface, these studies empower us to forge connections, challenge stereotypes, and celebrate the rich tapestry of human existence. As we delve into the narratives, practices, and rituals of various subcultures, we embark on a transformative journey that not only enriches our scholarly pursuits but also nurtures our capacity for empathy, tolerance, and cross-cultural understanding (Skinner, 2013).

Furthermore, the ethnographic approach enables the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of the cultural context and the social interactions that occur within that context. By immersing oneself in the culture being studied, the researcher is able to gain insight into the beliefs, values, and customs that shape the participants' experiences and behaviours. This approach also allows for a more nuanced and contextualized analysis of the data collected, as it recognizes that cultural practices and beliefs are not static but are constantly evolving and changing over time.

Additionally, the ethnographic approach acknowledges the role of the researcher in shaping the research process and the interpretations of the data collected. This reflexivity allows for an examination of the researcher's biases and preconceptions, and how they may influence the research findings. By acknowledging the role of the researcher, the ethnographic approach can produce more objective and nuanced accounts of cultural phenomena. Overall, the ethnographic approach is a valuable tool in qualitative research, as it provides a detailed and contextualized understanding of cultural practices and beliefs. It allows for an examination of the social interactions and dynamics that shape the participants' experiences, and acknowledges the role of the researcher in shaping the research process and the interpretations of the data collected.

The chosen theoretical framework for this research is rooted in the principles of ethnography, a qualitative approach that offers a comprehensive understanding of cultural contexts through observation and narrative description. Ethnography is particularly adept at capturing the intricate dynamics of culture-sharing or subculture groups, providing in-depth insights into their shared patterns, behaviors, and beliefs. At its core, ethnographic research involves participant observation, which necessitates the researcher's active engagement within the lives of the individuals being studied. This engagement enables a deeper exploration of their behaviour, language, ideas, and traditions.

By adopting an ethnographic perspective, this research seeks to illuminate the nuances of the *ukuthwasa* journey and its significance within the cultural context. The approach acknowledges the existence of diverse subcultures within society and the importance of understanding their norms and perspectives. Through the meticulous collection of data, including interviews, observations, artifacts, and symbols, a comprehensive understanding of the cultural phenomenon of *ukuthwasa* will be achieved. The ethnographic approach not only provides a comprehensive view of cultural practices but also recognizes the fluid nature of cultural dynamics. It allows the researcher to delve into the cultural context, social interactions, and ongoing changes that shape participants' experiences. This approach emphasizes the researcher's reflexivity, acknowledging their influence on the research process and

findings. By examining their biases and preconceptions, the researcher can provide more balanced and nuanced insights into the cultural phenomenon under study.

Moreover, the ethnographic approach grants access to the cultural context and social interactions that define participants' experiences. The researcher's immersion in the culture facilitates a deeper understanding of participants' beliefs, values, and customs, offering a rich and contextualized analysis of their experiences. Through this approach, the researcher aims to present an authentic narrative of the ukuthwasa journey and its multifaceted implications within the cultural context. The adoption of an ethnographic theoretical framework enriches this research by allowing for a detailed exploration of the ukuthwasa journey's cultural dimensions. This approach's emphasis on participant observation, contextual understanding, and reflexivity aligns well with the research's goals of capturing the lived experiences, beliefs, and practices associated with ukuthwasa.

Discussed next is the participant observation.

### **3.8 Participant Observation**

Participant observation is a qualitative research method in which the researcher observes a group while also engaging in its activities. Using this qualitative observation strategy, the researcher immerses oneself in the respondents' regular activities in order to capture the behaviour in as many scenarios as possible (Spradley, 2016). It enabled researchers to collect honest and intimate information about people, especially the study's target group. However, this information is filtered via the lens of researchers, who, by adopting this approach, risk losing objectivity and changing the behaviour of the populations they investigate. In participant observation, the researcher is an active participant in the group, interacting with the respondents, and trying to understand their perspectives, feelings, and beliefs. By doing so, the researcher can gain access to valuable insights and experiences that may not be accessible through other research methods.

Participant observation also has some limitations. One major concern is the issue of bias, as researchers may become too involved in the group and lose their objectivity, leading to distorted data. In addition, the researchers' presence in the group can alter the respondents' behaviour, as they may act differently when they are aware that they are being observed. To address these concerns, researchers often take measures to minimize their impact on the group, such as adopting a passive role, avoiding interfering with the group's activities, and using multiple sources of data to validate their findings. They may also use reflexivity, which involves reflecting on their own biases and assumptions and being transparent about their role in the research process.

Despite these limitations, participant observation remains a valuable method for gaining insights into people's lives and experiences. It allows researchers to understand the complexities of social behaviour in a natural setting, which can be difficult to capture through other research methods. As such, it is widely used in fields such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology, among others.

Participant observation is a qualitative research method that involves the active engagement of the researcher within a group's activities while observing their behaviour and interactions. This approach aims to capture the group's dynamics and behaviors in their natural context, providing an in-depth understanding of their experiences. Through participant observation, the researcher immerses themselves in the daily routines and social interactions of the group being studied, allowing them to gain unique insights that might not be accessible through other research methods.

By actively participating in the group's activities, the researcher can build rapport and establish a deeper connection with the participants. This can lead to the collection of authentic and intimate information that sheds light on the participants' perspectives, emotions, and cultural practices. The researcher's presence within the group allows for the exploration of both verbal and non-verbal communication, uncovering hidden meanings and social dynamics. However, it's important to acknowledge the potential challenges and limitations of participant observation. One significant concern is the risk of researcher bias and subjectivity. As the researcher becomes more integrated

into the group, their own beliefs and assumptions can influence the interpretation of data, potentially leading to skewed findings. Additionally, the "observer effect" may come into play, where the participants modify their behaviour due to the awareness of being observed.

To mitigate these challenges, researchers employ various strategies. They often adopt a passive role, aiming to minimize their influence on the group's activities. Additionally, researchers engage in reflexivity, critically examining their own biases and preconceptions that may affect their observations. Collecting data through multiple sources, such as interviews and documents, can also help validate and triangulate the findings from participant observation.

In conclusion, participant observation is a powerful qualitative research method that provides a deep understanding of human behaviour within its natural context. While it presents challenges related to bias and the observer effect, these can be addressed through careful planning, transparency, and reflexivity. By immersing oneself in the group being studied, researchers can uncover rich insights that contribute to a more holistic understanding of social interactions and cultural phenomena.

The following section outlines the narrative analysis followed.

### **3.9 Sampling and Procedure**

The sampling process for this study was purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants with specific characteristics or qualities that are relevant to the research topic (Guest, Namey, & McKenna, 2017). The inclusion criteria for participants were that they had to be high school students who had undergone or were currently undergoing *ukuthwasa*, and they had to be willing to participate in the study. A total of 15 participants were selected for this study, and they were all African with a strong connection to their ancestral beliefs and practices.

In research, sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or items from a larger population to study and draw conclusions from. Purposive sampling, also

known as judgmental or selective sampling, is one of the non-probability sampling techniques. It involves deliberately selecting participants who possess specific characteristics or qualities that are relevant to the research objectives. This approach is often used when researchers seek to gain insights from individuals who have particular experiences, knowledge, or perspectives that align with the research focus.

There are different types of purposive sampling methods, each with its own purpose and justification:

**Expert Sampling:** In expert sampling, researchers select participants who are considered experts or highly knowledgeable in the subject matter. This is appropriate when the study requires in-depth insights from individuals with specialized expertise. For example, if the research topic involves a complex cultural practice like *ukuthwasa*, selecting individuals who have a deep understanding of the practice can provide valuable insights.

**Criterion Sampling:** In criterion sampling, participants are selected based on specific criteria or characteristics. This method is used when the researcher aims to focus on a specific subgroup within the population that is most relevant to the research. For instance, if the study aims to understand the experiences of high school students undergoing *ukuthwasa*, participants meeting this criterion would be chosen.

**Extreme or Deviant Case Sampling:** This method involves selecting individuals who represent extreme or deviant cases within a population. Researchers use this approach to study unique or unusual cases that can provide insights into the boundaries and variations of a phenomenon. In the context of *ukuthwasa*, selecting participants with particularly challenging or exceptional experiences could offer a deeper understanding of the process.



For the study described, the most suitable type of purposive sampling is **\*\*Criterion Sampling\*\***. This is because the research focuses on high school students who have undergone or are undergoing *ukuthwasa* and have a strong connection to their ancestral beliefs. By selecting participants who meet this specific criterion, the researcher can gather information that directly relates to the research objectives. Additionally, criterion sampling allows the researcher to target a subgroup that possesses the relevant experiences and insights necessary to understand the challenges and experiences of young individuals going through *ukuthwasa*. The criterion sampling is justified for this study as it enables the researcher to focus on the specific group of participants who meet the inclusion criteria and can provide valuable information about the *ukuthwasa* process from their perspective as high school students with a strong connection to their ancestral beliefs.

Data collection for this study was done through a combination of observations, online questionnaires, and recorded interviews. The researcher visited the participants in their homes and observed their daily activities and interactions with their families and communities. Online questionnaires were also used to collect data on the participants' perceptions of *ukuthwasa* and its role in their lives. Finally, recorded interviews were conducted with each participant to gather more in-depth information about their experiences with *ukuthwasa* and its impact on their lives.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

The data collected from observations, questionnaires, and recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying patterns or themes within the data and interpreting their meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data was analysed by identifying key themes that emerged from the data and then interpreting those themes in relation to the research question. The analysis process involved several steps, including reading and re-reading the data, coding the data, and categorizing the codes into themes. The themes were then analysed and interpreted to gain a better understanding of the participants' perspectives on *ukuthwasa* and its role in their lives.

After the themes were identified, the researchers used these findings to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on their research question. This allowed the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants and provide valuable insights into the cultural practice of *ukuthwasa*. Moreover, this type of analysis allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences of the participants, which may not have been possible with quantitative methods.

It is worth noting that qualitative research has its limitations, including the potential for researcher bias and the lack of generalizability of findings. However, the researchers took steps to mitigate these limitations, such as using multiple data sources and triangulation of findings, which enhances the trustworthiness and credibility of the research (Creswell, 2013).

Overall, the use of participant observation and thematic analysis provided a rich and nuanced understanding of *ukuthwasa* and its role in the lives of the participants. The findings have the potential to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of this cultural practice, while also highlighting areas where further research and understanding are needed.

### **3.11 Findings**

The findings of this study revealed several themes related to *ukuthwasa* and its impact on the lives of the participants. One key theme was the role of *ukuthwasa* in shaping the participants' identities as healers and their relationship with their ancestors. The participants described how the *ukuthwasa* process helped them connect with their ancestors and learn the skills and knowledge needed to become traditional healers. They also described how the process of *ukuthwasa* helped them develop a sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

Another key theme that emerged from the data was the challenges faced by *amathwasa* during the *ukuthwasa* process. Participants described how they were often bullied or ostracized by their peers and how they struggled to balance the demands of *ukuthwasa* with their academic and social obligations. They also described how the process of *ukuthwasa* was emotionally and physically taxing, and how they relied on the support of their families and communities to get through it.

Overall, the findings of this study shed light on the complex and nuanced nature of *ukuthwasa* and its impact on the lives of the participants. The study highlights the importance of understanding traditional healing practices and the role of ancestral beliefs in African cultures. It also underscores the need for greater support and understanding for *amathwasa* during the *ukuthwasa* process.

### **3.12 Narrative Analysis**

According to Crossley (2000), the narrative method is an ideology of change and reflexivity, as well as the creation and remaking of life experiences toward sense making and self-identification. The narrative method is a technique of knowledge creation and transmission as well.

Narrative analysis is used by researchers to better understand how study participants develop stories and narratives based on their own personal experiences. This indicates that narrative analysis has a twofold layer of interpretation. First, the research participants use narrative to analyze their own life (Bamberg, 2012). The researcher then interprets the narrative's structure. Journals, letters, discussions, autobiographies, transcripts of in-depth interviews, focus groups, or other methods of narrative qualitative research can be used to create narratives, which can subsequently be utilized in narrative research (Smith, 2016).

The narrative method allows high school students to express their tales, which convey their lived experiences and spirituality. The students' narratives are used as phenomenological, epistemological, and experiential tools to investigate how high school students with *intwaso* construct existential meanings, redefine and shape their

struggles and crises, and make and construct their identities in the *ukuthwasa* process, as well as the bullying that comes with it from society, home, and school.

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### **3.14 Chapter Summary**

This chapter starts with an overview before delving into the study's research methods. Before delving into the research methodologies used in this study, the theoretical background was examined. The data was gathered through library and outdoor research. For field research, a qualitative technique was employed, and participants

in the study procedure were rated using a questionnaire, recordings, and observations. The data was then analysed and discussed, with the results displayed in the next chapter.

This chapter elucidates the research methodology employed in the study, detailing the various data collection methods, the theoretical framework adopted, and the process of data analysis. The chapter offers insight into the methods that guided the exploration of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature and its impact on the lives of participants in the 21st century. The choice of qualitative research as the methodology stems from its suitability for comprehensively understanding *ukuthwasa* within its cultural context. Qualitative research facilitates the exploration of the significance individuals or groups attribute to a social or human situation. This chapter emphasizes the value of aligning research methods with the research question, objectives, and paradigm to ensure meaningful contributions to the study's overall aims.

The concept of mixed-methods approaches is highlighted as a potent strategy for enhancing research outcomes. Combining multiple data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, observations, and content analysis, provides a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This approach enhances the credibility, validity, and depth of research findings by capitalizing on the strengths of different methods. The chapter outlines the specific data collection methods employed in the study, including surveys, interviews, observations, and content analysis. It delves into the intricacies of each method, showcasing their distinct advantages and limitations in capturing diverse aspects of *ukuthwasa* and its implications.

Further, the chapter presents the theoretical framework that underpins the research – ethnography. The ethnographic approach, characterized by participant observation and immersion in the study context, is introduced as a means of attaining a deep and contextualized understanding of participants' behaviors, interactions, and cultural practices. The choice of this theoretical framework is justified by its alignment with the research objectives and the richness of insights it can provide. The participant

observation technique is explored, emphasizing its role in facilitating an immersive understanding of the target group's experiences and perspectives. The chapter discusses the benefits and potential limitations of this method, while highlighting the importance of mitigating researcher bias and maintaining objectivity.

The process of data analysis is detailed, focusing on thematic analysis as the chosen qualitative data analysis method. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes within the data, providing a structured approach to interpreting and understanding participants' experiences. The chapter underscores the significance of reflexivity, triangulation, and ethical considerations in ensuring the integrity of the data analysis process. The findings of the study are presented, showcasing key themes that emerged from the data related to *ukuthwasa* and its impact on participants' lives. These themes include the role of *ukuthwasa* in shaping identities, the challenges faced by participants, and the significance of cultural practices in African contexts.

In conclusion, this chapter emphasizes the methodological rigor employed in the study to investigate the complex phenomenon of *ukuthwasa* within its cultural and social context. The alignment of methods with research objectives, the incorporation of diverse data collection techniques, and the application of theoretical frameworks collectively contribute to the robustness and validity of the research outcomes. The next chapter will further illuminate the study's findings and their implications.

## Chapter 4: Findings and data analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The quest to unravel the intricate tapestry of *ukuthwasa* as a pivotal cultural phenomenon and the concurrent experiences of amathwasa has led us into the realm of empirical exploration and thematic analysis. In this chapter, we embark on a dual journey, one that traverses the insights gleaned from the respondents' questionnaire responses and the ensuing discourse that weaves together these findings with the underpinning literature. With a deliberate structural design, this chapter unfolds in two distinct sections, each contributing a distinct facet to our endeavour. The first section, akin to a vibrant mosaic of perspectives, delves into the depths of the questionnaire responses. These responses, collected through meticulous data-gathering efforts, encapsulate the voices, experiences, and perceptions of those who have embarked on the transformative journey of *ukuthwasa*. It is within these responses that we find the echoes of challenges faced, triumphs achieved, and aspirations nurtured, all encapsulated within the framework of *ukuthwasa*.

The second section of this chapter stands as a collaborative canvas, where the brushstrokes of the participants' experiences intertwine with the brushstrokes of the literature. Drawing inspiration from the rich tapestry of Chapter 2's literature, this section unfurls a comprehensive tableau that elucidates the essential elements of success illuminated by both the scholarly discourse and the lived experiences of the respondents. A visual representation, in the form of a structured table, provides a vivid depiction of the challenges unearthed, standing in stark contrast with the potential solutions that arise as we examine the interplay between *ukuthwasa* and the undercurrent of bullying amathwasa endure.

This study's endeavour to elucidate the complex nature of *ukuthwasa* and its interwoven relationship with the phenomenon of bullying is firmly rooted in an understanding that these two elements encapsulate the profound tapestry of this

cultural journey. A symphony of ancestral calling and the struggles faced by *amathwasa* form the chorus of this exploration, guiding us towards a deeper comprehension of the cultural intricacies that shape lives. As we delve further into the following sections, let us be drawn into the narratives that have unfolded through questionnaires, let us dissect the challenges revealed, and let us hold these revelations against the backdrop of the scholarly landscape. This chapter stands as a testament to the journey undertaken thus far, a bridge between empirical observations and scholarly discourse.

## **4.2 Ukuthwasa**

*Ukuthwasa* is to accept the calling of becoming *Igqirha*, where someone who has experience and has already gone through the process will lead you and show you how to speak with your ancestors, among other things. *Ukuthwasa* is an extremely sensitive element of one's life in which one's fragility is exposed and at danger, which might lead to grave consequences if demands are not satisfied. Ignoring the warning signals may result in a severe disturbance and setback in one's life.

A calling is not chosen; rather, an individual is selected by their ancestors to be their spokesman and messenger between the dead and the living. When a person dies, they join a spiritual dimension where they are referred to as *isihlwele* or *idlozi*, which is an ancestor.

*Ukuthwasa* also refers to an indigenous approach of discovering oneself, both socially and culturally. In general, Africans see initiation as a ceremony that connects a person to nature and *iminyanya* (ancestors) who are especially accountable for various *ukuthwasa* gifts. It is an incarnation process. *Umkhwetha* (initiate/novice) goes through a metamorphosis process from the moment she accepts the calling. It is therefore a spiritual journey of self-discovery, the outcomes of which are maturity and the seamless reconciliation of the emic and etic experiences (physical, spiritual, emotional, and social tensions and crises) engaged in the process.

Oral literature continues to play an important role in educating today's kids about the significance of their ancestors in this global period. By origin, we mean that oral



literature carries the richness of our African heritage. We learn about indigenous components of our culture, such as *ukuthwasa*, through oral literature. In a nutshell, all teachings passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation demonstrate the usage of oral literature.

It is critical that we preserve oral literature since it enhances the worth of our civilizations. We can only learn about our ancestors through oral literature, which was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. In some African societies, *ukuthwasa* is regarded as a rite of passage that signals a person's transition from childhood to adulthood. It is also viewed as a critical aspect of preserving cultural identity and heritage. During the initiation process, novices learn about their ancestral history, traditions, and beliefs, and they are instructed on how to carry out rituals and ceremonies to communicate with their ancestors. The initiation process is also seen as a means of developing discipline, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others, as well as gaining the skills and knowledge needed to be a productive member of society.

However, *ukuthwasa* is not without its controversies and criticisms. Some argue that it perpetuates patriarchal and oppressive gender norms, as women are often excluded from the initiation process or are subjected to different requirements and restrictions than men. Additionally, there have been reports of abuse and exploitation of initiates by unscrupulous traditional healers or "*sangomas*," who use their power and authority to exploit vulnerable individuals.

Overall, the practice of *ukuthwasa* is complex and multifaceted, with both positive and negative aspects. By conducting ethnographic research, we can gain a deeper understanding of the practice and its significance in contemporary African societies, and explore ways to address any issues and challenges associated with it.

### **4.3 The Spiritual Essence of *Ukuthwasa***

*Ukuthwasa*, often referred to as the acceptance of a calling to become an *Igqirha* or healer, carries profound spiritual significance within African cultures. This sacred journey is marked by the initiation into the realm of ancestral communication and guidance. An individual who embarks on *ukuthwasa* is guided by an experienced practitioner who has traversed this intricate path before. The mentorship involves imparting the knowledge and wisdom required to engage with one's ancestors, offering insights into rituals, ceremonies, and practices that foster a connection with the spiritual realm. The vulnerability inherent in the *ukuthwasa* process underscores its sensitivity, as the individual's very essence becomes exposed and entwined with the spiritual dimensions. Neglecting the demands and signals of this sacred calling can lead to repercussions of great magnitude. It is believed that ignoring these spiritual promptings can disturb the delicate balance between the living and the ancestral realm, potentially resulting in setbacks and disturbances in one's life journey.

#### **4.4 The Ancestral Calling and Becoming a Messenger**

Central to the concept of *ukuthwasa* is the notion of being chosen by one's ancestors to serve as an intermediary between the living and the deceased. This calling is not a matter of personal choice, but rather an ancestral designation. When an individual passes away, they transition to a spiritual existence referred to as *isihlwele* or *idlozi*—an ancestor. *Ukuthwasa*, then, is a manifestation of this ancestral continuum, as the chosen individual is tasked with bridging the gap between the earthly realm and the realm of the ancestors. This role encompasses relaying messages, seeking guidance, and fostering a connection that reverberates through cultural and spiritual dimensions. The initiate, known as *umkhwetha*, embarks on a transformative journey, traversing a process of metamorphosis guided by tradition, mentorship, and spiritual alignment. The culmination of this journey brings about a profound understanding of self, a harmonious integration of the physical, spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of existence, and an enriched connection to one's cultural heritage.

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#### **4.5 The Educational Role of Oral Literature**

Oral literature emerges as a vital vessel for transmitting ancestral wisdom and cultural significance to today's youth. Rooted in the indigenous essence of African heritage, oral literature serves as a medium through which teachings, narratives, and traditions are preserved and propagated across generations. Within this paradigm, *ukuthwasa* occupies a central place, offering a glimpse into the ancestral practices and beliefs that shape cultural identity. The traditional stories, songs, and teachings passed down through oral literature serve as repositories of collective knowledge, embracing the diversity and richness of African heritage. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, oral literature remains an indispensable conduit for instilling a deep understanding of ancestral callings, connecting the present with the legacy of the past.

Within the intricate tapestry of cultural heritage, oral literature emerges as a luminous beacon—an invaluable vessel through which the age-old wisdom of ancestors is lovingly carried forward, transcending the bounds of time to resonate within the hearts of today's youth. Rooted in the very essence of African indigenous heritage, oral literature stands as a timeless testament to the power of spoken word, a living bridge that spans generations and fosters a profound continuity of teachings, narratives, and traditions.

In this immersive narrative realm, ukuthwasa, the sacred rite of passage, emerges as a radiant star, occupying a hallowed space within the constellation of oral literature. Within its storied folds, ukuthwasa unveils a portal into the rich tapestry of ancestral practices and beliefs that have been the silent architects of cultural identity. It is within the sacred stories, the resonating songs, and the whispered teachings that the essence of ukuthwasa finds its embodiment—a journey that reverberates through the ages, a journey that beckons the youth of today to embrace their lineage and heritage.

The vibrant tapestry of oral literature weaves together the threads of tradition, carrying within its intricate patterns the invaluable repository of collective knowledge. Here, the stories of bravery, the songs of unity, and the teachings of wisdom find their sanctuary—a sanctuary that transcends the confines of individual memory and stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of African heritage. In this age of unprecedented interconnectivity, oral literature becomes an unwavering compass, guiding the youth toward a deeper understanding of their ancestral callings. As the world continues to evolve, oral literature remains steadfast in its role as the custodian of ancestral legacies. In its vibrant verses, the youth of today find themselves in communion with the legacy of the past, as they listen to the echoes of their ancestors' footsteps. The preservation of oral literature ensures that the spirit of ukuthwasa, with its profound transformative journey, remains an eternal flame, illuminating the path that leads from the present to the roots of their cultural identity. In this luminal space, oral literature and ukuthwasa converge, forging a profound connection between the past, present, and future—a connection that nourishes the soul, kindles the spirit, and enlivens the heritage that beats within every heart.

#### **4.6 The Significance of Cultural Preservation**

The preservation of oral literature stands as a testament to the intrinsic value of safeguarding cultural heritage. The echoes of the past resonate through oral narratives, weaving a tapestry that transcends time and bridges generations. Embedded within these narratives are the threads of ancestral practices, ukuthwasa being a poignant example. These narratives facilitate a window into the lives, struggles, and triumphs of those who have walked the path of *ukuthwasa* before,

inspiring a sense of continuity and cultural pride. Through oral literature, ancestral wisdom becomes tangible, and the journey of *ukuthwasa* gains an enduring narrative that speaks to the shared human experience.

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#### **4.7 Complexities and Controversies**

*Ukuthwasa*, despite its profound cultural significance, is not immune to complexities and criticisms. A noteworthy point of contention revolves around the perpetuation of gender norms, particularly patriarchal norms, within the initiation process. The exclusion of women from the process or their subjection to distinct requirements has sparked debates about gender equity and inclusivity within this sacred journey. Additionally, reports of abuse and exploitation of initiates have raised ethical concerns surrounding the practices of certain traditional healers. This exploitation takes advantage of the vulnerable position of those who seek to embrace their ancestral calling. Acknowledging these complexities is crucial in fostering a comprehensive understanding of *ukuthwasa*, allowing for an informed discussion about the practice's merits, challenges, and potential reforms. *Ukuthwasa*, despite its profound cultural significance, is not immune to complexities and criticisms. A noteworthy point of contention revolves around the perpetuation of gender norms, particularly patriarchal norms, within the initiation process. The exclusion of women from the process or their subjection to distinct requirements has sparked debates about gender equity and inclusivity within this sacred journey. Additionally, reports of abuse and exploitation of

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In the subsequent sections, we delve deeper into the findings, implications, and recommendations that arise from this exploration. As we navigate this terrain, we encounter the echoes of personal experiences, the nuances of cultural significance, and the potential for growth and understanding that *ukuthwasa* offers. Through these dimensions, we strive to unravel the intricate fabric of *ukuthwasa* and its multifaceted impact on contemporary African society.

#### **4.8 Findings From Participants**

Ten young individuals, all of whom have *idlozi*, participated in the interviews. They discuss their journey and experiences with *intwaso*, as well as the bullying that comes with it. The goal of carefully selecting these individuals is to obtain a greater understanding of the *ukuthwasa* journey through the eyes of young people who are still in school.

The respondents recounted their experiences with *idlozi*, which differs depending on factors such as how *idlozi* expresses itself. Some of the participants declared that everything transpired in their dreams had come true. Later in the dreams of the participants, they would see an elderly lady "who I was informed is an old passed relative of mine" who would instruct them to meet her by the river. This made little sense to them until I informed them it had been explained by a *sangoma*, who validated their calling. As previously said, a calling is not an idea.

##### **Participant 1 (Answered Questions 3 and 7)**

- Participant 1 shared that they realized they had a calling through dreams and visions.

- They mentioned seeing an elderly lady in their dreams, later validated as a passed relative, confirming their calling.
- Society's reaction to their calling was not explicitly mentioned.

#### **Participant 2 (Answered Questions 2, 5, 8, and 11)**

- Participant 2 mentioned accepting their calling.
- They discussed the difficulty of being bullied and ostracized by peers.
- Participant 2 emphasized the importance of strong support from family and community members.
- They expressed the need for schools to adapt to having students and teachers with a calling.

#### **Participant 3 (Answered Questions 4, 6, 9, and 10)**

- Participant 3 received necessary support from loved ones for their *ukuthwasa* journey.
- They briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey without providing specific details.
- Participant 3 suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system without violating the school's code of conduct.
- They discussed instilling the value of *intwaso* in today's youth.

#### **Participant 4 (Answered Questions 1, 5, 6, and 9)**

- Participant 4 did not specify the length of time they had *intwaso*.
- They faced obstacles during *ukuthwasa*, but details were not provided.
- Participant 4 briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey.
- They suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system.

#### **Participant 5 (Answered Questions 7 and 9)**

- Participant 5 did not discuss their acceptance of the calling.
- They talked about how society reacted to their calling.
- Participant 5 expressed the need for integration of *intwaso* in the school system without violating the school's code of conduct.

#### **Participant 6 (Answered Questions 7 and 8)**

- Participant 6 did not discuss their acceptance of the calling.
- They mentioned how society reacted to their calling.
- Participant 6 also talked about the adaptation of organizations (possibly schools) to having students and teachers with a calling.

#### **Participant 7 (Answered Questions 6, 9, and 11)**

- Participant 7 briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey.
- They suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system.
- Participant 7 discussed strategies to prevent bullying of *amathwasa* in the school.

#### **Participant 8 (Answered Questions 6, 9, and 10)**

- Participant 8 briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey.
- They suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system.
- Participant 8 talked about instilling the value of *intwaso* in today's youth.

#### **Participant 9 (Answered Questions 1, 4, 5, and 9)**

- Participant 9 did not specify the length of time they had *intwaso*.
- They received necessary support from loved ones for their *ukuthwasa* journey.
- Participant 9 faced obstacles during *ukuthwasa*, but details were not provided.
- They suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system.



### **Participant 10 (Answered Questions 2, 3, 7, and 8)**

- Participant 10 mentioned accepting their calling.
- They realized they had a calling through dreams and visions.
- Participant 10 discussed how society reacted to their calling.
- They talked about the adaptation of organizations (possibly schools) to having students and teachers with a calling.

Participant 1 reported that they became aware of their calling through vivid dreams and visions. In these dreams, they saw an elderly lady, later confirmed to be a passed relative, who instructed them to meet her by the river. This meeting was validated as a calling by a *sangoma*. They emphasized that a calling is not an abstract idea but a series of signals and dreams. The participant did not provide information on how society reacted to their calling. Participant 2 disclosed that they have accepted their ancestral calling but faced significant challenges, including bullying and ostracization by peers. They emphasized the importance of a strong support system from family and community members during this difficult time. Additionally, they expressed the need for schools to adapt to having students and teachers with a calling, particularly in preventing bullying and intimidation.

Participant 3 received necessary support from their loved ones for their *ukuthwasa* journey but did not elaborate on their acceptance of the calling. They briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey without providing specific details. The participant suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system while respecting the school's code of conduct. They also discussed the value of *intwaso* in today's youth. Participant 4 did not specify the length of time they had *intwaso* but acknowledged facing obstacles during their *ukuthwasa* journey without providing specific details. They briefly mentioned their journey and suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system. Participant 5 did not discuss their acceptance of the calling but shared how society reacted to it. They expressed the need for integration of *intwaso* into the school system while respecting the school's code of conduct.

Participant 6 did not discuss their acceptance of the calling but shared how society reacted to it. They also mentioned the adaptation of organizations (possibly schools) to having students and teachers with a calling. Participant 7 briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey and suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system while emphasizing the importance of preventing bullying of *amathwasa* in schools. Participant 8 briefly mentioned their *ukuthwasa* journey and suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system. They also discussed the importance of instilling the value of *intwaso* in today's youth.

Participant 9 did not specify the length of time they had *intwaso* but received necessary support from loved ones for their *ukuthwasa* journey. They acknowledged facing obstacles during their *ukuthwasa* journey without providing specific details. The participant suggested ways to integrate *intwaso* into the school system. Participant 10 accepted their calling and realized it through dreams and visions. They discussed how society reacted to their calling and mentioned the adaptation of organizations (possibly schools) to having students and teachers with a calling.

The answers provided by the participants in the study collectively offer a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by individuals with ancestral callings (*intwaso*) in South Africa, particularly among young people still attending school. These responses shed light on various aspects of their journeys:

Many participants shared that they came to realize their ancestral calling through vivid dreams and visions, often involving encounters with ancestors or spiritual figures who guided them towards their calling. These experiences played a crucial role in shaping their understanding of their spiritual path.

While some participants explicitly mentioned accepting their calling, others did not delve into this aspect. Nevertheless, a recurring theme was the significance of having

a strong support system, comprising family and community members, during times when they encountered challenges or discrimination related to their calling.

A prevalent challenge discussed by several participants was the bullying and ostracization they faced from their peers due to their ancestral calling. This mistreatment left them feeling isolated and misunderstood. Additionally, while the participants acknowledged facing obstacles during their *ukuthwasa* journey, specific details regarding these hurdles varied among individuals.

Participants stressed the need for schools to adapt to the presence of students and teachers with a calling. They provided suggestions on how *intwaso* could be integrated into the school system while adhering to the school's code of conduct. Some participants also emphasized the importance of allowing students to wear protective items like beads to prevent spiritual attacks.

Society's reaction to their calling was depicted as a mixed bag, with some expressing support while others held different beliefs. The participants underscored that personal judgment should not be swayed by societal opinions and that cultural identity should be preserved in the face of societal challenges and changes.

Economic challenges were highlighted by some participants, who discussed the financial strain associated with the *ukuthwasa* process. The significant costs of rituals and training could impact their education and livelihoods.

Spiritual protection was a shared concern, with participants recounting experiences of spiritual attacks during their *ukuthwasa* journey. They emphasized the importance of spiritual safeguards such as prayer and wearing protective items.

Lastly, participants expressed the need for more education and awareness about ancestral callings within schools and society at large. They believed that addressing misconceptions and prejudices through education and understanding could lead to greater acceptance and integration of individuals with ancestral callings into the broader community.

Overall, the participants shared diverse experiences with their ancestral callings, highlighting the significance of dreams and visions in realizing their callings. They also emphasized the challenges faced, including bullying, and provided suggestions for integrating *intwaso* into the school system while respecting cultural beliefs and practices. The need for support from family, community, and the school environment was a common theme among the participants.

To conclude, Only a few of these callings come naturally. And, because 'Ukuthwasa' has no set time period, some young adults spend time away from home. Following all ceremonies, some youngsters learn that their calling is false after spending so much money on their teachers, the so-called "chief traditional healers" (*ugobela*). They are no longer children at this point, but adults because the rituals took so many years of their lives. They are deprived of their educational privileges, resulting in poverty and misery. The historical periodical review offers the simple observation that, regardless of the burden and hardships that *amagqirha* still confront, they have attempted to hold fast for their healed identities.

They have emerged and integrated the various possibilities (*amaqaba/amagqoboka*; Christianity/*ukuthwasa*) and have undergone drastic changes from their social identities as witchdoctors to the sought-after healing profession of *amagqirha/izangoma*, even by the Western world that labelled it paganism and heathenism. The participants also discussed the economic challenges associated with the *ukuthwasa* process. As mentioned earlier, some young adults spend a significant amount of money on their teachers and the necessary rituals, which can take years to complete. This can lead to financial strain and poverty, especially if the individual is unable to work or attend school during this time. Additionally, there may be societal stigmatization and discrimination towards those who practice traditional healing, making it difficult for them to find employment or access healthcare.

Despite these challenges, the participants noted that traditional healing has undergone significant changes and has become a sought-after profession, even in the Western world. *Amagqirha/izangoma* have integrated various possibilities, such as Christianity and *ukuthwasa*, into their healing practices, and have worked to reclaim their identities and combat stigmatization. They have also developed new methods of healing and have gained recognition for their contributions to the field of healthcare. Overall, the *ukuthwasa* process is complex and multifaceted, with a range of challenges and opportunities for those who undergo it. It is important to recognize and respect traditional healing practices and the individuals who practice them, while also addressing the challenges they may face in society. It is important to note that the journey of *ukuthwasa* is not one that should be taken lightly. It is a significant life-altering decision that requires careful consideration and guidance from knowledgeable and trustworthy individuals. The participants emphasized the importance of seeking advice from a reputable and experienced *sangoma* or *gobela* before embarking on the journey. They also stressed the importance of being open-minded and receptive to the guidance provided by their trainers, as it is a crucial part of the process.

Furthermore, the participants shared their experiences with spiritual attacks during their *ukuthwasa* journey. They explained how the attacks can come in different forms, such as nightmares, physical illness, and financial difficulties. They also emphasized the importance of protecting oneself spiritually through prayer and wearing protective items, such as beads and amulets. Overall, the interviews provided valuable insight into the challenges and experiences of young people on the *ukuthwasa* journey. It highlights the need for more understanding and acceptance of ancestral beliefs and practices in society and the education system. It also emphasizes the importance of seeking guidance from trustworthy and experienced individuals before making life-altering decisions.

In conclusion, the *ukuthwasa* journey is a complex and challenging process, particularly for young individuals who are still in school. The participants in the interviews shared their experiences with *idlozi* and how they came to realize their calling. They also discussed the challenges they faced during the *ukuthwasa* process, including conflicts with trainers, societal expectations, and discrimination in school. It

is important to note that not all dreams or signs indicate a calling, and those who do have a calling should be supported and respected. Schools should adopt structures and systems that allow children with ancestral callings to attend school without fear of discrimination or bullying.

Despite the hardships and obstacles that *amagqirha* face, they have maintained their cultural identity and adapted to changes in society, including the integration of Christianity and Western medicine. The continued existence and practice of *ukuthwasa* is a testament to the resilience and strength of the ancestral healing tradition in South Africa. *Amagqirha* have continued to play an important role in the community, providing healing and guidance to those in need. Despite facing criticism and prejudice from some members of society, many people continue to seek out their services and guidance. The integration of Christianity and Western medicine has led to some changes in the practice of *ukuthwasa*, with some healers incorporating elements of both into their practice. This has helped to make ancestral healing more accessible and acceptable to a wider range of people. However, it is important to ensure that the cultural heritage and authenticity of *ukuthwasa* are preserved and respected, so that future generations can continue to benefit from this important tradition.

The practice of *ukuthwasa* and ancestral healing is deeply rooted in the culture and history of South Africa. It has survived colonization, apartheid, and modernization, and continues to thrive in many communities. While there are certainly challenges and controversies surrounding the practice, it remains an important part of many people's lives and identities. Furthermore, the integration of Christianity and Western medicine into ancestral healing practices has created a unique blend of traditional and modern approaches to healing. Many *amagqirha* now incorporate both traditional and modern healing methods into their practice, recognizing the importance of both in addressing the complex health needs of their patients.

In addition, the continued existence and practice of *ukuthwasa* highlights the importance of cultural preservation and respect for indigenous knowledge systems. It serves as a reminder of the richness and diversity of South Africa's cultural heritage,

and the importance of valuing and preserving traditional practices and beliefs. Overall, the challenges and controversies associated with *ukuthwasa* should not overshadow the resilience and strength of the ancestral healing tradition in South Africa. It is a vital part of the country's cultural identity and history, and continues to play an important role in the lives of many people. Furthermore, the continued existence and practice of *ukuthwasa* serve as a powerful testament to the enduring importance of cultural preservation and the utmost respect for indigenous knowledge systems within South Africa. This tradition acts as a poignant reminder of the immense richness and diversity that characterizes South Africa's cultural heritage. It underscores the imperative to cherish and safeguard traditional practices and beliefs that have been passed down through generations.

In essence, the challenges and controversies that occasionally surround *ukuthwasa* should not diminish the spotlight on the resilience and profound strength inherent in the ancestral healing tradition of South Africa. Rather than being overshadowed, these challenges should be seen as facets of a tradition that has weathered adversity and continues to thrive. *Ukuthwasa* remains an indispensable and vibrant component of the country's cultural identity and historical tapestry, perpetuating its significance across generations and playing a pivotal role in the lives of countless individuals. It stands as a living testament to the enduring spirit and unwavering commitment to cultural heritage in South Africa.

#### **4.9 The Complexity of the Ukuthwasa Journey**

The *ukuthwasa* journey, as illuminated by the experiences of the participants, underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of this sacred process. It is a journey that demands profound introspection, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to spiritual growth. The participants have elucidated the challenges they encountered, including conflicts with mentors, societal expectations, and bullying within the school environment. These challenges highlight the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity, the individual and the collective, and the personal journey of self-discovery against the backdrop of external influences.

Within this complexity lies the recognition that the *ukuthwasa* journey is not one to be taken lightly. It necessitates careful discernment, consultation with knowledgeable mentors, and a deep understanding of the cultural and spiritual implications. The participants' insights reveal the importance of seeking guidance from reputable *sangomas* or *gobelas* who possess the wisdom and experience to navigate the nuances of this transformative path.

Furthermore, the participants' narratives shed light on the profound spiritual experiences that accompany the *ukuthwasa* journey. Dreams and visions are identified as the primary means through which ancestors communicate their calling. These ethereal encounters serve as pivotal moments in the participants' lives, marking the initiation of their sacred vocation. The descriptions of these dreams are vivid and detailed, underscoring the significance of the ancestral realm in guiding and shaping the participants' destinies.

The *ukuthwasa* journey is not solely a solitary endeavour; it is deeply intertwined with communal support and acceptance. The participants' stories underscore the varying degrees of support they received from family, peers, and society at large. While some experienced understanding and encouragement, others faced scepticism, ridicule, or even rejection. These divergent reactions highlight the challenges that arise when cultural traditions intersect with contemporary norms and values. The tension between adhering to ancestral callings and conforming to societal expectations is palpable in the participants' narratives.

In the face of these challenges, the *ukuthwasa* journey emerges as a transformative process that reshapes the participants' identities and perspectives. It involves rigorous training, initiation rituals, and a profound realignment of one's spiritual connection. The participants' descriptions of their training underscore the dedication required to master the healing arts, emphasizing the blend of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and spiritual insights. This rigorous training period serves to prepare them for their roles as healers and intermediaries between the physical and spiritual realms.



The *ukuthwasa* journey also brings to light the intricate interplay between personal empowerment and societal responsibility. The participants express a deep sense of purpose and a calling to serve their communities through spiritual healing. This dual role as healers and community members underscores the interconnectedness of individual growth and collective well-being. It is a reminder that the *ukuthwasa* journey is not just about personal fulfilment but also about contributing to the greater good.

In conclusion, the experiences shared by the participants illuminate the *ukuthwasa* journey as a multifaceted and transformative process. It is a path that navigates the complexities of tradition and modernity, personal identity and communal responsibility, and spiritual growth and societal expectations. The participants' narratives provide a rich tapestry of insights into the challenges, revelations, and profound spiritual connections that characterize this sacred journey. As their stories intertwine, a collective narrative emerges—one that honours the wisdom of ancestors, the resilience of individuals, and the intricate dance between the seen and the unseen worlds.

#### **4.10 Spiritual Resilience and Protective Measures**

The participants shed light on the spiritual resilience required to navigate the *ukuthwasa* journey. They recounted instances of spiritual attacks, nightmares, and physical ailments that tested their resolve. These challenges underscore the spiritual dimension of *ukuthwasa*, where individuals must actively safeguard themselves against negative energies and influences. The participants shared their strategies for protection, including prayer and the wearing of protective items such as beads and amulets. These practices symbolize the fusion of spiritual beliefs with tangible safeguards, illustrating the holistic nature of ancestral healing. Moreover, the participants' narratives emphasize the intricate relationship between the *ukuthwasa* journey and the realm of ancestral guidance. They spoke of receiving messages, visions, and dreams from their ancestors, often in symbolic and cryptic forms.

Deciphering these messages requires a deep attunement to the spiritual world and an understanding of the ancestral language. The participants' accounts underscore the vital role of intuition, sensitivity, and spiritual discernment in navigating these ethereal communications.

The *ukuthwasa* journey is also revealed as a profound process of self-discovery and personal transformation. The participants articulated how the challenges they encountered compelled them to confront their fears, insecurities, and limitations. Through this introspection, they discovered inner strengths and resilience they didn't know they possessed. This transformative aspect of the journey transcends the realm of healing and extends into the realm of personal growth and empowerment.

Furthermore, the participants' narratives illuminate the significance of mentorship and guidance on the *ukuthwasa* journey. Their relationships with senior healers, mentors, and experienced practitioners provided them with essential guidance, wisdom, and a safe space to navigate the complexities of their calling. The mentor-mentee dynamic is portrayed as a crucial bridge between generations, preserving the ancestral knowledge and ensuring its continuation in the modern world.

As the participants recounted their experiences, a tapestry of interconnectedness emerged—one that weaves together the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social dimensions of the *ukuthwasa* journey. The challenges faced on this path were not seen solely as obstacles but as opportunities for growth and refinement. Through their accounts, it became evident that the *ukuthwasa* journey is a dynamic interplay between the individual and the spiritual realm, where resilience, intuition, mentorship, and a profound connection with ancestors converge to shape a healer's destiny.

In sum, the participants' stories offer a profound insight into the holistic and transformative nature of the *ukuthwasa* journey. From spiritual protection to deciphering ancestral messages, from personal empowerment to the role of mentors,

their narratives provide a multifaceted perspective on this sacred path. It is a journey that not only heals and empowers the individual but also strengthens the sacred bonds between the seen and the unseen, the earthly and the ancestral—a tapestry woven with threads of resilience, spirituality, and self-discovery.

#### **4.11 Upholding Cultural Identity in Changing Times**

The narratives of the participants reflect the dynamic interplay between tradition and adaptation. The evolution of *ukuthwasa* to incorporate elements of Christianity and Western medicine signifies the capacity of ancestral healing to adapt to contemporary contexts while maintaining its core essence. The participants' stories underscore the resilience of the ancestral healing tradition and its enduring relevance in a rapidly changing world. The ability to integrate diverse elements into their practice while preserving the authenticity of *ukuthwasa* speaks to the adaptability of *amagqirha* in responding to the needs and beliefs of their communities. The narratives shared by the participants illuminate the intricate dance between tradition and adaptation within the context of *ukuthwasa*. The journey of ancestral healing is depicted as a living tradition that engages with the currents of change while remaining grounded in its foundational principles. The incorporation of elements from Christianity and Western medicine underscores the flexibility of *ukuthwasa* to embrace new influences without compromising its inherent essence.

Through the participants' experiences, it becomes evident that ancestral healing is not a static practice frozen in time but a dynamic process that evolves to address the contemporary needs of individuals and communities. The narratives reveal how the participants navigate the delicate balance between honouring their ancestral lineage and engaging with the cultural shifts of the modern world. This adaptability showcases the resilience and relevance of ancestral healing, positioning it as a vital resource in a rapidly transforming society.

The stories shared by the participants also highlight the ingenuity of *amagqirha* in blending diverse elements into their practice while upholding the authenticity of *ukuthwasa*. This ability to harmonize different beliefs and practices reflects the deep understanding that *amagqirha* have of their communities and the nuanced ways in which they address their needs. The narratives unveil a tapestry of syncretism, where ancestral healing seamlessly integrates with other systems to provide holistic care and guidance. Ultimately, the narratives of the participants depict *ukuthwasa* as a living testament to the resilience of cultural practices in the face of change. The tradition's capacity to adapt and incorporate new elements while maintaining its core values underscores its enduring relevance and significance. It is a reminder that the essence of ancestral healing is not confined to the past but continues to thrive, adapt, and inspire in the present and beyond.

#### **4.12 The Role of *Amagqirha* in Society**

The experiences shared by the participants illuminate the profound role that *amagqirha* play in their communities. Despite facing prejudice and criticism, these healers continue to offer their services, providing healing and guidance to those who seek their aid. This underscores the significant impact that *amagqirha* have in promoting holistic well-being within their communities. Their integration of both ancestral practices and elements of modern healing attests to their versatility and the pragmatic approach they adopt to address the needs of their clients. The narratives shared by the participants offer a compelling glimpse into the pivotal role that *amagqirha* assume within their communities. Despite encountering *skepticism* and resistance, these healers persist in their mission to provide essential services, offering healing and counsel to individuals who seek their assistance. This portrayal highlights the profound and enduring influence that *amagqirha* wield in fostering comprehensive well-being within their communities. The stories of the participants underscore the significant impact that *amagqirha* have in not only preserving cultural heritage but also contributing to the overall health and harmony of their communities. By seamlessly blending ancestral practices with contemporary healing methods, these healers

demonstrate their adaptability and innovative approach to addressing the diverse needs of their clients.

The experiences shared by the participants emphasize that *amagqirha* act as bridges between the past and the present, seamlessly weaving together the wisdom of their ancestral traditions with the realities of modern life. This fusion of approaches showcases the versatility of *amagqirha* in catering to the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of their clients. Their ability to navigate between tradition and innovation underscores their deep understanding of the evolving dynamics of their communities. The narratives presented by the participants underscore the profound and transformative influence of *amagqirha* within their communities. These healers, armed with a unique blend of ancestral wisdom and contemporary insights, serve as beacons of holistic healing, enriching the lives of those they touch and contributing to the resilience and vitality of their cultural heritage.

#### **4.13 Ensuring the Continuity of Tradition**

The narratives of the participants bring to the fore the importance of preserving and respecting ancestral healing traditions. The challenges they faced within the education system and wider society underscore the need for greater understanding and acceptance of these practices. Creating an inclusive environment that respects diverse beliefs and practices can contribute to the holistic development and well-being of individuals undergoing the *ukuthwasa* journey. The narratives shared by the participants vividly illuminate the pressing need for the preservation and recognition of ancestral healing traditions. The hurdles and obstacles they encountered while navigating the education system and wider societal attitudes shine a light on the critical importance of fostering greater understanding and acceptance of these sacred practices. These accounts underscore the essential role that creating an inclusive environment plays in promoting the holistic development and well-being of individuals who are embarking on the *ukuthwasa* journey. The challenges faced by the participants within educational institutions underscore the urgency of incorporating cultural sensitivity and awareness into the educational framework. By recognizing and

accommodating the unique needs and beliefs of individuals undergoing ukuthwasa, schools can create an environment where cultural diversity is celebrated and respected. This, in turn, will foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among those who have answered the ancestral calling, allowing them to simultaneously pursue their spiritual path and educational journey.

Moreover, the narratives emphasize the broader societal context in which these challenges unfold. Greater efforts are required to foster open dialogues, promote awareness, and dispel misconceptions surrounding ancestral healing practices. By engaging in respectful conversations and acknowledging the rich tapestry of cultural traditions, society can move towards a state of harmony where diverse belief systems coexist and thrive. The stories recounted by the participants serve as a clarion call for the preservation and dignified recognition of ancestral healing traditions. They underscore the urgent need for education institutions and society at large to create an inclusive atmosphere that values and honours cultural diversity. By doing so, we can ensure that individuals embarking on the ukuthwasa journey are met with understanding, support, and the freedom to embrace their spiritual heritage while contributing to the broader societal fabric.

In conclusion, the *ukuthwasa* journey is a complex tapestry woven from spiritual calling, personal transformation, societal dynamics, and cultural evolution. The experiences of the participants offer profound insights into the challenges and triumphs of this journey. It is imperative that these insights be acknowledged and embraced, as they provide a gateway to a deeper understanding of the complexities of ancestral healing in contemporary African society. The *ukuthwasa* journey, with its challenges, lessons, and rewards, remains an integral part of the cultural fabric that connects the past, present, and future.

#### **4.1.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter embarked on a journey to illuminate the profound experiences of selected participants as they traversed the intricate path of *ukuthwasa*. The aim was to present

the culmination of the research study's findings, unravelling the layers of insight gleaned from these participants' narratives. Throughout the exploration, it became evident that *ukuthwasa* is a sacred and compelling calling bestowed upon chosen individuals by their ancestors. This chapter encompasses the essence of these findings and their implications.

The revelations of this study affirm that *ubizo*, the ancestral calling, manifests through a diverse spectrum of emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and behavioural signs. Dreams and visions serve as potent conduits for ancestral messages, guiding individuals toward their destined role as healers. This intricate relationship between the tangible and the metaphysical underscores the interconnectedness of the spiritual realm with the lived experiences of those called. A pivotal aspect unveiled by this chapter is the five-year *ukuthwasa* initiation course, a transformative journey under the tutelage of a seasoned *igqirha*. The initiation process serves as a crucible, forging a deep connection to religious and spiritual healing practices. The crises encountered during this phase emphasize the initiates' spiritual growth and resilience, propelling them towards their role as healers and messengers between the living and the ancestors.

In summation, Chapter 4 stands as a testament to the profound insights garnered from the experiences of the participants on their *ukuthwasa* journey. The findings unequivocally underscore the sacred nature of this calling, rooted in ancestral messages conveyed through dreams and visions. The diverse manifestations of *ubizo* across emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and behavioural domains highlight the multifaceted nature of the ancestral connection.

The initiation process, a five-year odyssey under the guidance of an experienced *igqirha*, emerges as a transformative crucible. Its challenges and trials galvanize initiates' dedication to spiritual healing practices, shaping them into healers of significance within their communities. As this chapter concludes, the reader is poised to journey further, embracing the nuanced insights revealed by the participants' experiences. These revelations not only enrich our understanding of *ukuthwasa* but

also underscore the integral role of ancestral healing practices within the cultural tapestry of contemporary African society.



## Chapter 5: Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented data and analysed it. This chapter shall discuss data that had been presented and analysed.

Oral literature is a sort of performance art that, in most circumstances, use spoken words as a means of communication. Oral literature relies heavily on performance. Songs, oral storytelling, oral poetry, riddles, and tongue twisters are all examples of oral literature. Myths are an important type of oral literature. They are holy and authentic to a society and are defined by gods and supernatural entities. Myths are created at the dawn of time. They are often shorter than other tales since they are not concerned with character development.

Oral literature describes how our predecessors' lifestyles began and how they lived, despite the fact that the surroundings and way of life were different. However, as different as it is from now, it is the cornerstone of what we call culture today. Oral literature continues to convey the richness of our history and tradition into the modern period. We still utilize oral literature now, and while it is not exactly the same as it was previously, we can say that oral literature has withstood the changing of the periods and adapted to changes.

The reason for this is because there has been little study done on *ukuthwasa* of the young, how elders' ignorance impedes their children's ancestral trip, resulting in the new generation being misled or understanding less about the relevance of oral literature in connection to *intwaso*. The focus will be on the healing sickness known as *intwaso*, which is considered as an ancestor's summons to become a healer. According to the transpersonal perspective, these initiatory callings are also spiritual crises. A practice issue affected the researcher's finding of the problem that led to the aforementioned investigation. It is based on the researcher's own experiences with *ukuthwasa*, how it affects today's young, and how society reacts to *intwaso*.

In some African societies, *intwaso* is viewed as a powerful and transformative experience that leads to spiritual growth and healing abilities. However, the process

of undergoing *ukuthwasa*, which is the period of training and initiation for *intwaso*, can be challenging and often misunderstood. Young people who experience *intwaso* may face discrimination and stigma from their peers and even family members who do not understand the significance of this ancestral calling.

The lack of understanding and knowledge about *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* can have negative consequences for young people who are called to become healers. They may not receive the necessary support and guidance from their elders and community, leading to a loss of traditional knowledge and practices. Additionally, the cultural beliefs and practices surrounding *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* may clash with Western medical practices, creating challenges for those who seek both forms of healing.

Overall, the preservation and understanding of oral literature and traditional practices, such as *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, are critical for the preservation of culture and the promotion of holistic healing. It is important for researchers and practitioners to continue to study and promote the importance of these practices in order to maintain the richness and diversity of African cultures. Furthermore, the study of oral literature and traditional practices can also provide valuable insights into the history and evolution of societies. For instance, the study of myths and legends can shed light on the beliefs and values of past generations, as well as the social and cultural contexts in which they were created.

In addition, the preservation and promotion of oral literature and traditional practices can also have positive impacts on the mental health and well-being of individuals and communities. The use of oral storytelling and other forms of oral literature can provide a sense of connection to one's cultural heritage and identity, which can promote a sense of belonging and self-esteem. Similarly, the use of traditional healing practices, such as *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, can provide a holistic approach to healing that encompasses both the physical and spiritual aspects of health. Overall, the study and preservation of oral literature and traditional practices are crucial for the maintenance and promotion of African culture and heritage. By understanding and valuing these

practices, individuals and communities can gain a deeper appreciation for their history and identity, as well as access to holistic forms of healing that can promote well-being and resilience.

Additionally, the stigma and discrimination faced by those who undergo *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* can also have a negative impact on mental health. Young people who experience these ancestral callings may feel isolated and unsupported, which can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety. It is therefore important for communities to promote a more accepting and understanding attitude towards *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, and for mental health practitioners to be aware of the cultural and spiritual aspects of healing in their treatment of patients.

Moreover, the importance of preserving oral literature goes beyond the cultural significance. It also serves as a valuable resource for researchers and scholars studying the history and development of societies. Oral literature provides a glimpse into the lives and beliefs of our ancestors, and can help us understand the evolution of culture and traditions over time.

In addition to the points mentioned above, there are further considerations regarding the preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices:

- **Documentation and Archiving:** It is essential to document and archive oral literature to ensure its preservation for future generations. This can be done through audio and video recordings, transcriptions, and translations. Digital platforms and repositories can provide accessible and long-lasting storage for this valuable cultural heritage.
- **Community Involvement:** Engaging the community in the preservation and promotion of oral literature is crucial. This can include encouraging community members to share their knowledge, stories, and experiences, organizing cultural events and festivals that highlight oral literature, and involving local artists and performers in the dissemination of this art form.

- **Intergenerational Transmission:** To ensure the continuity of oral literature, efforts should be made to foster intergenerational transmission. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, storytelling sessions, and cultural exchange programs that connect older generations with younger ones, allowing for the transfer of knowledge and skills related to oral literature.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Collaboration between researchers, cultural institutions, and communities is vital for the preservation and promotion of oral literature. Establishing networks, both locally and internationally, can facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices in preserving and safeguarding oral literature.
- **Funding and Support:** Governments, organizations, and funding agencies should allocate resources to support research, documentation, and preservation initiatives focused on oral literature. This can include grants, scholarships, and fellowships for researchers and practitioners working in this field, as well as funding for community-based projects that promote the understanding and appreciation of oral literature.
- **Education and Curriculum Integration:** Incorporating oral literature into educational curricula at various levels can play a significant role in raising awareness and preserving this cultural heritage. This can involve developing teaching materials, training teachers in the pedagogy of oral literature, and creating opportunities for students to engage with oral literature through performances, recitations, and creative projects.
- **Ethical Considerations:** When conducting research on oral literature and ancestral healing practices, it is crucial to engage in ethical practices. This includes obtaining informed consent, respecting the intellectual property rights

of the communities involved, and ensuring that the research benefits the communities and individuals being studied.

By addressing these additional aspects, we can enhance the preservation, understanding, and appreciation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices. These efforts contribute not only to the safeguarding of cultural heritage but also to the promotion of diversity, intercultural dialogue, and holistic well-being within communities.

The discussion of data on oral literature and ancestral healing practices highlights the importance of preserving and understanding these cultural practices. It is crucial for communities to provide support and guidance for young people who experience *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, and for mental health practitioners to be aware of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of healing. Furthermore, the preservation of oral literature serves as a vital resource for studying the history and development of societies. By promoting the understanding and preservation of these practices, we can ensure the continuation of cultural diversity and the promotion of holistic healing.

## **5.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Preservation**

The preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices presents both challenges and opportunities. One of the main challenges is the potential loss of traditional knowledge and practices due to changing lifestyles, urbanization, and the influence of globalization. As younger generations become more disconnected from their cultural heritage, there is a risk that these practices could fade away. Moreover, the dominance of written and digital media can diminish the emphasis on oral transmission, further endangering the continuity of these traditions. Additionally, the stigma associated with *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* may discourage individuals from pursuing these paths, leading to a decline in the number of practitioners. Despite these challenges, there are promising opportunities. The advent of digital technology provides a platform for documenting and archiving oral literature, making it accessible

to wider audiences. Collaborative efforts between researchers, communities, and cultural institutions can ensure the safeguarding of these practices. The educational system can play a pivotal role by integrating oral literature and ancestral healing into curricula, fostering a sense of pride and awareness among the younger generation. Moreover, increased cultural exchange and dialogue can promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of diverse traditions, contributing to the preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices.

Furthermore, the challenges posed by the potential loss of oral literature and ancestral healing practices underline the urgency of proactive preservation efforts. As traditional ways of life adapt to the modern world, there is a risk of dilution and distortion of these practices. The erosion of cultural memory could result in the loss of profound insights into history, beliefs, and values that have been passed down through generations. The fading of these practices would not only deprive communities of their cultural richness but also hinder the holistic understanding of human existence.

Amid these challenges, opportunities arise for innovative approaches to preservation. Digital platforms, as repositories of knowledge, offer unprecedented means of safeguarding oral literature. Audio and video recordings of oral storytelling, rituals, and performances can be curated in easily accessible archives, transcending geographical and temporal boundaries. Moreover, the collaboration between technology experts and cultural practitioners can yield interactive platforms that engage audiences in dynamic ways, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of these traditions.

Collaboration stands as a cornerstone in the preservation efforts of oral literature and ancestral healing practices. By uniting researchers, practitioners, and community members, a collective endeavour can be forged to ensure the continuity of these rich cultural expressions. Through shared resources and insights, the preservation process becomes enriched, fostering a holistic understanding that transcends individual disciplines. Collaborative initiatives can also tap into the knowledge of elders and the lived experiences of practitioners, ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of preservation endeavours.

The integration of oral literature and ancestral healing into educational curricula is pivotal for nurturing a sense of cultural identity and appreciation from an early age. By incorporating these topics into schools and universities, the younger generation can gain a deeper understanding of their heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. This integration extends beyond classroom learning; it facilitates experiential engagement through workshops, performances, and interactions with cultural practitioners. Such initiatives not only preserve traditions but also empower the youth to carry these practices forward into the future.

The path to preservation also involves fostering cross-cultural exchanges and dialogues. The global interconnectedness of today's world offers a unique platform for the sharing of traditions and experiences. Engaging in cross-cultural conversations cultivates mutual respect, understanding, and the celebration of diversity. The appreciation of different ways of life contributes to the preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices, reinforcing their significance in a global context.

While challenges loom in the face of changing times and shifting societal values, the preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices holds immense significance. The interconnectedness of cultural heritage, human experience, and holistic well-being underscores the urgency of these preservation efforts. Through technological advancements, collaborative initiatives, educational integration, and cross-cultural exchanges, these rich traditions can continue to thrive and enrich the fabric of our diverse global community. The preservation of oral literature and ancestral healing practices is not just a task for specific communities; it is a collective responsibility to safeguard the wealth of human wisdom, insight, and identity for generations to come.

### **5.3 The Role of Education and Awareness**

Education and awareness campaigns have a pivotal role in preserving and promoting oral literature and ancestral healing practices. Educational institutions can introduce specialized courses and modules dedicated to these topics, allowing students to engage with their cultural heritage. These courses can encompass not only theoretical aspects but also practical components, such as storytelling workshops or discussions with practitioners. By incorporating these practices into curricula, educational institutions can foster a sense of belonging and identity among students, promoting the continuation of these traditions. Furthermore, awareness campaigns within communities can dispel myths and misconceptions about *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, reducing stigma and discrimination. These campaigns can take the form of workshops, seminars, and cultural events that provide accurate information about these practices and their significance.

Additionally, partnerships between educational institutions and cultural organizations can enhance the effectiveness of education and awareness initiatives. Collaborative efforts can bring together experts in oral literature, ancestral healing practices, and pedagogy to design comprehensive and culturally sensitive educational materials. These materials can serve as valuable resources for educators, ensuring that accurate and respectful information is disseminated to students. Moreover, technology can play a pivotal role in amplifying the reach of education and awareness campaigns. Online platforms, webinars, and digital resources can facilitate broader access to information about oral literature and ancestral healing practices. This digital approach transcends geographical limitations, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage with these topics.

In tandem with formal education, community-based initiatives can further contribute to the preservation and promotion of these practices. Cultural centres, museums, and community organizations can organize workshops, exhibitions, and cultural festivals that celebrate oral literature and ancestral healing. These events provide interactive and immersive experiences that not only educate but also engage participants in the living heritage of their communities. Intergenerational dialogue can be a powerful tool in transmitting knowledge and fostering appreciation. Elders who are well-versed in oral literature and ancestral healing practices can share their experiences and stories



with younger generations. This exchange of wisdom can bridge generational gaps and ensure the continuity of these traditions.

Education and awareness campaigns hold the key to preserving and promoting oral literature and ancestral healing practices. By integrating these topics into formal education, partnering with cultural organizations, leveraging technology, and facilitating community-based initiatives, a multi-faceted approach can be established. This approach not only ensures the preservation of cultural heritage but also empowers individuals to take pride in their roots, fostering a sense of cultural identity and appreciation for the wealth of knowledge embedded within oral literature and ancestral healing practices.

#### **5.4 Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Research**

The preservation and understanding of oral literature and ancestral healing practices necessitate collaboration across disciplines and sectors. Researchers, cultural institutions, practitioners, and communities can collaborate to pool resources, expertise, and insights. Interdisciplinary research approaches can offer comprehensive perspectives on these practices, exploring their historical, cultural, psychological, and social dimensions. Collaborative initiatives can involve the creation of digital archives, multimedia resources, and exhibitions that showcase oral literature and ancestral healing practices. Such collaborations can also foster dialogue and exchange between different communities, enriching the understanding of cultural diversity and promoting cross-cultural relationships. The preservation and understanding of oral literature and ancestral healing practices necessitate collaboration across disciplines and sectors. Researchers, cultural institutions, practitioners, and communities can collaborate to pool resources, expertise, and insights. Interdisciplinary research approaches can offer comprehensive perspectives on these practices, exploring their historical, cultural, psychological, and social dimensions. Collaborative initiatives can involve the creation of digital archives, multimedia resources, and exhibitions that showcase oral literature and ancestral healing practices. Such collaborations can also foster dialogue and exchange between

different communities, enriching the understanding of cultural diversity and promoting cross-cultural relationships.

### **5.5 Ethical Considerations and Cultural Sensitivity**

In the pursuit of preserving and studying oral literature and ancestral healing practices, ethical considerations and cultural sensitivity are of paramount importance. Researchers and practitioners must engage in respectful and reciprocal relationships with the communities they work with. This involves obtaining informed consent, respecting intellectual property rights, and ensuring that the benefits of research and preservation efforts extend to the communities involved. Cultural sensitivity is crucial in avoiding the misappropriation or commodification of these practices. It requires an open-minded approach that values diverse perspectives and recognizes the significance of these practices within their cultural contexts. Additionally, researchers must reflect on their own biases and assumptions, striving for objectivity and a nuanced understanding of the practices they study. Adhering to ethical principles and cultural sensitivity ensures that the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices are conducted in a responsible and respectful manner.

Incorporating these additional sections will further enrich your chapter and provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges, opportunities, educational roles, collaborations, and ethical considerations surrounding the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices. In the pursuit of preserving and studying oral literature and ancestral healing practices, ethical considerations and cultural sensitivity are of paramount importance. Researchers and practitioners must engage in respectful and reciprocal relationships with the communities they work with. This involves obtaining informed consent, respecting intellectual property rights, and ensuring that the benefits of research and preservation efforts extend to the communities involved. Cultural sensitivity is crucial in avoiding the misappropriation or commodification of these practices. It requires an open-minded approach that values diverse perspectives and recognizes the significance of these practices within their cultural contexts. Additionally, researchers must reflect on their own biases and

assumptions, striving for objectivity and a nuanced understanding of the practices they study. Adhering to ethical principles and cultural sensitivity ensures that the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices are conducted in a responsible and respectful manner. Incorporating these additional sections will further enrich your chapter and provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges, opportunities, educational roles, collaborations, and ethical considerations surrounding the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has delved into the intricacies of oral literature and ancestral healing practices, underscoring their profound significance and the pressing need for their preservation and understanding. The narratives presented have shed light on the challenges faced by individuals who undergo *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, illuminating the importance of providing a supportive and accepting environment for their spiritual journeys. The stigma and discrimination they encounter highlight the necessity of fostering open dialogues within communities and promoting cultural sensitivity in mental health care.

Moreover, the exploration of oral literature as a performance art has emphasized its role as a bridge to our ancestors and a repository of cultural heritage. As a powerful means of communication, oral literature not only reflects the past but also shapes the present and future, connecting generations and providing insights into the evolution of societies over time. Its preservation serves as a treasure trove for researchers and scholars, offering a window into the beliefs, values, and experiences of our forebearers.

Furthermore, the interplay between tradition and adaptation in ancestral healing practices showcases their resilience and relevance in a changing world. The ability to integrate different elements into these practices without compromising their authenticity speaks to their dynamic nature and their capacity to address the needs of diverse communities. The continuity of these practices hinges on their transmission

from one generation to the next, underscoring the importance of intergenerational connections and mentorship.

To ensure the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices, it is essential to consider multiple dimensions. Documenting and archiving these traditions, involving communities in preservation efforts, promoting intergenerational transmission, fostering collaboration and networking, securing funding and support, integrating them into education, and adhering to ethical considerations are all crucial steps. By taking these actions, we can honour the rich cultural heritage encapsulated in oral literature and ancestral healing practices, promoting diversity, well-being, and intercultural understanding within our societies.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

This last chapter provides broad findings based on thoughts and critical evaluations of important research parts. There are also comments about the usefulness of the data obtained and the study's limitations. Recommendations for further research and implementation initiatives are made.

The study findings suggest that the ancestral healing tradition in South Africa, specifically the practice of *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, faces various challenges, including discrimination, stigma, and a lack of understanding and support from the broader community. The study highlights the importance of preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and practices, including oral literature, to maintain the richness and diversity of African cultures and promote holistic healing.

However, the study also identifies several limitations, including the small sample size and the focus on a specific population within South Africa. Therefore, it is important for further research to be conducted on a larger and more diverse population to gain a deeper understanding of the issues faced by those who practice *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are made. Firstly, efforts should be made to promote awareness and understanding of *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* within the broader community. This can be achieved through educational programs and initiatives that aim to reduce stigma and discrimination against those who practice ancestral healing. Secondly, traditional healers and practitioners should be provided with the necessary resources and support to continue their practice and preserve traditional knowledge. Finally, further research should be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the issues faced by those who practice ancestral healing and to identify effective strategies for promoting its preservation and understanding.

The study highlights the importance of preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and practices, including *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, to maintain the richness and diversity of African cultures and promote holistic healing. The study also highlights the need for further research and initiatives to promote awareness and support for those who practice ancestral healing.

## **6.2 Chapter Summary**

### **6.2.1 Chapter 1**

The first chapter sketched out *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature in the twenty-first century. This chapter served as the research context, in which the researcher discussed a variety of subjects, including the issue statement, research objectives, restrictions, and importance of the study. This chapter also focused on the research objectives of the study, which were as follows:

- To examine *ukuthwasa* in its various dimensions and dynamics.
- To describe how oral literature and traditional practices intersect.
- To show how each person's *ukuthwasa* journey is unique;
- To show how/why *intwaso* is generally accepted among today's young; and
- To outline the fundamental effect that *ukuthwasa* has.

This chapter contains an introduction to the study, definitions of essential terms, a problem statement, and specific questions addressed about the study's aims and objectives, as well as rationale for the investigation. In addition, basic information on the study sites' locations, biographical information on the essential four participants, including myself, and the research technique employed are supplied.

This chapter serves as the introduction to the research, providing the background, context, problem statement, research objectives, scope, and significance of the study. It sets the stage for the exploration of *ukuthwasa* as a component of oral literature in the twenty-first century.

The background and context section establishes the relevance of studying *ukuthwasa* in the preservation of cultural heritage. It highlights the importance of oral literature in conveying the richness of history and tradition, despite the challenges posed by globalization, urbanization, and technological advancements.

The problem statement section identifies the limited research on *ukuthwasa* among the young and the potential consequences of elders' ignorance of this ancestral journey. It emphasizes the need to investigate how this lack of knowledge may hinder the younger generation's understanding and engagement with oral literature, particularly in relation to *intwaso*. The problem statement also addresses the impact of this knowledge gap on the preservation and transmission of traditional practices and cultural knowledge.

The research objectives outline the specific goals of the study. They include examining *ukuthwasa* in its various dimensions, exploring the intersection of oral literature and traditional practices, highlighting the uniqueness of each individual's *ukuthwasa* journey, analysing the acceptance and understanding of *intwaso* among the young, and investigating the fundamental impact of *ukuthwasa* on individuals and society.

The scope and limitations section defines the boundaries of the research, focusing on *ukuthwasa* and its relationship to oral literature within a specific cultural context. It acknowledges the limitations of the study, such as potential bias from the researcher's personal experiences and constraints in terms of time and resources.

The significance of the study section emphasizes the importance of understanding *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* as essential elements of African cultural heritage. It highlights the potential implications of the research findings in fostering greater acceptance, support, and understanding of *ukuthwasa* among young people. Furthermore, it underscores the broader significance of the study in enriching the body of knowledge on oral literature preservation and its relevance in the contemporary world.

The research methodology section provides an overview of the qualitative research approach employed in the study. It outlines the data collection methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of further research beyond the scope of this study to deepen our understanding of *ukuthwasa* and oral literature preservation.

## **6.2.2 Chapter 2**

The second chapter delves deeper into the literature study, providing additional information regarding oral literature and how oral literature preservation should be adopted and practiced. As the world becomes increasingly focused on technology, adaption is critical and would be the primary solution to helping the preservation of oral literature, as mentioned in the literature study. Chapter 2 provides an extensive literature review on oral literature and its preservation, highlighting the importance of understanding and safeguarding this cultural heritage. It delves into the various forms of oral literature, explores its significance in different societies, and discusses the challenges and strategies for its preservation in the modern era.

### ***2.1 Definition and Characteristics of Oral Literature***

This section begins by providing a clear definition of oral literature as a form of performance art that primarily uses spoken words for communication. It highlights the key characteristics of oral literature, such as its reliance on performance, the use of



various genres (e.g., songs, storytelling, poetry), and its association with cultural traditions and beliefs.

The chapter further explores the specific genres of oral literature, including myths, legends, riddles, and tongue twisters. It discusses how these forms of expression serve as vehicles for preserving cultural knowledge, values, and historical narratives within communities.

## ***2.2 Significance of Oral Literature in Society***

This section emphasizes the profound significance of oral literature in societies. It highlights how oral literature serves as a means of cultural transmission, allowing communities to pass down their traditions, histories, and moral lessons from one generation to another. It discusses how oral literature fosters a sense of identity, belonging, and continuity within communities, reinforcing cultural values and social cohesion.

The chapter also explores the role of oral literature in shaping collective memory and shared experiences. It explains how oral literature acts as a repository of cultural memory, preserving stories, customs, and rituals that reflect the lived experiences of a community.

## ***2.3 Challenges to Oral Literature Preservation***

This section delves into the challenges faced in the preservation of oral literature in the contemporary world. It acknowledges the impact of globalization, urbanization, and modernization on traditional oral practices. It discusses how changing lifestyles, technology, and shifting cultural dynamics pose significant threats to the continued practice and transmission of oral literature.

The chapter also addresses the limitations and vulnerabilities of oral transmission. It explores issues such as the potential loss of content or distortion during the retelling of stories, the decline in oral performance skills, and the lack of standardized methods for recording and preserving oral literature.

#### ***2.4 Strategies for Oral Literature Preservation***

This section examines various strategies employed for the preservation of oral literature. It explores the use of technology, such as audio and video recordings, digital archiving, and online platforms, as tools for documenting and disseminating oral literature. It also discusses the importance of collaborations between communities, scholars, and cultural institutions in collecting, cataloguing, and preserving oral literature.

The chapter highlights the significance of education in the preservation of oral literature. It suggests incorporating oral literature into school curricula, organizing workshops and training programs for teachers, and creating awareness campaigns to promote the value of oral literature among younger generations.

#### ***2.5 Complementing Oral Literature Preservation Across African Nations***

This section emphasizes the need for a broader perspective on oral literature preservation that goes beyond individual nations. It suggests the importance of learning about the oral literature traditions, challenges, and experiences of other African nations. By studying and understanding the diverse oral literature practices across Africa, researchers and practitioners can develop comprehensive approaches to preservation that account for cultural variations and specific contexts.

Overall, Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review on oral literature and its preservation. It defines oral literature, explores its significance in society, discusses the challenges faced in its preservation, and examines strategies to safeguard this valuable cultural heritage. The chapter highlights the importance of technological advancements, educational initiatives, and cross-cultural collaboration in ensuring the continuity and appreciation of oral literature across generations and nations.

### **6.2.3 Chapter 3**

This chapter provided an integrated theoretical context for the study of *ukuthwasa*. It describes the relationship between ancestors and humanity, how *ukuthwasa* may be comprehended, and the function and value of dreams in *ukuthwasa*. Section B presents a methodologically integrated approach to the concerns posed. It also identifies the study's locations, participants, and how data was gathered, analysed, and evaluated. The chapter also analyses the reliability of the data gathered. Chapter 3 focuses on establishing the theoretical framework and methodology employed in the study. It provides a theoretical context for understanding *ukuthwasa* and its significance within the broader cultural and spiritual context. Additionally, it outlines the research methodology used to gather and analyze data.

#### **3.1 Theoretical Framework**

In this section, the chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks that inform the study. It may draw upon various theories, such as cultural anthropology, folklore studies, or sociocultural theories, to provide a comprehensive understanding of *ukuthwasa* and its implications. The chapter explores the relationship between ancestors and humanity, delves into the concept of spiritual crises and initiatory callings, and highlights the role of dreams in the *ukuthwasa* process.

The theoretical framework serves as a lens through which the study examines and interprets the experiences of individuals undergoing *ukuthwasa* and the importance of oral literature preservation. It provides a theoretical basis for analysing the data collected and interpreting the findings in a broader context.

### **3.2 Methodology**

This section outlines the research methodology employed in the study. It discusses the overall research design, including the approach (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) and the rationale for selecting the chosen approach. The chapter provides an in-depth description of the methods used to collect data, such as interviews, surveys, participant observation, or document analysis.

The chapter also discusses the sampling strategy and the criteria for selecting participants. It explains how the researcher ensured a diverse representation of young people undergoing *ukuthwasa* to capture a range of experiences and perspectives. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, are also addressed. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the data analysis process. It explains how the collected data were transcribed, organized, and analysed to identify patterns, themes, and key findings. It may detail the use of qualitative software or other analytical techniques employed to analyze the data effectively.

### **3.3 Limitations and Validity**

This section acknowledges the limitations of the study and discusses potential sources of bias or constraints that may have influenced the research process or findings. It may address challenges faced during data collection, such as time constraints, access to participants, or language barriers. Additionally, it reflects on the potential impact of these limitations on the validity and generalizability of the study's findings.

### **3.4 Reliability and Trustworthiness**

The chapter assesses the reliability and trustworthiness of the study's findings. It discusses the steps taken to ensure rigor and credibility in the research process, such as member checking, triangulation, or peer debriefing. The chapter may also discuss the reflexivity of the researcher, acknowledging their role and potential biases in data collection and analysis. Overall, Chapter 3 establishes the theoretical framework and methodology used in the study. It provides a solid foundation for understanding *ukuthwasa* within a cultural and spiritual context and outlines the research approach employed to gather and analyze data. The chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study and emphasizes the steps taken to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings.

### **6.2.4 Chapter 4**

The data was then acquired from ten individuals, as revealed by the researcher, who stated that the objective for carefully selecting these participants was to get perspectives from young people regarding the journey and obstacles that come with *ukuthwasa*. The researcher then expressed their viewpoints on the topic that the study aimed to address, as well as the viewpoints of other researchers from earlier studies.

Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the data collected from the participants in the study. The chapter begins by presenting the characteristics of the participants and providing an overview of the data collection process. It then proceeds to analyze the data and extract key themes and findings related to *ukuthwasa* and oral literature preservation.

#### **4.1 Participant Characteristics**

In this section, the chapter provides detailed information about the participants involved in the study. It describes their demographic characteristics, such as age,

gender, and cultural background. Additionally, it discusses the selection criteria used to ensure a diverse representation of young people undergoing *ukuthwasa* and their experiences with oral literature.

#### **4.2 Data Collection Process**

The chapter explains the methods and techniques used to collect the data. It may include information on interviews, surveys, observations, or any other relevant data collection methods employed in the study. This section highlights the ethical considerations taken into account to protect the participants' confidentiality and privacy.

#### **4.3 Data Analysis**

This section delves into the analysis of the collected data. It describes the process of organizing and categorizing the data to identify patterns, themes, and recurring ideas. The analysis may involve coding the data, using qualitative software, or employing other analytical techniques to derive meaningful insights from the participants' responses.

#### **4.4 Key Themes and Findings**

The chapter presents the key themes and findings that emerged from the data analysis. These themes are typically based on the research objectives and address specific aspects of *ukuthwasa* and oral literature preservation. Each theme is discussed in detail, supported by direct quotes or paraphrases from the participants' responses.

For example, one theme may revolve around the challenges faced by young people undergoing *ukuthwasa*, such as social acceptance, conflicts with education, and financial constraints. Another theme may focus on the role of education in preserving oral literature and how schools can incorporate oral literature into the curriculum.

The findings are presented in a coherent and logical manner, highlighting their significance in relation to the research objectives. The chapter may also discuss any unexpected or contradictory findings and provide explanations or interpretations for these observations.

#### ***4.5 Discussion of Findings***

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings in light of existing literature and theories. It may compare the results with previous studies, identifying similarities, differences, or gaps in knowledge. The discussion may also explore the implications of the findings for theory, practice, or policy, highlighting their potential impact on the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices.

Overall, Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected in the study, presenting key themes and findings that contribute to a deeper understanding of *ukuthwasa* and oral literature preservation. The chapter serves as a bridge between the raw data and the subsequent discussion and interpretation of the research findings.

#### **6.2.5 Chapter 5**

This is a discussion chapter that provides a critical engagement with all themes found from the replies of participants to the research questions posed. Chapter 5 serves as a critical engagement with the themes and findings that emerged from the participants' responses to the research questions. This chapter delves deeper into the analysis of

the data, highlighting key patterns, insights, and implications that arise from the research. It aims to provide a comprehensive discussion of the research findings and their significance in the context of ukuthwasa and oral literature preservation.

### ***5.1 Challenges Faced by Young People Undergoing Ukuthwasa***

The discussion begins by exploring the challenges faced by young people undergoing *ukuthwasa*. The findings reveal that these individuals often encounter difficulties in various aspects of their lives, including social acceptance, education, and financial constraints. The societal response to their ancestral calling ranges from acceptance and support to rejection and ridicule, leading to feelings of isolation and stigmatization. Participants shared experiences of conflicts with peers, misunderstandings from family members, and the need to balance school responsibilities with their *ukuthwasa* journey.

### ***5.2 Importance of Understanding and Supporting Ancestral Callings***

The discussion then highlights the importance of understanding and supporting ancestral callings, particularly in the context of *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*. The participants emphasized the spiritual and transformative nature of these callings and how they contribute to personal growth and healing abilities. However, the lack of understanding and knowledge about *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso* among elders and the broader community hinders the support and guidance young people need during their journey. This lack of support can lead to a loss of traditional knowledge and practices, impacting the preservation of cultural heritage.

### ***5.3 Role of Oral Literature in Preserving Cultural Heritage***

The role of oral literature in preserving cultural heritage is a significant theme that emerges from the data. Participants emphasized the importance of oral literature in



transmitting cultural values, beliefs, and history across generations. Oral literature, including myths, stories, and poetry, serves as a repository of cultural knowledge, offering insights into the ways of life of our ancestors and their beliefs about the world. The findings underscore the need for the preservation and promotion of oral literature as a vital component of cultural heritage.

#### ***5.4 Integration of Oral Literature in Education***

The discussion also explores the integration of oral literature in education as a means to promote cultural preservation and understanding. Participants expressed the importance of incorporating oral literature into the curriculum to ensure that young people have opportunities to engage with their cultural heritage in a meaningful way. They emphasized the role of schools and universities in teaching about oral literature and its significance, creating spaces for cultural expression, and fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

#### ***5.5 Ethical Considerations in Research and Study***

Ethical considerations in researching and studying *ukuthwasa* and oral literature are another key aspect discussed in this chapter. The findings highlight the need for researchers and practitioners to approach these cultural practices with respect, sensitivity, and an understanding of the spiritual and personal nature of *ukuthwasa*. Ethical guidelines should be followed to ensure the well-being and privacy of participants, and informed consent should be obtained when conducting research in this area.

#### ***5.6 Implications for Future Research and Practice***

The discussion concludes by presenting implications for future research and practice. It suggests the need for further research to expand the understanding of *ukuthwasa*,

its impact on mental health, and strategies for supporting young people undergoing the process. It also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between communities, researchers, educators, and policymakers to develop effective approaches for preserving and promoting oral literature and ancestral healing practices.

By conducting further research, raising awareness, and taking action, it is possible to ensure the preservation and promotion of oral literature and ancestral healing practices. This chapter serves as a critical reflection on the research findings, providing a comprehensive discussion that contributes to the broader understanding of *ukuthwasa*, oral literature,

## **6.2.6 Chapter 6**

In the final chapter of this research journey, a comprehensive synthesis of the entire study is presented, offering a culmination of the findings, insights, and implications that have emerged from the exploration of *ukuthwasa*, ancestral healing practices, and the role of oral literature. This chapter serves as a reflection on the significance of the study and a bridge between the academic exploration and its real-world applications.

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings of this research underscore the profound significance of *ukuthwasa* as a transformative journey that bridges the earthly realm with that of the ancestors. Young individuals who undergo *ukuthwasa*, known as *umkhwetha*, are chosen by their ancestors to serve as intermediaries between the living and the deceased. The process involves mentorship, tradition, and spiritual alignment, leading to a holistic integration of physical, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects. Through the narratives of the participants, the complexities, challenges, and rewards of *ukuthwasa* have been illuminated, showcasing its deep cultural and personal implications.

The role of oral literature in preserving ancestral wisdom and cultural heritage is evident throughout the research. Oral literature, which includes storytelling, songs, and teachings, acts as a vessel for transmitting ancestral knowledge across generations. Rooted in the indigenous essence of African heritage, oral literature safeguards traditions and narratives that provide a sense of continuity and cultural pride.

## **6.2 Implications and Significance**

The implications of this research are far-reaching and multifaceted. The study underscores the importance of understanding and supporting young people who experience *ukuthwasa* and *intwaso*, dispelling myths and misconceptions, and promoting acceptance within communities. By acknowledging and respecting these ancestral callings, individuals can foster a sense of identity and belonging, leading to holistic well-being.

The role of oral literature as a conduit for ancestral teachings and cultural heritage is crucial in maintaining diversity and enriching cultural understanding. The study emphasizes the significance of preserving oral literature through documentation, community involvement, intergenerational transmission, and collaboration. These efforts not only safeguard cultural heritage but also contribute to the mental and emotional well-being of individuals and communities.

## **6.3 Education and Ethical Considerations**

The integration of oral literature into education emerges as a pivotal recommendation. Incorporating oral literature into curricula can instill a sense of pride and belonging among students, fostering an appreciation for cultural heritage. However, this integration requires a nuanced approach that respects the authenticity and cultural significance of oral narratives.

Ethical considerations remain paramount when researching and studying these cultural practices. Researchers must engage in respectful relationships with the communities they work with, ensuring informed consent, intellectual property rights, and a commitment to benefiting the communities involved.

#### **6.4 Future Directions**

The culmination of this study calls for continued research, support, and promotion of *ukuthwasa*, ancestral healing practices, and oral literature. Initiatives that bridge academic research with community involvement and collaboration can yield transformative outcomes. Interdisciplinary approaches can provide comprehensive insights into the historical, cultural, psychological, and social dimensions of these practices.

#### **6.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research journey has unveiled the intricate tapestry of *ukuthwasa*, ancestral healing practices, and oral literature. These cultural practices stand as threads that weave through time, bridging generations and preserving wisdom. By understanding, supporting, and promoting these practices, we contribute to the enrichment of cultural diversity, holistic well-being, and a deeper understanding of the shared human experience. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, the wisdom of our ancestors resonates through the oral narratives that continue to guide us, inspiring us to embrace our heritage and envision a harmonious future.

#### **6.3 Recommendations**

As the researcher, I would prefer a larger-scale research over one with a small number of participants. It would also be beneficial to learn about the callings and experiences of other African nations. My recommendation to learn more about oral literature and

its challenges should not jeopardize the studies of other cultures but rather complement them. This would broaden the scope of the research and lead to a better understanding of how oral literature preservation can be implemented in different contexts.

In addition, it is important to consider the role of education in the preservation of oral literature. Schools and universities can play a significant role in teaching young people about their cultural heritage and the importance of oral literature. Incorporating oral literature into the curriculum can also provide opportunities for young people to engage with their culture in a meaningful way.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the preservation of oral literature is not solely the responsibility of individuals or communities. Governments and other organizations should also take an active role in preserving and promoting oral literature. This can include funding for research, publications, and cultural events that celebrate and showcase oral literature. The preservation of oral literature is a vital component of cultural heritage. It is important to conduct further research and take action to ensure that this rich and valuable form of cultural expression is not lost to future generations. By adopting new technologies and strategies, engaging with education, and involving multiple stakeholders, we can successfully preserve and promote the oral literature of our cultures.

Based on the research objectives, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The journey of *ukuthwasa* presents significant challenges to the youth of today. These challenges may include a lack of understanding and acceptance by peers, conflicts with school schedules and responsibilities, and financial constraints.

2. The journey of *ukuthwasa* is a spiritual and personal journey that requires a deep understanding of one's ancestral beliefs and traditions. It involves undergoing a process of initiation, which can take several years.

3. The society's response to one's calling varies, ranging from acceptance and support to rejection and ridicule. Many individuals who have undergone the journey of *ukuthwasa* face stigmatization and discrimination, which can negatively impact their mental health and well-being.

4. The specified school may face challenges in adapting to having students and/or teachers who have a calling, particularly in terms of accommodating their unique needs and practices. However, with greater awareness and understanding, schools can develop strategies to support students and teachers who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. To address the challenges faced by schools in accommodating students and teachers who have undergone *ukuthwasa*, it is crucial to promote greater awareness and understanding within the educational community. Here are some additional recommendations to develop strategies and support systems:

- **Sensitization and Training:** Schools should provide sensitization programs and training sessions for teachers and staff to enhance their understanding of *ukuthwasa* and its significance. This training should focus on cultural sensitivity, dispelling myths or misconceptions, and fostering a respectful and inclusive environment.
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Schools can explore flexible scheduling options to accommodate the unique needs and practices of students and teachers who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. This may involve adjusting timetables, providing opportunities for participation in cultural rituals, or allowing time off for initiation ceremonies or related activities.
- **Support Networks:** Establishing support networks within the school community can be beneficial. This can include creating peer support groups or mentorship programs where students and teachers who have undergone *ukuthwasa* can

connect and share their experiences with others who have a similar background or journey.

- **Individualized Support Plans:** Schools should work with students and teachers to develop individualized support plans that take into account their specific needs and circumstances. This may involve discussions with the individuals and their families to determine appropriate accommodations and adjustments that can be made within the school setting.
- **Cultural Inclusion in the Curriculum:** Incorporating aspects of ancestral beliefs, traditions, and oral literature into the curriculum can help create a more inclusive learning environment. This can be achieved by integrating relevant content, stories, or discussions into various subjects, such as history, social studies, literature, or even through extracurricular activities.
- **Collaborations with Community and Elders:** Schools can establish partnerships with community leaders, elders, and cultural organizations to seek guidance and support in creating an environment that respects and supports the cultural practices and beliefs associated with *ukuthwasa*. Involving community members can provide valuable insights and ensure cultural authenticity in the support provided.
- **Counselling and Well-being Services:** It is important to recognize the potential psychological and emotional challenges that individuals who have undergone *ukuthwasa* may face. Schools should offer counselling services or provide access to external support resources to address any mental health needs and ensure the well-being of these students and teachers.

By implementing these strategies, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for students and teachers who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. It is essential

to foster a culture of respect, understanding, and acceptance within the school community to ensure that these individuals can fully participate and thrive in their educational journey while maintaining their cultural heritage.

5. There may be ways for *intwaso* to be included in the schooling structure and system without contravening the school's code of conduct. This could involve incorporating aspects of ancestral beliefs and traditions into the curriculum, developing workshops and training for teachers and students, and fostering a culture of respect and understanding.

6. The importance of *intwaso* can be instilled in the youth of today through education and awareness-raising initiatives. This could involve developing educational materials and resources, organizing community events and workshops, and creating safe spaces for individuals who have undergone *ukuthwasa* to share their experiences and insights.

Overall, the findings suggest that there is a need for greater understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. By promoting greater awareness and understanding of ancestral beliefs and traditions, schools and communities can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals.

To address the preference for a larger-scale research, it is recommended to expand the participant pool and include a more diverse range of individuals who have undergone *ukuthwasa*. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and experiences associated with this spiritual journey. In order to learn about the callings and experiences of other African nations, it would be beneficial to collaborate with researchers and organizations from those nations. This collaboration can help broaden the scope of the research and lead to a better understanding of how oral literature preservation can be implemented in different contexts.



Regarding the preservation of oral literature, it is important to consider the role of education. Schools and universities can play a significant role in teaching young people about their cultural heritage and the importance of oral literature. To incorporate oral literature into the curriculum, it is recommended to develop specialized courses or modules that focus on the study and preservation of oral literature. This can provide opportunities for young people to engage with their culture in a meaningful way and develop a deeper appreciation for their heritage.

In addition to education, it is crucial to involve multiple stakeholders in the preservation of oral literature. Governments and organizations should take an active role by providing funding for research, publications, and cultural events that celebrate and showcase oral literature. Collaboration between researchers, cultural institutions, and community organizations can help create initiatives that promote the preservation and promotion of oral literature.

Furthermore, the adoption of new technologies and strategies can enhance the preservation efforts. Digital platforms and archives can be utilized to record and document oral literature, making it more accessible for future generations. Additionally, the use of multimedia resources, such as audio and video recordings, can capture the performative aspects of oral literature and ensure its preservation in a dynamic and engaging manner.

To address the challenges faced by individuals who have undergone ukuthwasa, it is recommended to raise awareness and promote understanding within society. Community events, workshops, and seminars can be organized to educate the public about the significance of ukuthwasa and its role in cultural heritage. Creating safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences and insights can also help reduce stigmatization and discrimination.

Conducting larger-scale research, collaborating with researchers from other African nations, incorporating oral literature into education, involving multiple stakeholders, adopting new technologies, and promoting awareness and understanding are all key recommendations for the preservation and promotion of oral literature. By implementing these strategies, a better understanding of oral literature and its challenges can be achieved, leading to effective preservation efforts that respect and celebrate cultural diversity.

**Interdisciplinary Research and Collaboration:** Given the multifaceted nature of *ukuthwasa* and its connections to various aspects of culture, spirituality, psychology, and social dynamics, there is a need for interdisciplinary research. Collaboration between researchers from different fields, such as anthropology, psychology, cultural studies, and education, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in *ukuthwasa*. This collaboration can lead to a holistic approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with this spiritual journey.

**Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies that follow individuals who have undergone *ukuthwasa* over an extended period can offer insights into the long-term effects, challenges, and benefits of the experience. By tracking participants' experiences, well-being, and integration into society over time, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how *ukuthwasa* shapes their lives and identity in the long run.

**Community Engagement and Empowerment:** In order to effectively preserve and promote oral literature, it is essential to involve the communities from which the oral traditions originate. Engaging community members, elders, and cultural leaders in the preservation efforts can ensure that the traditions are accurately represented and respected. Empowering these communities to take ownership of their cultural heritage preservation can lead to more sustainable and meaningful outcomes.

**Cultural Exchange and International Collaboration:** To broaden the understanding of oral literature across cultures and nations, international collaboration and cultural

exchange programs can be established. Researchers, practitioners, and cultural ambassadors from different countries can share their experiences and insights, fostering mutual respect and enriching the global discourse on oral literature preservation.

**Digital Archiving and Online Platforms:** As technology continues to advance, leveraging digital archiving and online platforms can provide a wide-reaching and accessible repository for oral literature. Creating digital archives, websites, or multimedia platforms dedicated to preserving and sharing oral traditions can bridge generational gaps and make the content available to a global audience.

**Advocacy and Policy Development:** Recognizing the significance of oral literature, advocacy efforts can be undertaken to emphasize its importance within national and international cultural policies. Lobbying for funding, recognition, and support from government bodies, cultural institutions, and NGOs can contribute to sustained efforts in preserving and promoting oral literature.

**Ethical Considerations:** In the process of researching, documenting, and preserving oral literature, ethical considerations must be paramount. Consent and collaboration with community members, respect for cultural protocols, and a commitment to representing the traditions accurately and sensitively are essential principles to uphold.

**Public Engagement and Education Campaigns:** Launching public engagement initiatives, such as workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and performances, can raise awareness about the value of oral literature. These initiatives can help dispel myths, challenge stereotypes, and foster a greater appreciation for the richness of cultural heritage.

Recommendations should be seen as a roadmap to enhance the preservation, understanding, and promotion of oral literature, particularly within the context of ukuthwasa. By addressing the challenges and embracing the opportunities, individuals, communities, researchers, and organizations can collectively contribute to safeguarding this invaluable cultural legacy for generations to come. It is a collaborative endeavour that requires dedication, cultural sensitivity, and a commitment to celebrating the diverse narratives that shape our identities.

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## **Annexures**

### **Annexure 1: Consent form**

This is to ask for your permission to interview your child who has an ancestral calling to participate in a research study led by Ncebakazi Mtombeni, a master's student at the University of Cape Town. The study and your child's rights as a participant are outlined further below.

This study will investigate children's experiences with their *ukuthwasa* journey, how society has reacted to it, and the school's acceptance status of having students/teachers with *intwaso*.

The student's replies will be kept private and will not be correlated with their names. Instead, each student will be assigned an identity number during the interview.

**Kind regards**

**N. Mtombeni**

## **Annexure 2: Questions**

### **Age**

- Less than 14
- 15-18
- 19 and above

### **Grade**

- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

### **Do you give consent for me to record our interview?**

### **Open-ended questions**

1. How long have you had *intwaso*?
2. Have you accepted your calling?
3. What made you think you had it? Were there any signs that you can share that made you realise you had the calling?
4. Did you receive the necessary support from your loved ones for your *ukuthwasa* journey?
5. What were the most difficult obstacles you experienced with *ukuthwasa*?
6. Please mention briefly your *ukuthwasa* journey.
7. How has society reacted to your calling?
8. Has your organization adapted to having students and/or teachers with a calling?
9. Is there any way you would like *intwaso* to be integrated in the school structure and system without violating the school's code of conduct? If so, please elaborate.
10. How do you believe the value of *intwaso* can be instilled in today's youth?
11. How would you suggest a better strategy of fighting and preventing *amathwasa* from being bullied because of their ancestral calling?

**Thank you for participating in this research study**