

**INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING LIVING  
HERITAGE ARCHIVES AMONG THE YOUTH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A  
CASE STUDY NATIONAL HERITAGE COUNCIL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the youth being widely recognised as the future custodians of heritage, yet various scholars concur that awareness and usage of the living heritage archive among the youth in South Africa remain limited. This study explored the role of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through social media, with the aim of enhancing awareness and usage of these resources at the National Heritage Council (NHC) of South Africa. Guided by the concept of soft power, the study examined how the NHC leverages public programming initiatives to create awareness and encourage engagement with living heritage archives, particularly among South African youth. A qualitative approach, underpinned by a case study research design, was employed using semi-structured interviews, physical observation, and content analysis to collect data. 2020 to 2024/25 annual reports, institutional reports, policies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), strategic plans, minutes, Annual Performance Plans, and the NHC's Facebook page were the primary entities of analysis, whereas heritage officers working under the Core Business Programme served as a unit of analysis. Data collected was analysed thematically. The study revealed that while the NHC recognises the importance of public programming initiatives, its efforts to promote living heritage archives on social media remain limited and largely ineffective. As a result, content was shared irregularly, with heritage officers not conducting user studies on their users and potential users, and therefore sharing information that is not appealing to the eyes of the users. Users' comments were also regularly ignored. The study further revealed that the NHC's living heritage archives, especially heritage-funded publications, are not open to for the public access, and as such, the NHC drives the users to the authors of the heritage-funded projects instead of drawing them to the living heritage archives held by the organisation. To address these challenges, the study proposes a framework for promoting living heritage archives through social media, offering heritage institutions practical guidance for strengthening awareness and encouraging broader usage of living heritage resources.

**Key words:** public programming initiatives, social media, living heritage awareness, living heritage archives, living heritage, National Heritage Council, South Africa, intangible heritage, heritage, archives, user studies

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, whose love, patience, and encouragement have been my constant source of strength throughout this journey. To my husband, Mr Lesiba Simon Mojapelo, thank you for all the sacrifices you made in making sure that I complete my studies without hassle. To my children, Neo and Paballo, thank you, my babies, for enduring the times while mommy spent away from you with the efforts of completing her studies. This was all for you.

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## DECLARATION

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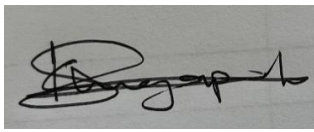
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### **INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING LIVING HERITAGE ARCHIVES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY NATIONAL HERITAGE COUNCIL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

I declare that the work titled **Influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through social media: a case study National Heritage Council in South Africa** is my work, and that all the sources used in this study have been properly acknowledged and cited.

I further declare that this dissertation has been submitted to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any institution of higher education.



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March 2025

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMHN	American Museum of Natural History
APP	Annual Performance Plan
AR	Augmented Reality
BNARS	Botswana National Archives and Records Service
BTCL	Botswana Telecommunications Corporation Limited
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COCTLIS	City of Cape Town's Department of Library and Information Services
COMSTA	Communications, Marketing, and Stakeholder Engagement
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ESARBICA	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
GCIS	Government Communications and Information Systems
HESOP	Heritage Education Schools Programme
HoC	Head of Communications
ICA	International Council on Archives
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
J-PAL	Jameel Poverty Action Lab
KPA	Key Performance Areas
LH	Living heritage
MMR	Mixed Method Research
NARSSA	National Archives and Records Service of South Africa
NHC	National Heritage Council
NIO	National Inventory Office
NMC	National Museum of China
NPSALH	National Policy on South African Living Heritage
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Services
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act

PESP	Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme
PSO	Programme Support Officer
RAMD	Records and Archives Management Department
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
RLHR	Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UA	University of Alabama
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
VR	Virtual Reality
WHS	World Heritage Specialist

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The importance of awareness of living heritage cannot be overemphasised because heritage plays a crucial role in influencing our identities, cultures, and communities. Living heritage is irreplaceable and non-renewable; the need for awareness creation of living heritage is therefore of extreme significance. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019), living heritage is an inheritance that is passed on from one generation to another; therefore, it is crucial for fostering a cohesive society, cultural diversity, peace, reconciliation, and economic growth. Living heritage enhances people's lives by constantly offering a profound and motivating sense of connection to historical and lived events, as well as to community and heritage resources (South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA 2020).

According to SAHRA (2020), living heritage consists of cultural expressions that are passed on from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments, and contribute to giving us a sense of personal, group, and national identity and continuity. Living heritage is imbedded in human beings, hence its fragility. Due to the nature of living heritage being irreplaceable, it requires documentation to be continued, and for the same living heritage to be documented, it must be known, hence the significance of awareness of the living heritage. Despite living heritage being constantly reproduced, developed, and renewed by its custodians, SAHRA (2020) states that awareness of the living heritage needs to be upheld to ensure continued identification with the living heritage practices by bearer groups and communities.

Globally, the United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (affectionately known as Agenda 2030) supports the protection and safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage (United Nations 2023). In terms of Goal 11.4, United Nations (UN) member states undertake to make an effort to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. This was also emphasised by UNESCO through its convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003). According to Article 14 of the UNESCO Convention for the

Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, each state party shall endeavour, by appropriate means, to foster the promotion of intangible heritage through the following:

- a. Educational initiatives, that is, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the public, and young people in particular.
- b. Training and capacity-building activities within communities.
- c. Non-formal means of knowledge transmission.

Based on the provisions of the UNESCO convention, it is important for the country to not only promote living heritage but also raise awareness among young people. According to Brough, Literat and Ikin (2020), the youth remain a large segment of the users of social media platforms. A recent report by Patricios (2023) on digital statistics in South Africa shows that 43.5 million of the population uses social media for various purposes such as education, news, entertainment, customer service, and networking. According to the report, Facebook is the most widely utilised platform, followed by YouTube.

Social media is a vital tool that can be used by heritage organisations to promote their products and services through public programmes, along with activities such as community works, dialogues, leaflets and pamphlets, exhibitions and brochures, and public lectures (Mnjama 2018; Mosweu 2019; Saurombe 2016; Chaterera & Rodrigues 2019). These activities can raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of living heritage and that everyone must make an effort to ensure that the world heritage is protected. However, Mukwevho (2017) is adamant that user studies are crucial when conducting public programming initiatives. User studies ensure that relevant public programming initiatives are established to attract the users and potential users to the archives. The implementation of user studies before developing public programming initiatives ascertains successful public programming initiatives.

Liew, Wellington, Oliver and Perkins (2015) identify social media as internet-based applications that facilitate content creation, knowledge sharing, content editing, and content contribution. Social media allows individuals to communicate and share content in real time (Garaba 2012; Davis 2016). For the purpose of the current study, Facebook was used as social media platform for awareness creation, largely because it is the most popular and most-used social media platform in South Africa (Manca 2020; Querty Digital 2018; Patricios 2023; Bountouri 2017). The choice of Facebook

for the study was also influenced by the large number of followers of the National Heritage Council's (NHC) Facebook page. The researcher observed that the NHC's Facebook page is followed by 8700 members as opposed to its Twitter account that has three followers and the Instagram account that has 1849 followers.

### **1.1.1 The link between promotion of living heritage and public programming**

The promotion of living heritage records through public programming using Facebook as a tool is crucial for the continuous awareness of human history, cultural developments, and an increased usage of archives (Bountouri 2017). However, despite this fact, the living heritage archives of the NHC, as observed by the researcher, are least known and used by the public (Saurombe & Ngulube 2018). Only a small portion of the public is aware that archival resources are open to anyone (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2011). Chaterera (2017) proffers that the ability of the heritage institutions to promote their heritage archives to the public using social media is the foundation for awareness and usage increase of their archives. UNESCO (2003) defines heritage as a product and process that provide societies with a wealth of resources that are inherited from the past, created in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) defines heritage as an expression of the traditions, customs, rituals, practices, beliefs, and legacies that are practised by and transferred from generation to generation (South Africa 2013). Whereas the NHC defines heritage as what is preserved from the past as the living collective memory of a people not only to inform the present about the past but also to equip successive generations to fashion their future. It is what creates a sense of identity and assures rootedness and continuity, so that what is brought out by the dynamism of culture is not changed for its own sake but is a result of people's conscious choice to create a better life (NHC 2020-2025: 7). The common ground of the definitions of heritage resides in it being the inheritance of individuals that is transmitted from one generation to another, which allows individuals to make an informed decision in their choices of life.

In terms of section 4 of the NHC Act, the NHC is charged with the responsibility to protect, preserve, promote, and encourage the use of the content and heritage of the country. Although public programming has so far been proven to be the best strategy to encourage the use of archival material, Saurombe and Ngulube (2016) and

Saurombe (2020) opine that public programming has not been prioritised by memory institutions in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA).

For example, the University of Alabama (UA) was successful in using Facebook to promote their archival repository through public programming (Saurombe 2019). As a result, Crymble (2010) suggests that institutions should consider using new technology in promoting their archival holdings to the public. Using social media platforms helps alleviate the endangerment that the living heritage in South Africa is currently facing. The use of social media to support public programming allows users and potential users of the archives to view the archive resources with a perception that archives do not only keep old records that are without value to society (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022). Engaging with social media platforms enables the living heritage archives to remain relevant in this era of increased use of technology (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022). Living heritage records will remain worthless if they are not accessible and used (Saurombe 2016). It is for this reason that the living heritage archives should be made known for public access use through creative and innovative ways that social media provides.

Saurombe and Ngulube (2016b) and Charter (2000) emphasise that public programming initiatives can assist individuals to rediscover their heritage, as awareness of the past assists in reinforcing who they are, and thus sustain their cultural diversity. Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022) add that successful public programming initiatives are dependent solely on sound leadership. However, Mukwevho (2017) and Day, Bastardo, Bisbey, Reyes and Salas (2024) argue that sound leadership alone cannot lead to successful public programming initiatives. While effective leadership is crucial for motivating and directing teams, successful projects frequently call for collaboration, community involvement, clear vision and strategy, sustainability, as well as evaluation and adaptability in successfully implementing public programming initiatives (Musaigwa 2023).

A continuous awareness of the living heritage archives can be achieved through user studies. According to Blais (1995), user studies can address the issues of awareness and visibility. User studies analyse the behaviour, needs, and expectations of the users, therefore helping the leaders to tailor their public programming initiatives to the

needs of their users and potential users. In this case, the researcher noted that the integration of soft power, along with user studies within public programming initiatives of the living heritage archives, can assist in guaranteeing the visibility of the archives.

The heritage of South Africa is facing the risk of extinction due to the lack of awareness. Khalid and Chowdhury (2018) also maintain that there is currently an unawareness of the living heritage in communities, especially among the youth of South Africa. Historical imbalances emanating from how the heritage of diverse communities was treated during the apartheid era still contribute to the unawareness of the South African heritage (National Policy on South African Living Heritage (NPSALH) 2009). Indigenous languages, rituals, social practices, performing arts, and indigenous knowledge across social groups were actively opposed (NPSALH 2009). South Africa's heritage was not openly valued and promoted and, as a result, South Africa lacks social cohesion (NPSALH 2009).

Despite South Africa being a rainbow nation that is well known for its promotion of cultural diversity, cultural diversity is still not appreciated by the citizens. Occurrences of xenophobia, corruption, racism, a lack of ethics and care in public, and institutional services manifest daily in the country due to the lack of social cohesion, which is caused mainly by unawareness of the essence of cultural diversity (NPSALH 2009).

Living heritage plays an important role in promoting cultural diversity, social cohesion, peace, redress, and development. It enables mutual respect for human, social, and cultural rights (South Africa 2013). Heritage also provides individuals with a sense of belonging as well as an accumulation of intellectual capital for present and future generations. It is for these reasons that living heritage records must be promoted to the citizens through social media to increase awareness, access, and usage by users and potential users. The use of Facebook as a social media platform in this study is mainly for increased visibility and usage of the living heritage archives. Social media is used for marketing the living heritage archival services of the NHC for awareness and usage.

### **1.1.2 Accessibility and visibility of living heritage**

Malm (2019) argues for the need for modifications and improvements in the education provided to the public. It is now apparent that with the growth of information within the

heritage sector, living heritage archival officers should know how to filter information to best attract their target audiences to the living heritage archives during educational programmes. The successful implementation of user studies along with sound leadership in public programming initiatives can be considered the improvements needed to instil knowledge about the living heritage archives to the public using social media as a platform for awareness.

User studies are crucial for determining the needs of the users and potential users. User studies can assess the public whom the living heritage archives are targeting, thereby assisting the living heritage officers to strategise their approach when conducting public programming initiatives for awareness creation. According to Kumar (2016), a user study is a type of market research where the target audience is monitored to assess their behaviour, preferences, and viewpoints. Through a user study, living heritage officers can better understand what their users and potential users want from the archives by conducting interviews, surveys, and focus groups (Shai & Bopape 2021). Living heritage officers can better match users' expectations by adjusting their public programming initiatives in view of the knowledge they would have gathered through studying their users. Power, Lewis, Petrie, Green and Richards (2017) assert that user studies often focus on access and usage, which is one of the key purposes of archives. User services are therefore linked to the success of public programming initiatives; the more the programmes align with the needs of users and potential users, the more living heritage archives will be used effectively. Hence the +significance of user studies before conducting public programming initiatives.

## **1.2 CONTEXTUAL SETTING**

The study took place at the National Heritage Council (NHC) of South Africa, located in Summit place business park, 221 Garsfontein road, Pretoria. The NHC is a Schedule 3A public entity and an agency of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) (NHC 2020-2025:6). The NHC's mandate is centred on preservation, protection, transformation, and promotion of heritage in South Africa for social cohesion (NHC 2020-2025). The organisation derives its mandate from the NHC Act (Act No. 11 of 1999). In terms of section 4 of the NHC Act, some of the primary objectives of the NHC include the:

- development, promotion, and protection of the national heritage for present and future generations
- coordination of heritage management
- protection, preservation, and promotion of the content and heritage, which reside in orature in order to make it accessible and dynamic
- promotion and protection of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), including, but not limited to, enterprise and industry, social upliftment, institutional framework and liberatory processes
- intensification of support for the promotion of the history and culture of all the people and, particularly, to support research and publication on enslavement in South Africa.

As a public institution, the NHC seeks to serve the interest of the public through the promotion of knowledge, memory, and history to the public (Melville & Malao 2005; Louis & Robinson 2012). The NHC therefore renders the following products and services to the public:

- Research reports on national heritage
- National heritage knowledge interventions programme
- Publications on national heritage
- Information on heritage in South Africa (NHC 2020-2025)

The NHC also serves to ascertain that the national heritage knowledge interventions programmes such as programmes centred on Freedom Day, Human Rights Day, and Heritage Day in South Africa are shared through its various social media platforms, which are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (NHC 2022/23). The programmes designed and implemented by the organisation are posted on the NHC's social media platforms for awareness as well as for their followers to engage in the activities. Despite the institution targeting the youth as its social media audience, the organisation is still not technologically equipped to reach its audience (NHC 2022/23).

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The success of memory institutions in achieving awareness and usage of their public archival repositories using social media is still a challenge. Mukwevho (2019) revealed that the Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Western Cape landmarks are visible,

whereas Free State, Limpopo, Northern Cape, North-West and Eastern Cape could not easily draw potential users to their archives. The Northern Cape and the Western Cape archives were found to be the only active departments on social media in achieving awareness and usage of their archives. Therefore, reinforcing that very few public archival repositories are taking advantage of social media to promote their archives (Mukwevho & Ngoepe 2019; Liew, King & Oliver 2015; Garaba 2012; Saurombe 2016). As a result, awareness and usage of archival repositories by the youth in South Africa ranges from minimal to no usage (Kamatula 2011; Van der Walt 2011; Saurombe 2018; Kamatula, Mnkeni-Saurombe & Mosweu 2013; & Mukwevho 2017). Harris (2000), Van der Walt (2011), and Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019). The lack of usage results largely from the youth not knowing the archives and the purpose they serve in societies (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2011). Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) further reiterate that another reason the youth are not utilising these archives is because of the archival holdings not reflecting their needs.

The NHC carries the legislative and policy mandate “to develop, promote and protect the National Heritage for present and future generation and to intensify support for the promotion of history and culture” of its people (South Africa 1999a). With the mandate the NHC carries, observations suggested that the information regarding the living heritage archives held by the NHC is not made available on social media to members of the public, therefore contributing to low usage of the living heritage archives by the youth in South Africa. Improper marketing of living heritage archives as well as the fact that the youth are largely being ignored during public programming also contributes to the public’s unawareness of the archives (Craig 1991; Cook 1997; NHC 2022/23). As such, proper and effective public programming is necessary for raising awareness of living heritage archives among the youth of South Africa through social media. Schellnack-Kelly (2024) links the low awareness of archival heritage with apartheid and the colonial dispensation, arguing that those in power tried by all means to destroy indigenous knowledge and suppress any narrative that sought to promote heritage and local communities.

This is also the case with NHC, as despite their Facebook account having a large following, they seem to be attracting low numbers of young people to visit the institution. Hence, several scholars lament the poor usage of living heritage archives. According to Ngoepe (2019) as well as Mojapelo, Modiba and Saurombe (2023), the

number of users of living heritage resources in South Africa is decreasing. It is worrisome that the NHC fails to attract young people, as the organisation is expected to champion the promotion of living archival heritage. Consequently, the institution does not live up to its own mandate, which is to “promote the national heritage for present and future generations; and to intensify support for the promotion of history and culture” of its people (South Africa 1999a).

The use of living heritage archives is dependent on the extent to which people are aware of its existence. Therefore, the non-existence of the institution’s living heritage archives on social media impacts negatively on their archival visibility and usage by the community they should cater for (Saurombe 2016). Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) aver that the lack of awareness of archival repositories results in a few individuals using the archives. Needless to say, individuals cannot use products and services they are not aware of; therefore, there is a need for extensive public programming initiatives aiming at raising awareness of the existence of memory institutions and the services they offer. The use of soft power as a conceptual framework could assist in attracting individuals to use the living heritage archives, maintain awareness of the South African heritage, and subsequently alleviate its extinction in South Africa.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting the living heritage archives through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage among the youth in South Africa. The specific research objectives for the study were to:

- identify cultural strategies used by the NHC to promote living heritage among the youth
- assess the adoption of social media as an innovative tool to enhance public awareness of living heritage among the youth
- determine skills for carrying out public programming of living heritage among youth
- assess the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness through social media

- propose a framework to guide the public programming initiatives through social media for the promotion of living heritage among the youth.

#### **1.4.1 Research questions**

A research question can be defined as the loophole the researcher perceived in previous research studies, which the current study seeks to answer. The research questions therefore serve as a guide for the entire research study being conducted.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

- What cultural strategies has the NHC adopted in promoting living heritage among the youth?
- How does the NHC use its social media platforms for public awareness of the living heritage among the youth?
- Do responsible officers have the relevant skills to perform successful public programming initiatives for awareness creation in the youth?
- How are existing public programming initiatives effective in creating living heritage awareness and usage among the youth through social media?

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Public programming initiatives are currently among the guaranteed ways of improving awareness and usage of public archives (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2011). Njobvu, Hamoya and Mwila (2012) opine that research that investigates the enhancement of visibility and usage of archives is significant because it validates the value of the archives in society. Njobvu et al. (2012) further explain that the visibility and accessibility of archives assist in improving the image of an organisation.

Despite the availability of numerous scholarly works on the awareness of public archives using public programming initiatives, very little research could be found on the success of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through the use of social media. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing the findings on the impact made by public programming initiatives established by the NHC towards ensuring an awareness of their living heritage archives. The study also assists in assessing the effectiveness of public programming initiatives used by the NHC in making living heritage known to the public of South

Africa. Assessing the effectiveness of public programming initiatives assists organisations to realise their strengths and weaknesses, therefore allowing room for strategising and being creative enough to overcome their weaknesses, for them to achieve their mandate. A framework to guide the public programming initiatives on social media is also proposed by the study. Although the framework is developed specifically for use by the NHC, other organisations can also make use of it, depending on their needs and services.

The study encouraged the effective use of social media by the NHC to promote living heritage archives to attain awareness and usage of the archives. Social media users will be informed about the archives as well as their significance in their lives and the society at large. The study also assists the NHC's living heritage unit to realise the relevant skills required in carrying out successful public programming initiatives. The living heritage unit will fathom the significance of enhancing their social media usage in promoting the living heritage, as well as the significance of evaluating the effectiveness of their public programming initiatives. The NHC might also be motivated to use public programming strategies that people will relate to when promoting the archives.

The vision of the NHC advocates for the building of heritage knowledge, access to heritage, benefits from heritage, application of heritage to people's lives as well as influencing people's behaviour. This study therefore assists the institution to achieve its vision by ensuring access to and usage of the living heritage the NHC gathers.

## **1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

A conceptual framework is a guiding tool for the research study. It ensures that all angles of the research study are tackled, leaving no room for misinterpretations of the meanings behind the findings of the study (Ivey 2015). In essence, a framework of a study ensures that all the answers of a study conducted are gathered. It is for this reason that Ngulube (2018) deems a study without a framework as poor. A research study conducted without a conceptual framework or a theoretical framework stands a chance to leave out crucial parts of the whole. A framework informs a research study. It informs on how the research will be conducted, and how research data will be collected and interpreted. A framework provides an understanding of how the research

is structured. The proper application of a framework can enrich and improve a research study (Cooper & Meadows 2016).

According to Ngulube (2018), a conceptual framework is a set of concepts obtained from one or more than one theory to explain a phenomenon. Maxwell (2012) further clarifies it as a system consisting of ideas, assumptions beliefs, expectations, and theories that underpin and inform one's research. The conceptual framework articulates the variables the researcher needs to include in the research study design and argues for the significance and relevance of a study. A conceptual framework also responds accurately to the research questions of the study. According to Ravitch and Carl (2021), a conceptual framework grounds the research topic and guides the development and iteration of research questions. To assist in navigating the research process, the researcher adopted the soft power concept as a conceptual framework. In simple terms, the soft power approach deals with the ability to attract and persuade people (Nye Jr 1990).

The American political scientist, Joseph Nye Jr., in 1990, first coined the concept soft power. This concept was initially established to bridge the gap in how scholars conceptualise power. Recently, soft power has been helpful to leaders in attracting the public to their mandate. The concept came about when Nye assessed the power resources of Americans in military and traditional economic terms in trying to solve the disciplinary and policy puzzles of Americans (Nye 2021). Nye discovered that the US managed to achieve the outcomes it wanted through attraction. As a result, Nye (2021) identified soft power as the use of attraction to achieve desired outcomes.

According to Nye (2021), soft power may be direct, therefore requiring no intentional activity on the part of the agent. An agent may talk about a topic without the intention of attracting the people he or she is sharing the topic with. Meanwhile, the people are developing interest, which can prompt them to research thoroughly about the topic for them to gain more insights. Soft power's influence is not imposed or forced, but rather mediated through channels of communication, which helps shape perceptions, values, and attitudes (Nye 2017). Soft power, therefore, relies on the voluntary choice of the target to adopt an idea of the agent. The effectiveness of soft power depends on the level of voluntary attraction from the targets.

The concept entails winning others over to obtain favourable cooperation, unlike hard power, which applies force and incentives to achieve favourable conditions (Trunkos 2013; Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022; Gallarotti 2011; Vuving 2009). The soft power concept elaborates that individuals often use their ideas to persuade others into doing what they want them to do (Nye 2017). The ideas brought forth thus affect the public's perception of them, which ultimately results in the public developing interest in those ideas. An interest developed in the public will lead them to consider their participation in those ideas. Those who believe in soft power hold the view that one can still persuade people without using force or any form of intimidation.

The key constructs that served as a theoretical base in this study first included the cultural system that promotes universal values that individuals can easily identify with. Soft power's foundations on culture are undergirded by prominent social cohesion and a preeminent quality of life. Secondly, the constructs encapsulate a leadership system that relies mainly on individuals' ability to persuade others to do what they desire to achieve; thirdly, they entail an education, which Hackman (2012) explains as an investment made deliberately by informing and engaging individuals and organisations to support their work; and, lastly, they include innovation or advances in the media which assist in marketing decision makers (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022; Gallarotti 2011). These primary resources are the ones that give rise to soft power (De Martino 2020).

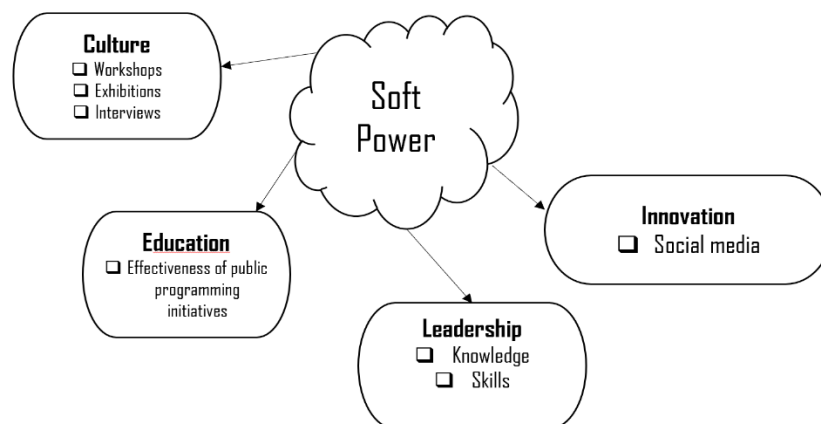
The concept soft power is preferred mainly because it integrates smoothly with public programming, as it deals with promoting visibility of a particular product or service. Its characteristics include an inexpensive nature, sustainability, and legitimate dependence (Mukwevho 2017). Soft power as a framework for this study, serves as an awareness programme, which will be used to change how people perceive the living heritage archives and eventually develop the desire to access them. In addition, it will contribute to the awareness of the living heritage archives, along with its use through Facebook as a social media platform.

The researcher believes that soft power is essential to locate, assess, and analyse the existing literature in themes for this particular study. Soft power has the qualities to address the steadily declining percentage of archival material consultations by the public of South Africa through public programming initiatives on social media. The use

of soft power will assist in addressing the issues of visibility faced by archival materials. The unawareness of living heritage archives in the youth of South Africa as a result of improper marketing and the youth being ignored during public programming (Mukwevho & Ngoepe 2019; Craig 1991; Cook 1997; NHC 2022/23), will therefore be addressed by the soft power.

For the purpose of this study, soft power is associated with the awareness programmes aimed at motivating people to change their attitudes and behaviour about living heritage archives (Garaba 2016). As suggested by Crymble (2010), institutions should consider using new technology in the promotion of their archival holdings to the public. The use of Facebook as a social media platform in this study was mainly for the increased visibility of the archives, as advised by Crymble (2010).

- Conceptual framework of soft power



**Figure 1.1: conceptual framework of soft power (Researcher 2025).**

Figure 1.1 can be explained as follows:

- **Culture**

Culture is a broad concept with no clear definition, which can signify many things depending on the context. In the context of places, culture refers to ecological dynamics, institutional influences, and cultural aspects (Causadias 2020). Culture, as conceived within soft power theory, operates as a persuasive rather than coercive force that influences attitudes and behaviours through attraction, identity, and shared meaning (Nye, 1990). In this sense, culture serves as a strategic resource through

which institutions can shape perceptions and foster voluntary engagement. Within the context of promoting living heritage archives to the youth, the National Heritage Council (NHC) employs cultural strategies that exemplify this soft power logic.

Public programming initiatives employed by the NHC such as workshops, intergenerational dialogue, exhibitions, interviews, youth heritage camps, calls for funding, ubuntu, and heritage awards represent the practical application of culture as a soft power. These initiatives attract the youth by showcasing living heritage in relatable, participatory formats, therefore reinforcing the fact that heritage can also be used as a strategic resource. The initiatives further promote cultural pride and identity by engaging the youth in their historical stories and local customs. In the context of this study, the promotion of universal values through these initiatives using social media may help to build voluntary engagement with heritage archives through emotional resonance and cultural belonging rather than obligation (Nye 2021). Consistently using public programming initiatives that resonate with the needs of social media users and potential users can help maintain awareness and usage of the living heritage archives by the youth in South Africa. Making sure that awareness of initiatives such as exhibitions, interviews, calls for funding, and intergenerational dialogues are shared on time on social media platforms can also allow the youth to engage and ultimately guarantee usage of the output products of the initiatives.

- **Innovation**

Using communication platforms that reflect the culture and values of the youth such as social media, can help enhance awareness and usage of the living heritage archives. The NHC's use of cultural initiatives, therefore, embodies the persuasive potential of culture, which may be shaping attitudes and behaviours among the youth through attraction, identity, and shared meaning. Social media further serve as indirect channel of influence that shape perceptions through attraction, participation, and cultural resonance (Nye 2017). Social media enables institutions to disseminate cultural content in ways that are interactive, visually engaging, and attuned to youth identities and digital habits (Crymble 2010). Platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Twitter) are creative tools for promoting living heritage archives because they increase awareness outside of traditional archival settings and

allow historical tales to be shared in ways that the youth can relate to and understand (Englert & Harisch 2020).

In the context of this study, reframing living heritage archives in formats that align with youth communication norms and digital cultures. Digital campaigns, virtual exhibitions, short-form videos, podcasts, and interactive storytelling may enhance the visibility and accessibility of heritage resources beyond physical spaces. Social media also supports participatory reinterpretation and peer-led circulation of heritage knowledge, allowing culture to function not only as content but as a communicative force that appeals to emotion, identity, and belonging. In this way, social media operationalizes soft power by generating interest, engagement, and voluntary interaction with heritage rather than through directives.

- **Leadership**

Soft power is not only embedded in cultural content but enabled by human capability. Successful public programming initiatives are dependent on the competency of heritage officers to communicate, mediate, and translate heritage in an appealing and participatory manner. Key skills include youth engagement, user studies, communication design, digital literacy, and storytelling. Heritage officers must communicate heritage in a compelling, youth-friendly ways that evoke interest, identity, and pride. Digital and social media competence is also essential, as online platforms function as contemporary channels of cultural diplomacy that can make heritage visible, relatable, and engaging to younger audiences. In addition, cultural sensitivity and mediation skills enable facilitators to present diverse traditions in ways that resonate with youth while maintaining authenticity and respect. User studies further enhance soft power influence by guaranteeing that heritage programmes are relevant, attractive, and interactive.

In the context of this study, heritage officers must have clear leadership skills, particularly transformational leadership. Experience in conducting public programming initiatives, together with training conducted regularly, may assist with attracting the youth to the living heritage archives. In addition, cultural sensitivity and mediation skills will enable heritage officers to present diverse archives in ways that resonate with the youth while maintaining authenticity and respect. Collaboration and networking with communities, educational institutions, traditional leaders and cultural influencers

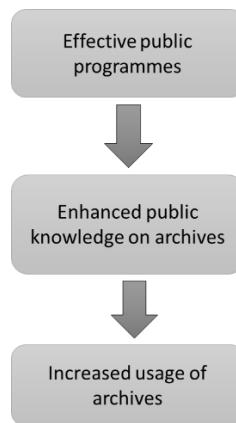
expand the reach of influence through social relationships. Furthermore, youth engagement, facilitation, advocacy, and persuasion skills empower practitioners to inspire voluntary participation and foster a sense of ownership among young people. Heritage officers with these skills are better positioned to frame heritage in ways that resonate with the youth, ensure inclusivity, and facilitate meaningful participation.

- **Education**

The effectiveness of public programming initiatives on social media as a soft power tool promoting cultural narratives, identity, and shaping public perception without coercion, can therefore be evaluated by examining the extent to which initiatives generate engagement, positive sentiment, and voluntary participation among the youth. The effectiveness of public programming initiatives can also be examined by the usage of the archives held by the institution. Metrics such as likes, shares, comments, user-generated content, and sustained interaction reflect successful soft power influence rather than mere exposure. Furthermore, evaluating how social media content fosters cultural pride, intergenerational connection, and interest in heritage practices is essential to understanding its persuasive impact.

Heritage content shared through social media stimulates awareness, sparks dialogue, strengthens identity, or encourages active engagement with archival resources (Ginzarly & Teller 2025). Conversely, limited reach, disengagement, or lack of resonance may indicate the need for refinements in strategy, presentation, or skill application. In the context of this study, effectiveness of the existing public programming initiatives is measured through qualitative indicators, including engagement statistics, content sharing, user-generated participation, audience retention, and shifts in perceptions and behaviour.

- Relationship between effective public programmes, archival usage, and soft power conceptual framework model.



**Figure 1.2: Relationship between effective public programmes, archival usage, and soft power conceptual framework model (Researcher 2025).**

Figure 1.2 can be explained as follows:

An increase in the visibility of living heritage archives on Facebook through attraction and persuasion can assist in spreading knowledge about the living heritage archives (Blais & Enns 1991; Nye Jr 1990). Effective public programming initiatives can raise the public’s awareness of the living heritage archives (Mukwevho 2017). Through public programming initiatives, users can be educated about the significance of the living heritage archives’ existence, encourage their usage, and thereby increase the public’s knowledge of archives.

Public awareness of living heritage archives will result in individuals knowing and appreciating the value offered by living heritage archives to the society (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022). Given that societies will be educated enough about archival repositories, their likelihood of accessing the archives will increase as a result of their interest in knowing more about their living heritage. As such, the living heritage will see increased use by the public on account of their awareness.

## **1.7 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The mandate of the NHC seeks to connect the government, heritage institutions, and communities to ensure that South Africa’s heritage is preserved, celebrated, and made accessible to all citizens. According to observations, the NHC as an entity with the legislative mandate to preserve and promote heritage towards social cohesion, does conduct public programming initiatives for awareness and usage of the services offered on social media. However, several scholars continue to lament the minimal

usage of the archives by the youth. The study, therefore, sought to cover issues concerning public programming initiatives used to promote living heritage archives housed by the NHC, the adoption of social media for awareness of living heritage archives, skills used to carry out awareness on the living heritage archives, and how established public programming initiatives are effectively promoting awareness and usage on social media, with its focus being on the youth of South Africa.

Despite various platforms, such as physical workshops available to be used for public programming, this study nevertheless utilised social media as a medium for conducting public programming. Facebook was used as a tool for information awareness for this study and not any other social media tool. A case study as a qualitative research approach was adopted by the study to gain an in-depth understanding of how the NHC is effectively contributing towards ensuring awareness and usage of the living heritage archives housed by the NHC among the youth of South Africa. The purpose of selecting living heritage archives is mainly because the mandate of the NHC is limited to intangible heritage, which is also referred to as living heritage. A limited population was selected because the institution has limited staff personnel dealing with the establishment of public programming initiatives used to promote living heritage archives.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

Key terms exist to help users and researchers to better understand the research terminologies used (Noori 2021). In the context of the current study, key terms provide a better understanding of how they were used by the researcher. The terms underscore this study are heritage, living heritage, archives, social media, Facebook, visibility, public programming, user, and user studies. The terms are defined thus:

### **1.8.1 Heritage**

Heritage is the birthright of individuals, which is acquired through representations, artefacts, and experiences that one may encounter (Waterton & Watson 2015). Heritage is what defines our being, which can be transmitted from one generation to the other. According to Vecco (2010), heritage encompasses the historical and cultural values of the past generations that are adopted by generations. Heritage can either

be tangible in the form of physical structures such as heritage sites, and intangible in the form of the knowledge behind why a structure is regarded as a heritage site.

### **1.8.2 Living heritage**

Living heritage refers to the intangible aspects of culture that are passed down to our descendants from our forefathers (UNESCO 2019; SAHRA 2020). Living heritage consists of performing arts, oral traditions, rituals and festive events, and knowledge and practices regarding practices involving nature, knowledge, and skills related to crafts. According to SAHRA (2020), living heritage is constantly reproduced. Living heritage can therefore be defined as intangible cultural heritage that is continuously developed within various communities and passed down from one generation to the other.

### **1.8.3 Archives**

Archives are records preserved by institutions as a source for historical and or research purposes. The visibility and accessibility of public archives to the public cannot be overemphasised. Maluleka, Nkwe and Ngulube (2023) propose social media as one of the tools to promote access to archival material, therefore public archives should be made visible to the public through social media as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The public needs to be aware of all the records held by organisations to grant them the ability to make informed decisions (Kamatula 2011). The visibility of the archives will ultimately result in awareness and usage.

### **1.8.4 Social media**

Social media is used by institutions to promote their products and services to the public and is deemed a powerful tool that can be used for advocacy as well as for outreach by institutions (Liew et al. 2015). The benefits of social media in heritage institutions cannot be overemphasised. Social media provide a platform for a wide reach of users, convenient access to information, and convenient promotion of access to the archives and records of an institution (Garaba 2012). Authors such as Kamatula et al. (2013); Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022); Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a), Chaterera and Rodrigues (2019), and Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) strongly believe that social media can raise awareness of archives in South Africa and other parts of sub-Saharan

Africa. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube can be used to reach out to the public.

### **1.8.5 Facebook**

Facebook is a social media network used by individuals and organisations to connect and engage with the online public. Facebook can reach out to potential users, especially young people (Ngoepe & Ngulube 2011). Young people between the ages of 18 and 34 mostly use Facebook to share moments and memories (Querty Digital 2018; Kamatula et al. 2013). As far as making living heritage records known to the public, Kamatula et al. (2013) maintain that Facebook is the most relevant tool to use, as it is used globally. Facebook as the most preferred social media tool, can guarantee awareness and usage of the archives of institutions.

### **1.8.6 Visibility**

Visibility consists of various ways used by institutions to make new products and services known to the public (Treem & Leonardi 2012). Visibility programmes are used as methods through which the public is taught about the products and services offered by institutions (Mason 2016). In essence, visibility is the ability to be seen and known by the public. Visibility serves to increase awareness and usage of the products and services made visible to the public by the public.

### **1.8.7 Public programming**

Public programming refers to initiatives undertaken by responsible officers to promote the records of their archival collections. Saurombe (2016:2) describes public programming as a means of promoting access and communicating the value of archives to society. One can conclude that public programming is a function used by various institutions to promote their products and services among the youth.

### **1.8.8 User**

The term 'user' refers to a person who make use of the archival resources, as well as the services and products provided by the archives, and therefore benefits from them (Maurya 2018). The user serves as the central point of the archival resources offered, thereby articulating their information needs to those who provide the information. Orlu,

Ozowa and Idikwu (2016) refer to a user as either the information provider or the information consumer. In the context of this study, a user refers to the youth.

### **1.8.9 User studies**

User studies refer to interviews conducted among the users and potential users with the goal of identifying their information needs. User studies may help close the information gaps between the existing information services and the required information (Maurya 2018). Concerning the awareness creation, user studies assist in analysing users and potential users aimed at tailoring the public programming initiatives to their information needs.

### **1.8.9 Youth**

The term youth generally refers to young people aged 16 to 30 years (Galstyan 2022). However, Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) define youth more narrowly as individuals between 13 and 18 years of age. For this study, youth refers to young people aged 13 to 18 years. Introducing young people to archives at an early age fosters awareness and appreciation of archival resources, thereby increasing the likelihood of their engagement with public archives in the future. According to Kau, Ngoepe, and Saurombe (2019), raising public awareness about archives enhances their usage, as individuals become more informed about their existence and relevance.

### **1.8.10 Culture**

Culture refers to shared customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, languages, arts, rituals, and social behaviours that characterize a particular group of people or society (Naik, Baker & Mohiyeddini 2023). In the context of Nye (2021) public programming initiatives serve as a culture used by an organisation to influence results by influencing others to desire the organisational goals. In this study, culture therefore refers to public programming initiatives that the NHC uses to attract, persuade, and appeal to its social media users and potential users, particularly the youth.

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology outlines the methods used to carry out a research investigation. Gounder (2012) refers to research methodology as the identification of relevant techniques to use when conducting a research study. In essence, research methodology consists of ways in which a research study will be carried out scientifically. In this study, methodology comprised the following components: research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection technique, data analysis, trustworthiness of data, and ethical considerations.

The study was guided by the interpretivism paradigm. A qualitative research approach was used to explore the impact made by public programming initiatives towards ensuring awareness of the living heritage archives at the NHC through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage. In gathering data, the researcher adopted an interpretive in-depth case study research, which assisted in exploring the real-life context of the current phenomenon. The researcher deliberately selected the population of the study and used standardised semi-structured interviews and content analysis to collect data. The participants of the research were nine heritage specialists who worked for the NHC. The ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the Unisa College of Human Sciences, and the data gathered was analysed thematically using codes. A comprehensive description of the research methodology is presented in Chapter Three of the study.

## **1.10 STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION**

This section provides a description of how the chapters are outlined and explains what is covered in each chapter for the benefit of the reader. The dissertation is structured into six chapters, and they are presented as follows:

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The chapter provides in detail an overview of the research project. In this chapter, the subject of the study is introduced, followed by a discussion of the contextual setting, problem statement, research purpose and objectives, and the concept soft power ,

which was used as the conceptual foundation of the study. The key terms used in the study are defined, and the summary of the research methodology is also discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter discusses the literature relating to the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage through the use of social media. The literature review, as presented in the study, is guided by the research objectives.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Chapter three discusses the research methodology adopted by the study. The study broadly explains the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection technique, data analysis, trustworthiness of data, and ethical considerations. The qualitative research methodology and the case study research design are discussed in this chapter. An interpretivism worldview as a research paradigm is also highlighted. The population and sampling techniques, as well as the data collection and data analysis techniques are also discussed and outlined.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Chapter four discusses the data analysis and provides the presentation of the research findings, which emanated from the data collected through interviews and content analysis. This chapter is also organised with the guidance of the research objectives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

In Chapter Five, a broad description of the interpretation of research findings is provided. The findings are interpreted according to the research objectives.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chapter six provides the conclusion drawn from the data gathered and analysed, therefore answering the research questions of the study. Recommendations for the study will be provided based on the findings of the study. The recommendations made will address the aim of the study presented in Chapter One based on the findings of the study.

## **1.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter One set the scene by outlining the potential contribution that social media can make in enhancing public programming initiatives. The chapter started off by explaining the importance of living heritage archives and how the concept is viewed globally. As part of introducing the problem, the researcher highlighted that the NHC was not taking advantage of Facebook to encourage young people to use living heritage archives. The study therefore sought to explore the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage of the archives. The value of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through Facebook as a tool for communication towards continued awareness of cultural developments and human history of South Africa was discussed in this chapter. The problem statement provided an insight into the need to explore the impact made by established public programming initiatives by the NHC towards guaranteeing awareness and usage of the living heritage archives in the youth. Other sections covered in Chapter One include a statement of the problem, significance of the study, conceptual framework, scope and delimitation of the study, and definition of key terms. The following chapter discusses a literature review of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined the introduction and background of the study with a particular emphasis on the significance of living heritage and how public programming can be used to promote living heritage among the youth through social media. As part of the introduction, the following were discussed: introduction and background, contextual setting, statement of the problem, research purpose and objectives, significance of the study, conceptual framework and the foundation of the study, scope and delimitation of the study, definition of key terms, research methodology, ethical clearance, and the structure of the dissertation.

Therefore, this chapter presents the literature review which covers the map of literature, literature on cultural strategies and awareness of living heritage archives, archives and public engagements, challenges and best practices, usage of social media for public awareness of living heritage, the importance of awareness of living heritage, influence of social media and cultural perception, public programming skills in the heritage sector, transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles, professional development and training programmes, effectiveness of public programming initiatives, evaluation models and methodologies, and challenges and barriers to effective public programming initiatives. The literature review helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the research problem.

#### **2.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review seeks to familiarise oneself with the subject area of the research study before the construction of an argument and/or justification. A literature review provides the context and rationale for the research study (Arshed & Danson 2015). Synder (2019) argues that a literature review, which only focuses on selective scholarly works, can face issues of contradicting existing guidelines for writing a literature review. Hence, there is a need for the researcher to be impartial when reviewing the literature to allow the reader to hear different perspectives on the subject matter under investigation. The literature review must synthesise all the research works arguing for and against the research question of the study being conducted. A

literature review is basically a building block of a research study; a well-structured literature review therefore advances knowledge of the subject at hand, and can also display other research gaps (Synder 2019).

Researchers must remain aware that the subject matter under investigation has been previously explored by other researchers, and the current study sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by addressing gaps identified in prior research. The literature review is the ability of the researcher to clearly state what is already known about the focus area of the study being conducted (Arshed & Danson 2015). The literature review aims to inform the reader about the findings of previously conducted studies that are closely connected to the study being conducted. Therefore, the literature review of this study sought to explore the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives at the NHC.

The focus of the literature is on the following themes that were drawn from the research objectives: public programming initiatives used by the NHC to promote the living heritage, the usage of social media as an innovation tool for awareness enhancement, skills required to carry out public programming initiatives and the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating an awareness of the national living heritage among the youth on social media.

### 2.3 MAP OF A LITERATURE REVIEW

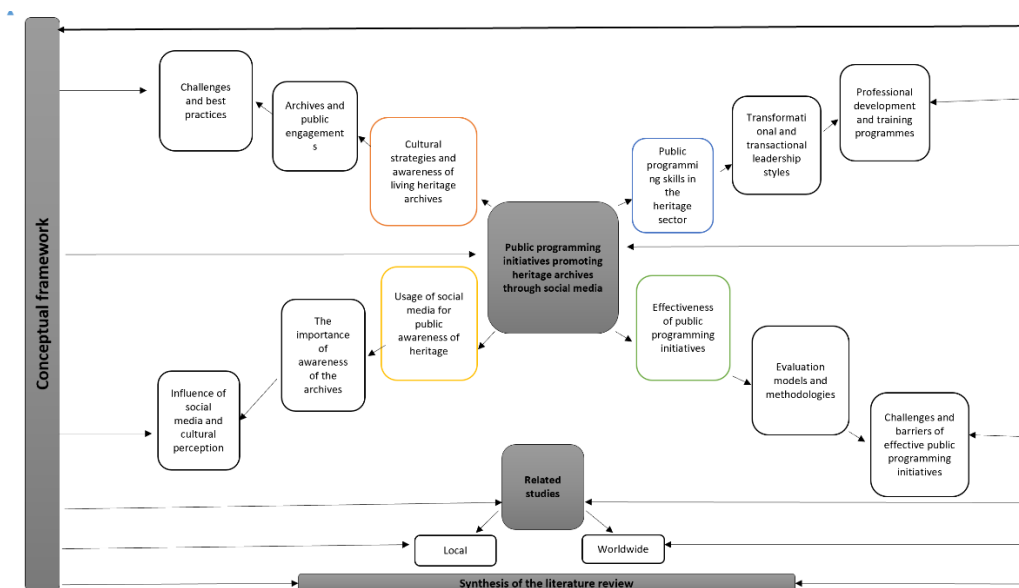


Figure 2.1: Literature review map (Researcher 2025)

### **2.3.1 Cultural strategies and awareness of living heritage archives**

Cultural strategies are essential for establishing unity, defining national identity, and raising awareness of living heritage archives. Nye's (2017) soft power theory argues that institutions and states use culture as a persuasive weapon to sway public opinion and draw people in without using force. Strategic implementation of cultural strategies increases cultural diplomacy and national pride by allowing heritage institutions to project values and narratives that resonate with the public, particularly among young people (Cull 2020). Soft power functions in this concept through engagement, communication, and attraction, establishing cultural legacy as an evolving platform for connection and influence rather than just a storehouse of the past.

Cultural strategies in the context of living heritage archives include community engagement programs, digital storytelling, educational outreach, and creative programming that encourages awareness and use of archival materials. Several scholars such as Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019); Kamatula et al. (2013); Liew, King and Oliver (2015); Saurombe and Ngulube (2016b), and Kau, Ngoepe and Saurombe (2019) argue that public programming initiatives have the potential to transform archives into participatory spaces where heritage is experienced, negotiated and shared therefore aligning with soft power goal of generating affinity and mutual understanding. Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019); Kamatula et al. (2013); Liew, King and Oliver (2015); Saurombe and Ngulube (2016b), and Kau, Ngoepe and Saurombe (2019) further contend that public programming initiatives can take archives to the people, as it allows archivists to engage with communities to better understand their information needs.

Furthermore, the capacity of organisations to successfully convey cultural meanings is directly related to public awareness of living heritage archives. UNESCO (2021) defines living heritage as customs, expressions, knowledge, and abilities that communities acknowledge as belonging to their cultural heritage. As such, it necessitates adaptable approaches that appeal to modern audiences. Institutions can promote involvement and stewardship by using soft power to present heritage as a source of pride, inventiveness, and creativity (Chitty, Ji & Rawnsley). This alignment promotes intercultural communication and collective memory by reinforcing heritage as a cultural asset and a tool of influence.

In a study to examine public programming initiatives in the ESARBICA region, Saurombe (2020) found that the directors of the National Archives agree that public programming enabled their respective institutions to develop programmes that are relevant to the client's expectations. Public programming initiatives are vital in guaranteeing the awareness and usage of the archives. Public programming can achieve the continued existence of the archives, thereby guaranteeing that the members of the public use the living heritage archives more frequently. As Mojapelo, Modiba and Saurombe (2023) would put it, archives exist for the people and if people are not aware of their existence, then archives will not serve its purpose. Public programming programmes support the understanding and the usage of living heritage archival resources by the public, students, researchers, and communities. This was confirmed by a study conducted by Mukwevho (2019).

The value of educational programmes should not be debatable considering their contribution towards the utilisation of archived records (Van der Walt 2011; Saurombe 2016). Public programming presents an opportunity for heritage institutions to provide educational programmes with the sole purpose of promoting access to heritage. Educational programmes are necessary to teach the public about the importance of the preservation of their historical materials. The link between public programming and educational programmes was emphasised by Mukwevho (2019); Kamatula et al. (2013); Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011); Liew, King and Oliver (2015) who argue that public archives are mandated to make known their archival materials to the public through various educational programmes and strategies. The public programming strategies consist of exhibitions and display, collaborations and partnerships, workshops and training sessions, archival tours, and borrowing of records to ensure the visibility and accessibility of the archives. The purpose of educational programmes is to inform the public and to provide them with more knowledge or skills they can use to navigate through and effectively use the archival materials (Mukwevho 2019).

Liew, King and Oliver (2015) and Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) suggest that social media platforms can also be used for public programming due to their wide reach. Institutions use multiple social media platforms for various purposes. Social media platforms are used by institutions to market and promote events, raise awareness, conduct competitions, and display new collections of the resources rendered within an organisation (Masizana & Salubi 2022). In other instances, event pages are created

whereby event details are shared with the public and followers are then encouraged to participate or attend, thereby increasing awareness and participation.

Since the 2015-16 financial year, the City of Cape Town's Department of Library and Information Services (COCTLIS) has utilised their Facebook to engage and create awareness of their library services to the public (Masizana & Salubi 2022). COCTLIS extends their reach by consistently sharing the content of its library services on social media. Other public libraries such as the Canadian public library use social media platforms such as Twitter to justify their existence and to ensure their users can perceive them as being relevant (Cavanagh 2016). Organisations share content by creating and curating valuable and engaging content, such as calls for applications and job posts, to attract new followers and to keep existing followers interested and informed.

Institutions use social media to keep an eye on what the public is saying about them and therefore respond to both favourable and unfavourable remarks (Masizana & Salubi 2022). Institutions also respond to comments and discussions on their social media platforms and ensure that they handle the issues accordingly, which helps to build a sense of community and devotion among their followers.

In the study conducted by Huang and Sarigöllü (2014), forty per cent of the participants offered complimentary access to various trial options to raise awareness about the features of the products on social media. The more familiar the target market is with what an institution offers, the more likely the products and services offered are to be used. Organisations also use social media for consistent messaging, visual content, and interaction with their followers as a way of building a brand that resonates with the interests of their target market (Ahmad 2020)

Social media helps people engage and communicate with each other on an online platform; meanwhile public programming aims to promote physical interaction with communities. According to Maluleka et al. (2023), public programming promotes interaction with the community, discourse, and gatherings of people for common experiences. However, a study by Mnjama (2018) revealed that many archival institutions are not making an effort to invest in public programming initiatives, which has led to low usage of public archives. Public programming involves encounters that take place in person, unlike social media whose interactions occur virtually (Patricios

2023). Public programming is often established as a result of an aim to achieve clear goals in an event. Public programming initiatives are strategically developed to achieve specific objectives, whereas social media's flexibility allows for distribution of various goals at any time. Public programming requires planning and money involved to ensure that an objective is met. Unlike social media, where an individual objective can be met without having to source out funds, and also in a short period, to a large audience.

Social media has become an essential part of our everyday lives in this digital era; therefore, providing the public with countless options for connectedness and information sharing (Patricios 2023). A study conducted by Akeriwa, Penzhorn and Holmner (2015) on using mobile technologies for social media-based library services at the University of Development Studies library in Ghana showed that the university community responded favourably to the institution's use of social media. The university community frequently used the library services offered on the institution's social networking sites.

Ahmad's (2020) study concluded that social media is beneficial in promoting an organisation's brand. Ahmad (2020) interviewed owners of small businesses and their partners on their ability to create brand awareness through social media, whereby a conclusion on the positive impact on small businesses' brand awareness was realised. The business owners further acknowledged that there is a greater comprehension of how social media contributes to the development of a solid and positive customer-business relationship (Ahmad 2020).

The Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) of the United States of America (USA) Department of Agriculture also held a successful webinar on social media, which hosted 210 participants (Gharis, Fawcett, Bardon & Hubbard 2014). The webinar titled 'How and what social media is being used in natural resource outreach', was held to question the audience about a series of questions on social media tools they used frequently and thought were most helpful for their workplace out of all the options offered. The seminar was held to promote the opportunities offered by social media which organisations can leverage on. Gharis et al. (2014) stated opportunities such as assisting clients to stay ahead of the changing market trends and to promote

group consensus and decision-making, give clients background information and openness, among others.

Therefore, the use of social media as a tool for public programming initiatives assists in ensuring that the clear objectives aimed by public programming initiatives are met without the struggle of having to source out funds. The versatility of the social media caters for public programming which is to foster community engagements through education, entertainment and cultural enrichment, therefore allowing for a global audience reach (UNESCO 2019). Using social media for public programming also assist by capitalising on the advantages of each, therefore working together for a maximised success in promoting living heritage.

Social networking, seminars, word of mouth and websites, are also listed by Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011) and Saurombe (2018) as effective programming activities that can be utilised to engage with the youth about the living heritage archives. Furthermore, increasing the visibility of the archives through public programming initiatives will raise awareness of their significance to society and consequently enhance the image of archives (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022). Scholars such as Mosweu (2019), Saurombe (2019), Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019), and Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a) have discovered that archives are underutilised as because they are generally invisible to the public. Mosweu (2019) argues that archives that are invisible to the public and minimally accessed by users will ultimately be considered unworthy of existence. In essence, archives will be unknown or unused if their visibility and accessibility are not achieved (Kau et al. 2019). Hence, public institutions must give special consideration to the significance of public programming initiatives to raise awareness about the presence, accessibility, and significance of archives (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022).

According to Bountouri (2017), archives are a significant part of culture and society, and, as such, they should be open to society. The heritage archives consist of records involving human history as well as cultural advancements, which essentially offer individuals access to a nation's culture and heritage (Saurombe, 2019; Melville & Molao 2005). The foundation of people's being is found in the heritage archives, and as a result, it becomes crucial for heritage institutions to use innovative ways of increasing the usage of their archives. Contrary to Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a)

proclaiming public programming as a solution to the public's unawareness of archives, Van der Walt (2011) argues that the role of public programming is still not enough to guarantee the creation of awareness about the archives of South Africa. Several scholars, such as Saurombe and Ngulube (2016), Kau et al. (2019), Bountouri (2017), Mosweu (2019), Mosweu (2019), Saurombe (2019), Chaterera and Rodrigues (2019), Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022), and Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011), recognise public programming as an effective tool to raise awareness. Ideally, if properly conducted, public programming initiatives have the potential to increase access to living heritage archives. The researcher argues that public programming initiatives accompanied by creative ways of achieving awareness, along with sound leadership, will eventually succeed in awareness creation.

A good leader makes the work environment a safe space for his or her followers. A safe working space motivates the followers to take risks in innovating the improvements in an organisation (Mayfield & Mayfield 2012; 2014). Thus, followers add value when they feel they are safe and appreciated (Edmondson 2018). A safe space at work therefore inspires the staff to challenge their capabilities in making living heritage archives known to the public. It is stated by Edmondson (2018) that the followers cease to support their leaders when they feel unsafe at work, which eventually affects the goal of the organisation; hence the need for strategic leadership in establishing innovative and effective public programming initiatives. Therefore, the conclusion by Blais and Enns (1991) is that educational programmes are the challenging awareness programmes for the archives.

Innovative ways of achieving the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives include studying the users and potential users. According to Mukwevho (2017), user studies play a crucial role in making living heritage archives known to the public. The knowledge of the needs of the users and potential users will allow the living heritage officers to know which public programming approach they should use when conducting their outreaches to the target population. Nengomasha and Nyanga (2015) articulate that it is imperative for living heritage officers to tailor programmes according to the needs of the targeted group. The public programming initiatives must be suitable for various age groups (Mukwevho 2017), and failure to do so can render the educational programmes useless to the targeted group. The public programming initiatives must address the needs of the targeted group.

Public programming initiatives need to demonstrate the value that the living heritage archives will add to the livelihood of the public. Often, such value is articulated as the impact the living heritage archives makes in the lives of the younger generation and the generations to come. The youth carries knowledge of the archives with them and transfer it to the generations to come. The knowledge of the great impact that living heritage archives make in the social media community will ultimately make the youth value who they are and what makes them who they are. This includes their traditional attires, and their sacred places. These facts can be helpful in conducting public programming (Moahi 2019). The only way the living heritage archives will be visible and relevant to the public is through public outreaches and public programming initiatives that are suitable for the needs of the target group (Moahi 2019). Mukwevho (2019) and Katuu (2015) identified various educational programme categories that can be used by the relevant archivists to raise awareness of the archival materials. Nonetheless, it is crucial for the archivists to choose public programming initiatives that are specifically designed to encourage genuine public participation in those whose needs can be met by the archives (Mukwevho 2019). Thus, living heritage officers should always focus on their users' and potential users' needs to achieve awareness of the archives.

The survey conducted by Fleming and Gerrard (2014) aiming to collect information pertaining to the public programming initiatives in higher institutions of learning in the USA in 2012 revealed that the programming initiatives were often dictated by the departments in institutions of higher learning and the targeted population, which ultimately resulted in successful educational programmes. The execution of public programming initiatives during the National Archives Week also indicated success in imparting knowledge of the archives to the public in a study conducted by Kau et al. (2019). Learners from a school in Gauteng indicated that their attendance of an exhibition at the Pretoria show and the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA) open day during the National Archives Week led to them having knowledge about the archives (Kau et al. 2019).

Maluleka, Nkwe and Ngulube (2023) place emphasis on public programming initiatives being successful only when they are being effectively promoted. Archival institutions mostly receive media attention during events such as archives awareness week, wherein various public programming initiatives are used to promote the products and

services offered by the archives. Maluleke, Nkwe and Ngulube (2023) further reiterate that successful implementation of the public programming initiative strategies can effectively raise public awareness of the living heritage archives. By fostering a greater appreciation of historical records, living heritage archives can successfully enhance public awareness and promote the public's active interaction with the archival materials.

Living heritage archives preserve cultural heritage by conserving records that represent artistic, linguistic, and cultural expressions (Peterson 2018). The awareness of living heritage archives will thereby influence transparency in the cultural beliefs of various communities. The awareness of the living heritage archives will serve as the community's basis of reference to the reasons behind people following certain cultural practices. The records of the significant information resources in the archives assist with the prevention of the loss of cultural heritage (UNESCO 2019). Awareness of the living heritage archives will therefore assist in keeping the public informed about where they can access crucial information of their cultural heritage. Knowledge of the living heritage archival resources can assist communities to develop a sense of shared history and identity (Peterson 2018).

In a study to investigate public programming of public archives in the ESARBICA, Saurombe's (2016) findings showed that the initiatives for public programming were not prioritised. According to Saurombe (2016), the lack of priority in public programming initiatives resulted from staffing shortages, issues of transportation to and from the office, budgetary constraints, as well as the absence of policies governing public programmes. Saurombe (2016) further indicates that slight efforts in collaborating with other organisations for public programming and restricting user studies to existing archive users affect the potential of public programming initiatives in promoting the archives to the public at large. Mukwevho (2017) shares these sentiments, that collaboration with a partner when conducting public programming initiatives, yields positive results. One of the most crucial approaches to encouraging the value and use of archives is collaboration.

### **2.3.1.1 Archives and public engagements**

Public engagements are significant for knowledge exchange and increasing awareness and usage of the archives. Apart from awareness creation and enhancing

usage, public engagements also provide a platform to solicit inputs from the public (Saurombe 2020). According to Mukwevho (2017), intentional interactions promote a sense of cooperation and partnership by helping to establish and strengthen public-institutional trust. Public engagements enable discussions and the sharing of ideas among the public and the facilitators of the engagement. Such platforms help build a sense of security and trust, which results in holistic partnership and collaboration with the communities. Furthermore, public engagements of archives conducted on an online platform improves accessibility by enabling remote access to materials, which democratises knowledge and encourages inclusivity (Mamabolo & Durodolu 2023).

According to Van der merwe (2016), archives consist of an abundance of excellent content for public engagements. Individuals and professionals can utilise valuable records to produce content for their public programming initiatives such as workshops, exhibitions, and presentations. Accessibility of the archives to the general audience encourages public engagement with archival materials. As a result, institutions now offer their archival collections remotely to maximise the interaction of the public with archival resources, as well as allow for contribution to the democratisation of historical and cultural knowledge (Youngblood 2015). Institutions such as the South African community libraries use the national Mzansi Libraries Online project to market and provide information services (National Library of South Africa 2019).

### **2.3.1.2 Challenges and best practices**

Public engagements of the archives offer a range of both challenges and opportunities. Dreyer and Nofziger (2021) assert that it can be difficult to guarantee that archives are available to everyone, especially individuals with minimal resources or disabilities. Large volumes of material can be found in archives, some of which may be hard to access because of technological or physical obstacles (Jaillant 2022). Some of those obstacles may include the public being unable to use media platforms because of a lack of internet connection or not knowing how to search for information online, while physical obstacles may include physical archival buildings being far from the potential users. Furthermore, because of a lack of resources and the fragility or format of certain records, the majority of archives are still kept in physical media such as paper records or analogue recordings, as a result, it is challenging for the public to access those archives (Bhebhe, Masuku & Ngulube 2013). The inaccessibility of physical archives

and/or archives on an online platform in this instance becomes a barrier to the access and usage of the archived resources by the public. As such, public engagements can assist with reaching potential users.

Making sure that the scope covering diverse audiences can also be challenging to prepare when preparing for public engagements due to challenges such as cultural variety, varying degrees of interest, and competence (Queensland Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning 2017). Developing inclusive and accessible engagement tactics might be difficult. The Queensland Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (2017) therefore developed a community engagement toolkit that assists the Queensland Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, with planning for effective public engagements. The toolkit assists with ensuring that the diverse community of Queensland can take part in timely, relevant, and meaningful community engagement, ensuring that their opinions are taken into account proportionate to the proposed plan or amendment decision.

On the other hand, copyright or any other forms of intellectual property might pose a challenge when digitising and distributing records from the archives to the public. It can be difficult and time consuming to navigate copyright law and obtain the required permits for the archives that are protected when organisations want to digitise the records (Sutton 2019). Archives are also entrusted with the responsibility of preserving historically significant records and making them accessible (Manganye & Saurombe 2023). Failure by the archive to uphold trust between those who create and utilise the archival materials may compromise the integrity of the archives (Mhlanga 2014).

Best practice of public programming includes informing the participants in an understandable and straightforward manner about the goals, intentions, and results of public engagements (Rodriguez-Navas, Morales & Lalinde 2021). Clear communication makes it easy for the public to comprehend information and easily draw the public's attention to what is being discussed, therefore making the public more curious about the topic at hand. Bucata and Rizescu (2017) attest that one of the most crucial management tools organisations can use to produce meaningful performance is clear communication. Cases wherein the connection between archival resources to contemporary affairs and issues are emphasised can draw the attention

of the public to the archives. For instance, York University took their students to the archives of Ontario to use census data records as part of their introductory Canadian history course, which the students rated as effective in assisting them with their coursework (Heron 2014). The case stated above supports a statement made by Mukwevho (2019) that collaborations with educational institutions, community organisations, and libraries for outreach purposes can increase public knowledge of the presence and significance of archives. Infusing archives into the school curriculum has therefore proven to be effective in the education sector.

According to Heron (2014), through interviews with Canadians, York University documents intangible knowledge of the Canadians they believe is slowly fading away, to alleviate its extinction. The Portuguese Canadian History Project and the Greek Canadian History project from York University collaborate with the Clara Thomas Archives and the university's special collections for public engagement. The two groups assist with exhibiting the collected records from the knowledge barriers to the public to guarantee that the collected materials by the archives are appreciated. The street exhibitions organised by the Portuguese Canadian History Project organisation at the city's downtown summer street festival were also a success in ensuring that the university archives are known to the public (Heron 2014).

It is also crucial for institutions to make efforts to enhance archival resources accessible digitally and physically. Initiatives such as offering alternate formats for people living with disabilities, digitising archives, and translating non-English resources into other languages, are some of the efforts institutions can consider in making archives accessible and used by the public (UNESCO 2020).

### **2.3.2 Usage of social media for public awareness of living heritage**

The way cultural organisations promote living heritage has evolved as a result of social media's growing popularity (Alam, Rahman, Arif & Hossan 2025). Soft power identifies social media as a contemporary tool for attraction and persuasion that allows organisations to project cultural values, identities, and narratives that promote positive interaction and voluntary participation. Nye (2017) claims that soft power influences preferences and fosters mutual understanding between parties by utilising non-coercive approaches like communication, culture, and values. The use of digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube enables

heritage institutions to extend their influence by making cultural heritage accessible, relatable, and participatory (Ibrahim & Ibrahim 2022).

Social media serves as a tool for both international relations and communication, which is in line with soft power's focus on dialogue and attraction rather than control. It enables groups like heritage institutions to disseminate narratives, images, and stories that honour South Africa's living legacy while encouraging young people to feel a sense of cultural pride and emotional connection (Smith 2024). By presenting heritage as a soft power tool that projects identity and shared values to audiences both domestically and internationally, cultural communication through digital platforms increases a country's cultural visibility (Mavrodieva, Rachman & Shaw 2019).

Additionally, social media's interactive features encourage participatory heritage practices by allowing the general public to interact with, reinterpret, and co-create meanings related to living heritage. This interactivity raises awareness by converting passive audiences into engaged cultural participants (Mavrodieva, Rachman & Shaw 2019). According to Alsaleh (2024), this kind of involvement correlates with the democratisation of heritage, in which communication technologies mediate cultural narratives and enhance a sense of community. This participatory component turns into a potent kind of cultural diplomacy in the context of soft power, where attraction is fostered by shared experiences and digital storytelling rather than by institutional authority.

Social media promotion of living heritage also tackles the issues of restricted physical access and budgetary limitations that heritage institutions frequently face. Organisations can maintain awareness campaigns and visibility that appeal to younger generations by utilising low-cost, high-reach platforms (UNESCO 2021). Cultural identity and national image, which are essential components of soft power dynamics, can be strengthened by heritage institutions redefining traditional archives as dynamic, changing cultural expressions through videos, virtual exhibitions, and user-generated content (Fattori, Mckenna, Rivera-Carlisle & Gould 2025).

Compared to the traditional ways of making the living heritage archives known to the public, Mason (2016) states that the adoption of social media has a significant potential to improve the visibility of the living heritage archives. In order to reach a larger audience, the archives should consider expanding their reach to other areas where

people can be located in large numbers (Mukwevho 2017). Such areas include innovation such as the social media wherein a large number of the public, especially the youth, is found. The International Council on Archives (ICA) (2012) also requires that any institution holding archives should take the initiative to promote access by using multiple channels to inform the public. Social media, as another channel of information sharing, plays a crucial role in accomplishing the requirement of the ICA.

In their study, which investigated the adoption of social media to take archives to young people in South Africa, Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) found that social media is not used to its full potential by memory institutions in South Africa. According to Pepe and Bournique (2017), social media is an effective tool for awareness creation in living heritage institutions because of their cost-effective nature. Social media enables free information creation and sharing, and allows for convenient information access and a direct community involvement on a globalised scale (Mnjama 2018; Mosweu 2019; Nchabeleng, Botha & Bisschoff 2018). Users of social media platforms can create, edit, share, and delete their information in real time and conveniently with no external charges from editors. Social media also grants users convenient access to public programmes on social media anywhere and at any time (Nchabeleng et al. 2018). The consistent use of social media also assists in measuring the return on the investment, thereby contributing to accountability of the costs incurred and the efforts that were invested (Liew et al. 2015).

Social media offers a range of benefits that has a wide reach. The capability of social media to reach out to the public on a globalised scale can increase the usage of the living heritage archives. The increased usage of the living heritage archives through public programming using social media will assist the living heritage officers to identify deficiencies in significant areas of the management of the archives, such as the appraisal, description and preservation (Mukwevho 2017; Ngulube & Tafor 2006). Upon realisation, the living heritage officers are able to close the gaps and therefore improve the management of their archives.

Liew, King and Oliver (2015) perpetuate that regardless of social media being cost-effective in making the living heritage archives known to the public, it is actually time consuming and requires a lot of effort. The costs incurred by social media consist of the of time for content creation, time for implementation, time for responding to users

and engaging within the context of the topic, including research, software for fee-based programmes, and alternative backup systems needed in the event of a primary system failure (Crumpton 2014). The use of social media by an organisation requires dedication from those who manage the sites for it to be successful in the outreach initiatives. Social media managers ought to put in the effort to post the public programming initiatives on social media and monitor them. The social media manager is required to engage with the public through the social media pages on behalf of the organisation. Therefore, it is crucial that stakeholders are consulted before the implementation of the awareness initiatives, as this will guarantee support from management (Liew et al. 2015).

Despite the fact that Pepe and Bournique (2017) regard social media as an effective tool for heritage institutions, Kamatula et al. (2013) argue that social media is not considered as viable means to enhance public programming initiatives in Tanzania, South Africa and Botswana. Liew, King and Oliver (2015) also maintain that social media can hinder the messages that institutions attempt to send out, more especially in the cultural heritage space. People perceive information differently and can share their own perceptions of what has been shared by heritage institutions on social media, eventually altering what has been said to others.

Other heritage institutions such as archives, museums and libraries are increasingly making use of social media to reach out to their constituencies to raise awareness about their archives. For instance, the personal digital collections such as Getty Museums at Tate, Educators Online at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Learning@Whitney at Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) application at the Science Museum in London are used to raise awareness about the archives (Vassiliadis & Belenioti 2017:99). Public libraries across the USA are succeeding in using social media networks to enhance awareness through outreach programmes such as the Chicago Public Library's photo voice projects involving refugees, Providence Public Library's exhibitions of contemporary art, featuring local artists inspired by archival collections, as well as San Francisco Public Library's involvement of citizens in arts and craft (Schull 2016).

The Kansas Community Library in the US is also successful in using social media for advocacy and engaging with users and stakeholders about the services they render

as well as the benefits of being a member of the library (Moahi 2019). The University of North Carolina, Iowa University, Stanford University and the Jewish Women's Archive are also victorious in using various social media such as Twitter, YouTube, and a blog in raising awareness about their special collections (Saurombe 2019). The work done by archivists was appreciated by the members of the University of North Carolina's blog for their contribution to an increase in the number of visits to the blog (Saurombe 2019). An increase in the number of viewership of YouTube awareness videos was also realised by the Iowa University wherein partnerships with other stakeholders were gained. Users' interest was increased by a virtual creation of archives at Stanford University, which saw an increase in the number of public programming initiatives, which also influenced more interactions. The Jewish Women's Archive also saw an increased number of users of their archives after posting their content on their Twitter account for awareness (Saurombe 2019).

Irrespective of the succession of other organisations in using social media for public knowledge of their archival resources, Mukwevho (2019) suggests that the shared information on social media platforms needs to be tailored to the needs of the target audience. The sharing of information from archival collections on a regular basis tailored to the needs of the public, can interest the public to use the archives. This will also ensure that the living heritage archives are able to attract a larger audience. In general, the archives are priceless tools that advance knowledge of society, history, and culture (Mukwevho 2017). The archives are essential for maintaining the collective memory and educating one generation to the other. Hence the need for public knowledge of the archives through social media. When local communities are aware of their living heritage, they will definitely use it to curb social ills in their communities; thereby bridging the social cohesion gap as well.

The main conclusions in the study "Let the little children come to archives" by Kau et al. (2019) imply that the public archives repositories do not promote the archival services through social media. The Gauteng teacher in a study by Kau et al. (2019) complained that the archives are located far from where they lived and that there was no remote access to the archives facilities in Gauteng, which hindered their effective access to the archives. Maluleka et al. (2023), investigated the online presence of public archival institutions in South Africa and the scholars concluded that the public archival institutions were not accessible. Despite being located in cities (far away from

marginalised communities), it is worrisome that the archival institutions have a limited online presence. The provincial archives of the Western Cape and the Northern Cape are the only ones using social media (Mukwevho 2017). Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2017) unearthed that a few archival repositories are utilising Facebook to engage their users and potential users; therefore, failing to take the archives to the people. This is done because of being restricted to promote the archives on social media because the archives are subsidiary units within the arts and culture departments in the government.

The NARSSA is the only organisation, which is accessible online, whereas the provincial archives had their parent bodies managing the websites, while some had no websites at all (Maluleka et al. 2023). Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2017) assume a low usage of the public archives as a result of other public archives repositories due to their parent department policies which inform them of the social media platforms they are restricted to use. Such public archives include the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport. Maluleka et al. (2023) also concluded that the public archival institutions do not have official social media sites.

According to Mukwevho (2017), the primary reasons behind archival institutions not utilising social media include a lack of management support, social media not forming part of the organisational strategic objectives, and organisations not prioritising social media. For instance, Kamatula et al. (2013) established that NARSSA, the Records and Archives Management Department (RAMD) and the Botswana National Archives and Records Service (BNARS) do not have strategies in place to maintain, manage, and promote most of the archives they hold, which are of the national historical importance. The RAMD uses public programming initiatives such as workshops, tours, websites, word of mouth, and seminars to promote their living heritage archives, meanwhile NARSSA uses exhibitions, tours, websites, seminars, and newsletters to promote their living heritage resources (Kamatula et al. 2013). Kamatula et al. (2013) further state that BNARS also uses word of mouth, seminars, workshops, exhibitions, a website, and newsletters to market their collection. None of the above three national archival institutions take advantage of social media as a tool to promote their archives to the public.

Lacher-Feldman (2011) illustrates how utilising Facebook as a means of outreach strategy for a special collection was effective in advising individuals and groups about the activities and events taking place at their specific archive. Kamatula et al. (2013) opine that it is mostly the national archives in industrialised nations like the USA and the United Kingdom (UK) that make use of social media, particularly Facebook, as a marketing and communication tool. Twitter, as another social media platform, was also effective in bringing users to the Women's Archive Map blog (Kamatula et al. 2017). Public programming initiatives have undoubtedly proven to be effective in promoting the archives to the public through social media, regardless of it being currently in its experimental phase.

Looking at the science fraternity, Yeo (2015) state that with Facebook and Twitter being popular social media sites in the US, several scientists are already using the two platforms to interact with large audiences online about scientific information. Scientists create and share content with the public, after which they gather views of the public about the scientific topic being shared through the comments and interactions made by the public; the data gathered can then serve as cognitive cues in helping the scientists analyse the data (Yeo 2015). Social media is simultaneously used as a tool for public engagements as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the efforts made by the organisation towards its betterment.

The Botswana government also uses social media to communicate with its people by posting notices of public meetings, news releases, live speeches, and service requests (Mosweu 2019). The increased success of social media usage has also influenced traditional media to move to social media channels for improved service delivery. The Botswana Telecommunications Corporation Limited (BTCL) suffered a decline in voice-call services because of the rising use of social media platforms, which resulted in a decreased revenue (Lesemela 2018). Lesemela (2018) further reiterates that after the decline in voice-call services as a traditional media, the BTCL saw the necessity to consider the use of social media for public engagement and communication, rather than depending on a call centre.

Social media, particularly Facebook, has decreased election inequities and expanded the democratic space in Botswana by helping with the mobilisation of revolutionaries who abolished the East African monarchies (Masilo & Seabo 2015). Politicians and

political parties can mobilise support from the public through social media. Through social media, previously disadvantaged populations are taken through the entire process of political events, which also grants the population an opportunity to express their views and engage in the democratic processes (Masilo & Seabo 2015).

Museums have utilised social media platforms to ask people for small donations online, to leverage ideas through solicited online contributions, and to improve audience engagement and communication (Han 2020). Through social media, museums encourage participation from a diverse range of audiences, including young people. Young people from ethnic minorities and other marginalised populations can understand and appreciate their culture and history from exhibitions hosted.

Museums with rare collections such as the National Museum of China (NMC), where rare and precious artefacts in China are found, have an opportunity for a wide reach towards awareness and usage of their collections to the public. In engaging with the public, the NMC additionally uses Weibo and TikTok to publish its most recent live parades as well as brief videos of the necessary information (Han 2020). The American Museum of Natural History (AMHN) also engages with its target audience through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube by sharing content featuring natural history about natural species (Shaw, Borrie, Mcleod & Miller 2022; Han 2020).

Facebook grew rapidly from its launch in 2004. Eight months into the inception of Facebook, the number of users exceeded six million and continues to grow rapidly, at 30 407 600 users in 2023 (Brugger 2015). The constant increase in the number of Facebook users shows its great potential for awareness and usage of living heritage archives.

### **2.3.2.1 The importance of awareness of living heritage**

Living heritage aims to strengthen cultural identity, advance sustainability, cultivate respect for one another, and guarantee that cultural expressions endure for upcoming generations. SAHRA (2020) articulates that living cultural heritage consists of oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge, and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

In a study investigating the use of archival principles to authenticate oral history, Ngoepe (2019) explains that oral history is important in filling the archival gaps. The mainstream archives in South Africa pay too much attention to recorded information and disregard oral history as a significant carrier of information. However, the 2009 National Policy of South Africa Living Heritage puts things into perspective that living heritage should not be separated from tangible heritage. These gaps have the potential to increase the establishment of what Ngoepe and Bhebhe (2021) labelled as “counter archives.” According to Ngoepe and Bhebhe (2021), counter archives are established to push the agenda of social justice through archiving and effectively ensuring access to the neglected history.

Archives foster a culture of transparency in society. One needs to understand that South Africa went through a period of marginalisation of indigenous communities. More still needs to be done to create awareness about living heritage as part of a collective effort to ensure that the living heritage of all communities are preserved for the use by the coming generation. Archival services contribute to ensuring informed decision-making in the public (Ngulube, Ngoepe, Saurombe & Zambuko 2017). The archives contain records of enduring value, which affect all aspects of our lives. Archival repositories can create a sense of community among their users through facilitating conversations, answering questions, and fostering discussions. In doing so, the awareness of the archives will assist by shedding a light on the history of the public’s living heritage (Makutla, Modiba & Saurombe 2021). Ngulube et al. (2017) stipulate that archival resources are preserved for the public to use. Unawareness of the archives among the majority of the public will be unfair to them, as the benefits of the archives will only be limited to the minority (Van der Walt 2011).

The promotion of the living heritage archives through social media for awareness creation will do justice to the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) (Act No.2 of 2000). The awareness creation of the living heritage archives can foster the act by indirectly informing the public that they have the right to access information held by the archives. According to South Africa (2000:5), PAIA aims to carry out the constitutional right to access information held by the archives that is in the interest of the public. One of the key components of any Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation is proactive disclosure, which deals with the ability of institutions to proactively disclose information rather than waiting for members of the public to lodge formal requests

(Ngoepe, Jacobs & Mojapelo 2024). The greatest challenge with PAIA is that it adopts the definition of a record as captured by the NARSSA Act and Ngoepe and Bhebe (2023) argued that this definition has its flaws. PAIA and the NARSSA Act define a record as a “recorded information regardless of form or medium”. Ngoepe and Bhebe (2024) postulate that this definition suggests that records should be seen within the boundaries of tangible documents and the authors challenged this narrow view by emphasising that a definition of records must appreciate living heritage such as oral history and indigenous knowledge.

PAIA as the South African law assists with encouraging accountability and openness by allowing anyone to access the information held by public and private organisations. In terms of legislation, members of the public can access a record kept by an organisation, provided the person making the request complies with every step in the Act’s procedural criteria for requesting access to that record (South Africa 2018). According to South Africa (2018), the criteria for accessing a record from a private body consist of the requester demonstrating that the record requested is necessary for exercising or defending one’s legal rights. The requester fill in a form of request and submit it to an information officer, indicating all the necessary details that will assist an information officer in retrieving the record requested.

Despite PAIA promoting access to information held by various organisations, it also sets down principles for when access to information may be denied. PAIA acknowledges that certain information may need to be kept for reasons such as national security, commercial confidentiality, or personal privacy (Information Regulator 2020). Also, if an information requester feels that a decision to deny their request was unfair, they can challenge the decision through internal channels or in court. Apart from that, PAIA plays a crucial role because it provides people with the knowledge they need to engage in public life and hold institutions accountable for their actions.

### **2.3.2.2 Influence of social media and cultural perception**

Social media plays a major role in influencing how the public views themselves and the world around them. Social media being the centre of the digital age, can influence decision-making of an individual significantly, and shape their perceptions towards culture (Ausat 2023). The current researcher opines that communicating and sharing

information with social media users, and partaking in conversations can shape how an individual views the world around them. In addition, the viewpoint of an individual social media user may alter how another views things (Maitri, Suherlan, Prakosos, Subagja & Ausat 2023). Through social media, people can adopt cultural practices from another without compromising their own. According to the researcher, people may perceive other cultures as pleasing to them and adopt them. The freedom provided by social media platforms for people to freely express their thoughts and beliefs plays a crucial part in how individuals perceive culture (Maitri et al. (2023). Social media actively shapes, directs, and alters the opinions of the public, which can potentially shape the viewpoints of a larger community (Ausat 2023). A mere advertisement of a product, with the reviews of others, can influence people to either purchase or not purchase the same product.

The distribution of information and opinions on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic proved that social media could influence the perception of the public and ultimately impact their decision-making (Ausat 2023). For instance, the current researcher opines that social media users shared the benefits of using steamed eucalyptus tree leaves when an individual presents COVID-19 symptoms, which led to people believing this and using it to relieve symptoms. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted that the dissemination of unverified or inaccurate information on social media can lead to changes in attitudes and beliefs of the public (Septianti, Wahab, Hastuti, Purnama & Ausat 2023). Hence the necessity to consider the existence of a phenomenon called filter bubble and polarisation.

Filter bubble refers to a situation where social media users are more likely to encounter opinions and attitudes that support their preconceived cultural or ideological worldviews (Ausat 2023). It articulates that the availability of little information on social media as a platform for awareness runs a risk of experiencing filter bubbles. The lack of access to a wide range of information and opposing views may hinder efficient and well-informed decision-making by the public (Rijal 2023). Therefore, the availability of a wide range of information about living heritage archives on social media will make the public aware of the records; engage with them and further access them to make an informed decision.

Polarisation refers to the division of a society into various groups, reinforced by their opinions or beliefs (Alstein 2022). Relying heavily on one-sided information causes polarisation (Alstein 2022). When people are exposed to limited information, they tend to divide themselves into groups or individually according to their beliefs. Polarisation frequently results in increased conflict, less cooperation between opposing sides, and difficulties in identifying a common ground. The exposure to living heritage archives by the public will grant the public an opportunity to be aware of what the archives consist of, and encourage the public to view all the collections, which will allow them to make an informed decision. Access to living heritage archives through social media will lead to awareness of the living heritage archives, which will therefore encourage usage in the public because they will be more eager to know all the sides of a story before they make a decision.

Heron (2014) confirms that sharing the archival contents on social media allows communities access to records easily. An archival populism movement which was established over the past ten years by the increasing digitisation of historical materials has encouraged Canadians to reconsider archives. Partnerships such as the LAC's TV show named "Who do you think you are?" also contributed largely to awareness and usage of the Canadian archives (Heron 2014). Nonetheless, Ausat (2023) and Fârte and Obadă (2021) emphasise that it is crucial for the public to know how to filter information that has been shared on social media to avoid erroneous or even deceptive information that easily spread through content, which can ultimately affect consumers' perception of a product or service.

### **2.3.3 Public programming skills in the heritage sector**

Successful initiatives of public programming require the right expertise and abilities by those mandated to drive educational activities to the public (Saurombe & Ngulube 2016). Effectiveness in public programming is greatly enhanced by knowledge and skills that enable heritage officers to engage audiences, communicate meaning, and sustain cultural influence. These skills become crucial tools for fostering attraction and voluntarily conforming to cultural norms (Nye 2021). Consequently, heritage officers serve as cultural ambassadors, transforming cultural heritage into inclusive, relatable, and motivating stories that appeal to a wide range of audiences. particularly the youth. The strategic projection of cultural influence requires the expertise of heritage

professionals in areas such as cultural communication, audience engagement, storytelling, digital literacy, and community facilitation (Cull 2020). Effective public engagement in cultural institutions, according to Li, Zheng, Watanabe and Ochiai (2024) is dependent on communicators' capacity to foster dialogue, trust, and emotional ties all of which are essential components of soft power. These skills aid in transforming public programming in the heritage sector from static exhibitions into engaging and impactful cultural interactions.

Public programming skills also encompass strategic design and interpretation, allowing practitioners to curate experiences that appeal to the public's sense of identity and belonging (Shabangu 2025). Researchers like Nowacki (2021) emphasise that in order to mediate between institutional goals and public expectations, heritage professionals need to be able to interpret and interact with others. By presenting heritage as a persuasive, interactive process that encourages voluntary engagement, this kind of mediation exemplifies the ideas of soft power. Through inclusive public programming, heritage officers can project national narratives that align with shared values, thereby reinforcing the symbolic power of heritage as a soft power resource.

In a globalised world, UNESCO (2021) emphasises that skills in digital communication, content production, and intercultural facilitation are becoming more and more important for promoting intangible heritage. The capacity to create creative, interactive programs like workshops, heritage festivals, and online storytelling campaigns is consistent with soft power's focus on attracting and persuading people through cultural experience rather than education (Li et al. 2024). Heritage institutions may guarantee that public programming not only conserves the past but also projects cultural confidence and influence into the future by providing practitioners with the communication, creativity, and teamwork skills they need (Grcheva & Vehbi 2021).

Relevant skills and knowledge of the archives can assist the living heritage officers adapt or evolve in changing circumstances (Nesmith 2007). Therefore, inadequate knowledge can have a detrimental impact on the public programming initiatives aimed at promoting living heritage for awareness and usage, and ultimately fail to attract the interests of the public to the archives (Njobvu et al. 2012).

Saurombe and Ngulube (2016) postulate that the archivists who deemed themselves knowledgeable and skilled about public programming, claimed not to have the chance

to provide public programming initiatives often. As a result, Murambiwa and Ngulube (2011) articulate that specialists' lack of experience in conducting public programming initiatives that particularly address users' requirements is likely the root of the issue rather than the implementation of the public programming itself. Meanwhile, the executive board members of ESARBICA respondents emphasised that public programming was not practised effectively in the region because it was not prioritised. According to Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a), despite ESARBICA carrying a mandate of training the local community on professional topics, the executive board of ESARBICA indicated that among all the preconference workshops on a variety of topics, including disaster management and preservation, the workshops attended by archivists in ESARBICA region did not address public programming-related topics. Hence the lack of public programming skills in South Africa.

Living heritage officers require skills to use soft power to attract individuals to eventually access and use available archives of the living heritage. The knowledge and expertise of the living heritage archives in public programming may assist the public programming initiatives to be successful (Saurombe & Ngulube 2016a; Brett & Jones 2013). According to Kandade (2021), the only way for heritage institutions to attract youth is to use what Simon (2016) labelled as the art of relevance, meaning that effort is needed to decode what matters to young people and directly invite them to the premises. Living heritage officers also need to showcase their competencies in educating social media users about the significance and value of living heritage archives in their lives and the society at large (Saurombe & Ngulube 2016a; Ngoepe, Jacobs & Mojapelo 2022). Furthermore, Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a) reiterate that the lack of public programming skills by responsible officers will render the programme initiatives worthless. Public programming initiatives that are executed without proper skills, will not attract the users they intend to attract and retain. As a result, social media users will continue to be unaware of the archives.

Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) argue that individuals will not use the archives unless they are aware of how crucial they are for their wellbeing. As a result, the researcher noted that those who are responsible for the execution of public programming initiatives should acquire all the necessary skills required for the successful implementation of the programmes. The living heritage officers should be competent in educating, attracting, and retaining users to their archives through social media. In

order to influence people's attitudes and behaviours, Mukwevho (2017) believes that it is crucial to use the leadership construct, which includes the qualities of expert knowledge, teamwork, and speech. The lack of the necessary skills in conducting public programming initiatives will yield no success in attracting users to the archives (Liew et al. 2015).

However, the institutions need to invest in instilling the leadership skills in their living heritage officers. Van der Walt (2011) state that sound leadership results from frequent training and workshops, which are organised by institutions for their archival officers. Organisations should invest in training their living heritage officers in how they should further promote their living heritage archives to the public. Practical training can assist the heritage officers by giving them ideas on how they can navigate through the public programming initiatives towards achieving awareness. Living heritage archives are a crucial source of information, the public needs to know about them so that the archives are able to play their education role in the lives of the public (Senturk 2011).

The users and potential users should know what the archives consist of as well as their benefits. It is imperative for users and potential users to know and understand the main records held by the living heritage archives (Katu 2015). Educating users and potential users about the living heritage archives will increase their understanding of the archives and their appreciation for and use of the archival materials (Kemoni 2002). Public programming initiatives will enlighten the public about the services offered by the heritage institutions (Katu 2015). Furthermore, Katu (2015) argues that the public needs to be aware that they can access archives freely, and that they ought to also be taught how best they can utilise those archives towards having their information needs met. Maluleka et al. (2023) contend that an awareness of the living heritage archives through educational programmes will justify the existence of the archives. Educating the public about the archives held by the institution will encourage them to learn about their culture and heritage (Maluleka et al. 2023).

The crucial function in public programming initiatives is leadership. Leadership plays a significant role in all organisational activities. Living heritage officers should create and lead public programming initiatives continuously to maintain awareness in the public (Mason 2016). The creation of public programming initiatives should have short and long-term goals (Mukwevho 2017), as these will assist in motivating the living

heritage officers to work towards reaching them by reminding them of the initial reasons why they are educating the public and what they initially wanted to achieve. Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) suggest that the commitment of a leader influences the overall performance of the group. Leadership involves the capacity to influence others directly through an exercise of social power by an individual, so they can persuade another person to do something they otherwise would not have done (Mittal & Elias 2015; Goyal, Kiran & Bose 2023). Leadership exists in any group. A group without proper leadership is most likely not to achieve its goal on time or not at all. Individuals within a group normally suggest their various perspectives, and if there is no leader in a group, there can never be a solid conclusion. Every group member would want their suggestion considered without considering the effectiveness of their suggestions in achieving the initial goal of the group within an organisation if there is no leader. The survival and growth of an organisation depend solely on effective decision-making (Ling, Simsek, Luba & Veiga 2008).

It is thereby pivotal that the living heritage officers are equipped with leadership skills for them to achieve their mandate of awareness creation of the living heritage archives to the public. Goyal et al. (2023) affirm that the effectiveness of public programming initiatives is associated with leadership, which involves strategic decision-making. The leadership style adopted by a team determines the success of an established initiative. Proper leadership results in successful public programming initiatives.

According to SAHRA (2022/2023), South Africa is capable of effectively promoting public programming initiatives for awareness and usage of the living heritage archives. SAHRA as an agency of the Department of Sport Arts and Culture believes that it is executing public programming initiatives effectively. According to SAHRA (2022/2023), the institution is digitising historical records, cultural items, and heritage places, which allows researchers and the public to easily access, and interact with South Africa's legacy through these digital archives. SAHRA achieves digitisation of moveable and immovable heritage resources through a digital heritage management system called the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS) (Wiltshire 2016). SAHRIS is an online heritage resource database; the database serves as an integrated heritage management, a national repository, a national collections repository and a centralised platform for reporting and tracking heritage crime (Wiltshire 2016:139). The database is created with the goal of safeguarding

South Africa's culturally significant or otherwise unique resources for the current and future generations (South Africa 1999b).

Partnerships such as the institutions of higher learning and research institutions, UNESCO, and the National Geographic Society also aim to establish the digital heritage preservation activities, and to initiate and organise field workshops to train local communities in digital models used for preservation of cultural heritage (Buragohain, Meng, Deng, Li, & Chaudhary 2024). The organisation's digital archives are also made freely accessible worldwide to support scientific research, education, public access, cultural heritage, and the advancement of the digital humanities (Buragohain et al. 2024).

Ile-de-France in north-central France and Qashqadaryo in south-eastern Uzbekistan have developed digital preservation by classifying different information details under three headings, which are heritage documentation videos, 3D models of heritage assets to be viewed using different model settings, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), lastly, heritage sites with featured pieces in 3D, Google Map, and images (Buragohain et al. 2024). Visitors can explore the historical monuments and landmarks in greater depth through virtual surroundings, as well as obtain educational insights and historical contexts, thereby making the virtual visit more interesting and educational (Buragohain et al. 2024). These institutions offer online guided tours of the heritage sites and online exhibitions, accompanied by video documentation. According to Buragohain et al. (2024), the digital archives offer a virtual portrayal of the heritage site in VR utilising any of the visual reality headsets from the HTC Vive, Oculus Go, and Oculus Rift with downloadable options in addition to historical information and videos. By using contemporary digital tools, these initiatives aid in bridging the gap between technology and heritage and increasing accessibility and engagement for cultural preservation.

### **2.3.3.1 Transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles**

According to Goyal et al. (2023), leadership consists of various styles. Leadership as advocated by Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) falls among the most crucial aspects of management. A leadership style influences the health and direction of an institution. For instance, under the capable leadership of Jack Welch and Lee Lacocca, companies like General Electric and Chrysler were able to emerge from the verge of

bankruptcy and turn around and become some of the most profitable organisations in the world (Robbins & Coulter 2007). Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) therefore associate leadership effectiveness with the two well-known types of leadership theories, which are transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Mukwevho (2017) is concerned about the leadership in the public archives given that the knowledge of the archives is not effectively promoted. Unawareness of the services rendered by an organisation should be alarming to the relevant people who are mandated to promote them. When people are not aware of the services established for them to utilise, it assumes that the leaders are not interactively and regularly sharing such knowledge in the public space. Public programming initiatives that lack proper leadership will not be beneficial to the desired outcomes by an organisation. Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022) clarify that crucial leadership attributes for public programming initiatives in the promotion of the archives consist of relevant qualification as well as the knowledge of the archives and records management. A lack of knowledge of the archives and records management often affects the visibility and accessibility of the archives negatively.

A transformational leadership style entails a leader who seeks to empower followers to become leaders in future. It causes positive change and adds value to followers by developing passion and commitment in the followers towards becoming like their leaders in future (Korejan & Shahbazi 2016). Transformational leaders are role models for their followers. They stimulate their followers to be innovative and creative in accomplishing the set goals. Transformational leaders have empathy with their followers and the leaders engage their followers in every decision they make. In essence, transformational leaders lead the change they want to see. They inspire transformation in others. Despite transformational leadership style improving the motivation, morale and output of followers, the researcher observed that the followers can work to try and prove themselves to their leaders. The followers may invest their emotions in their work such that they end up becoming agitated and exhausted (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013). The extra work put in by followers will be in favour of the top management, at the same time straining the followers. In the transformational leadership style, the chances of the followers being exploited by their leaders are high.

In the transactional leadership style, leaders focus on supervising their followers. Transactional leaders encourage compliance in their followers through rewards and penalties (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013). Punishment is given for poor outcomes of the work given while rewards are given for positive outcomes of the work. Transactional leaders are always examining the work of their subordinates to spot errors and inconsistencies so they would know who to punish. The transactional leadership style only keeps followers on their toes for doing their work without challenging their capabilities. This leadership style focuses on addressing lower-level needs by individually managing each part of the needs separately (Hargis, Wyatt & Piotrowski 2001). Transactional leaders are all about ensuring that all due procedures are followed in accomplishing a given task; they are focused on the present unlike the transformational leadership style, which is more concerned with the future and developing its followers. Transactional leadership leaves no room for mistakes or growth of their followers; they are focused on successfully meeting their deadlines with considering the quality of the work. The leader's motivation through rewards and penalties often brings them minimal adherence from the followers (Odumeru & Ifeanyi 2013). Transactional leaders follow a set structure in the completion of their goals, unlike the transformational leadership style which is flexible in its procedures of accomplishing the set goals. The researcher therefore notes transformational leadership style as a successful leadership style that aims to mutually benefit an individual and the organisation. Individuals can learn throughout the procedures, while challenging themselves to become the best in what they do, ultimately paving the way for their path in leadership as well.

The researcher noted that a transactional leadership style does not allow growth in the followers, instead it instils doubt in the followers whenever they are doing their work. The followers will always doubt their capabilities to accomplish a task whenever they are being micromanaged by their supervisors. Micromanagement demotivates individuals and destroys those who are eager to learn and become the best in the work that they do. Hence, it is imperative that the living heritage officers must be equipped with the relevant leadership style for them to render effective public programming initiatives. In fact, a leader, who is invested in serving the public will ensure that they invest in their followers to guarantee that even if they are no longer with the same institution, awareness creation of the living heritage archives is continuous.

In a study to examine the archivist's knowledge and skills in promoting public archival institutions, Saurombe and Ngulube (2016) found that public programming expertise is to a certain extent available in Eastern and Southern Africa, however, the use of social media and websites to promote archives required more attention with regard to further training. The study further found that the participants were not aware of available training on public programming initiatives.

### **2.3.3.2 Professional development and training programmes**

Professional development and training programmes are essential for improving abilities, competencies, and knowledge in any institution. The training programmes include but are not limited to workshops and seminars, online courses, conferences and networking events, on-the-job training, and leadership and management training (Results for Development Institute 2018).

The International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and Results for Development (R4D) spearheaded the creation of the early childhood workforce initiative, a project aimed at empowering and assisting individuals who work closely with young children (Bernard van Leer Foundation 2017). Some of the individuals who benefit from such a programme are educators. The R4D thereby conducts assessments to determine the extent and nature of the difficulties faced by the early childhood workforce, as well as highlighting innovative methods nations have adopted (Results for Development Institute 2018). The information gathered is therefore used to advise and direct the initiative.

Mentorship also serves as the most effective catalyst for job advancement. Mentors are a source of knowledge. Mara, Morar, Blaga and Balcescu (2024) define mentorship as a relationship between someone with more experience or knowledge guiding those with less experience or knowledge. Mentors assist mentees in setting specific goals and creating growth-oriented tactics by offering individualised coaching and cultivating an environment of ongoing feedback (Mara et al. 2024). This is done to ensure that their mentees are on par with everything they are being mentored on. Towards ensuring effective mentorship, mentors are also informed by means of workshops in how to deal with challenges encountered when offering their services, challenges such as communication breakdowns, misplaced expectations, and time restraints (Manuel & Poorsattar 2020). In a study to explore the adoption of structured

mentorship programmes by professional associations in South Africa, Mojapelo and Shekgola (2022) found that professional associations have the capacity to initiate the programmes but in reality, there is a dearth of concrete efforts regarding the implementation.

Mastercard turned to mentorship in order to eliminate organisational silos and facilitate connections between staff members and colleagues with comparable goals and interests. The mentoring programme offered by Mastercard has shown to be especially helpful in integrating hired personnel into the company (Manuel & Poorsattar 2020). Overall, mentorship is a strong tool for both professional and personal growth, providing vital advice, insight, and support to people pursuing careers in a variety of professions.

Leaders in Novartis chose to start a mentorship programme with a focus on cross-functional and cross-country pairs because, in the past, their staff had difficulty learning about opportunities outside of their region and function. Novartis is a pharmaceutical institution that aims to rethink medicine to prolong and improve people's lives (Novartis 2023). The institution succeeds in its mentee-mentor initiative. The project allows associates the opportunity to collaborate closely with colleagues they might not have otherwise had the chance to meet and forge new relationships with (Novartis 2023).

On-the-job training is also commonly used to teach specific skills and knowledge related to the role of the job at hand. Workers pick up skills through experience, which is sometimes more efficient for certain tasks than instruction (Atkinson 2016). On-the-job training allows an individual to receive immediate feedback while they work, enabling them to make necessary corrections and immediately enhance their performance (Osborne & Hammoud 2017). Employees can acquire the skills necessary to perform well in their roles while they are actively working by participating in on-the-job training, which is a useful and successful method.

#### **2.3.4 Effectiveness of public programming initiatives**

The effectiveness of public programming initiatives in the heritage sector is determined by their capacity to enhance cultural awareness, promote participation, and facilitate identity-building among target audiences (Liu 2023). However, soft power is adamant

that the effectiveness of public programming initiatives is assessed not merely through attendance or outreach metrics, but by their capacity to influence perceptions, inspire attraction, and foster enduring cultural connections (Nye 2021). Effective public programming, therefore, fosters cultural values, bolsters national pride, and reinforces the emotional connection between institutions and the public.

Public programming initiatives, including exhibitions, heritage festivals, educational workshops, and digital campaigns, achieve optimal effectiveness by conveying cultural narratives that engage diverse audiences. Effectiveness is therefore attained when public programming initiatives progress beyond mere information dissemination to foster participatory, experiential learning opportunities that cultivate empathy and shared understanding (Waterton & Watson 2015). The institution's ability to adjust to modern communication channels and address the changing interests of young people is another factor that determines how effective heritage programming is. Melissen (2005) argues that in the digital age, soft power is increasingly exercised through mediated platforms where cultural narratives are co-created and shared. Heritage institutions that utilize innovative public programming such as virtual exhibitions, social media storytelling, or youth-centred projects enhance visibility and ensure relevance in an interconnected society. Such approaches not only expand reach but also amplify the cultural legitimacy of the institution as a trusted custodian of heritage.

Additionally, the contribution that public programming makes to social cohesion and cultural identity can be used to gauge its effectiveness. According to UNESCO (2021), heritage-based programming promotes respect for one another, communication, and intergenerational continuity outcomes that are highly compatible with the goals of soft power. Therefore, Heritage becomes living manifestation of national culture when programs successfully involve communities.

Effective public programming initiatives are a guaranteed way of achieving awareness in public institutions (Chaterera & Rodrigues 2019). Kau et al. (2019) explain that effective programming initiatives form an integral part of awareness creation, as they encourage increased access to and usage of archival records by individuals and organisations (Saurombe 2016). It also communicates the value of the archives to the society (Saurombe 2016). Public programming initiatives allow the public to benefit from its interactive nature and dynamic learning experiences that make the archives

more real and tangible (Melville & Malao 2005). However, Moahi (2019) is adamant that the effectiveness of the public programming initiatives in making the living heritage archives known results from the public programming initiatives being tied to the vision and mission of the organisation. Therefore, the ineffectiveness of public programming initiatives in guaranteeing the awareness of the living heritage archives will result in archives being regarded as the graveyard of records (Jimerson 2003). Wilson (2005) also asserts that when public programming initiatives fail to create awareness of the living heritage, such that it runs the risk of extinction in South Africa, the initiatives defeat their purpose.

The ability of public programming initiatives to grant access to and use of an organisation's archives through awareness, gives the institution meaning as well as relevance to society (Chaterera & Rodrigues 2019). It also helps educate sponsors of the institution (Saurombe & Ngulube 2016a). In the same article, Saurombe and Ngulube (2016a) reiterate that the absence of relevant skills in archival institutions will render the archives worthless. As much as public programming is certain to create awareness, Garaba (2015) explains that it is only when public programming officers keep up with the social media trends that public programming initiatives will be a success.

Towards making public programming initiatives effective in heritage institutions, Kandade (2021) suggests that heritage institutions need to make heritage archives relevant to the youth by making the archives meaningful to the public. Put succinctly, the public needs to realise the value of living heritage archives in their lives for them to use the archives. According to UNESCO (2023), safeguarding living heritage is not just a cultural issue, it also contributes to addressing ecological and social challenges. Kandade (2021) further states that the youth normally gauge the value of something before they associate with it. If the youth realise the importance and usefulness of the living heritage archives and finds them appealing and 'cool enough' for them, they will eventually associate with them. Some of the factors guiding relevance, as noted by Kandade (2021:19), include human curiosity, imaginative effect, familiarity as a catalyst, and constant renewal.

Based on the suggested factors that guide relevance by Kandade (2021), relevant officials should consider constantly educating social media users about living heritage

archives. Educational programmes conducted on a regular basis will stimulate the imaginations of users and potential users. Constant educational programmes through social media by relevant staffing will ultimately develop an individual's curiosity about what living heritage archives actually entail. Kuiper and Allan (2016) suggest that humans are curious in nature. Curiosity drives people to frequently look for information to improve how they perceive their surroundings and to validate their assumptions. Kandade (2021) further reiterates that constant educational programmes will eventually prompt users and potential users to access the information in order to be informed. Educational programmes conducted once are not enough to appeal to the users and potential users. Repetition therefore offers high chances of users accessing and using the living heritage archives.

Individuals may still decide not to access the living heritage archives if they regard the information as being of less importance to them. Kandade (2021) states that regardless of the efforts made to bring the youth closer to living heritage archives, they may still not bother to access them, should they regard them as having less to no significance in their lives. However, the public needs to be aware of available information at their disposal to allow them to make informed decisions. Educational programming activities are therefore critical in guaranteeing awareness.

Pertaining to relevance, Arnett (2014) is of the view that people find various things as appealing to them. For instance, one person may not find the way information is shared to them appealing whereas another person would find it appealing; hence, the need to have all the necessary skills to ensure that users' and potential users' needs are covered during public programming initiatives. A user study therefore plays a significant role in assisting living heritage officers to align their programming activities and making them relevant to the information needs of their users and potential users. According to Murugan (2011), user studies refer to a method used to gather information about the needs of one's users and potential users. User studies refer to the raising of probability for users and potential users to access relevant and meaningful information. For living heritage officers to know what their users and potential users value, they may consider conducting user studies. Users are key in the access and usage of the living heritage archives, and as a result, user studies may be utilised for effective public programming in heritage institutions. Information gathered

is usually used to guide the decisions of those who generate information with the aim of providing beneficial information to the public towards closing the information gap.

User studies also talk to the 'Art of Relevance', which Simon (2016) refers to as a process of assessing the interests of potential users. Assessing the relevance of users through a user study will assist the living heritage officers to identify what their users and potential users value. User studies will aid living heritage officers in identifying the values of their users and potential users, which will assist them in the development of their educational activities towards attracting their users to the archives. This will also assist living heritage officers in applying the soft power conceptual framework in luring users to their archives through public programming initiatives.

Prioritising the needs of users by conducting a user study will guarantee access and usage of information that will meet the needs of the users while stimulating their interests in other information available in the archives. Driven by curiosity, an individual will seek information to validate their assumptions. One may also refer to the new information when engaging with others to achieve relevance (Kandade 2021). An individual will only value what they know; therefore, assessing the interests of the individuals towards making them aware of the living heritage archives will definitely be a success in achieving an awareness of the living heritage archives.

When living heritage archive officers are aware of the kind of heritage information needs their users have, they will be able to provide the kind of living heritage information that is relevant to the current needs of the users. A gradual introduction to the new living heritage information after providing users with their current information needs will definitely guarantee success in the increase of access of and usage to the living heritage archives. Users and potential users will eventually learn about important information, including information they never thought they needed. Active access and usage of the living heritage archives will assist the living heritage to live on to the next generations (Kandade 2021).

#### **2.3.4.1 Evaluation models and methodologies**

The importance of evaluating the public programming initiatives cannot be overemphasised. Evaluation models and methodologies are crucial in evaluating the efficacy, efficiency, and impact of initiatives, projects, or procedures. They provide

methodical ways to comprehend what functions well or poorly, along with their reasons (Frye & Hemmer 2012). Evaluation models assist with gathering feedback that is beneficial in improving programming initiatives and discovering factors that contribute to the programme's success. Evaluating public programming initiatives supports accountability and enables living heritage officers to continue developing their programming initiatives (Saurombe 2016).

Evaluation methods consist of a logic model, outcome mapping, and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) among others (Thusini, Milenova, Nahabedian, Grey, Soukup, Chua & Henderson 2022). Logic models describe the inputs, actions, outputs, and results of a programme. It gives an illustration of how programme actions are supposed to yield the intended results (Kekahio, Cicchinelli, Lawton & Brandon 2014). A logic model makes provision for connecting the resources, activities, and outputs of your programme to the goals you have in mind. It lets you assess their software as soon as it starts (Thusini et al. 2022). Additionally, it facilitates the communication of the plans of action, objectives, and progress monitoring to their stakeholders. According to Kekahio et al. (2014), logic models consist of resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes as its four components. Logic models therefore connect the work to the expected outcomes.

Outcome mapping offers several advantages. Organisations can record, analyse, and report on their accomplishments by using the methods provided by outcome mapping to establish planning, monitoring, and assessment systems (Earl, Carden & Smutylo 2001). These include breaking down the various ways that information is used at various programme implementation stages, assisting in the creation of a common vocabulary around progress markers, and going beyond monitoring to inform adaptation throughout implementation (Buell, Malallah & Mason 2020). The benefits include more evidence for decision-making at a rate that may enable learning and change in real time. Rather than being limited to a unit, the model functions best when it is integrated into the programme and organisational culture (Earl et al. 2001). Rather than merely evaluating immediate outputs, outcome mapping focuses on changes in the interactions, behaviours, and actions of individuals or groups impacted by the programme.

CEA evaluates a programme's expenses in relation to how well it achieves predetermined goals (Qayam 2017). The evaluation of a programme is done by taking the influence of the programme on a specific outcome and dividing the result by the programme's overall cost. The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) set out to assess the number of cases of diarrhoea illness that were prevented for every US dollar spent on five distinct programmes that were put into place in diverse settings (Qayam 2017). Among the established programmes, three treated water with chlorine, one upgraded the water supply, and another intervention encouraged hand washing with soap to change people's health-related behaviours. According to the data, the most economical method of preventing diarrhoea disease among those examined was to give out free chlorine at public water sources (Qayam 2017). This resulted in fewer cases of diarrhoea for every US dollar spent on the programme.

#### **2.3.4.2 Challenges and barriers to effective public programming initiatives**

Effective initiatives for public programming can encounter a variety of difficulties and obstacles, regardless of their focus, be it in education, health, social services, or community involvement. Numerous factors such as a lack of funding or workforce, unclear roles and duties for execution, inconsistencies with other current policies, a lack of cooperation and coordination among those in charge of carrying them out, and or a lack of political will or motivation may contribute to failure in implementing successful public programming initiatives (Health Policy Project 2014). Chigwada, Ncube and Ngulube (2025) also noted challenges such as ineffective outreach strategies, inadequate institutional investment, and limited public visibility as often hindering the overall effectiveness of public programming initiatives.

Ratlabyana, Mkhonza and Magongo (2016) also note that numerous public initiatives depend on government money, which is limiting or susceptible to reductions due to competing priorities during resource allocation. Budget can be strained and opportunities for more effective initiatives can be lost when the budget is not big enough to carry out certain initiatives. In addition, implementation may be slowed by navigating complex organisational regulations and compliance requirements (Gai, Kemp, Serrano & Schnabel 2019). Meanwhile, complex organisational regulations may cause delays and lead to higher expenses because of inefficient operations.

Due to social, economic, or geographic obstacles, some towns or groups may not have as much access to public programmes (The World Bank 2022). Therefore, it might be challenging for the living heritage officers to ensure that public programming initiatives are inclusive and meet the needs of various populations. Competent human resources are also crucial in implementing an effective public programming initiative. Organisations often struggle to find and keep qualified and skilled employees, which results in ineffective service deliveries (Figgett 2017). Figgett (2017) further reiterates that it is crucial to retain qualified staff members to ensure continuity of effective public programming initiatives by organisations.

When conducting public programming initiatives, supervisors should list each position's responsibilities. Living heritage officers need to be aware of their own roles and how they contribute to the overall project or organisation's objectives. The delegation procedure will therefore assist in making clear who should be accountable, consulted, and responsible for each task or decision (Suhanda & Pratami 2021). Miscommunication between individuals conducting public programming can cause disruption. Hence, it is crucial to keep everyone informed and to quickly resolve any role-related difficulties, and, most importantly, have regular updates and meetings (Kumar 2024).

## **2.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter Two outlined what a literature review is, along with its significance in research. The researcher explored the objectives of the study in detail in relation to the findings of other scholars whose studies sought public awareness creation through public programming initiatives towards increased usage of the archives. Under objective one, public programming initiatives and awareness of archives, the researcher explored the contribution of public programming initiatives in guaranteeing the continuous existence of the archives. The researcher also presented examples of public institutions that are using public programming for awareness creation towards usage. The researcher also noted the relationship between the archives and public engagements, together with their challenges and best practices.

Under usage of social media for public awareness of living heritage as the second objective, the researcher emphasised the significance of using social media as a tool for awareness creation towards increased usage. It was also discussed how other

mentioned institutions are utilising social media, especially Facebook for awareness. The importance of awareness of the archives was stipulated as well. The researcher also noted the influence social media has on cultural perception. For the third objective, public programming skills in carrying out public programming initiatives in the heritage sector, the researcher explained the significance of having the expertise to implement public programming initiatives to the public. The researcher showed that it is crucial to have skilled and knowledgeable living heritage officers to achieve successful promotion of the living heritage archives, and that professional development and training programmes are crucial in improving the abilities and knowledge of individuals within an institution. Leadership was also shown as one critical trait to have in individuals who are mandated to make living heritage known to the public as well as used by the public.

The researcher identified the significance of guaranteeing successful public programming initiatives in the archives; and also pointed out several ways in which effective public programming can be conducted by institutions. The researcher also emphasised the importance of user studies in order for the living heritage officers to tailor their information to the needs of their users as well as their potential users. The necessity of evaluation models and methodologies in evaluating the impact made by the programming initiatives was also explained. The challenges and barriers that are likely to affect public programming initiatives and the best practices were stated towards maintaining effective public programming initiatives.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Two dealt with the literature review of related studies. Literature was presented in accordance with the research objectives. A summary of research methodology was presented in Chapter One. The current chapter provides specific details and justification of the research methodology adopted by the study. In social research, it is important to explain the methods used to collect the data for the benefit of the reader in terms of trustworthiness.

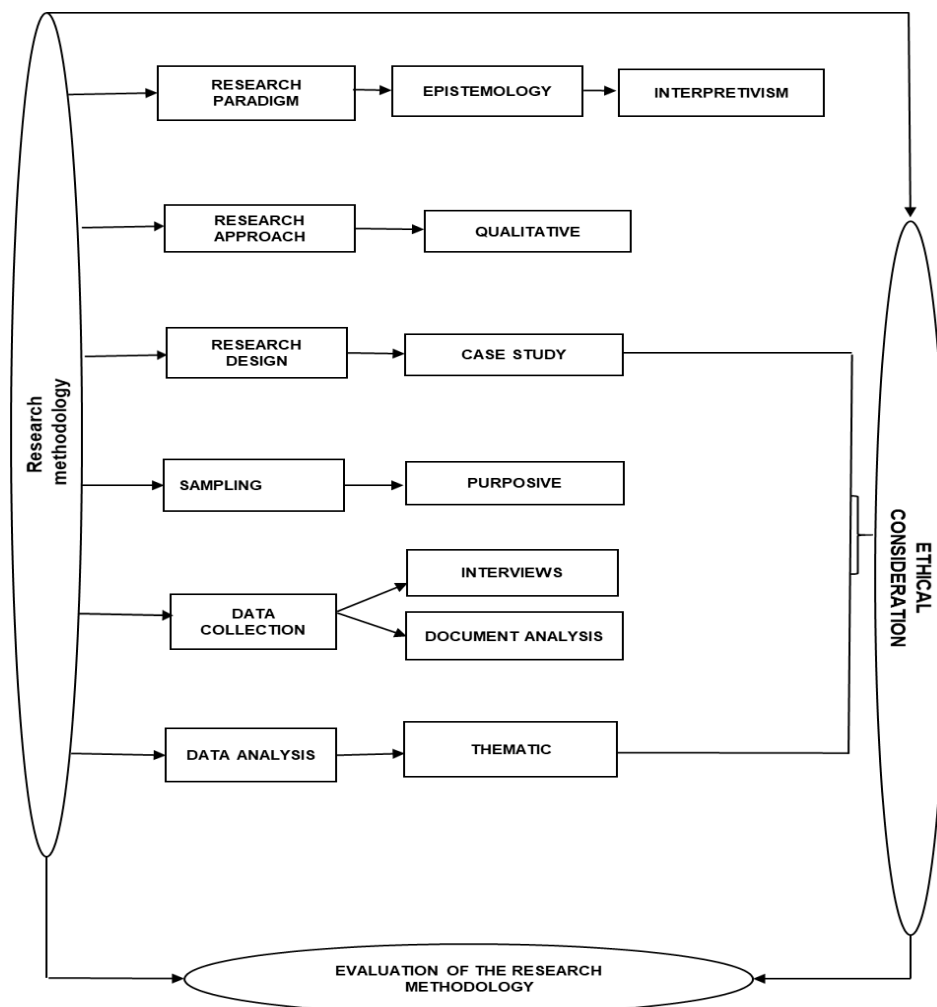
According to Mukwevho (2017), it is crucial to investigate challenges relating to the visibility and usability of the archival repositories in South Africa through research. Research refers to a continuous quest for knowledge (Singh 2021). It is a scientific investigation that requires one to search for new facts with the aim of gaining new knowledge on a topic (Kabir 2016). Research practically means that there is always room for improvement on previous work done by other researchers.

Research assists in enhancing knowledge by resolving issues through dealing with difficulties and providing answers to questions (Shah & Al-Bargi 2013). Shah and Al-Bargi (2013) further state that research investigates a phenomenon through a deliberate and organised process. In view of that, the study investigated issues related to the influence of public programming initiatives in the promotion of the living heritage archives. The purpose was to enhance public knowledge of the living heritage archives that are at the public's disposal, with the view of increasing the usage of the living heritage archives as well.

The NHC engages itself in public programming initiatives such as the Heritage Schools Outreach Programme (HESOP) initiatives that aim to instil a culture of self-appreciation, nation building, and foreground heritage within the school curriculum. However, it is important to go through the systematic and methodological processes to investigate the impact made by the living heritage archives by identifying public programming initiatives used by the institution, exploring the usage of social media by the institution, assessing the skills of the living heritage officers, and assessing the

effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in making the public aware of the living heritage archives of the institution.

A research methodology is a navigation tool consisting of ways in which research is conducted. Research methodology covers ways in which data is generated and analysed to substantiate research findings (Igwenagu 2016; Gounder 2012; Struwig & Stead 2013; Neuman 2014; Walliman 2011). This section entails the research paradigm, approach, design, population and sampling, data collection, and data analysis towards informing the reader on the methodology used. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the actions the researcher took during the investigation.



**Figure 3.1: Research methodology framework (Researcher 2025)**

### 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is perceived as the way in which an individual views the world (Hughes 2010), hence it is normally called the “worldview” (Creswell & Creswell 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the reason for referring to it as “worldview” is that it encapsulates basic sets of beliefs, assumptions, and values. Fraser and Robinson (2004) define a research paradigm as a particular way in which individuals believe that problems occur as well as how those problems can be further examined. Hughes (2010) further explains that paradigms influence how researchers think and view social reality. A research paradigm therefore influences the researcher’s opinions about themselves and others based on how they view the world around them (Schwandt 2001).

In social research, there are three epistemological perspectives, namely positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Creswell and Creswell (2018) add the fourth perspective, which is transformative, arguing that research must promote transformation. Positivists hold the view that reality does not change, it is objective and measurable, therefore leading to generalisations of findings (Antwi & Hamza 2015; Alharahsheh & Pius 2020). Positivists believe that there is a single truth or only one tangible reality (Kaushik 2019). Positivism is therefore associated with the quantitative research approach.

The second epistemological perspective is interpretivism. Kaushik (2019) explains that interpretivists believe that truth and knowledge are subjective, and that the only way to understand reality is to involve people who have experienced it. Interpretivism is more interested in in-depth variables and aspects that are context-related (Alharahsheh & Pius 2020). According to interpretivists, individuals interpret social reality based on their lived experiences and unique perspective or social context. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) further reiterate that interpretivists hold the view that reality is constantly changing; therefore, human beings cannot be studied the same way as physical phenomena. Interpretivism is associated with the qualitative research approach.

The last epistemological perspective is pragmatism. Weaver (2018) defines pragmatism as a paradigm that places more emphasis on “what works” than the things that are objectively “true or real”. According to Weaver (2018), pragmatism provides a

foundation for defending democratic values. In essence, the pragmatism paradigm highlights the significance of selecting meaningful goals in research. Pragmatism is thus associated with MMR.

### **3.2.1 Selected research paradigm for the study**

The current study followed an interpretivism worldview, which states that human beings are studied differently than the way objects are being studied in natural sciences (Du Plooy-Cilliers 2014). Human beings are not static, they frequently undergo change, wherein they are bound to adjust to new environments (Van der Walt 2020). The interpretivism worldview fit the description of the current study because the study involved human participants who are knowledgeable about social reality.

Pulla and Carter (2018) claim that interpretivism is an appropriate view to explore the significance underlying the comprehension of human behaviour and social phenomena of the staff at the NHC. The interpretivism worldview assisted the researcher to explore and understand the research phenomena within the context of the officers who are responsible for making living heritage known to and used among the youth by gaining more insight into the living heritage officers' everyday lives towards living heritage promotion. This also allowed the researcher to cover all the crucial aspects of human beings in their natural setting, such as the multiple realities, contextuality, subjectivity, and complexity (Pulla & Carter 2018).

Interpretivism argues that humans are subjective in nature and that the reality of an individual may differ from another (Alharahsheh & Pius 2020; Pull & Carter 2018). One's perception of living heritage awareness and usage through social media may differ from that of their colleagues. Despite the NHC staff working towards achieving the same mandate, their experiences towards achieving such may coexist with each other, but will never be the same. It is therefore imperative that different views are gathered in an individual's context towards gathering the possible reasons behind living heritage facing risks of extinction in South Africa. Interpretations of several lived experiences of individuals will assist in leading the researcher to the truth of why living heritage is fading in South Africa. The adoption of the interpretivism paradigm also assisted the researcher in generating a high level of validity in data mainly because the worldview is focused on an individual contribution while taking into account a variety of variables (Myers 2008).

### 3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Social research consists of three widely used research approaches, which are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method research (MMR) approaches. The quantitative research approach is explained by Creswell and Creswell (2018) as an approach that comprises numbers and is used to measure amounts or quantities (Gounder 2012). The quantitative approach uses closed-ended questions and experiments as its research strategy, as well as instruments such as questionnaires for data collection. The quantitative research approach is used to inspect relationships between variables. The advantage of quantitative research approach is that it allows the generalisation and replication of the outcomes.

The application of quantitative methods also includes summarising, averaging, identifying trends, forecasting, and testing casual relationships (Rana, Oldroyd & Gutierrez 2021). We can use quantitative methods to rank priorities, measure the magnitude of relationships, calculate effect sizes, and assess the quality of the evidence-supporting efficacy. Quantitative methods are objective. By utilising numerical data and statistical analysis, quantitative approaches seek to reduce researcher bias and yield more objective and repeatable outcomes (Daniel 2016).

Ordinarily, the quantitative research approach begins with a hypothesis that can be tested and answered by means of numerical data. To assess the significance of the findings and the viability of rejecting the null hypothesis, researchers utilise statistical tests (Daniel 2016). The use of statistical data by quantitative research approach therefore saves time and resources when collecting data analysing data.

With regard to qualitative research approach, Daniel (2016) argues that it is an approach used to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of particular groups or individuals assigned to a human or social issue. Daniel (2016) further clarifies a qualitative approach as an approach that uses words, open-ended questions, and responses. Gounder (2012) emphasises that this approach is concerned with quality; hence, the use of words and the reasoning application. The collection of data using this approach is done through observations to obtain the feeling of the situation at hand to describe it. The approach is centred on the meaning of an individual as well as the significance of expressing the difficulty of a situation (Daniel 2016).

The qualitative research approach yields a wealth of information about individuals and circumstances. Researchers generally build theories and insights based on the facts obtained rather than verifying pre-existing hypotheses (Casula, Rangarajan & Shields 2021). Additionally, Casula et al. (2021) note that despite the researcher frequently participating actively in the gathering and analysis of data, which may have an impact on the study's conclusions, this interaction is not considered a prejudice, but rather a natural element of the study process. The qualitative research approach lets the hypothesis come from facts.

The other research approach is MMR, which incorporates elements of both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The approach may entail gathering the two kinds of data simultaneously or successively, then combining them for analysis to obtain better results. The ability of MMR to collect data using both approaches is advantageous because it produces additional insight beyond the data that could have been provided by either qualitative or quantitative approaches separately. In essence, it fills the gaps that might have remained if one research approach had been used. According to Marutha (2022), MMR helps to research complex subject areas that require a statistical approach and narrative explanation.

In order to handle complicated research questions in a meaningful way, a mixed methods design blends the philosophical frameworks of both post-positivism and interpretivism and weaves qualitative and quantitative data together so that research problems are properly explained (Shrestha & Giri 2021). The use of MMR allows investigators to address research concerns comprehensively and in depth while also aiding in projecting findings and effects of the studied problems to the entire community (Shrestha & Giri 2021). Therefore, a mixed methods approach, which simultaneously balances the shortcomings of each method and combines two sets of strengths, offers the best opportunity of solving research problems (Marutha 2022). As a result, impact research questions are increasingly being addressed by MMR designs.

### **3.3.1 Research approach selected for the study**

The qualitative research approach best fits the description of the current study as the study sought to explore the impact made by public programming initiatives in

guaranteeing an awareness of the NHC's living heritage archives with the goal of increasing their usage. The research approach assisted in gaining an in-depth understanding of the impact made by established public programming initiatives towards alleviating the extinction of the living heritage. Reasons behind the living heritage running a risk of extinction, even when the institution participates in public programming through social media, were also established.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research designs are the types of inquiry within the three research approaches; they strive to provide guidelines on processes and procedures in a research study (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This study adopted a case study research design, which is currently among the five most popular qualitative research designs in the health and social sciences. The other four research designs are narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

The narrative research design gathers and examines stories to understand individuals, groups, and cultures (Wolgemuth & Agosto 2019). Phenomenology seeks to understand the world of human beings through an intellectual engagement at a conscious level (Qutoshi 2018). It is a philosophical framework to gain an understanding of occurrences at the level of subjective reality. Ethnography, also known as cultural anthropology or naturalistic enquiry, is a research method where the researcher observes and gathers valuable cultural information through engagements with the target population (Sharma & Sarkar 2019). The research design method helps to understand complex design problems. Grounded theory develops theories that are based in carefully gathered and examined facts (Noble & Mitchell 2016). Noble and Mitchell (2016) further indicate that the grounded theory is used to reveal things like group behaviours and social relationships, also known as social processes.

Case studies explore the real-life context of the current phenomenon, particularly when the distinction between the context and phenomenon is not immediately apparent (Yin 2003). In essence, a case study clarifies the boundaries between a phenomenon and a context. Creswell and Creswell (2018) also note that a case study research design is used to explore activities, events, and activities. Depending on the philosophical assumptions of the researcher, this research design can either be

interpretive, critical, or positivist (Gounder 2012). This study adopted an interpretive in-depth case study research, which is also advocated by Walsham (1993).

Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheikh (2011) are adamant that a case study method is necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon of interest. The case study research design is helpful in producing knowledge that can enhance practice (Ponelis 2015), by assisting with the gathering of insights and ideas about the reasons behind unawareness of living heritage in the public.

Perceptions of living heritage officers cannot be generalised; therefore, it is crucial that all of them are presented with the case to enable them to provide their subjective view on the subject matter. Ragab and Arisha (2018) insist that interpretive research findings are not definitive and therefore cannot be applied to other contexts except for the one being studied for. A case study as a research design assists the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of a case of living heritage facing extinction from the relevant living heritage officers who are mandated to promote heritage. Crowe et al. (2011) suggest that case studies can assist in deriving the links to the cause of an event or a phenomenon. Conducting interviews with the various living heritage officers at the NHC assisted the researcher to gain knowledge that may link to the cause of the living heritage being minimally utilised by the youth in South Africa. It also highlighted the gaps that exist within the institution towards guaranteeing successful living heritage promotion and usage of the living heritage archives.

### **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

A population consists of entities or individuals from which data must be gathered (Wiid & Diggines 2013). In defining the population, Pascoe (2014) maintains that there must be a common shared characteristic between all the individuals or entities that link to the research question. The population of the study is then defined by the population parameters of the study, which are clarified as the nature, size, and unique characteristics of the population (Wiid & Diggines 2013). The population identified for this study were the staff members of the NHC.

The best strategy in social research is to study the entire population; however, this is not practical due to the number of factors such as limited time and budget constraints.

Hence, researchers thoroughly study selected a sample, which is believed to represent the entire population. Sampling is a process of selecting the population that will assist with providing answers to the question of a study towards solving a research problem (Pascoe 2014). Pascoe (2014) further notes that a sample, which must represent the entire population, is attained by probability sampling, which is normally used in a quantitative study. A non-probability sampling method, which is usually used in qualitative studies, is only concerned with the inclusion of enough people in a sample such that a data saturation point is achieved (Pascoe 2014). Data saturation is defined as the point reached by the researcher wherein the interviewees repeat the same information to the researcher, and no longer provide new information (Fusch & Ness 2015; Pascoe 2014).

A non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher carefully uses their judgement to select an accessible population was used for this study (Pascoe 2014). The sampling technique applied to this study because the researcher was based where the research was being conducted. The researcher was able to observe and identify relevant sample for the study. Additionally, Shukla (2020) maintains that this sampling method does not represent all the characteristics of an entire population most of the time.

A purposive sampling method was used in this study. The researcher deliberately selected the elements needed to include in the sample, using a predetermined set of characteristics (Yin 2018). A population consisting of characteristics rendered significant for the research was selected as the sample of the study. Such a method is advantageous because it enabled the researcher to ensure that the sample chosen assists with the research (Pascoe 2014).

The sample of the study is indicated in Table 3.1 below. The office of the chief executive officer (CEO) and chief financial officer (CFO) as well as the support unit, which includes the supply chain, legal, audit, and finance units were excluded from the population of the study mainly because their work was not centred on awareness of the living heritage.

**Table 3.1: Units and sample of the study**

Units	Sample of the study
Communication, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement (COMSTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Executive: Communication, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement</li> <li>• Communication officer</li> <li>• Graphic design intern</li> </ul>
Living Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme manager</li> <li>• Preservation and promotion coordinator</li> <li>• Research intern</li> </ul>
Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route (RLHR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme manager</li> <li>• World Heritage Specialist (WHS)</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes manager</li> <li>• Programme support officer</li> <li>• PESP manager</li> </ul>
Research and knowledge production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research specialist</li> </ul>
Human Resources & Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources manager</li> </ul>
Social media comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHC Facebook Page</li> </ul>

The living heritage, funding, and resistance and liberation heritage route (RLHR) units are responsible for establishing public programming initiatives, while the communications and marketing department publishes and manages the online programmes; they are all therefore the relevant sample for this study. A sample size consists of the number of actual participants in the gathering of research data (Kaur

2017). The sample size of this study included 13 employees of the NHC, and social media users' comments, particularly on Facebook.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE**

The study utilised standardised semi-structured interviews which are a type of in-depth interviews, and content analysis for data collection. In-depth interviews assisted in providing different views and opinions to the same questions but from different participants; which allowed for comparison in an orderly manner, and for a simplified data analysis (Strydom & Bezuidenhout 2014). Content analysis can be used to supplement the information obtained from documents such as annual reports, policies, strategic plans, minutes, organisational or institutional reports, and annual performance plans, as well as make an allowance for monitoring and comparing shifts in representations overtime (Shava et al. 2021). Bowen (2009) defines content analysis as a systematic process used to assess or evaluate both printed and electronic documents.

In-depth interviews were chosen particularly because they allowed the researcher to ask the participants clarity-seeking questions on specific issues deemed relevant to the study (Strydom & Bezuidenhout 2014). Bengtsson (2016) adds that the data analytic procedure entails making sense of the data by selecting, evaluating, and synthesising the data contained in the documents, and audio data, and social media posts to achieve meaningful assumptions about the messages. The researcher notes that interviews provide a detailed description, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of subjective experiences. This then allows the readers to view things as though they are, through the eyes of the participants. Moreover, content analysis allows the researcher to use institutional documents to supplement interview and social media data.

#### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview is a form of study often employed in social sciences. A semi-structured interview follows a predetermined outline and centres on a central issue that offers a broad framework (Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syam 2022). Although semi-structured interviews are guided by a planned set of questions or guidelines, the interviewer is free to go deeper into themes as they arise throughout

the discussion (Adams 2015). Following up on interesting points assists in obtaining more information from the interviewee, thereby enabling participants to give thorough answers and articulate their ideas and experiences in their own words.

Semi-structured interviews are helpful when a research topic needs in-depth investigation because it is complicated or poorly understood. It is perfect for learning about the individual experiences, viewpoints, and driving forces of participants. However, the manner and style of the interviewer may have an impact on the answers (Solarino & Aguinis 2021). Nevertheless, practice and training can lessen the risk. Solarino and Aguinis (2021) also indicate that the analysis of the semi-structured interviews can be intricate and lengthy, thereby requiring precise coding and interpretation. The flexibility of the semi-structured interviews was also highlighted by Adams (2015), who state that although it has its benefits, it can also result in differences in the data gathered, which could impact how comparable the responses are.

Mashuri et al. (2022) state that anthropology literature is an example of a semi-structured interview because the interviews are used to explore the life story of an individual or a group of individuals; the life story of Prophet Muhammad was also highlighted as another example of a product of interviews.

The researcher drafted semi-structured interview questionnaire, printed it out and presented it to interviewees before the commencement of the Interview. Interviewees were given five minutes each to go through the questionnaire before they can be interviewed. Interviews were conducted with the communication officer, graphic design intern, LH programme manager, research intern, programme manager, WHS, RLHR programme manager, research specialist, and the human resource manager. The researcher drafted interview schedule, where the availability of the interviewees was filled. The researcher further conducted interviews in the offices of the participants, while using their cellphone to record the conversation. The recordings for this study were safely stored on iCloud.

### 3.6.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is a research methodology that involves examining the content of communication on documents, interviews, symbols, audio data, and social media posts to identify patterns, themes, and meanings in a dataset (Gheyle & Jacobs 2017). It can be used for both qualitative and quantitative data, depending on research needs. Content analysis makes it possible to compare over time and monitor shifts in representation, discourse, or communication tactics (Shava, Hleza, Tlou & Shonhiwa 2021). Content analysis can further guide program development, public messaging, institutional strategies, or research recommendations.

Content analysis is therefore significant for making meaningful and reproducible assumptions about the messages, their context and or how they impact things (Bengtsson 2016). Furthermore, it follows clear steps for selecting and analysing content. It is also conducted in an objective manner through predefined categories and rules, and applied both in quantitative and qualitative forms. Overall, content analysis can offer beneficial information about behavioural patterns, language use, and historical or cultural customs (Shava, Hleza, Tlou & Shonhiwa 2021). The fact that content analysis can examine both documents, audio data, and social media posts, makes it more suitable to utilise in this research study.

Despite its popularity and benefits, content analysis has a number of drawbacks. When working with substantial amounts of qualitative data that need meticulous coding and interpretation, the procedure can be time-consuming (Rahman 2017). There is still a chance that researcher bias will affect how content is categorised or comprehended, even with efforts to preserve neutrality through predetermined categories. The quality of the coding framework also has a significant impact on the accuracy of the findings; unclear categories can result in inconsistent and misinterpreted results (Hosseini, Kimiafar, Mostafavi, Kiani, Zendehdel, Zareiyan & Eslami 2020). The results of content analysis are also directly impacted by any bias, gaps, or incompleteness in the source material because it is limited to communications or documents that already exist (Shava, Hleza, Tlou & Shonhiwa 2021). It can be challenging to capture nonverbal or implicit meanings, such as tone, symbolism, or irony, and important contextual or cultural nuances may be lost when content is quantified or divided into units (Bengtsson 2016). Inference may be a method's

limitation since it can be difficult to draw conclusions about intentions or impacts based only on content. For this study, the researcher analysed the annual reports, institutional reports, policies, the annual performance plan, the strategic plan, minutes, & NHC Facebook content.

Content analysis was conducted on annual reports, institutional reports, policies, SOPs, strategic plans, minutes, annual performance plans from participants, and social media (Facebook) log analysis was also analysed.

### **3.6.3 Observation**

Observation using a qualitative method concentrates on comprehending phenomena from the viewpoint of the participants (Ciesielska, Bostrom & Ohlander 2018). Observation seeks to investigate and understand phenomena within their natural environments. Researchers sought to understand people's perceptions and interpretations of their experiences. Instead of being performed in controlled surroundings, observations are frequently made in natural settings, where researchers are able to observe the subjects' regular behaviour (Ryan 2019).

The observer can play a variety of roles, such as an active participant, who engages with the subjects and may even have an impact on the environment, or passive observer who does not interact with the subjects (Ciesielska et al. 2018). In the study naturalistic observation of engagement and disengagement within professional development in education, Ryan (2019) sought to study the actions of attendees at educational professional development conferences. He discovered that while the presentation was going on, the observed sample showed to be uninterested in the proceedings because they were frequently interacting with other people or scanning the room.

The researcher was mostly working with the LH team, which is driving most of the public programming initiatives within the institution. The researcher was therefore assisting with the implementation of the initiated programmes, meanwhile working closely with the communications team. Observations made by the researcher were that regardless of the NHC having initiated public programming initiatives, they however were not meant to inform the public about the archives held by the institution, instead, the initiatives were established to promote and preserve cultural heritage,

particularly among the youth in a form of research. Initiative such as Ubuntu was established to uphold the values of Nelson Mandela; with GOSHA celebrate champions of heritage, and Funding heritage assisting with the preservation and promotion of heritage, especially in previously marginalised communities. It was also noted on Facebook that instead of the NHC bringing the public to the archives held by the institution, it drives the public to the beneficiaries of the heritage funding who assisted with gathering the heritage research collated for the benefit of the organisation towards preserving South African heritage.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Data collection techniques are intended to capture rich, comprehensive, and contextually relevant information in the context of qualitative research (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger 2020). Both primary and secondary data such as published data and internal publications, can be gathered for a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews (Ayu & Dewi 2021). In literature, participants or non-participants can make qualitative observations. When someone observes something as a participant, they are part of the witnessed environment, such as a nurse in a maternity ward (Busetto et al. 2020). However, a non-participant observer only observes from the outside, and not a part of the action, and attempt to avoid changing the environment by their presence. People may tend to change their behaviours when they know they are being watched.

An observer may record behaviours, interactions, and events in natural environments using tools such as audio recordings, video recordings, or field notes (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey 2005). To obtain comprehensive information from participants, individual or group interviews may be conducted; the researcher may even go as far as conducting content analysis. Preserving anonymity and confidentiality by making sure that information is handled appropriately and preserved safely, is one crucial aspect during the collection of data. Attending to any ethical concerns that surface while gathering data is of significance (Ayu & Dewi 2021). It is therefore important to ensure that the collection of data aligns with qualitative research principles, ultimately leading to rich and meaningful insights into research questions.

During interviews with participants, the researcher requested annual reports, institutional reports, policies, SOPs, strategic plans, minutes, and annual performance

plans from participants for each unit. Social media (Facebook) log analysis was also conducted.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is referred to as the process of carrying out particular evaluations and calculations with the aim of taking out information that is relevant from the collected data (Bezuidenhout & Cronje 2014). Qualitative data analysis brings order, meaning and structure to the data gathered. According to Belotto (2018), qualitative data can be analysed in three ways: coding, interrater reliability, and the use of themes. A thematic data analysis was used by the researcher to analyse data. The researcher used the ATLAS.ti application for data transcription and analysis, and generated the participants' codes shown in Table 4.1.

Thematic data analysis is used to find and analyse themes or patterns in qualitative data (Dawadi 2020). It offers an organised way to interpret complex data and is particularly helpful for comprehending how different data elements relate to the research topic. Belotto (2018) explains thematic data analysis as a method that requires intensive reading through a set of data to locate themes. In thematic data analysis, the subjective experiences of the researcher centres on making sense of the data.

Thematic data analysis consists of several steps to follow when analysing the collected data. The following steps were followed during data analysis:

#### **Step 1: Familiarising with the data**

The first step starts when researchers become interested in getting to know the data (Dawadi 2020). To fully understand the content, the researcher must examine the field notes, transcripts, and any additional data sources; and underline particularly fascinating parts. It is also crucial that the researcher makes accurate and comprehensive text transcriptions from any audio or video recordings they may have. The researcher can identify the kind and quantity of themes that could surface from the data with the aid of this step (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Dawadi (2020) explains that the significance of this step lies in directing any additional actions that the researcher might need to take to properly analyse the data.

## **Step 2: Generation of initial codes**

The process of coding breaks down large amounts of data into manageable bits of meaning; the approach the researcher chooses to code will depend on the research topics and point of view (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). During this step, we begin to systematically and meaningfully organise the collected data, meaning that we code data relevant to the research questions. While coding can be done manually, qualitative data analysis software such as ATLAS.ti, NVivo, or MAXQDA can facilitate the effective organisation and management of codes (Dawadi 2020). For this study, ATLAS.ti (trail) was used. Researchers label concepts, patterns, or graphic components that appear frequently as keywords (Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Ranfagni 2023). Nonetheless, it is essential to examine the transcripts again before coding.

## **Step 3: Searching for themes**

The third phase consists of short words or phrases, called codes, which are applied to data segments that encapsulate the main idea, importance, or subject of the data (Naeem et al. 2023). When searching for themes, the researcher examines the codes for any patterns, and then group those that are similar to create possible themes. A theme can be defined as a pattern that highlights an important or fascinating aspect of the data and/or study issue (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). The primary goal of this phase was to identify patterns and connections within and between the whole set of data (Dawadi 2020). However, it is crucial to think of the codes as building blocks and combine them with other codes that are similar to one another in order to create prospective themes that may be related to the research topic.

## **Step 4: Reviewing themes**

This stage involves the researcher developing themes to move from a more in-depth examination of codes and categories to a more abstract interpretation (Naeem et al. 2023). In this stage, the researcher goes over, adjusts, and expands upon the initial themes determined in step three (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). It is then helpful to compile all the information related to each theme. Dawadi (2020) suggests that after reading the information related to each theme, the information should be evaluated to check if it supports the theme and it should be considered how well the themes fit with

the overall structure of the data collection. Themes ought to be different from one another and harmonious.

Dawadi (2020) implies that there are two stages in step 4. The first step involves extracting all coded extracts related to each initial theme from the software programme file and pasting them into a Microsoft Word document (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Maguire and Delahunt (2017) further reiterate that using software programmes or any word document processing programme to compile information can be accomplished with ease by utilising the cut-and-paste feature. In step 2 the validity of particular themes with respect to the data set was taken into consideration (Dawadi 2020). This step guarantees that the themes support the goals of the research and are representative of the data. For instance, this stage could entail talking to co-workers or going over the data again.

### **Step 5: Defining and naming themes**

The fifth step is the last stage of refinement. The goal of this step is to pinpoint the essence of each subject by finding out what the theme expresses, and the relationship between the subthemes and the primary theme, if any (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). The researcher should organise all topics in a logical and consistent narrative by going back to the compiled data extracts for each theme (Dawadi 2020). The researcher needs to carefully consider the story that each theme conveys, how it fits into a larger story the researcher wants to tell about the data in connection to the research questions, and make sure there was no excessive amount of overlap between themes (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). The researcher also has to make sure the title of each theme accurately conveys their meaning and content by keeping them brief and descriptive. Examining all the primary themes, subthemes, codes, and extracts will help further enhance the themes (Naeem et al. 2023). The final naming and definition of the data are given as the last phase of step five.

### **Step 6: Writing a report**

Step six involves writing a report such as a dissertation or a journal article outlining the findings. According to Naeem et al. (2023), a thematic analysis report must persuade the audience of the analysis's value and significance. This helps by conveying a clear, logical, and concise explanation of the narrative that the data represented within and

across themes by offering adequate support, specific instances and/or passages that might encapsulate the main ideas of the point the author is making.

The researcher should create a narrative that makes sense by combining the topics and their explanations, as proof for the interpretations. The researcher must also utilise illustrative sections from the data to justify data interpretations and offer evidence for each theme (Dawadi 2020). The illustrations aim to provide answers to the research questions and highlight the knowledge that the study adds (Naeem et al. 2023).

### **3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF DATA**

Abuhamda, Ismail and Bsharat (2021) state that qualitative researchers use different terminology from quantitative researchers under quality criteria to express the same idea. Qualitative researchers refer to trustworthiness while quantitative researchers refer to validity and reliability. Trustworthiness consists of four dimensions, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ahmed 2024).

- ***Credibility***

According to Stahl and King (2020), credibility relates to how the accurate data provided by participants have been interpreted by the researcher. The credibility of the data is determined by the amount of time the researcher spends with the participants, because much time spent with participants results in a better understanding of the participants. Furthermore, credibility is enhanced when the participants believe the outcomes. The researcher spent much time at the NHC, and in doing so, there was application of prolonged engagement (Korstjens & Moser 2018), which would ascertain credible outcomes. Member checking, where data collected from participants is fed back to them, were also applied. Moreover, data collected via semi-structured interviews were supplemented by data collected using content analysis and observation.

- ***Transferability***

Collins and Hussey (2003), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Shenton (2004) assert that transferability refers to “the degree to which the results and analysis can be applied beyond a specific research project”. Ahmed (2024) refers to transferability as the degree to which research findings can be applied to different contexts or scenarios.

The qualitative approach aims to increase knowledge by transferring results from one setting to another (Stahl & King 2020). Stahl and King (2020) further aver that transfer is only feasible when a thorough description offers a sufficiently detailed depiction of the scenario to be applied to other people's circumstances, and typically at the request of the local stakeholders.

By offering thorough and in-depth explanations, researchers enhance the study's transferability by enabling readers to assess the findings' applicability to comparable circumstances (Ahmed 2024). Additionally, when readers are provided with a detailed account of the research context, participants, and procedures, they are better equipped to assess how closely the study's conclusions align with their own circumstances and environments. Ahmed (2024) further explains that it is crucial to give a clear explanation of the sampling procedure and standards to support the findings' possible transferability because providing an explanation of the sampling techniques and participant selection criteria helps to ascertain whether the results could be relevant or transferable to populations or environments that are similar to the context of the study. According to Younas, Fabreques, Durante, Escalante, Inayat and Ali (2023), thick descriptions give readers a thorough background so they can evaluate how transferable the findings are, hence its application in this study towards ensuring transferability.

- ***Dependability***

Dependability speaks to the process of integrating quality that occurs among the collection of data, data analysis, and the theory generated from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Collins & Hussey, 2003). The collection of data using purposive sampling, using the same interview guide and observation protocols during data collection assisted in maintaining consistency of the data, thereby contributing to dependable results.

- ***Confirmability***

Confirmability relates to how well the outcomes emanate from the data collected (Kakar, Rasheed, Rashid & Akhter 2023). Ahmed (2024) asserts that confirmability is the degree to which the results are unbiased and objective, ensuring that the researcher's impact or preferences have no bearing on the results. To increase the

confirmability of the findings, researchers employ a variety of techniques, such as responsive journaling, member checking, and peer debriefing (Stahl & King 2020).

Confirmability comprises peer engagement, where the researcher's bias is minimised by discussing interpretations and observations with workers or subject matter experts (Ahmed 2024). Obtaining input from experts or peers reduces personal biases and validates interpretations by presenting different viewpoints, thereby boosting objectivity, and verifying the validity of the results. To ensure confirmability of this study, the researcher stated the research process explicitly and conducted an audit trail.

### **3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations revolve around the researcher establishing a level of trust with their research participants, advancing research integrity towards protecting their research participants, and guarding against improper behaviour, which could reflect poorly on the researchers' organisation or institution (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines provided by the University of South Africa (Unisa) (2013) Research Ethics Policy to ensure that the participants were protected. As required by the policy, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Participants must be protected from any harm and/or anxiety that may arise from their contribution to the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers 2014). Cacciattolo (2015) adds that participants must be informed of how their identities and results will be used, and their consent must be on record. As suggested by Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), the researcher provided the consent information in writing to the NHC staff to sign to allow for informed decision-making by the prospective participants. Records of their consent to participate in the research study was kept by the researcher. The researcher also guarded against any misinterpretations that may arise from the research study by briefing the population of the study about the aim of the study prior to the collection of data (Unisa 2016). The right to confidentiality of the participants by not mentioning their names was upheld on the presentation of the data gathered as stipulated in the Unisa's Policy on Research Ethics (Unisa 2016).

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) and Locke, Acorn and O’Neill (2013), assert that participants must participate in the research study willingly. The participants must not feel forced to partake in a research study; hence, the researcher made the NHC staff see the need for their participation in the study instead of forcing them to participate. Throughout the study, the researcher ensured that the following ethical principles were strictly adhered to:

**Table 3.2: Ethical principles**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Autonomy</b>	Autonomy refers to the capacity to independently make decisions and take actions on what is most favourable to oneself (Albuquerque & Garrafa 2016; Motloba 2018). It is the ability to make your own choices without feeling any pressure to go along with the decision made by another. It also includes transparency with the population of the study therefore allowing them to make an informed decision arising from autonomy (Varkey 2020).
<b>Non-maleficence</b>	The foundation of the concept lies with the moral intention of an agent to refrain from harming, imposing risk of harm, or minimising injuries to others (Motloba 2019). It is the act of protecting the research population from any harm or injuries that may arise as a result of their participation in the research study and not inflicting any harm intentionally.
<b>Beneficence</b>	Beneficence refers to acting in the best interest of others in removing obstacles that may cause harm; it is setting moral standards to safeguard and defend others’ rights and rescue those who are in danger (Varkey 2020). Guarding against misinterpretations as well as maintaining confidentiality are other characteristics of beneficence.

<b>Justice</b>	According to Varkey (2020), justice is understood to be a fair, equitable, and suitable treatment of individuals. It refers to treating all the research participants equally fair. This includes giving all the participants the same incentives if there are any being distributed, and giving all the research participants the same treatment even when no one is seeing.
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All sources used in the study were acknowledged by means of department-approved reference techniques. The work was run through the Unisa approved Turnitin software to ensure that the similarity index is within the allowed limit. This was done to ensure academic integrity as required by Unisa’s policies and procedures.

### **3.11 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study followed a qualitative methodology informed by an interpretivism epistemological perspective, which emphasises the importance of understanding the meanings and perspectives of individuals within their social and cultural contexts. This was necessary to uncover the meanings behind people’s behaviours, thoughts, and social interactions.

Data was collected qualitatively using semi-structured interviews, the NHC’s Facebook page, content analysis of APP’s, institutional reports, policies, strategic plans, minutes, and annual reports, social media analysis, and through observation from the NHC staff. Data could not be taken from the whole anticipated sample due to other staff members conducting their fieldwork. The collection of data from the population that was available took little time to conduct because an interview schedule was drafted and given to the population to fill in their available dates and times for interviews. The data collected was analysed using ATLAS.ti.

The use of semi-structured interviews sought to assist in providing different views and opinions on the same interview guide, which allowed comparison in an orderly manner. content analysis helped compare the data obtained from the participants, whereas observation assisted with the gathering of first-hand information in real time, identifying

patterns, avoiding biases, and improving validity of research by providing evidence that is directly related to the focus of this study.

The identification of living heritage officers working in public programming appeared easier, as the researcher was based in the institution for the duration of the master's degree. The collection of data was also easy as the sample availed themselves for the interviews on the scheduled dates and times. Three (3) of those who could not avail themselves for the interview notified the researcher of their travel arrangements, whereas One (1) did not respond to the emails sent by the researcher with regard to enquiring about their availability for the interview session. The researcher was therefore able to yield nine participants. Comments from social media (Facebook) were also collected.

### **3.12 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Chapter Three discussed the research methodology employed by this study. In the three epistemological perspectives in social research, the researcher adopted interpretivism for this study. The researcher also adopted a qualitative research approach with the goal of acquiring comprehensive information about the study's objectives. The justification of the adoption of a qualitative research approach was also provided. The researcher selected case studies as a design for this study, mainly because case studies explore the real-life context of a phenomenon.

The study collected data from the staff members at the NHC, using a non-probability sampling, which only included people who were willing to take part in the research. The semi-structured interviews and content analysis as data collection tools adopted by the study were also discussed and clarified. Thematic data analysis was also discussed, along with the steps needed to be followed when conducting one. Under thematic data analysis, the researcher noted that to maintain uniformity and transparency in thematic analysis, the researcher should keep a record of the coding decisions and procedures, be open to finding new or surprising themes, and be willing to review previous procedures when new information becomes apparent due to the flexible nature of the thematic analysis. The researcher further explained the trustworthiness of data, the ethical considerations, and the ethical principles that should be adhered to.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the research methodology adopted by the study. The following sections were discussed for the reader to understand the process followed by the researcher to arrive at the conclusion: research paradigms, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data analysis, trustworthiness of data, ethical consideration, and evaluation of research methodology. The current chapter presents the findings of the study which were achieved by following the methodology, as presented in the previous chapter.

The structure of this chapter includes an analysis of data collected through standardised semi-structured interviews, observation, social media content analysis, and analysis of documents collected from the NHC. In addition, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the institutional policies, annual and quarterly reports, APPs, strategic plans, and social media log analysis

#### **4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS STRATEGY**

The findings of the study are presented using written descriptions, tables, and verbatim quotes. According to Saurombe (2016), any doctoral study involves the gathering of significant data, which is required to be presented in a manner that will make it easy for the reader to understand. If the reader is not able to make sense of the findings, the whole purpose of contributing to the existing body of knowledge will be defeated. To maintain alignment with the research objectives, data is systematically presented in accordance with the research objectives outlined in Chapter One.

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011), the presentation and analysis of the findings are crucial because they enable the researcher to organise data into a form that is understandable and interpretable, enabling the study and examination of the relationships between the research problems and the development of conclusions. In addition to providing answers to the research questions of this study, the goal is to assist in identifying patterns and connections between the variables (Nalzaró 2012). Therefore, the data collected through face-to-face standardised semi-

structured interviews, content analysis, and observation were analysed in view of the following objectives:

- To identify cultural strategies used by the NHC to promote living heritage.
- To explore the usage of social media as an innovative tool to increase public awareness of living heritage.
- To assess whether responsible officers at the NHC have relevant skills required to carry out public programming initiatives.
- To assess the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness through social media.
- To propose a framework to guide the public programming initiatives through social media.

A proposed framework that will assist in guiding the public programming initiatives through social media towards awareness and increased usage of the archives held by the institution is included in Chapter Six of the study (Conclusions and recommendations). As highlighted earlier, the researcher made an effort to ensure that the presentation of data is presented in a manner that the reader can easily grasp the data without the need to engage the researcher for further clarity.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the researcher used standardised semi-structured interviews, observations, and content analysis for data collection. The researcher anticipated to collect data from the head of executive: communication, marketing and stakeholder engagement (COMSTA), communication officer, graphic design intern, LH programme manager, preservation and promotion coordinator, LH research intern, RLHR programme manager, WHS, funding programmes manager, funding PSO, PESP manager, and the research specialist.

The researcher collected data from the communication officer who was also acting for the executive manager: COMSTA at the time of interviews due to changes in management, graphic design intern, LH programme manager, LH research intern, RLHR programme manager, funding programme manager, funding PSO, research specialist who was also acting as the general manager for the executive core business, the human resource manager, and social media log analysis.

The WHS and the preservation and promotion coordinator were unavailable for the interview sessions. The preservation and promotion coordinator travelled for fieldwork; however, no response was received from the WHS. The position of the PESP manager also became vacant due to a change in management. The head of executive: COMSTA resigned while the interviews were in progress.

With the consent of the participants, the researcher recorded the interviews in order to obtain precise data. The interviews were recorded using the researcher's personal phone. To ensure that the voice records were secured, the researcher created a file on the phone, which required face recognition to be accessed, and then stored those records in the file. After all the interviews were conducted, the researcher saved all the records in iCloud storage and encrypted them to prevent unauthorised access. Furthermore, the researcher recorded notes on a notepad during the interviews and observations. The interviews, observation notes, and reviewed documents are compared and analysed in this chapter.

Qualitative content analysis and presentation of the data were done in addition to verbatim responses, tables, figures, and images. The researcher used ATLAS.ti for data transcription and analysis, and generated the participant codes shown in Table 4.1. the NHC is a small organisation, and as such, the researcher generalised the positions of the staff members to either manager or junior of the organisation when coding. The participants were assigned codes, which excluded any potential for the public to deduce the identities of the participants. As part of ethical consideration, the use of codes to denote specific participants helped the researcher to adhere to ethical guidelines by ensuring the anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy of the participants.

The researcher arranged the interview recordings according to the sequence of the interviews. During data transcription, the researcher renamed the recordings according to the codes established to ensure that there was no confusion of identities.

### **4.3 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Anonymity is critical in a qualitative study. This is why the researcher used codes to ensure that the identities of participants are not revealed because when people represent organisations, especially people in high positions, their views may be influenced by what the organisation stands for. This can limit the ability of the

participants to provide honest and unfiltered opinions or consider alternative perspectives. It is therefore significant for participants to speak freely, as individuals, for the sake of a broader, and more objective view. To ensure that participants spoke freely towards providing complete and unbiased information, the researcher guaranteed that their participation was of significance in this study because they are experts in their field.

The roles of the participants were explained on the informed consent forms signed by the participants, and the researcher reiterated the roles to all the participants individually before interviews were conducted. The participants were given the interview guide to read before the interviews commenced. Each participant was given five minutes to read through the questions. The questions were clarified prior to and during the interview sessions to ensure that the participants responded in the context of the study. The participants were also reminded that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw during and/or after the interview session.

Towards ensuring that the ethical principle of anonymity was followed, the researcher used codes to identify each participant. The researcher saved each interview recording with the participant's code immediately after the interview session, which also assisted with avoiding confusing participants during data analysis. The researcher then categorised the data collected according to the relevant themes.

**Table 4.1: NHC participants' codes and positions**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Position level</b>
FU2	Funding manager	Manager
FU1	Funding PSO	Junior
HRF1	HR manager	Manager
LH1	LH programme manager	Manager
LH2	LH research intern	Junior
RLH1	RLHR programme manager	Manager

CMS1	Public relations officer	Junior
CMS2	Graphic design intern	Junior
RKP1	Research and knowledge production manager	Manager
FBLA	Facebook log analysis	Social media

The participants as projected in Table 4.1 consisted of four junior employees and five managers which the researcher selected purposively. Participants LH2 and CMS2 had more than two years of experience in their work, and participants FU1 and RLH1 had more than 10 years of experience in their roles at the NHC. RKP1 had one year of experience in their role at the NHC at the time the interviews were conducted; participant HRF1 had more than years of experience at the NHC, participant CMS1 had more than 12 years of experience in their role at the NHC and participants LH1 and FU2 had more than 20 years of experience in their roles at the NHC. The table below therefore consists of participants with various levels of studies. The demographic data of the study participants is shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Participants' demographic background**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Generalised positions</b>	<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Minimum years of work experience</b>	<b>Gender &amp; age range</b>
FU2	Funding manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor's Degree</li> </ul>	20	Female Age: 56-65 years
FU1	Funding PSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Diploma</li> </ul>	10	Female Age: 40-45 years

HRF1	HR Manager	• Master's Degree	3	Male Age: 46-50 years
LH1	LH Programme manager	• Master's Degree	20	Male Age: 51-55 years
LH2	LH research intern	• Honours Degree	2	Female Age: 20-35 years
RLH1	Project manager	• Bachelor's Degree	10	Male Age: 51-55 years
CMS1	Public relations officer	• Bachelor's Degree	12	Female Age: 40-45 years
CMS2	Graphic design intern	• Bachelor's Degree	2	Male Age: 20-35 years
RKP1	Research and knowledge production manager	• Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	1	Female Age: 46-50 years

Table 4.2 above displays the roles, qualifications, years of work experience, gender, and age of the participants. The participants consisted of five females and four males with ages ranging between 20 and 65 years. Among the participants were five managers and four juniors. The participants' backgrounds ranged from 1 year to over

20 years of experience in their roles at the NHC. Neuman (2016) argues that researchers should pay more attention to how the sample of cases, units, or activities illuminates social life rather than how representative the sample is.

#### **4.3.1 Participants and their positions**

The researcher purposively selected the participants of the study according to their relevance in positions that were important to the study. The funding, research and knowledge production, and living heritage units play a crucial role in the preservation and promotion in the institution, as well as the national living heritage. The researcher believed that the participation of managers and their juniors would allow for the provision of extensive knowledge about the topic at hand, while also unearthing the knowledge gaps of their juniors. At the same time, juniors can also contribute to innovative ways in which managers can better provide services to the public. Participation of the users can help the institution assess the effectiveness of their public programming initiatives towards attracting the youth.

#### **4.3.2 Highest qualification**

The researcher identified the highest qualification of the staff at the NHC with the goal of checking their relevance to the line of work the staff members performed at the NHC. The researcher was of the view that the accumulation of a tertiary qualification in the role a person is playing at work, allows that person to have a smooth adjustment in their role at work. The knowledge of theory of the role an individual plays at work allows them to easily apply it. When you know what you are doing, you are able to do it diligently.

#### **4.3.3 Years of experience**

The years of experience refers to the years of service the NHC staff had in their roles at the NHC, and not the actual experience in their field of study. The researcher believed that the more years an individual has in their role, the more knowledgeable they are about their duties. They are able to find innovative and creative ways in which to successfully deliver services to the public.

The collected data and the results of the study were analysed and presented in relation to the themes of the study's objectives. The themes emerged from the study's

objectives and the conceptual framework. The main themes and categories utilised in the collection of data are shown in Table 4.3 below. The table also serves as a guide to how the study was presented.

**Table 4.3: Key themes, categories, and data collection method of the study.**

Key themes and categories	Data collection method
<p><b>4.3.1 Cultural strategies</b></p> <p>4.3.1.1 Cultural strategies adopted by the NHC to enhance visibility and accessibility of the living heritage.</p> <p>4.3.1.2 Participation of the public in living heritage through social media.</p> <p>4.3.1.3 Plans and strategies for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3.2 Social media and public awareness of living heritage</b></p> <p>4.3.2.1 Media platforms adopted by the NHC for public programming initiatives.</p> <p>4.3.2.2 Promotion of living heritage archives on social media.</p> <p>4.3.2.3 Social media target audience.</p> <p>4.3.2.4 Reasons for the adoption of social media in raising public awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3.3 Relevant expertise to carry out public programming initiatives</b></p> <p>4.3.3.1 Key skills and competencies crucial for implementing public programming initiatives</p> <p>4.3.3.2 Training relevant to public programming and heritage management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.3.4 Effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> </ul>

4.3.4.1 Overall effectiveness of current public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> </ul>
4.3.4.2 Mechanisms used to gather feedback.	
4.3.4.3 Feedback from the public on modification or improvement of public programming initiatives.	
4.3.4.4 Level of participation on social media.	

### 4.3.1 Cultural strategies

The first objective of this study was to identify public programming initiatives used by the NHC to promote living heritage. This section reflects on the public programming initiatives adopted and used by the NHC to promote living heritage. The section also discusses the participation of the public in living heritage in the established public programming initiatives through social media, the skills and competencies by the living heritage officers who are mandated to implement these public programming initiatives, and the training relevant to public programming and heritage management. The plans and strategies in place for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives are also clarified.

#### 4.3.1.1 Cultural strategies initiatives adopted by the NHC to enhance visibility and accessibility of the living heritage

The participants were asked to identify the public programming initiatives used by the NHC to enhance the visibility and accessibility of living heritage in South Africa. The data collected through interviews, observations, and content review, the annual report, APP as well as the strategic plan indicated that the NHC adopted the following public programming initiatives:

- Funding for heritage projects
- Publications and productions on national heritage
- Media engagements
- HESOP

- National Inventory Office (NIO)
- Cultural expressions
- Dialogues
- Lectures
- Book exhibitions
- Seminars
- Symposiums
- GOSHA
- Partnerships

In an engagement with the participants, the researcher noted that the NHC had two programmes –the support programme and the core business programme. The support programme is divided into five pillars, which are CEO, human resources and facilities, marketing and communication, secretariat, and finance units. The core business programme has four pillars, which include the living heritage, the resistance and liberation heritage route, funding, and research and knowledge production units. An organisation’s support programme serves a vital role in assisting the organisation to accomplish its objectives by offering vital services, resources, and support to ensure the operational success of the institution. The core business unit is the key, crucial component of the NHC that is in charge of providing the main goals or services the company provides to the public.

The participants mentioned that the public programming initiatives fall under the core business unit wherein all of the public programming initiatives are established and conducted. Various units within the core business unit conduct different public programming initiatives, which speak to their standard operating procedures towards supporting the primary mandate of the institution, which is to transform, protect, and promote heritage through coordination and management of heritage and resources for social cohesion and sustainable development. The COMSTA unit assists with the promotion of the educational programmes established by the core business unit.

LH1 mentioned that the reason behind the establishment of the NHC was to readdress the imbalance of heritage management in the country. LH1 further stated that the NHC was established to uplift that which was marginalised prior to 1994, which is the living heritage. For people to start taking intangible/living heritage as referred to in South

Africa, they need to know these heritage resources, and for them to know, the NHC had to develop and conceptualise education and awareness programmes.

The participants noted that the living heritage unit facilitates HESOP, NIO, cultural expressions, Ubuntu projects, intergenerational dialogues, book exhibitions, and GOSHA. LH2 and LH1 explained that HESOP is an outreach programme that deals with schools through a partnership with a number of government entities, with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) being the main partner. LH1 and LH2 further clarified that HESOP conducts annual heritage research competitions where learners from Grades 8 to 11 from different secondary schools in all the provinces of South Africa are given a topic around which they can conduct their research. LH1 indicated that *“NHC submits a concept document to the National Department of Basic Education which is circulated to provincial and district offices; Schools can then register to participate in the programme”*. LH2 stated that *“however, the focus of this programme is on disadvantaged schools, with biasness on the learners who are doing social sciences”*.

Both LH1 and LH2 indicated that the competition starts at district level, move to provincial level, and then to the national level where the top one schools in all the provinces are invited to an all-expenses-paid week-long camp for them to present their final topics and represent their provinces at a national heritage site. LH1 and LH2 further stated that each school was represented by five learners, and that the top four winners at the national camp were rewarded with incentives such as laptops, cell phones, tablets, certificates, trophies, medals, and promotional items. Participant LH1 mentioned that the competition targets the September school holidays to ensure that the camp does not interfere with the studies of the learners.

With intergenerational dialogues, LH1 indicated that the youth come together with the elderly to engage about heritage matters. Cultural expressions consist of various cultural activities taking place with the sole purpose of preserving and promoting intangible heritage. According to LH1 and LH2, cultural expressions are hosted annually. LH2 mentioned that book exhibitions are also hosted in Africa Month, which is in May. The books exhibited are the research outputs submitted to the NHC by the funding beneficiaries as a product of their funded projects as mentioned by LH2. LH2 mentioned that GOSHA is also an annual event where the institution recognises the

contributions of the public in promoting and preserving living heritage. LH2 further stated that the institution, through the living heritage unit, awards the public in different established categories of the living heritage by the unit, with various incentives for their contributions in heritage. The awards are held in all the provinces of South Africa rotationally; however, LH1 explained that the living heritage unit decides on which province the awards will take place in their planning.

The researcher observed that the living heritage had also established an inventory system named NIO, which is not yet functional as it is still in its development stage. LH1 explained that NIO is an inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) established by the NHC to ensure that elements of South Africa's IKS and everyday cultural practices are preserved and promoted. The 2022 annual report indicated that the LH unit engages knowledge bearers and custodians of various elements of living heritage on various kinds of intangible/living heritage topics, as guided by the NIO framework. LH1 further clarified that the knowledge bearers are documented during an interview, and the documents are then deposited on the NIO system after an internal verification has been conducted.

FU2 mentioned that the funding unit provides funding for community living heritage-related initiatives. The researcher noted that the funding unit has two types of funding that have the same objective, which is to provide funding for community living heritage-related initiatives. The funding according to the researcher's observation includes PESP and the NHC annual heritage budget. FU1 and FU2 mentioned that the unit advertises a call for funding every financial year, wherein communities are invited to submit their intangible heritage-related proposals for consideration. FU1 and FU2 indicated that the funding unit further evaluates the proposals against the funding policy for relevance, and then either accept or reject the proposal. FU2 indicated that to ensure the success of the funded projects, the unit is mandated by its policy to monitor and evaluate the performance of the funded projects to ensure that their performance is properly measured against the criteria agreed upon. FU2 also mentioned that the unit is entrusted with the duty to walk the journey with the beneficiaries through emails and phone calls whenever beneficiaries need help or clarity on their project to ensure its success.

According to RLH1, the RLHR unit conducts community engagements such as dialogues, lectures, seminars, and symposiums. RLH1 further stated that the interactions are normally led by heritage experts and practitioners for the purpose of debate. The NHC revised-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25) states that the RLHR unit also forges partnerships in international organisations or cultural institutions.

According to CMS1, the COMSTA unit plays the role of managing the reputation of the organisation internally and externally. CMS1 further stated that the COMSTA unit ensures that the services and products of the NHC are promoted. In addition to supporting all the core business units, CMS2 clarified that the COMSTA unit designs posters about the events that are yet to take place as received from the core business programme. CMS2 additionally stated that COMSTA then markets the events prior to their occurrence for awareness through various mediums of communication.

Participants all agreed that the organisation has developed public programming initiatives to enhance the visibility and accessibility of heritage, including the living heritage. The participants and document review further mentioned the following regarding public programming initiatives adopted by the institution. FU2 had this to say:

*“One of the programmes is HESOP within our living heritage programme. We also have got resistance and liberation heritage route (RLHR), this is where we are covering all the issues related to our liberation struggle in the country and capacitate our communities around the liberation struggle, and where the NHC is driving the communities towards transformation of the heritage landscape.”*

On the other hand, FU1 indicated that:

*“In the core business unit, we have one of the pillars called the LH. They run programmes such as HESOP, and GOSHA. We also have RLHR, where we commemorate heritage sites. We also have the funding programme, where we advertise every financial year; we invite the public to respond to our call of funding heritage-related programmes.”*

The medium-term strategic framework 2020/21-2024/25 states that the funding unit provides funding to community heritage initiatives that help safeguard, conserve, and advance South Africa's cultural legacy. Every year, candidates are asked to submit funding proposals for heritage projects. A little more than R62 million was allocated to 67 projects around the country, creating 6035 PESP jobs. All nine provinces were covered by these initiatives. Additionally, 32 public projects were supported with R7 million from the NHC's annual heritage budget.

The NHC partnership policy 2024 stipulated that the funding policy outlines how the NHC provides funding for initiatives that support national heritage initiatives, informs prospective applicants and other stakeholders on the types of projects that are funded with the NHC funding, and outlines the principles that guide awarding of funding and inform all stakeholders how projects can be funded in the heritage sector to enable their participation. These are to ensure that applicants and prospective applicants are aware of the terms and conditions that may attach to funding prior to lodging applications and contracting with the NHC in respect of projects and ensure that projects that have been awarded funding are monitored and their performance properly measured against agreed criteria and the intended outcomes are achieved.

When participants were asked about the about public programming initiatives adopted by the NHC of South Africa to enhance the visibility of living heritage, LH1 had this to say:

*“We have an outreach programme where we deal with schools (HESOP), but we also have intergenerational dialogues, which are also platforms in which there is education and awareness where the elderly are engaging the youth on heritage matters. But over and above that, I guess there are other initiatives that the NHC is doing, be it seminars, and other areas in which they focus on teaching the public about things that are new when it comes to heritage. We also have cultural expressions, which consists variety of activities, but they are all aimed at advocacy and awareness because we know that for people to understand and value heritage, they need to know about it.”*

On the other hand, LH2 stated that:

*We have book exhibitions in Africa Month (May). Before the exhibition starts, we normally do brief presentations about who we are as an entity. That is when the NHC is being promoted for awareness of its services. The information resources that form part of the exhibition are the research outputs from funding beneficiaries. HESOP caters for learners from Grade 8 to Grade 11. The programme caters all the nine provinces in South Africa.”*

The revised medium-term strategic framework 2020/21-2024/25 emphasised that nationally, schools challenge each other to represent their province at a week-long camp in this NHC programme. The NHC has collaborated with the DBE in developing the learner and teacher support materials on heritage themes. The NHC normally collaborates with organisations such as the Brand SA, National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), SAHRA, South African National Parks (SanParks), and some provincial Departments of Sport, Arts and Culture.

APP 2022/23 also highlighted that the NIO records every element of South Africa’s cultural practices, norms, and values normally referred to as living heritage. This tool redresses past imbalances that neglected and/or criticised intangible cultural heritage. Living heritage provides people with a sense of identity and continuity within communities. Understanding common features of cultural traditions across South Africa can foster national unity and pride while maintaining respect for human rights.

The revised medium-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25) highlighted that through the GOSHA flagship activity, the NHC recognises the contribution of individuals, groups, organisations, and academic institutions contributing to the conservation, preservation, and promotion of South Africa’s heritage. The NHC has collaborated with the Limpopo Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, which continued its partnership with the awards into the third year hosted. Revised medium-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25) further indicated that cultural expressions are an annual event hosted in February, where communities appease and acknowledge their ancestors for providing marula. The ceremony contributes to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and promoting the IKS of brewing and serving marula beverages. According to the NHC (2020/21-2024/25), the event is a

way of enhancing and promoting social cohesion, nation building and contributing towards socioeconomic development.

Partnerships the NHC has entered into have been noted in the revised medium-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25) as follows:

- The NHC expanded on its previous year's foundation to maintain cordial relations with strategic stakeholders across the three tiers of government and internationally.
- The programmes implemented during the financial year received the support of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture's nationally and provincially as well as the support of the Department of Tourism with whom a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed.
- Provincial Traditional Houses of Leaders appreciated the NHC extending an opportunity to collaborate in matters of preserving heritage, especially in their communities.
- A working relationship was entered into with the Seychelles National Heritage Resource Council to establish an institutional structure for the two parties to exchange expertise and have joint activities.

The living heritage inventory SOP 2024/25-25/26) emphasised that the NHC often partners with organisations where the collaboration does not involve the transfer of funds but entails the sharing of resources and other forms of in-kind contributions, for instance, HESOP and GOSHA, with the sole purpose of promoting living heritage to the public.

RLH1 mentioned that concerning the public programming initiatives established by the NHC to promote LH the RLHR unit established the following:

*"We have community engagement programmes where we have public engagements in the form of dialogues, lectures, symposium, seminars, generally it is an interactive discussion led by heritage experts and practitioners to instil a sense of dialogues, so people can debate. We also do our international programmes through our multilateral engagements where we forge partnerships in international organisations or cultural*

*institutions in other countries, where we share our common heritage values and experiences so that all humanity is preserved in terms of heritage.”*

The annual report 2022/23 presented the occurrence of some of the public programming initiatives established by the NHC as follows:

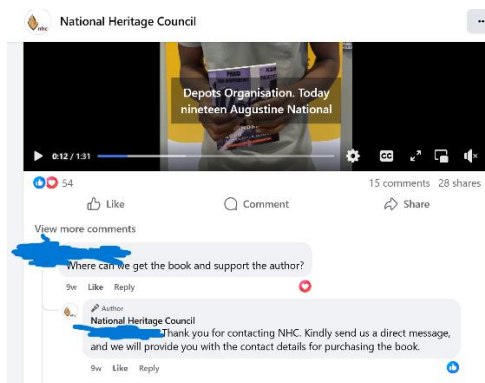
- **Human Rights Month Commemorations – 2024.** Cultural Heritage as a Human Right Seminar – Free State TV and Free State Radio attended the event. Free State TV covered the seminar till the end and interviewed the NHC representative.
- **Human Rights Public Lecture** – Sedibeng Ster community newspaper attended the event and covered it until the end and interviewed NHC CEO and VUT vice-chancellor.
- **60<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the Rivonia Trial** – September 2023 – An interview on Morning Live Channel 404 and SABC 2 was conducted by CEO, Dr Lukhwareni.
- **Heritage as a strategic resource intergenerational dialogue – August 2023** – A media partnership with Thobela FM was sought for the purpose of promoting the event and hype prior to and during the event. Interviews were conducted on Thobela FM by several NHC officials who attended the event in Mpumalanga.
- **Golden Shield Heritage Awards** – July – September 2023 – Media interviews were conducted on Khayelitsha FM by Ms Ngwaila and Riverside FM by Mr Mulaudzi. Publicity was received in the daily newspapers: Daily Sun, Cape Argus, Isolezwe Les' Xhosa, Die Burger, and others. Broadcast: VOC FM, Alberton Record, and Ubuntu and GOSHA 2023.

The NHC's Facebook page posts are mainly about the promotion of heritage funding opportunities, public events such the Indigenous Knowledge Seminars, workshops, Ubuntu, Dialogues, Public lectures, exhibitions, HESOP, GOSHA, Ancestors Day, resistance heritage, notice of declaration of world heritage sites, results of funded projects, short storytelling videos, commemorations, and countdown to deadlines. In most of the initiatives, the NHC is in collaboration with various entities such as the DBE, Universities, and NGO's. Through these initiatives, the NHC can reach the public, especially the youth. Frequent posts are on heritage fundings, heritage awards,

and heritage competitions' calls, deadlines, countdowns, extensions, and funding beneficiary short videos on the output product upon dropping it off at the institution. However, the researcher noted that the NHC does not have public programming initiatives established mainly for attracting the public to the archives held by the institution.

Recently, the NHC has established a programme where beneficiaries of the heritage funding give a summary of their research output in a video. The research output often comes in as a book, documentary, or research article. The video taken is therefore shared on Facebook as an awareness initiative. According to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by both beneficiaries and the NHC, beneficiaries are compelled to give the NHC five copies of their outputs (NHC 2023). The NHC usually deposits the beneficiary outputs at its resource centre. In one of the videos recently shared on Facebook, a user requested the NHC where they can locate the book which the beneficiary was dropping off at the NHC, and instead of drawing the public to the organisation to use the information resources, the organisation directed users and to the beneficiary, who in this case is the author.



Users questioned that "Where can we get the book and support the author?", and another stating that they needed a copy of the book.



The above screenshots indicate requests made by users that they needed a copy, the institution responded by stating that they would provide them with the author's details for them to purchase.

Some of the public programming initiatives shared by the NHC on Facebook are as follows:

**Table 4.4: Public programming initiatives on the NHC’s Facebook page**

Public programming initiatives shared on Facebook	Description
	Seminar
	Declaration of a World Heritage Site

**National Heritage Council**  
16 Feb 2024

Like Comment Share

14 2 shares

All comments

Thank you for showing Ubuntu to our community. Our old and young ones are happy, so are we as stakeholders.  
Reply

Is been almost 2years now I have applied since I received a message that says my application is received I just need to know how long must we wait???

All races are suffering due to cadre corruption at all levels...maybe you can help the others too. Electioneering going on

## Ubuntu initiative

**National Heritage Council**  
08 May 2024

On 10 May 1994, the founding president of a free South Africa, Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela addressed the nation and the world on the occasion of his inauguration at the Union Buildings, Pretoria. Former President Mandela's inauguration speech was important in both its symbolism and content. Freedom Park will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Mandela's speech.

You are invited to these historical events; National Dialogue on healing, Cleansing and Renewal on 09 May and Inter-faith Prayers on 10 May 2024.

Email Magda Strydom from Freedom Park @ magda@freedompark.co.za #Africamonth2024 #Africamonth

**30th Anniversary of Madiba's Speech**

5

## Dialogues

We're LIVE on YouTube!

Join us for the Heritage Month Roundtable Dialogue – a powerful conversation reflecting on the role of traditional leaders in South Africa's liberation journey.... See more

HERITAGE MONTH ROUNDTABLE DIALOGUE  
Theme: Echoes of Resistance: Traditional Leaders in the South African Liberation Journey.  
26 SEPT FRIDAY 12:00  
VENUE: LESEDI CULTURAL VILLAGE

YOUTUBE.COM  
Echoes of Resistance: Traditional Leaders in the South African Liberation Journey

4 1 comment

**National Heritage Council**

5


Like Comment Share

**National Heritage Council**  
08 May 2024 · 🌐

Today is a day where we honour those who came before us and celebrate our rich heritage – Happy Ancestor's Day.

Share with us how will you be celebrating your Ancestor's Day?

#AncestorsDay #africamonth2024



23 12 shares

Like Comment Share

Ancestors Day

**National Heritage Council**


17 May 2024 · 🌐

And this is how we celebrated International Museums Day at the E'skia Mphahlele Library in Tshwane today.

To align with the theme, we enriched the public with some Heritage knowledge through a quiz.

International Museums Day is tomorrow – 18 May. Visit your nearest museum to learn about your history, culture and heritage.

#InternationalMuseumsDay #AfricaMonth2024 #KnowYourHeritage



3

During the international museums day, the NHC exhibited their collections, and enriched the public with heritage knowledge through quizzes.

**National Heritage Council**

04 Jul 2024 · 🌐

Need funding for your Heritage project? Simply follow the link to register and apply for funding support thr... See more

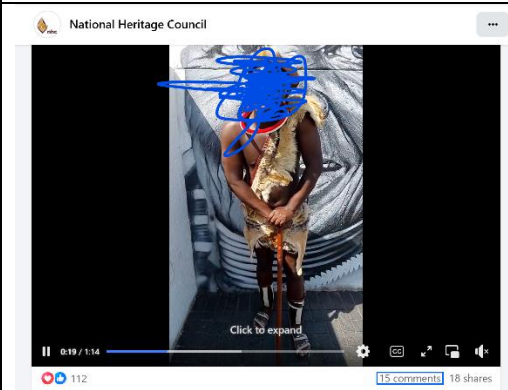


114 58 comments 367 shares

Funding call



The NHC in collaboration with the University of Pretoria, undertook a research trip to the Richtersveld to conserve, promote, and document the national heritage for future generations.



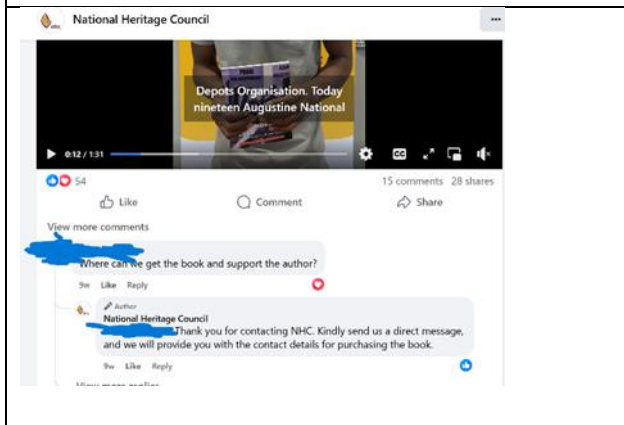
The initiative was established mainly to honour diverse cultures during Heritage Month. Individuals from various cultures make a video wearing their traditional attire, and then express in their home language what heritage means to them.



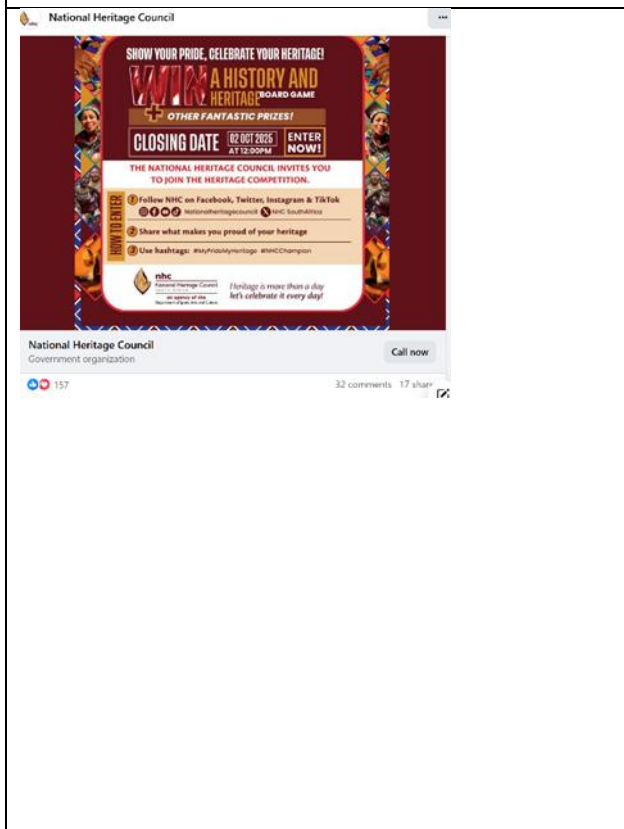
The purpose of the event was to acknowledge the important role women play in safeguarding, shaping, preserving, promoting, and transmitting South African heritage, particularly cultural heritage.



HESOP 2025 winners.



Heritage publications



The post depicts the heritage campaign initiated by the NHC towards celebrating heritage and therefore requested the public's participation by following the Facebook page, sharing what makes the public proud about their heritage, and posting such on social media using hashtags. All of this was to be rewarded by a history and heritage board game as well as other prizes to five winners only.

A report generated by a service provider from May 2023 to January 2025 indicated that the NHC utilises Facebook, Instagram, and X as its social media platforms. The report generates engagements from the three social media platforms, certainly because the institution subscribed to report generation from the three social media platforms only.

The observations of the researcher indicated that the core business programme deals with the establishment of public programming initiatives. Three of the four core business units currently conduct public programming initiatives at the NHC. The funding, RLHR, and living heritage units actively facilitate educational programmes towards visibility and awareness of South African heritage.

The researcher observed that among the well-known public programming initiatives in the core business, among all participants were HESOP, GOSHA, and funding projects. Participants were not aware of the other educational programmes facilitated by the living heritage. Only FU2, CMS1, RKP1, and RLH1 mentioned public programming initiatives facilitated by the RLHR unit. In addition, LH1, LH2, CMS1, and CMS2 mentioned the NIO system, despite it being in its developmental stages. LH1 and LH2 emphasised that NIO is a great innovation that will assist the institution in promoting the living heritage of South Africa online for increased visibility and access.

As highlighted by the NHC's medium-term strategic framework (NHC 2020/21-2024/25), the researcher noted that the NHC strives to achieve its public programming initiatives through strategic heritage partnerships. The initiatives involve securing new and additional resources for the upkeep and growth of the programmes and projects to ensure the continuation and sustainability of the projects.



**Figure 4.1: 2023 HESOP top one school**



**Figure 4.2: Africa Day exhibition**

#### **4.3.1.2 Participation of the public in living heritage through social media.**

The researcher sought to determine how the adopted public programming initiatives are encouraging the participation of the public in living heritage through social media. When questioned about how the adopted public programming initiatives were encouraging the participation of the public in living heritage through social media, CMS1 mentioned that posters about heritage-related matters are shared on social media in the simplest and most comprehensible form, to allow the NHC social media platform followers to easily understand the information being shared. CMS1 clarified that when an individual can interact with information with ease, they can follow and engage on matters shared. CMS1, CMS2, LH2, LH1, RKP1, and RLH1 also explained that the institution posts videos and live streams about seminars, exhibitions, lectures, and dialogues to focus the attention of the public to heritage, and to allow them to engage.

It was also mentioned in the discussion with CMS1, LH2, CMS2 and FU1 that the social media followers of the organisation participate in the posters shared; however,

their participation is not as often as anticipated by the organisation. CMS1 and CMS2 stated that participation received from the public is moderate, especially when job vacancies and calls for funding applications are shared. The researcher observed that social media followers of the NHC Facebook page use the platform to enquire about the dates as to when the approved funding applications will be announced, and when the list of GOSHA finalists will be publicised. The researcher reviewed the Facebook posts and found that some of the comments shared by followers are the public expressing their frustrations about the honouring of the heritage awards, stating that the NHC awards are always honouring those they favour. However, FU2 and LH1 reinforced that the honouring of living heritage ambassadors is guided by the mandate of the NHC as well as the SOP within which the living heritage unit operates.

FU1 explained that the public is encouraged to participate in the living heritage programmes because they want to preserve and promote their living heritage. The urge for some of the public members to participate in the engagements encourages them to share the posters of events that take place, as well as those that are yet to take place. RLH1 also shared that in its programmes, the organisation always creates surveys that the public has to complete and submit after an event. These surveys are for the participants to know their weaknesses so that they can improve on the services they render to the heritage communities. Again, when the public sees that their opinions and suggestions are taken into consideration, they feel valued and are encouraged to participate in engagements published on the social media pages of the institution.

RKP1 highlighted that the institution also encourages interaction with the public through various communication mediums such as the COMSTA hotline number, emails, and telephones. CMS1 additionally stated that the public is told in any poster published that if they require further clarity and/or assistance in any heritage-related matter, they can contact the living heritage officers on the numbers or emails provided. Another way of encouraging the participation of the public as highlighted by LH1 and LH2 was through the incentives given to those who participate in heritage. For instance, the GOSHA prize money, as well as the HESOP promotional items and winner prizes can always encourage people to participate in heritage knowing so they also benefit from the same heritage.

LH1 further emphasised the importance of making heritage attractive, especially to the public, by adapting to social media platforms, which the public can relate to towards encouraging participation of the public in heritage. LH1 articulated that:

*“Working closely with our communication and marketing unit, from time to time through our newsletters, be it on Facebook, be it on Instagram, we post heritage-related issues, we even have daily do you know or did you know about this. And since we also have incentives in our programmes, that on its own encourages people to participate, because they know they are going to benefit out of heritage. In our website as well, we encourage interaction with the public, because we want the NHC to be a one-stop shop when it comes to heritage knowledge.”*

LH1 also mentioned that another way of encouraging the participation of the public is through emails, the COMSTA hot line number, as well as the LH line of enquiries. According to CMS2, the call for heritage funding posters shared on social media also plays a significant role in encouraging the participation of the public in living heritage. CMS2 had this to say:

*“The sharing of the NHC posters on social media encourages the public to go and visit the NHC website for funding which ultimately improves the wellbeing of the beneficiaries by giving them employment opportunities.”*

LH2 also uttered that public programming initiatives indicate to the public that heritage is a strategic resource, and that one can survive through heritage. According to LH2, HESOP competitions are another proof to the public that when you use heritage wisely, you can benefit from it. LH2 implied that:

*“HESOP competitions provides learners with heritage research skills which they can also use to apply for various fundings in heritage. The knowledge of heritage research as well as the incentives received through the competitions, alone can serve as an encouragement for the learners to leverage heritage.”*

RLH1 maintained that to encourage participation in each programme in social media, you need to put together a concept of what you want to achieve, the theme and its relation to living heritage, and the part it plays in transforming, protecting, and

preserving heritage. A media release will then be established after a theme has been constructed. You use social media to circulate it to all the targeted audiences, and by that you are going to incite interest in whatever programme you are offering. RLH1 further noted the significance of follow-up as another way of encouraging participation. This is what RLH1 had to say:

*“At times during the event, we do capture attendees, their views, and their inputs during the proceeding, and also note as to how many people participated. The attendees also do follow-ups as well, including those who were not part of the event. Some take an interest because they are heritage practitioners, if they look for funding they get to be educated through our public programmes.”*

RKP1 reiterated that all the core interactive activities are posted on the social media platforms of the institution. The COMSTA team at the NHC ensures that adverts for upcoming events are posted on social media prior to the event to incite the followers and potential followers of the social media pages.

However, participant FU1 highlighted that even when participants are encouraged to participate in living heritage using social media, the funding unit still struggled with the participation of funding applications for grass-rooted projects. FU1 lamented that:

*“People in the deep rural areas are struggling to apply for the NHC fundings due them being unable to access the adverts on social media as a result of them not having data, an internet café being far from them, and issues of load shedding are discouraging the public to participate in our funding.”*

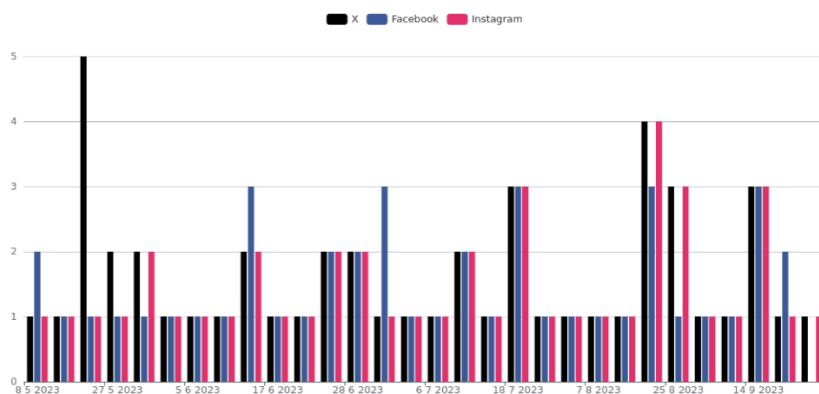
The researcher together with CMS2, LH2, LH1, and RLH1 observed that the participation of the public in living heritage through social media is realised when calls for funding application and GOSHA are open. LH2 reinforced that:

*“Knowledge about one being able to make money out of their heritage knowledge alone can serve as a motivation for the public to know more about their grassroots and therefore preserve and promote them.”*

The 2022/23 annual report highlighted some of the public programming initiatives they used to encourage the participation of the public in the following ways:

- A two-week Heritage Month campaign was implemented in September 2022 to engage the public while promoting a spirit of celebration. The NHC ran an advertisement wherein the NHC posed questions to the public through Radio 2000 DJs. Listeners called and sent WhatsApp voice notes to share their views on critical questions that were asked. Some of the questions were:
  - “Should heritage be taught in schools?”
  - “As a parent, do you have conversations with your children about their heritage?”
  - “Do you think ma2000 understands what this day really means?”

The 2023-2025 report by Cells (2023-2025) indicated on a graph below the number of people who engaged with the brand or topics related to the keywords of the brand within a 24-hour time span. Facebook began with two individuals engaging with the brand and topics related to the keywords within 24 hours. Facebook’s engagements have been fluctuating, with the number of engagements going down to the initial numbers, instead of increasing.

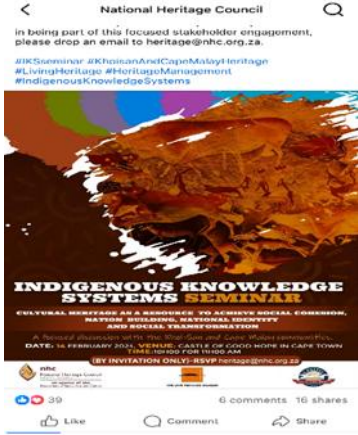





1 May 2023 - 1 Jan 2025




**Figure 4.3: Social media graph (Cells 2023-2025)**

**Table 4.5: Public engagement on NHC’s Facebook page**

No. of users	Facebook posts	Comments, shares, likes, views
1.		<p>Comments: 1</p> <p>Shares: 6</p> <p>Likes: 17</p>
2.		<p>Comments: 6</p> <p>Shares: 16</p> <p>Likes: 39</p>
3.		<p>Comments: 3</p> <p>Shares: 2</p> <p>Likes: 14</p>

<p>4.</p>	 <p>114 likes, 58 comments, 367 shares</p>	<p>Comments: 58</p> <p>Shares: 367</p> <p>Likes: 114</p>
<p>5.</p>	 <p>8 likes, 0 comments, 0 shares</p>	<p>Comments: 0</p> <p>Shares: 0</p> <p>Likes: 8</p>
<p>6.</p>	 <p>23 likes, 0 comments, 12 shares</p>	<p>Comments: 0</p> <p>Shares: 12</p> <p>Likes: 23</p>

7.		<p>Comments: 0</p> <p>Shares: 0</p> <p>Likes: 5</p>
8.		<p>Comments: 0</p> <p>Shares: 8</p> <p>Likes: 43</p>
9.		<p>Comments: 2</p> <p>Shares: 1</p> <p>Likes: 13</p> <p>Views: 949</p>





<p>10.</p>	 <p>National Heritage Council</p> <p>0:19 / 1:14</p> <p>112</p> <p>15 comments 18 shares</p>	<p>Comments: 15</p> <p>Likes: 112</p> <p>Shares: 18</p>
<p>11.</p>	 <p>National Heritage Council</p> <p>0:12 / 1:31</p> <p>15 comments 28 shares</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p> <p>View more comments</p> <p>Where can we get the book and support the author?</p> <p>Like Reply</p> <p>Author National Heritage Council</p> <p>Thank you for contacting NHC. Kindly send us a direct message, and we will provide you with the contact details for purchasing the book.</p> <p>Like Reply</p>	<p>Comments: 15</p> <p>Likes: 54</p> <p>Shares: 28</p>
<p>12.</p>	 <p>National Heritage Council</p> <p>Government organization</p> <p>157</p> <p>32 comments 17 shares</p>	<p>Comments: 32</p> <p>Likes: 157</p> <p>Shares: 17</p>
<p>13.</p>	 <p>National Heritage Council's Post</p> <p>ROUND TABLE DIALOGUE</p> <p>Theme</p> <p>Echoes of Resistance: Traditional Leaders in the South African Liberation Journey.</p> <p>26 SEPT 2025</p> <p>FRIDAY</p> <p>TIME: 12:00 PM</p> <p>VENUE: LESEDI CULTURAL VILLAGE</p> <p>18</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p> <p>3 comments</p>	<p>Comments: 3</p> <p>Likes: 18</p> <p>Shares: 0</p>

Table 4.5 above indicates that Facebook users do not actively engage with programmes such as declaration of heritage sites, ubuntu, seminars, exhibitions, heritage events, and HESOP. Users, however, engage with events such as heritage publications, video clips where various cultures express their pride in their own heritage, mostly with calls for heritage funding, as well as heritage competitions.

- Number 12 of the public programming initiatives on the above table was a heritage competition where five winners were going to be announced and receive heritage prizes, however, no winners have been announced to date. The public was complaining that even for the previous competition, where the public was told that they would win tickets to attend GOSHA, they had not been responded to, and yet they are being expected to enter another competition. The users complained about the NHC not keeping their promises, which can lead to the users questioning the institution's credibility. Users shared their frustrations by commenting that:

- User 12:

*"We are not Idiots. We entered the Golden Shield Heritage Awards for winning a ticket of attending Awards and you didn't respond. Not even to share the winners." Now we must do this. We know you will never announce winners. Stop playing people,"*

- User 12 further stated that:

*"I entered the Gold Shield attending competition and you didn't respond. Not even to share the winner" I wish to join this competition but when I think of how you us is not ok."*

During the HESOP camp, the learners visited a heritage site as part of an excursion. They were given a tour guide, therefore explaining the history and origins of the site. However, a user argued that the information being shared with the learners is misleading.

- User 9 cemented that:

"Heritage Biodiversity and indigenous plants both naming by local names is significant in connecting local people with that before they were camped out

were part of the ecosystem. NHC is doing more than we thought as an DSAC Agency. This knowledge from the veldt is part of our intangible heritage.”

*“I don't think our ancient ones look at animals as pure food. Please this narrative is wrong and should be corrected. Read the books of Mr Ian Player. Listen to folks about how we conserved the wild. In fact, it was the colonial hunters who killed more animals in 40 year in the 1800s than the locals. We should not allow rangers to mislead and pass environmental propaganda. We had chiefs responsible for expedition (letsholo) that was highly regulation during hunting seasons. I can challenge this ranger on IKS and environmental knowledge.”*

- On the Round table dialogue on traditional leaders under user 13, the issue of inclusivity was questioned by the users on a heritage month round table dialogue that was shared by the institution on their Facebook page.

The dialogue was initiated by the RLHR unit within the organisation towards honouring the overlooked role of traditional leaders in South Africa's liberation journey. However, according to user 13 the Khoisan leadership was not included in the dialogue. User 5 in their own words stated that:

*“will ask gayton personally why he allows such a post or event without the khoisan leadership. there is not just traditional leader what about the khoisan indegionous leadership.”*

requested an invitation as they wish to highlight key issues that are on their policy brief. In their own words, user 13 further stated that:

*“Please may you invite us as C20 working group on Cultural Diversity Recognition and Embracement as we have a priority theme on recognition of Indigenous people and traditional authorities. As Afrikan Indigenous Leaders, we also had a dialogue on the same topic at Constitution Hill during the Human Rights Festival, National Heritage Council was there. We also wish to highlight key issues that are on our policy brief.”*

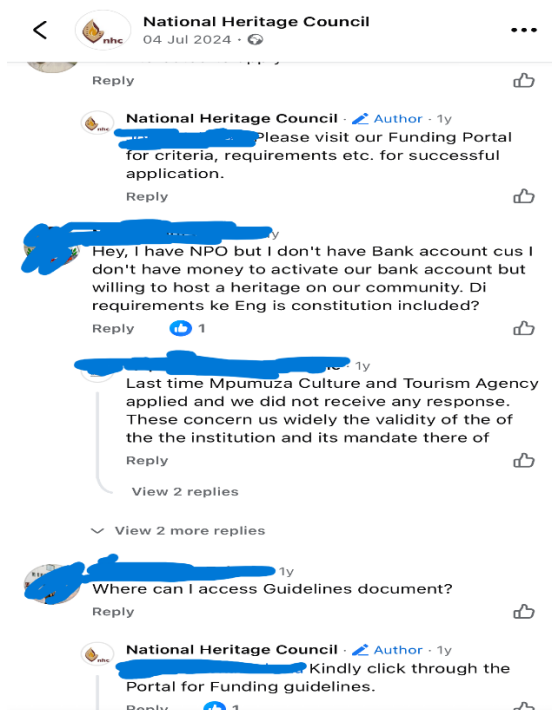
- User 11 handed over their completed project in the form of a book. Instead of drawing the public to the organisation to use the information resources, the organisation directed users to the beneficiary, who in this case, is the author.

The organisation should have given the users an option to either visit the institution and utilize the materials they have, or purchase. This would have informed the public of their repository as well, and therefore ensured usage of the information resources they have at their disposal.

Comments under User 10 expressed the joy of the users seeing someone they are familiar with representing South African heritage. Some of the comments were that:



- User 4 on call for heritage funding were generally enquiring about the application of the funding. Comments made were that:



In essence, soft power depicts that leadership entails engaging users to support your work (Mukwevho & Ngulube 2022). However, retaining users through maintaining the credibility of the brand is key to consistently attracting users and potential users.

In discussion with the participants, the researcher noted that participation of the public in the NHC was mostly through their social media platforms, especially Facebook. The researcher also noted that initiatives such as the sharing of events and posters online were one way in which the NHC encourages participation. Such initiatives allow people who might not normally have access to heritage sites or events to have the chance to learn more about heritage online.

According to the observation of the researcher, the NHC does not engage in innovative activities such as crowdsourced contributions and polls to ensure that the public is solely drawn to the organisation. The only innovation, by far, the researcher noted was the posing of questions through a radio station during Heritage Month in 2022, apart from the norm of sharing a poster online. The researcher also noted that much consistent correspondence comes from funding beneficiaries who consistently need guidance and assistance in their funded projects.

The researcher also observed that despite the NHC striving to post the events that the organisation participates in on the social media platforms, the participation from the

public is minimal to none. The funding posters shared on Facebook do not receive much participation. However, the funding participants explained that from the system they use for application, they receive enough applications, although the institution still lacks funding applications from KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and the Northern Cape.

Social media makes the conventional concept of participation and cultural preservation more accessible, inclusive, and interactive. It is therefore crucial for the NHC to be innovative in sharing the content on social media to attract participants to engage and participate in heritage.

#### **4.3.1.3 Plans and strategies for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives**

When asked if there were any plans or strategies in place for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives in the future, CMS1, FU2, LH2, LH1, RLH1, and RKP1 confirmed that the NHC did have plans and strategies in place to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives. However, there were limitations due to financial constraints as mentioned by the participants that hindered expansion the participants would love to implement with regard to public programming initiatives. Participants mentioned that they had concepts that were lagging because of the lack of resources to implement them, instead, they used the little funds they had in trying to reach all the provinces. Additionally, the APP (2022/23) stated that the NHC is not known in small towns due to financial constraints. The 2021/2022 APP of the organisation also mentioned that despite having few resources, the NHC strives towards executing its relatively broad mandate, but the participation in an excessive number of programmes and projects by the institution ends up forcing the organisation to stretch the funds.

With regard to the plans and strategies for evolving or expanding the current educational programmes, the researcher observed that the NHC has a strategic framework in which all units within the NHC indicate their outcomes, their baseline, and the target year in which the programmes initiated can be achieved. LH1, FU2 and LH1 highlighted that due to financial constraints, the units within the organisation-initiated partnerships for the expansion of the products and services the institution offers. LH1 further mentioned that the LH unit worked closely with private sectors.

RLH1 also mentioned that it worked closely with partners such as the universities, heritage resource agencies in different provinces, and individual entities.

However, RLH1 and RKP1 reiterated the NHC is a national office and does not have provincial offices that could help with evolving or expanding the current educational programmes. The organisation has no intentions of expanding its offices now. RKP1 emphasised that there was a need for the organisation to strive towards meeting the masses, especially in consideration of those in rural areas. In an engagement with participants, the following was said:

CMS1 mentioned that the invention of the NIO is one innovation that will assist in expanding the current public programming in the future. CMS alluded that:

*“I know of the National Inventory portal that is in place, where it is going to be so much heritage content. We will be driving followers to that portal, and also taking part of the content by making sure we share it in the simplest form. We will also break down the information that is within the portal and share it with followers, therefore driving the social media users to the portal through social media platforms. The bigger objective is to drive the users to the portal.”*

In answering the question asked, FU2 stated that there were plans included in the strategic framework of the organisation, within the categories of the new initiatives supported by the institution. FU2 explained that:

*“In our annual planning programmes strategically, we include in the categories of what we support new initiatives where we collaborate with different stakeholders to enhance our plans and public programming initiatives with the communities.”*

LH1 alluded that because the NHC has realised that it cannot be on its own when coordinating programmes due to a lack of funds, a strategy for partnerships has been put in place to ensure that the current public programming initiatives are expanded. LH1 had this to say:

*“We are starting a strategy to expand engaging houses of traditional leaders, engaging community-based organisations, so that they get*

*involved, we even work closely with private sectors, especially when it comes to outreach programmes. I will give an example, when we started, we used to have maybe two or three learners per province for HESOP, but now where we stand, we have five learners per province at national level. We also used to start the programme on province level, but now we start at local and district level. So, I can strongly say that we are in the process of expanding, and we are expanding.”*

LH1 further mentioned the NIO as another way the organisation worked towards expanding its current public programming initiatives. However, RLH1 highlighted that at the moment, the challenge is with the organisation only having the national office. RLH1 lamented that:

*“The challenge now is that we are a national organisation only based in Pretoria. There are also no plans of opening new offices now. So, it is imperative that we have national footprint in all the provinces in South Africa.”*

RLH1 explained that the communities with which the NHC deals most are those from deep rural areas where beneficiaries may need much support to execute their projects. It is therefore challenging for the beneficiaries to visit the NHC offices for further support because of the distance between them and the national offices.

CMS2 suggested a way in which the organisation can further expand its current public programming initiatives by stating that:

*“If we were to work with touch base, it can assist the organisation with email marketing, and SMSs to the people who once attended the NHC-related activities. A database of the NHC with records such as attendance registers can be utilised for heritage promotion and awareness. Such can assist us with the marketing and promotion of the organisation along with its heritage archives towards an increased usage, and awareness. People can easily access information about the NHC on their emails and or SMSs.”*

Participants LH1, CMS1, and LH2 noted the NIO system that was yet to function as an invention will have much impact on the visibility and accessibility of the South African heritage. RLH1 further acknowledged that:

*“The current plans which also include partnerships with institutions like universities, heritage resource agencies in different provinces, individual entities and trustees, will assist to make it a point that we expand our public programming partnerships.”*

Facebook users identified several strategies through their comments as observed by the researcher. On a post about heritage month round table dialogue, one user indicated that the NHC should consider inviting the C20 working group on cultural diversity recognition and embracement.

User 14 commented that:

*“Please may you invite us as C20 working group on cultural diversity recognition and embracement as we have a priority theme on recognition of indigenous people and traditional authorities. As Afrikan indigenous leaders, we also had a dialogue on the same topic at Constitution Hill during the Human Rights Festival, National Heritage Council was there. We also wish to highlight key issues that are on our policy brief.”*

Another strategy that the NHC may use in evolving their public programming initiatives would be to validate the authorship of publications received, as well as initiatives they partner in, for instance, had the institution validated the truthfulness of the information shared by the tour guide, the NHC would not have received comments on how misleading the information was to the learners and the social media users at large.

Possible strategies as observed by the researcher will be to peer review historical information, such as tour guides, with a heritage expert to ensure that the information shared is accurate, educational and informative.

As informed by a comment by a user 12 on the heritage competition that the institution campaigns for new competitions without closing previous ones, one would suggest that the institution should close up competition, and fulfil their promises by giving away prizes to the announced winner before another competition is announced. This will help avoid tension, confusion, and help boost the confidence of the public in the organisation.

The comments referred to above is as follows:

*“We are not idiots, we entered the GOSHA for winning a ticket of attending awards and you didn’t respond. Not even to share the winners. Now we must do this. We know you will never announce winners. Stop playing people.”*

User 12 further stated that *“ther is not just traditional leader what about the Khoisan indigenous leadership”* on a post about heritage month round table dialogue depicts that the NHC may have omitted the Khoisan traditional leadership from the dialogue. This, therefore, suggests that the institution needs to ensure that in all its initiatives, everyone for whom the programme is established is covered.

The researcher distinguished that the process of growing or changing public programming projects entails developing tactics that improve audience participation, impact, and accessibility. Usually, these tactics call for a combination of creativity, teamwork, and adjustment to demands and current trends. The researcher realised that the current, known strategy of expanding the public programming initiatives depends on the NIO system, partnerships, live streaming of events, and the use of YouTube.

The researcher also noted that the organisation was engaging in partnerships such as houses of traditional affairs, and heritage resources to overcome the financial constraints experienced. Although the NHC is the national office, there were still no plans to open new offices in different provinces.

#### **4.3.2 Social media and public awareness of living heritage**

The second objective of the study was to explore the usage of social media as an innovative tool to increase awareness of living heritage.

##### **4.3.2.1 Media platforms adopted by the NHC for public programming initiatives**

In an effort to explore social media as an innovative tool for raising public awareness of living heritage as the second objective, the researcher enquired about the platforms used by the NHC for public programming initiatives to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives in South Africa. The interviews with CMS1, CMS2, FU2, FU1, LH2, HRF1, and RKP1 confirmed that the NHC has embraced

Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube for awareness and access. RLH1 and LH1 mentioned that:

*“Over and above YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, we also populate every activity we do. The different activities the organisation does and partakes are shared on our website. People are also able to send through an enquiry to us through our website. We also have our own emails, telephones, information, and details of managers of the NHC are on our website where the public is encouraged to interact with us. So over and above all these social media platforms, the public are also at liberty to call us directly to ask about whatever heritage-related question they want to ask, and then we educate them on whatever they want to be informed on.”*

CMS1 stated that the organisation heavily used Facebook as a communication tool with the public. CMS1 mentioned that:

*“We mainly use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube as well, but not so strongly on Twitter. We would tweet whenever there are dialogues taking place, although, we normally tweet those strong heritage messages. However, the medium of communication that we heavily use is our Facebook and Instagram for heritage promotion.”*

FU2 mentioned Facebook and Twitter (now known as X) as social media used by the NHC to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives. LH2 shared that the videos about outreaches conducted by the institution are often shared on YouTube. LH2 stated that:

*“The NHC uses their Facebook page, Instagram, Twitter, and also YouTube, because some of the videos about the outreaches conducted by the institution are shared there.”*

The researcher observed that participants of this study were aware of the media platforms used by the organisations they serve. However, RKP1 was not sure if the organisation had adopted Twitter and Instagram to enhance the visibility and accessibility of living heritage in South Africa. RKP1 was only aware of Facebook as a medium of communication with the public by the institution. RKP had this to say:

*“All the events the institution have, they would be advertised on our social media platforms. Be it Facebook, I hope we have Twitter, Instagram I am not sure.”*

According to the revised medium-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25), the NHC actively participates in the four social media platforms, which are X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

The researcher observed that the institution used Facebook more heavily than the other social media platforms that the institution has adopted. The researcher unearthed that although some of the participants were able to state two or three social media platforms used by the organisation, none, except for the COMSTA unit, was able to identify all the social media platforms adopted.

The social media engagement report indicated three social media platforms adopted by the NHC, among others. The report included Facebook, Instagram, and X as a result of the institution subscribing to only three media platforms with the service provider. Among the three social media platforms, Facebook appeared to be the one with more engagements by mentions than the other two.




**Figure 4.4: Social media engagements by mentions.**

## Who Report

This report is used to identify key influencers who are contributing to your brand

**How to use:** To identify potential influencers based on their overall contribution

### By Mentions

Total Authors 52	 National Heritage Council 116 13000 R 1 621 919.00
Total Posts 358	 National Heritage Council 91 4308 R 342 308.20
Unit of Measurement	 National Heritage Council 74 2803 R 269 648.59

### 4.3.2.2 Promotion of living heritage archives on social media

The researcher enquired if the living heritage archives of the NHC have adopted social media as a tool for raising public awareness of living heritage. LH1 and FU2 concurred

that the NHC archives have adopted social media to raise awareness of living heritage. LH1 stated that:

*“The inventory and our website are ways in which our living heritage archives have adopted social media. The audio-video materials that are captured/ or documented during our events or activities are not put in a particular storeroom; instead, they are deposited on our website for people to have access. The NIO is a database on its own, whereby we digitised almost each and every information that we have, so that people can have access. We are now in the process of developing 3D models, especially with regards to our resource centre. Whereby people will have a walkthrough of what we have as an institution.”*

LH1 further explained an innovation that the living heritage was considering towards the adoption of social media by the living heritage archives by stating that:

*“This unit that I find myself working in is also in the process of purchasing monitors in which whatever information that has been captured is being played there. Be it at the reception, or when we go out during our events. We plan to have sections of mini-exhibitions, and through that, we will be playing whatever we have. I want to believe that even when we are playing things that have happened a year or 2years ago, those who were not part and parcel of that particular event, surely will be aware of the things that transpired. I want to believe that we are being innovative. Over and above the everyday use of YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, I want to believe that the main media platform will be our inventory, as well as the website itself.”*

FU2 also highlighted the NIO system as an invention adopted to raise living heritage awareness. FU2 had this to say:

*“The living heritage archives have adopted social media, for example, the NHC is now running an innovation hub to include and raise awareness on living heritage matters countrywide through the NIO. The NIO preserves our electronic version of the heritage documents, and it is also publicising awareness. The platform is going to be opened up to the public and different*

*platforms countrywide. You can go to the NHC website and be able to go directly there.”*

Nonetheless, FU1, LH2, RLH1 and RKP1 were of the view that the living heritage archives at the NHC have not yet adopted social media for raising public awareness. Participant FU1 stated that:

*“In-house we have what we call the resources centre. This is where all the POE’s of every unit, especially in core goes to and are made accessible to the staff members. We normally ask for five printed books from the funding beneficiaries. These books are deposited there at the resources centre. The resources centre is only accessible to the staff of the NHC.”*

LH2 also reiterated that the living heritage archives of the NHC have not yet adopted social media as an innovative tool for raising public awareness of living heritage. However, the institution used its website to profile the winners of the GOSHA, which also focused on awarding the public whose work is based on promoting living heritage. RLH1 also answered by stating that:

*“I would not say yes at the moment for external consumption, internally yes. We archive our files in different files and drives in the institution internally, and the lucky information gets to be put on our website. We are not as effective as we should as to where we place our programmes. Although, these social media are used only during events.”*

According to the observation of the researcher as well as RKP1, the institution only placed some of their documents on social media. The researcher noted that the institution did not share all their information on their platforms. For instance, the website consisted of 2018-2021 winners of the HESOP programme. The winners from 2022 until 2024 were not included. From the Speeches tab, the speeches and talks that were held from 2021 until 2024 were not included. RKP1 continued to say that:

*“The archives of the NHC needs to be proactive in adopting social media for awareness. We only use social media to put some of the documents.”*

Both CMS1 and CMS2 agreed with LH2 that the organisation (NHC) was slowly adopting social media as an innovative tool for raising public awareness. For example, CMS1 and CMS2 had this to say:

*“We are slowly achieving the promotion of living heritage archives through the projects that we fund. We are currently working closely with the funding unit, to make sure that we profile the projects they have funded, so that people are aware about the funding and the content we fund. This is also to ensure that our core work is seen out there. We also ensure that we keep the funded projects on our website. For each year, we have the names of the NPOs we have funded, a brief description about their projects, as well as the value of the funding they have received.”*

The researcher observed that the institution used hashtags and trends for their social media campaigns to raise awareness and encourage user-generated content that connects cultural heritage to contemporary issues or events. For instance, events such as GOSHA and HESOP. It has also been noted in the organisational APP that as much as the institution uses social media to promote living heritage, the institution still lacked the technological means to connect with the public (NHC 2021/2022). The study also found that NHC shared information on Facebook and Instagram, but not on Twitter. The NHC has also recently joined TikTok.

Some of the content shared by the NHC on their social media handles includes:

- **Facebook**

The NHC posted the following content on 11 October 2024:

*“The launch of Sibhudu Cave, a component of early modern behavioural series World Heritage Site.”*

*“The NHC will be part of the Africa 24 conference from the 25-29 November 2024 in Kenya, Mombasa. The goal for this conference is to place African Cultural Heritage at the forefront of ICOMOS interest and activities. #Africa24Conference #CulturalHeritage #Intangibleheritage”* – Posted on 19 November 2024.

*“The NHC supports the inaugural Lenaka Memorial Lecture scheduled to take place today at the Batlokoa Ba Mota Community Hall from 15h00 to 19h00.”* – Posted on 14 November 2024

- **Instagram**

*“Day 2 of the ICOMOS Africa24 Conference is underway.”*

Recently, the organisation has established a programme where a video of beneficiaries of the heritage funding is taken while giving a summary of their funded heritage outputs when submitting it to the NHC. However, the program is announcing current heritage records, which are yet to be archived, whereas previous archives are not being considered. The researcher also observed that there is no single mention of the NIO system on Facebook, meaning that Facebook users may be unaware of its existence.

#### **4.2.2.3 Social media target audience**

The researcher enquired about the target audience of the NHC’s public programming with the view that the knowledge of your target group would allow one to tailor to the needs of that specific targeted population. According to FU2, the target market of the NHC is varied. FU1 clarified that the funding unit caters for youth in heritage, as well as women in heritage. FU2 therefore stated that:

*“We do have the ones who are visiting our website on a regular basis and make inputs on the question-and-answer platforms, and then we do have those who go through our Facebook, also engaging on the programmes that we are currently running depending on the period, because we do have various themes throughout the year. We also have television stations where we go and publicise our initiatives. We are also dealing with webinars where we publicise our programmes through targeted audience groups. We target heritage practitioners, youth in schools, and we also target the traditional leadership.”*

LH1 and LH2 stated that the LH unit targets all ages. HESOP targets the youth, an intergenerational dialogue targets the elderly, whereas GOSHA targets all ages, be it whomever contributes to the preservation and promotion of the living heritage. RLH1

stipulated that the RLHR unit targets various audiences. RLH1 further clarified that the unit targets the following:

*“Heritage sector forums or entities such as SAHRA, Museums – Iziko, Ditsong, and all other museums of South Africa. We target specific audience based on specific things. For instance, in the month of June, we target the youth, in August, we target women, in May, we target African continent. We are flexible in terms of our programmes. We target different societal groups due to the different events and themes we have.”*

The researcher also observed that the NHC targeted the youth at high-school level and the elderly, with the emphasis being on the youth. CMS2 maintained that the use of both social and traditional mediums of communication such as local radio stations, alone proves that the NHC targeted both youth and the elderly. A statement in the APP (2022/23) of the NHC also states that the organisation targets the youth, women, and people in rural areas.

#### **4.3.2.4 Reasons for the adoption of social media in raising public awareness**

The researcher’s main goal was to gather reasons as to why the NHC adopted social media for public awareness of living heritage. CMS2, CMS1, RKP1, RLH1 and FU2 uttered that:

*“Currently, social media is the tool that can easily connect the public with the institution, promote projects effectively and at a cheaper cost. Social media allows for effective communication between the institution and its target audience.”*

LH1 and LH2 stated that the use of social media by the institution could be a result of the wide reach with which the social media has. Social media allows the institution to reach a wide audience, which assists with allowing new people to apply for funding which the institution offers. It allows easy access to new followers in heritage, especially because the NHC is not based in provinces. LH1 emphasised that:

*“Through the use of social media platforms, it is easy to make people aware of what we do.”*

The APP highlighted that another reason for the NHC to adopt social media was the awareness of the increasing usage of social media by the youth through their mobile phones (NHC 2021/22). CMS1 also mentioned that social media is used by almost 70 million people across the globe. In addition, everyone these days is on social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, so the messages there can be disseminated quickly. The institution therefore uses the social media to promote the visual form of living heritage to the public.

CMS1 and CMS2 also mentioned that the adverts they put on social media platforms revealed that the public relied on social media for information. Social media in its nature is affordable, especially when it comes to advertisement. It was noted by CMS1 that paid advertisements can be costly, and with the organisation having limited resources, it would be challenging to outsource. CMS2 also clarified that social media is convenient and reaches a wide audience; however, it would be limiting to the people who are in rural areas as a result of problems with networks or poor infrastructure.

The researcher realised that the country is moving in a direction where heritage cannot be left behind with the introduction of the 4IR . The institution had to move with the trends to be able to extend themselves and have a better reach to their audiences. Be that as it may, the COMSTA unit does not cover all nine the outlying areas the organisation would have targeted.

### **4.3.3 Relevant expertise to carry out public programming initiatives**

The third objective sought to assess whether responsible officers at the NHC had the relevant expertise required to carry out public programming initiatives.

#### **4.3.3.1 Key skills and competencies crucial for implementing public programming initiatives**

Participants were asked about key skills and competencies crucial for successfully implementing public programming initiatives. There were diverse views from participants. FU2 uttered:

*“You need to understand heritage management so that you can enhance its transformation. This is crucial because our public programming initiatives needs to be heritage focused, otherwise you will end up*

*funding projects that are not heritage related. So, because we have structured all our programmes, informed by the different categories of our sector in heritage; we design all our skills and our competencies around the same focus area.”*

CMS1 believed that the required skills and competencies crucial for the implementation of programming initiatives include writing skills, social media management, photography, storytelling through short vlogs, and digital marketing. Certainly, because visual content is consumed highly, especially by young people. We therefore strive to make living heritage attractive for the young ones.

LH1 and RLH1 agreed that one should have interpersonal skills, and public speaking in the sense that you need to convince people to start appreciating, because heritage by its nature is not attractive, especially to learners or the youth. When you change your mind-set, you need to be able to convince others of the importance of heritage. So, the skills that are needed here over and above one's knowledge of the subject matter, are the above skills because you are dealing with people. The way you engage with people is key.

LH2 stated that the first thing an individual needs to acquire is communication skills, followed by innovative skills. One must be able to innovatively navigate public programming initiatives. For instance, one cannot talk about conservation the same way every year when conducting educational programmes, creativity needs to become clear for people to eventually follow what is being presented to them.

Towards navigating through social media, RLH1 noted that an individual needs to have knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT). This is what RLH1 has to say:

*“The knowledge of ICT systems and platforms will enable one to use social media platforms to the best of their ability towards making heritage known to the public.”*

Because the NHC has been established with the sole responsibility to readdress the imbalance of heritage management in the country and to uplift those marginalised prior to 1994, which is the living heritage, RKP1 suggested that it is imperative for the institution to be cautious in articulating or presenting messages to the public. The

institution must also be considerate of the diverse country we live in and be certain not to offend others when communicating. It is therefore crucial for the institution to know and understand their work and audience. RKP1 further stated that:

*“An individual needs to have passion for the work that they do, be creative about presenting the message you want to put across, and have clear communication skills.”*

Participants were further asked if the officials who were responsible for public programming initiatives at the NHC had the relevant skills and competencies to conduct public programming initiatives through social media and why. CMS1 emphasised that it is key for those people within living heritage to have relevant skills, because they are the ones that carry the rich heritage content, which needs to be out there for the people to know, access, and use.

CMS1 confirmed that living heritage officers did have the skills needed. CMS1 elaborated that:

*“I can confidently say that the living heritage unit officers have the relevant skills and competencies to conduct public programming initiatives. I can attest that the living heritage successfully implement its heritage programmes annually, regardless of the challenges they encounter in their planning and preparations, because I have been to their events on regular bases.”*

CMS1 further stated that the COMSTA unit also had the relevant skills in promoting the organisational programmes. The unit ensured that they covered all channels of communication in promoting the projects established by the institution towards the promotion of those projects, the institution, and its services as well. COMSTA was invited to decision-making meetings of all the units in the organisation, which allowed them to make inputs. With them wanting their inputs executed, COMSTA ensured that the events were promoted to the best of their abilities.

LH2 also concurred that the officials mandated to conduct educational programmes did have the necessary skills needed. LH2 elaborated that the living heritage officers are good communicators, professionals, innovative, and knowledgeable about their area of work. LH2 had this to say:

*“I am saying this confidently, so, because I have witnessed the officials I work with having all the answers on the questions asked in the outreaches we conduct. This truly shows that indeed they know their job.”*

LH2 is of the view that when people are employed within the institution, they are not being employed to just come and deal with heritage within the office environment. Instead, their skills and competencies are also assessed through the interview sessions. LH2 stated that:

*“The NHC is known for its public events, so when we hire people, we look at what they have when it comes to public engagement, men-to-men/face-to-face engagements with the public. Therefore, my observation is that we have people, but there is always a room for improvement. But thus far when you look at the success of our public programming initiatives, one can simply say that yes, indeed, we have people who have got the skills and competencies because I have never had a situation where I have seen somebody struggling.”*

LH2 additionally stated that the NHC trained its staff members in various programmes. The staff were trained much more on their confidence to engage with the public as soon as they joined the institution. LH2 further mentioned that:

*“The training becomes easier because most of our programmes are people oriented. Therefore, there is no way one will not have the required skills, even when one does not have it, they will be able to master these skills that are needed to engage on this kind of initiatives.”*

RLH1 mentioned that the RLHR unit did have people who were academically trained and specialised in these programmes, so they acquired the necessary knowledge and theory around heritage. RLH1 stated that:

*“We also have the strong COMSTA unit that knows how to get to the media for publication. We also have people who are capacitated with project management skills and can deal exceptionally well with the projects that are established by the NHC for awareness creation and usage.”*

RKP1 believed that the relevant living heritage officers acquired the relevant skills and competencies because feedback from the public speaks volumes. RKP1 explained that:

*“So far, we have not received any extreme backlash from what we put out there. Meaning that what we put out there is relevant and respectful. It fits a quorum to be absorbed by all South Africans.”*

CMS1 concluded that the relevant officials did not have the relevant skills needed to execute educational programmes. CMS1 elaborated that:

*“I have not seen much of living heritage content on social media by the heritage officers. Now we have TikTok, I was expecting to see our presence on TikTok by young people that work within the living heritage to share heritage-related content. The young ones also do follow our social media, however, there is not much activeness on social media. The presence on social media by the core staff or generally the living heritage people is not so strong, regardless of much living heritage content they have.”*

CMS1 further proposed that heritage experts may create a platform and share or voice their perspectives on a particular theme. People in living heritage can also engage on certain subjects around a particular theme and take a lead in those engagements so they may become thought leaders. People in heritage may even write opinion pieces about the state of heritage in the country in newspapers, on Twitter, and even on Facebook. Heritage officers may also share stories when they return from visiting heritage sites, in and out of South Africa. In that way, heritage officers can share content that people did not know about. CMS1 additionally said:

*“On social media, when you want to be seen as a heritage activists, you need to share as much of your thought pieces on heritage, Resistance heritage; tell a story behind those heritage, then at the end of the day, people will be able to link up that NHC have people that have so much rich knowledge about heritage. That is when we will be able to get even profiles or even random media interviews on certain heritage subject. The more you share; it is the more people will see you as a heritage ambassador.”*

FU1 concurred with CMS1 by saying that officials did not have the necessary skills. FU1 stated that:

*“In my view, to be honest, I think most of the officials responsible for public programming initiatives through social media do not have the relevant skills and competencies to conduct public programming initiatives through social media. The way we always outsource when we need heritage expertise really shows that the officials still lack the relevant skills needed. If we had the relevant skills, we would not be outsourcing, it would be in-house.”*

In conversation with the participants, the researcher deduced that some of the participants agreed that the heritage officers had the relevant skills and competencies to conduct public programming; meanwhile, some were not sure, and some were of the view that the heritage officials did not have the required relevant skills and competencies. Some participants believed that the heritage officials should have ICT skills which others declared not to have. Another participant stated that the lack of presence and activeness by the staff alone speaks volumes about the heritage officials not having those ICT skills. In contrast to the claim that heritage officials did not have the required skills, LH1 stated that the hiring process of employees had a criterion that specified the skills required skills of an individual and that the participants believed that an organisation could not hire an incompetent individual. However, the researcher believed that regardless of the hiring processes stating otherwise, the work of an individual speaks for them.

#### **4.3.3.2 Training relevant to public programming and heritage management**

Participants were asked if they received any specific training relevant to public programming and heritage management from the institutions with the aim of establishing the reason behind the competence or incompetence of the staff in conducting public programming initiatives. CMS1 and CMS2 responded by saying:

*“I have not received any training relevant on public programming and heritage management. The experience that I have comes from my tertiary education. I took my theory and applied it in real-life job. I also obtained some of my experience on the job, and understanding how to promote programmes to the public.”*

LH1, LH2, RLH1, and RKP stated that the only training they received was through their tertiary education. LH1 and LH2 mentioned that they received their training on the job as well as through their tertiary qualifications. LH2 further stated that:

*“I only got opportunities to partake in outreach programmes; I then learnt the job upon observation on how they do things in our unit.”*

RLH1 emphasised that the training received was from the strategic leadership programme they enrolled in by themselves at the University of Pretoria, including short courses, seminars, and the specific projects they attended, which focused mainly on policy.

RKP1 divulged that the only training received was on heritage management; however, it was received through tertiary education. RKP1 mentioned that they had to learn public programming along the way, through a project they were conducting. On the other hand, FU1 and FU2 concurred that they had attended training on public programming and heritage management. FU1 clarified by saying that:

*“I can say that I partly received training on public programming, but the programme ran for two days, and it happened long ago, such that I already forgot what they said.”*

FU2 indicated that they received several training opportunities in public programming and heritage management. FU2 hinted that:

*“I have training on public funding with the university, I have also done courses around project management because once you deal with heritage management, and you have to structure it in a form of a programme.”*

FU2 additionally highlighted the significance of having project and financial management skills because the unit within which the participant operated dealt with a lot of funding.

Despite all the claims from participants saying they did not receive training from the NHC, HRF1 alluded that the NHC provides training to its staff members. HRF1 explained that:

*“In terms of our training, we have a training committee that looks at training and employment equity. The staff members will submit the kinds of training they would want to achieve towards their own personal development. The training committee will sit and decide on how many trainings an individual can have, then agree on the annual training plan. We have also collaborated with Seta, where we submit our workplace skills plan as well as the annual training pot. We submit an annual training report to Seta each financial year to say that this is what we have promised, and here is what we have achieved, attaching proof of what we have achieved as well. We only fund the studies that are relevant to what an individual is doing at work. However, the course must be relevant to the mandate and the heritage objectives of the NHC.”*

Nevertheless, due to observations and document review of the HR policy, saying otherwise about the institution providing training to all its staff members, the researcher further asked participant HRF1 the reason why interns were not covered by the same policy. HRF1 responded by saying that:

*“I have been consulting the staff recently regarding the new policies, wherein the training development was part of the consultation. The plan is to have an updated policy that will include the interns as well for their personal developments. Because the current policy, the way it was, it was excluding the interns. In fact, interns are the ones that need more training because they need to be exposed to different skills set and they also need to be empowered. Now, the policy is yet to go to the council of the NHC for approval. The policy will only be implemented the next financial year, which is 2024/25.”*

HRF1 additionally said that the NHC offered institutional trainings that facilitated collaboration with other stakeholders. For instance, this financial year, according to HRF1, the NHC managed to offer training sessions such as ethics, records management, and fraud for the benefit of all the employees of the NHC. Additionally, HRF1 stated that the competence of employees goes hand in hand with a healthy working environment, and to ensure that employees work in a healthy and conducive environment, HRF1 said:

*“We have the wellness session which we arranged recently. We appointed an independent wellness service provider. This is to show that we care about the wellbeing of our staff. The service provider can be accessed by the staff for free. Whatever is discussed by the service provider and an employee is strictly confidential. The service provider only provides the NHC with stats and a report to say how many people attended the sessions.”*

In the interviews with all the participants, the researcher observed that despite the NHC providing general employee training, the core business of the institution lacked primary skills training. All the participants except for FU1 and FU2 stated that they have not received training relevant to their line of work. The only training they received was what they learnt in their tertiary education and/or on-the-job training.

The researcher also found that the HR training policy favours the staff of the NHC over the interns. The employees at the NHC were given an opportunity to improve themselves by enrolling themselves in furthering their studies, while interns did not enjoy the same benefits.

It is through the organisational scholarship that some of the participants received training relevant to their line of work. Other participants stated that they obtained their experience on the job, while others obtained it through their tertiary education. The researcher also noted that the institution did not conduct user studies during the planning on which training they should conduct. HR implements training which they believed would close an organisational gap.

The researcher also discovered that the NHC did not have an archival repository or a functional file plan. The records of the institution were stored in the storerooms of each unit. Nevertheless, the institution had a resource centre, where books purchased by the institution and the funding beneficiary outputs were kept. However, the resource centre information resources were not yet shelved as a result of office relocation. As a result, the NHC lacked proper heritage management. The lack of people who will completely deliver the services provided by the institution such as the records manager, was worrisome for a national office (NHC 2022/23).

#### **4.3.4 Effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives**

The fourth objective sought to assess the effectiveness of the existing public programming initiatives in creating heritage awareness on social media.

##### **4.3.4.1 Effectiveness of current public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness**

In trying to examine the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives at the NHC, the researcher asked the participants to assess the overall effectiveness of the current public programming initiatives in creating awareness of living heritage through social media. CMS2 stated that:

*Through the stats on the NHC database, we can tell that indeed the current public programming initiatives of the NHC are successful in creating awareness of living heritage through social media. The NHC has subscribed to News Clip, which gathers data of those who interacts with the posts on the NHC handles. COMSTA receives a report from the News Clip service provider quarterly, which proves the effectiveness of the public programming initiatives by the institution.*

CMS2 further explained that News Clip is a service provider, which conducts media monitoring and analysis of the NHC content on social media.

CMS1 was of the view that the effectiveness of the current public programming initiatives in creating awareness was starting to surface. CMS1 said that the effectiveness of public programming initiatives was very low in the beginning, as the content that was shared on social media was seen as boring. CMS had this to say:

*“Normally content shared on social media used to be on dialogues with older people that were sharing backward and academic content that was too heavy to consume for a laymen, yet heritage it is something that is consumed by everyone across, and it needs to be broken down in a sense that it is easy to understand, and easy to digest.*

*Therefore, social media is slowly assisting us to break it down so that people can easily understand what is tangible and intangible heritage.*

*Now we are slowly starting to package that content around living heritage.”*

However, FU2 was against the notion of the effectiveness of current public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage through social media. FU2 stated that:

*“As much as the NHC is trying to reach out, part of our mandate says we need to increase access within the sector. The platforms that we are using, the social media, print and electronic seem not to be sufficient because now and again we become aware that it looks like we may have missed very crucial grassroots programmes that we are targeting.”*

LH2 shared the same sentiments with FU2 by indicating that the overall effectiveness of the current educational programmes in creating awareness through social media was likely high. LH2 explained that:

*“Not all the events held by the institution gets an opportunity of being hybrid, to allow wide reach. We also see these in HESOP; the same schools are always showing up for the competition. This shows that the social media is not doing justice to other schools as well. Had the social media making awareness of such programmes, we would be having different schools partaking in our competitions.”*

Nevertheless, LH1 and RKP1 concurred that the NHC’s current public programming initiatives were on the right track in creating awareness of living heritage because society always interacts whenever the institution has an event. LH1 stated that:

*“I think that whatever we are using currently is effective because I see people starting to ask questions in numbers. When people are asking questions is because they want to know more. When they are commenting on the platforms we are using to convey a particular message, and you find that in large numbers there is lots of feedback, be it comments, or questions or enquires, that on its own show that we are touching where it matters most, hence these feedbacks.”*

However, RKP1 suggested that the institution had to capitalise on schools and universities because they were there for the NHC to give them a message. RKP1 further stated that the collaboration with universities may work in the favour of the institution by expanding awareness of the living heritage to the public at large. RKP1 further said that:

*“We can collaborate with universities and tag them whenever we are sharing information on our social media platforms.”*

A revised medium-term strategic framework (2020/21-2024/25) highlighted an effective educational programme which the NHC once implemented as follows:

*“A Heritage Month campaign was implemented in September 2022 to engage the public while promoting a spirit of celebration. A partnership was established between Radio 2000 and the NHC, whereby the campaign ran for a two-week period including 24 September (Heritage Day). Instead of the usual approach of placing an advertisement, the NHC posed questions to the public through Radio 2000 DJs. Listeners called in while others sent WhatsApp voice notes to share their views on critical questions that were asked. Some of the questions were:*

- Should heritage be taught in schools?*
- As a parent, do you have conversations with your children about their heritage?*
- Do you think ma2000 understands what this day really means?”*

The researcher observed the NHC subscribes to a service provider that gathers the interactions on the NHC’s social media platforms and therefore provides the institution with a report of the effectiveness of the institutional programmes.

A video clip about a publication on The Clash of tribes shared on Facebook, one user shared their sentiments about the publication by stating that the book is worth reading. User 11 stated that: *“Gratefully for the work. It gives a lot of insights as to what happened and where we find ourselves today. Young people have to know the strives our people went through, especially being related by the youth themselves.”*



Figure 4.5 above represents names of products that mention the NHC's brand, product, campaign or event. The figure 4.5 indicates the institutions and individuals

On the other hand, the researcher also noticed that the overall effectiveness of the public programming initiatives was deemed not to be sufficient by most of the participants. The educational programmes were declared ineffective in ensuring that the crucial grassroots programmes anticipated by the funding unit were covered. In HESOP, another participant noted that the schools that participated were the same ones that participated in the living heritage competition. As a result, there was a need for improvement on public programming initiatives towards ensuring effectiveness of the living heritage awareness on social media.

However, other participants believed that they were on the right track when it came to their unit's public programming initiatives creating living heritage awareness. RLH1 believed that their educational programmes were effective because the unit received feedback from their target audience, which showed that their educational programmes were making an impact.

#### **4.3.4.2 Mechanisms used to gather feedback**

Feedback is crucial for institutions to know the effectiveness of their innovations. It assists the institution in realising and improving on its weaknesses. Saurombe (2016) reiterates that through evaluation models, accountability of officers and continuous improvement on the public programming initiatives from the living heritage can be achieved. The researcher examined the mechanisms used by the NHC to gather feedback on their public programming initiatives. CMS2 highlighted the significance of the News Clip service provider in gathering feedback on social media platforms on behalf of the organisation.

CMS2 further explained that comment sections are mostly used by COMSTA as a feedback mechanism for the public. Additionally, CMS1 mentioned that:

*“Mechanisms that we have, it is through one-on-one interviews with the public after an event, to engage them about their knowledge on heritage,*

*media interviews, or radio interviews, interviews, as well as on social media. We interview the attendees on how they found the event was.”*

FU1 and FU2 uttered that in funding, they had what they called appeal as a mechanism used to gather feedback. If a funding applicant was not happy, they could appeal through an email. The applicants could also make a phone call to request for either a physical or virtual meeting to address their concerns.

FU2 added by saying that the funding unit also had a question-and-answer section on their platforms which applicants could use to guide the unit on their information needed. FU2 further stated that the funding application forms featured a section where applicants were at liberty to inform the unit where they heard about the NHC. FU2 mentioned that such initiatives were facilitated to strengthen and refocus on the platforms that were effective for the organisation.

LH1 and LH2 responded by saying that:

*“Through our Facebook, we get feedback on the comment section, and on our website, details are there of the NHC officials where the public can engage us. We also have the interactive feedback section on our NIO and website. We also have the COMSTA which engage the public on daily basis, and where there are questions, they are taken to relevant people to respond. These programmes that we have, makes it easier for people to interact with us as an institution.”*

During an interview with participants, the researcher noted that the funding unit had a comments section in the application system, which applicants can use for queries. The unit also had a section on their application form that asked the applicants where they heard about the funding. The 2022/23 annual report highlighted the media interviews and comments section as the most-used mechanisms to gather feedback .

#### **4.3.4.3 Feedback from the public on modification or improvement of public programming initiatives**

Feedback gives stakeholders a chance to share fresh concepts, methods, or solutions, which promotes innovation in educational programmes. In view of examining whether the NHC has encountered any feedback that led to an innovation at the organisation,

the researcher asked the participants scenarios of events in which feedback prompted innovation of public programming initiatives on social media. All the participants in the interview agreed to have had instances that encouraged the modification of their public programming initiatives. CMS1 alluded that:

*“There were instances where the public would ask questions about the funding that the NHC offers, the kind of organisations do they fund, as well as the rapid questions we were receiving from our previous NHC funding campaign. Because of those questions, we went back to the drawing board, by trying to have posters that speaks on the how, who, and what. Basically, sharing as much snippets as possible about those programmes. Instead of sharing a whole page, we summarise it into sections of the criteria which the NHC funds, mainly the NHC and PESF funding.”*

CMS2 additionally stated that there was an instance where the public complained about the writing skills of the organisation, saying that the organisation did not write in a heritage format. CMS2 therefore mentioned that the COMSTA unit worked on improving their writing skills. According to CMS2, the same people who made comments about the initial writing skills later came back and acknowledged the improvement that the NHC has made thus far.

FU2 mentioned that feedback has played a huge role in the funding unit. FU2 had this to say:

*“When we started in funding, we did not include quite a number of categories, but through the public initiatives and feedback, we have now included youth in heritage, where you find that there are youth that are out there and have not followed proper scientific qualifications in heritage but they are doing what we call knowledge production. That knowledge has helped us to create a category initiative internally.”*

RLH1 mentioned that feedback from the public plays a significant role in making one wiser in the planning of their unit targets. RLH1 also mentioned that a question that the public asked during an event propelled them to establish that which they were being asked about. RLH1 said that:

*“In one of our events, one of the people were asking if we have public lectures, which helped us establish the programme.”*

LH1 mentioned that the NIO resulted from the feedback made by the public. LH1 expressed that:

*“The reason why we have established the NIO it was precisely because of the feedback that the information the elderly have if they pass on, they pass on with it, so we need to have a database of some sort. So, we established the NIO to capture and document all the information these people have.”*

The researcher noted that the institution considered the opinions of their participants because most of their established educational programmes as highlighted by the participants, were the products of the feedback they received from the public. However, CMS2 mentioned that the COMSTA unit filtered queries on the social media platforms of the organisation and that in instances where the feedback from the public was an attempt to cause commotion, they would ignore the comments. The researcher distinguished that the filtering of comments by the institution may lead to other social media users feeling as though they are not being heard. The mentioning of ignoring other comments on Facebook is worrisome.

#### **4.3.4.4 Level of participation on social media**

In a discussion with participants on the level of participation by the NHC followers on social media, it was mentioned that there was participation. LH1 stated:

*“The participation is high, especially with the youth, because they are curious and inquisitive. That is what led to us having the intergenerational dialogues, because we realised that the youth, especially are asking a lot of questions, and then we felt that it would be good for us to create a platform in which the elderly and the youth come together, and that those questions that we normally receive on our various media social platforms are answered here and there. So, the participation is there, and since we also acknowledge through programmes like the GOSHA, even the elderly people have interest to continue that which they are doing especially when it comes to heritage*

*management because they have realised that they are starting to be appreciated and acknowledged. People participate to such an extent whereby when we are not implementing an event, they will be calling to say when are you starting with this programme? It shows that people are eager and willing to participate in the programme. At times, the public even correct us on how to do things, which also shows their interest in what we do.”*

RLH1 mentioned that the level of participation is satisfactory because the programmes implemented by the RLHR unit usually did not receive less than 60 attendees. FU2 stated that the statistics provided by the COMSTA unit indicated that the level of participation from the public increases per funding advert shared on the social media platforms of the institutions, particularly Facebook. Alternatively, LH2 emphasised that:

*“Participation or contribution by the social media users depends on what has been posted on the social media pages. For instance, you might find that there is a high level of participation in the comment section on posters about funding, but when a poster about maybe a Mandela day is being shared, people do not participate as much.”*

CMS2 concurs with the statement made by LH2 above by stating that:

*“Very often the public contributes to posts they are likely to benefit from. For instance, you find a lot of participation and contributions of the public in posts that talks about funding, unlike in posts that talks about the national heritage of South Africa.”*

CMS1 mentioned that participation was mainly high on Facebook because that was where the institution had the most followers. CMS1 further said:

*“We would have traditional leaders, and heritage activists commenting on every Facebook post we share, could be a commemoration that we do, the dialogues that we host, or even the posters of the events that we are about to hold. We do get fairly good participation.”*

However, RKP1 was not aware of the level of participation by users in discussions shared on social media. RKP1 said that:

*“The only time I visit the NHC social media platforms is when we are having events and then I participate and log out.”*

The researcher observed that the level of participation was dependent on the content being posted on social media. Participation was mostly by means of posters which are funding and/or incentives-related topics. Application calls for GOSHA, and heritage funding received much more participation than other posts shared. This is also supported by the screenshots obtained from the NHC’s Facebook page in table 4.5. The screenshots indicated a spike in comments, likes and shares on call for heritage funding post, heritage funding competition, and an initiative established to honour diverse cultures in a video format. Unlike on initiatives about dialogues, declaration of world heritage sites, and so forth.

Pictures from events hosted by the RLHR unit also reflected the sentiments shared by RLH1 that participation received by the RLHR unit was always satisfying. The living heritage showed that enough participation was received from the public; however, the pictures of the HESOP camp shared on the Facebook page of the institution proved the claim made by LH2 that the competition always hosted the same schools for the HESOP competition.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter addressed the data analysis and presentation. The chapter also provided demographic information about participants. This study included a sample of the core business managers and their juniors. The findings are presented in accordance with the study’s specific objectives. The discussion is covered in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided a detailed account of analyses and presentation of data collected through observation, standardised semi-structured interviews, and content analysis. The findings, as presented in Chapter Four, are discussed and interpreted in the current chapter. According to Nalzaró (2012), the interpretation of data comes after a thorough analysis of the data and the application of appropriate statistical procedures. The interpretation of data is the process of summarising the results of data analysis by connecting them to the original research question or problem.

The problem statement of this study was that despite the fact that public archives should be visible and easily accessible through social media for the public's awareness and usage, various scholars such as Mukwevho and Ngulube (2022), Kamatula (2011), Van der Walt (2011), Saurombe (2018), Mukwevho (2017), and Kamatula et al. (2013) attest that awareness and usage of archival repositories by the youth of South Africa are minimal. Chapter One of this document and the previously described problem statement are incorporated into the interpretation and discussion of the data reported in Chapter Four of this study. Additionally, the data interpretation will combine and summarise the literature review and conceptual framework covered in this study's Chapter Two.

##### **5.1.1 Cultural strategies**

The first objective sought to identify public programming initiatives adopted by the NHC to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage. The objective also focused on the participation of the public in living heritage through social media, as well as on the plans and strategies for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives.

##### **5.1.1.1 Cultural strategies initiatives adopted by the NHC to enhance visibility and accessibility of the living heritage**

The ability of an organisation to attract the public to the archives through public programming initiatives is a powerful tool to enhance the visibility and accessibility of

living heritage. The study established that the NHC adopted funding for heritage projects, publications, and productions on national heritage, media engagements, HESOP, NIO, cultural expressions, dialogues, lectures, book exhibitions, seminars, symposiums, GOSHA, and partnerships as its public programming initiatives used to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage. Therefore, managing desired outcomes through attraction (Nye 2021).

Participants were able to identify the existing public programming initiatives established by the NHC; however, each participant mentioned only the programmes they were aware of, with HESOP and GOSHA being the well-known programmes in the core business unit.

HESOP conducts living heritage competitions, whereby high school learners are given different research topics around which the learners should draft their research proposals. Once the learners have completed their research work, they present their research work to HESOP adjudicators and to all stakeholders attending the camp. The living heritage research reports discovered by the learners are therefore shared in the process of their presentations. However, there is an awareness limitation of the living heritage discovered by the learners because the findings are only presented to stakeholders attending the camp. The institution does not share the research outcomes with the public. With GOSHA, nominees send their profiles and indicate the category in which they are competing among other various categories available within the living heritage unit, towards preserving and promoting living heritage. Potential candidates who will be travelling to the awards have their profiles displayed on a screen to the attendees, and those who are interested in the works of those whose profiles are being played on the screens can follow the individual.

The findings therefore suggest the NHC acknowledges the contribution public programming initiatives make in creating living heritage awareness in the public to allow for the continued existence of the archives as well as the knowledge transfer from one generation to another. The findings validate Saurombe's (2020) study, which suggested that taking archives to the people through public programming is one way of making the public aware of the archives and ensuring the visibility of public archives.

According to Hackman (2012), advocacy is an investment we make when we purposefully and deliberately inform and involve people and organisations in order to

get their support for our work. Considering the problem statement, the result might indicate that the NHC recognises the value of public programming initiatives in making living heritage known to the public, as well as drawing in possible partnerships and/or supporters for the visibility of their projects. However, the institution only has one public programming initiative used to inform the public about the funded projects. However, it is worrisome that the initiative only focuses on the current records, and not all the living heritage archives. Another issue observed by the researcher was that the NHC's living heritage archives, especially heritage-funded publications, are not open to the public to access. This was solidified by a comment made by the NHC, redirecting the Facebook users to the heritage funding beneficiary when they enquired about where and how they can access the information resource.

The statements made on the HESOP excursion tour guide also reflected the need for the institution to verify any information being shared with them before uploading it on their social media platforms, as sharing misleading information can damage the reputation of the organisation and make users question the credibility of an organisation.

#### **5.1.1.2 Participation of the public in living heritage through social media**

Participants felt that members of the public are encouraged to participate in living heritage through social media through the heritage posters shared on the social media platforms of the institution, calls for funding such as the PESP, and annual heritage funding, as well as through incentives given to the public through programmes such as GOSHA and HESOP for their contribution in the preservation and promotion of living heritage. The researcher also observed on the NHC's Facebook page that the public is also encouraged to participate through dialogues, heritage competitions, heritage campaigns, and videos where different cultures are encouraged to share what culture means to them. Participants also shared that the public is encouraged through interactive topics posted on social media pages. The use of emails and telephone correspondence is also deemed an alternative correspondence with the public whenever the public needs heritage-related assistance or guidance. However, the funding beneficiaries, applicants, individuals who entered the heritage competitions, as well as GOSHA applicants, are those who mostly participate.

Observations also showed that the more familiar users are with an individual whose video about what heritage means to them is shared, users tend to engage a lot on the very same post. Although it has been noted that on a series of posts, users are being ignored. The researcher also realised that heritage competitions are being posted on Facebook, yet no winners are announced on the platform. Users also complained that they have been entering competitions, yet the winners are not announced. According to Benz, Riefle, and Satzger (2024), user detachment may eventually result from low user engagement. Users are more likely to lose interest in and emotional commitment to a product, service, or brand when they are disengaged, which causes agitation and user attrition.

Additionally, inconsistency in the promotion of annual programmes such as the HESOP, GOSHA, and heritage funding has been shown to have an impact on the participation of the public in heritage through social media. The programmes create online traffic before and during their occurrence on social media pages of the institution, specifically Facebook, and once the event is done, the public no longer participates as much. Videos on what heritage means to the public, which also proved to facilitate engagement on Facebook, are no longer being shared with the public.

According to Masizana and Salubi (2022), public programming initiatives can achieve the continued existence of the archives only if the programmes are consistent. The institution needs to conduct the programming initiatives consistently and in a creative manner to ensure continuous participation by the public. Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) also concluded that a lack of awareness of the archives results in few people using them. This may lead to the public being more aware of the two programming initiatives than the other programmes, apart from the funding projects. Therefore, they are interacting with what they know, and when it stops, they pause their participation, which may also impact engagements when the organisation resumes its public programming initiatives.

Observations by the researcher also indicated that often users participate in the public programming initiatives shared on Facebook; however, the institution, on a regular basis, does not respond to the concerns and or engagements made by the users on posts shared. This was mostly seen on the inquires made by the public about heritage competitions shared without announcing winners. The organisation did not address

the public, which is also infringing the 7<sup>th</sup> Batho Pele principle (Remedy) which informs that a system must be in place to handle and remedy failures and mistakes when they occur (The National School of Government 2024).

In relation to the problem statement, it may simply mean that the established public programming initiatives are not as effective as they should be to attract the public to engage in them through social media. The youth need creative content that is created consistently so for them to follow. Nye (2017) attests that you need to be consistent in content creation to eventually attract the public to whatever topic you are discussing, therefore obtaining favourable cooperation of the public.

Moahi (2019) also states that the only way living heritage archives will be visible, relevant, and used by the public is through having public programming initiatives that are suitable to the needs of the target group. The public will not participate in any content they feel is not relevant to their needs. Furthermore, Mukwevho et al. (2023) reiterate that the living heritage archives can successfully enhance public awareness and promote the public's active interaction with the archives by fostering a greater appreciation for historical records. This calls for the need of the institution to conduct user studies to guarantee that the content shared is relevant to the public and that it also helps encourage participation.

### **5.1.1.3 Plans and strategies for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives**

Information on whether the NHC has any plans and strategies in place to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives in the future was presented in Chapter Four. Participants revealed that the organisation had strategies to evolve or expand the current established public programming initiatives at the NHC. Participants further revealed that the plans that the organisation had were stipulated in the organisational strategic framework; however, the lack of resources served as a barrier to the implementation of those plans. Some of the living heritage strategies mentioned were engagements with houses of traditional leaders, community-based organisations, and public and private sectors for collaborations on events. However, the organisation had no plans and strategies to expand its offices, which may as well assist with plans and strategies to evolve public programming initiatives. The

expansion of offices can assist with different perspectives from various individuals, which can ultimately add to the current public programming plans and strategies.

However, viewing the results in terms of the problem statement, the NHC may not yet have been implementing all its plans and strategies because of the limited resources participants mentioned. The NHC is a national office whose legislative mandate under section 4 of the NHC Act is to protect, preserve, and promote the content and heritage that resides in orature to make it accessible and dynamic. Not implementing all the strategies and plans established may hinder the progress of its mandate to its fullest. The institution should also reconsider posting new competitions without closing off previous competitions. Winners must be announced, and prizes must be given to the winners of previous competitions before announcing new competitions.

Additionally, it is limiting to have a national office without provincial offices. It means that if the national office cannot establish plans and strategies to expand its current public programming, the heritage of South Africa will face extinction, and will not be known by future generations. In addition, if the institution does not implement established plans and strategies, it will only mean that those plans and strategies were in vain.

Furthermore, it may seem as though the collaboration of the NHC with other organisations was not effective in alleviating the institution of its financial constraints in successfully implementing its public programming initiatives, simply because the public programming initiatives already established by the organisation did not reach the grassroots communities, which the funding units were also targeting. Although participants believed there was a need for improvement on the current plans and strategies for public programming initiatives, they also believed that the NIO system was the solution the organisation needed.

It was established that collaboration with service providers such as Touchbase would assist the marketing department with email marketing of the living heritage held by the organisation. Collaboration in the workplace is essential for a number of reasons. Brenda, Scott, and Manning (2024) maintain that collaboration enables diverse viewpoints and abilities, which again enables better and innovative solutions. There is an idiom that says two heads are better than one, therefore, elaborating on the fact that a problem shared is a problem solved. Brenda et al. (2024) further opine that

collaboration makes it easier to share knowledge and skills. Workers can develop professionally and learn from one another, which makes the team more informed and proficient. Meredith, Moolenaar, Struyve, Vandecandelaere, Gielen, and Kyndt (2023) also emphasise that effective collaboration enables teams to quickly adjust to new issues, technologies, or market developments in a work environment that is evolving quickly.

### **5.1.2 Social media and public awareness of living heritage**

The second objective sought to explore social media as a cutting-edge instrument for raising public awareness of living heritage. The objective summarises and explains the findings in view of the understanding that social media can be used as a tool to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives held by the NHC; media platforms adopted by the NHC for public programming initiatives, promotion of living heritage archives on social media; social media audience; and reasons for the adoption of social media in raising public awareness.

#### **5.1.2.1 Media platforms adopted by the NHC for public programming initiatives**

The use of various media platforms in the archives has transformed the way archives engage with the public, by providing significant opportunities for both outreach and advocacy (Liew, King & Oliver 2015). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have a huge potential to improve the visibility of archival collections (Mason 2016; Mukwevho 2017). Social media breaks down geographic and socioeconomic barriers, thereby enabling archives to reach people worldwide. Furthermore, social media enables online participation or contributions to discussions. All participants were aware of Facebook and WhatsApp as media platforms used by the organisation for public programming initiatives. Participants were able to identify YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, the website, media partnerships, webinars, workshops, and email correspondence as the media platforms used by the organisation for public programming initiatives.

With the findings obtained, the researcher's impression was that not all the staff at the NHC knew about social media platforms used by the organisation for visibility and accessibility of the services and products offered by the organisation. The responsible officers may not be taking their time to ensure that the staff are aware of the media

platforms used by their organisation for awareness and accessibility. The researcher opines that awareness should start internally before going external. A study conducted by Huang and Sarigöllü(2014) concluded that the more familiar people are with the products and services offered, the better those products and services will be known and used. Gharis et al. (2014) emphasise that responsible officials need to promote the social media platforms used by an organisation as well as the opportunities it offers which the organisation can leverage on to the staff members. Gharis et al. (2014) further stated that such acts assist in giving the staff background information and openness, among other reasons.

#### **5.1.2.2 Promotion of living heritage archives on social media**

Usage of social media to promote the living heritage archives has a significant potential to improve visibility of the living heritage archives. Participants stated that the NHC has not entirely adopted social media as a tool for raising public awareness of living heritage; instead, the organisation is slowly getting into adopting social media as an innovative tool. The NHC profiles beneficiaries of the NHC, be it GOSHA winners, Ubuntu initiative partners, HESOP winners, as well as the projects funded by the funding unit. A brief description of the funded projects, as well as the value of the funding received, is shared on the NHC's website. However, participants highlighted that the institution only shares some of the documents on its website. The APP also highlighted that the organisation is indeed slowly adopting social media as an innovative tool through the establishment of the NIO system. The way in which the NIO functions is that the institution posts videos of documentaries about LH documented by heritage knowledge bearers, wherein the public can easily and freely access. Participants also mentioned that there were plans in progress to ensure that the NIO database videos are played on all the monitors, which the LH unit is planning to purchase.

Participants further argued that at the time, the organisation promoted living heritage archives internally through its resource centre. The staff were given access to the heritage resources held by the institution internally, wherein an individual could request a key from a responsible individual, sign a register, and either read the information resources in the resource centre or take it home with them, along with the terms and conditions of the resource centre.

The researcher also noted that the institution shared some of the information on their website. For instance, the website consists of the 2018-2021 winners of the HESOP programme. The winners from 2022 to 2024 were not included. From the Speeches tab, the speeches and talks that were held from 2021 to 2024 were not included. The NIO database was still a work in progress, as well as the plans of purchasing the monitors, which brought the researcher to believe that the NHC has not entirely adopted social media for awareness and usage. The researcher found that for the biggest part, the institution uses its website to promote the living heritage archives, and not Facebook, which one respondent mentioned was one media platform that has a large follower base. It has also been observed by the researcher that the only public programming initiative utilised on Facebook is one where heritage beneficiaries share a summary of their heritage-funded project output in a video taken at the institution upon dropping it off.

Therefore, the researcher noted that the NHC did not take full advantage of its social media platforms as a tool for public programming. This finding emphasises the findings of Mukwevho and Ngoepe (2019) that social media is not used to its full potential by memory institutions in South Africa. However, it might also be a sign of a lack of optimism, expertise, and or uniqueness about the use of social media as a tool for promoting the archives (Mukwevho 2017). Participants further mentioned that there was no sign of the living heritage officers taking the lead in living heritage-related topics on social media, which could be a result of unawareness, as well as a lack of expertise in using social media platforms.

### **5.1.2.3 Social media target audience**

The public archives should aggressively consider extending their reach to new locations where sizeable populations are present in order to increase their audience (Mukwevho 2017). Information on the social media audience targeted by the public programming initiatives established by the NHC was presented. Participants indicated that the NHC targets everyone, with an emphasis on the youth. Observations by the researcher attested to the views of participants. However, the target market varies due to different periods in the year. For instance, in Youth Month, the youth are targeted, in Women's Month, women are targeted, and so on. Participants also stated that the LH unit programming initiatives target various groups; for instance, HESOP targets the

youth (high school learners), GOSHA targets everyone, mainly those who contribute to heritage, and intergenerational dialogues target both the youth and the elderly. The strategic framework also highlighted that the NHC's public programming initiatives target heritage sectors and/or entities.

Various groups of the public are targeted due to the different events and themes of the institution. Contrary to the study conducted by Mukwevho (2017) stating that young people are still not the number one targeted audience regarding marketing through social media platforms, the NHC's main target emphasis is on the youth with the belief that the youth are the generation of tomorrow, and that they will carry on the heritage knowledge accumulated and transfer it to the next generation. In relation to the problem statement, the findings of the study contradict the statement made by Craig (1991) and Cook (1997) that the youth are largely being ignored. However, the reason behind the unawareness of the youth and the lack of access to the living heritage archives by the youth is low to no usage, which may still be due to improper marketing of the public programming initiatives of the NHC. Participants further stated that the social media platforms used by the NHC seem to be insufficient due to their inability to reach the crucial target of the funding unit, which are grassroots programmes. The statement agrees with a study conducted by Kamatula et al. (2013) that social media is not considered a viable way of enhancing public programming initiatives in Tanzania, South Africa, and Botswana.

#### **5.1.2.4 Reasons for the adoption of social media in raising public awareness**

The adoption of social media for raising public awareness offers several compelling benefits. Participants stated that social media is a communication tool that can easily reach a large audience by connecting the public with the institution, therefore making communication and reach effortless. Social media can reach a wide audience, which assists in attracting potential followers of the media platforms. This statement agrees with Mukwevho's (2017) emphasis that for the archives to reach a wider audience, they need to consider expanding their reach to other areas where people can be found.

Participants further mentioned cost effectiveness and efficiency as other reasons for the adoption of social media by the NHC. Social media promotes projects at a cheaper cost online, by simply sharing posts on the mediums adopted by the institution. Pepe and Bournique (2017) agree that social media is an effective tool for awareness

creation in heritage institutions because of their cost-effective nature. Participants also explained that the accessibility of social media makes it another reason for its adoption, especially because the institution only has a national office. Social media conforms with the mission of the NHC, which seeks to transform, protect, and promote heritage through the coordination and management of heritage knowledge and resources for social cohesion and sustainable development. Participants further mentioned that among other reasons for the adoption of social media, was for the institution to remain relevant to the trends.

Social media is an effective tool for the creation of awareness compared to traditional media (Pepe & Bournique 2017). However, in contrast to Masizana and Salubi (2022), the NHC does not comment on unfavourable remarks by the public, instead, one respondent (COJ) mentioned that the organisation ignores the comments. The COMSTA policy also stated that despite the Head of Communications (HoC) being expected to respond to both positive and negative engagement via social media accounts, the HoC should also remove comments showing any disrespect from the NHC media platforms where possible.

In view of the reasons for adopting social media in raising public awareness, the results suggest that the NHC adopted social media mainly to inform the public of what they do. The organisation uses their social media platforms for awareness of projects and events that are occurring in and outside the office of the NHC, and not necessarily for promoting their living heritage archives. Social media platforms are also used to inform the public about the living heritage events that the NHC is attending and/or hosting, as well as the calls for funding offered by the institution. The findings suggest that the main reasons for adopting social media for a wide reach was mainly for awareness of the products and services offered by the institution, apart from promoting living heritage archives. Saurombe (2019) contends that the use of social media to attract the public to the archives of an institution is influential in attracting increased usage and interaction of the public in the archives. The findings suggest that the institution should have the promotion of its archives in mind when establishing its reasons for adopting any social media platform.

### **5.1.3 Key skills and competencies crucial for implementing public programming initiatives**

The third objective sought to assess whether responsible officers at the NHC had the relevant expertise to carry out public programming initiatives. The results are summarised and explained in relation to the key skills and competencies crucial for implementing public programming initiatives, as well as the training relevant to public programming and heritage management.

#### **5.1.3.1 Key skills and competencies crucial for implementing public programming initiatives**

The previous chapter presented information regarding the key skills and competencies participants believe the living heritage officers require to implement successful public programming initiatives. According to Mukwevho (2019:182), knowledge is power. However, knowledge is power only when one acts on it. Taking action based on the knowledge one has enabled them to address issues, bring about change, and make sound decisions. This objective assumed that the relevant skills and knowledge of the archives as well as public programming could assist the living heritage officers adapt or evolve in changing the circumstances of the archives being minimally used. The researcher also assumed that the more years an individual spends working in a specific role at work, the more they are exposed to their field of work, and therefore accumulate the skills needed.

The researcher sought to establish if heritage officers did have the necessary skills and competencies needed, and it was established that responsible living heritage officers did have the required skills needed; however, each participant answered based on their units, which might not be generalised to the entire organisation. Some of the participants stated that their reason for agreeing to have the required skills and competencies is that an individual is hired based on their skills and competencies, and their having been appointed clearly shows that they are fit for the position they hold. However, it was also established through other participants' views that there was more room for improvement.

When enquiring about the key skills and competencies required by heritage officers, it was established that one should have a heritage background, as well as public

speaking skills. The study established that participants believed that excellent communication and ICT skills are also needed for one to actively and efficiently conduct public programming initiatives online, through social media platforms. In using social media platforms as tools for taking archives to the public, participants were of the view that writing skills are crucial in ensuring that the public is attracted to the content being shared. Writing skills are very necessary for any form of communication as it assists the writer to present the information in a manner that is easy for the reader to understand the message being communicated. The study found that being innovative in creating and sharing content on social media is also key to ensuring that the target audience finds it more attractive. Participants also reiterated the fact that an individual ought to have passion for the work they do. According to Sanchez and Carvajal (2024), passion drives motivation, which makes it simpler to maintain commitment to objectives. When an individual is passionate, they are more inclined to work harder, maintain focus, and endure hardships.

The study further found that the need for proper leadership as highlighted by the soft power conceptual framework was not mentioned among the crucial key skills and competencies needed to successfully implement public programming initiatives related to living heritage by participants. Along with proper leadership, Korejan and Shahbazi (2016) maintain that a leader must also be transformational to ensure that their followers are also motivated to continue to attract users to the archives. According to Nye (2021), the US managed to achieve the outcomes it wanted through attraction by utilising soft power. Nye (2021) emphasises that over and above all the skills needed, proper leadership is key in persuading people without using force. The researcher therefore suggests that proper leadership is required to ensure that the archives are known because public programming initiatives without proper leadership will not be beneficial to the desired outcomes by an organisation.

### **5.1.3.2 Training relevant to public programming and heritage management**

Information on whether the participants received the necessary training relevant to public programming and heritage management to carry out public programming initiatives was presented in Chapter Four. The assumption was that if the staff are occasionally provided with the necessary, they will eventually master the art of facilitating educational programmes and properly managing living heritage. The

majority of the participants did not receive any training relevant to public programming and heritage management at the NHC, instead they received their training through on-the-job training, as well as from their tertiary education. Atkinson (2016) validates that on-the-job training allows the staff to pick skills by experience, which is sometimes more efficient for certain tasks than instruction. The method is viewed as a successful method of teaching. Only a few participants received training from the institution. The study established that while there were participants who received their training a long time ago, there were others who received several training sessions for public programming initiatives and heritage management.

The findings indicate that the institution does not have an archival repository, instead, their records are archived in metro file boxes and stored in storage rooms of designated units within the organisation. As a result, there is a lack of heritage management within the institution. The researcher noted that professional development and training programmes are essential for improving abilities, competencies, and knowledge in any institution. Van der Walt (2011) also notes that sound leadership results from frequent training. The researcher therefore suggests that it is necessary for the institution to establish frequent training sessions that are relevant to the needs of all the staff, have an archival repository, as well as establish heritage management to ensure the successful carrying out of the public programming initiatives.

The researcher also noted that the institution partially conducts user studies. User studies are conducted on employees who are offered an opportunity to further their studies in relation to the work they do in the organisation; user studies are not conducted when workshops for all the staff are being organised. HR organises workshops that they believe will close the information gaps of the organisation. User studies are significant in decoding the information needs of the staff members. Moahi (2019) also emphasises the fact that user studies are the only way in which an institution can establish training that is relevant to the needs of the staff members.

#### **5.1.4 Effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives**

The fourth objective sought to assess the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness on social media. The results in this objective are summarised and explained, firstly in relation to the overall effectiveness

of current public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness, secondly, in relation to mechanisms used to gather feedback, thirdly, in relation to feedback from the public on modification or improvement of public programming initiatives, and lastly, in relation to the level of participation on social media.

#### **5.1.4.1 Overall effectiveness of current public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness**

Information about the effectiveness of current public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness on social media was presented in Chapter Four. It was necessary to understand whether the current public programming initiatives provide the institution with value for money to ensure that their existence is not questioned. Liew et al. (2015) are of the same view that consistent use of social media assists in measuring the return on investment. When assessing the overall effectiveness of the current established public programming initiatives, participants mentioned that the effectiveness is starting to show. The institution used to share content consisting of dialogues that the younger generation did not find attractive, which affected the effectiveness of the programming initiatives. Participants stated that the current public programming initiatives are effective in creating living heritage awareness through social media. The response was guided by the statistics that the NHC received monthly about the activity across the social media platforms it uses, particularly Facebook.

Contrary the statement made by LH1 stating that interaction is encouraged on the institutional website, the website is outdated on some of its programs. For instance, the website lastly updated the HESOP winners and participants in 2021. The Facebook page of the NHC hardly redirects users to the Facebook page. As observed, the organisation mostly redirects the users to the NHC website for funding applications.

Facebook users have been noted by the researcher to mostly address their concerns of previous posts on current posts. For instance, users utilised a post about the announcement of a history competition to address their concern about the previous competitions, wherein the institution did not announce winners, yet they are campaigning another competition without closing off the previous one, on free entry for the GOSHA. Although the institution appears to be selective with whom they

respond to on the comments section. The Facebook page indicates a series of users not being responded to, which is worrisome because on many occasions, their line of questioning is relevant, where in some like that of user 9's views about how the HESOP tour guide was misleading the youth, were ideally for saving the reputation of the organisation.

Participants also elaborated that the fact that the public frequently questions their unit about their programmes shows that the public programming initiatives are effective in creating living heritage awareness through social media. However, some participants highlighted that the current public programming initiatives are ineffective in establishing heritage awareness on social media. The respondents who indicated their statement is justified by seeing the same schools, in other cases, with the same learners, always being the ones showing up for the HESOP competition. The APP (2022/23) suggested that due to limited resources, the NHC lacks technological resources and capacity constraints to ensure that its public programming initiatives are successful in facilitating effective living heritage awareness.

Considering the problem statement, the researcher suggests that there may be improper marketing of the public programming initiatives. The researcher also suggests that the NHC may not be tailoring the public programming initiatives to attract new individuals; the institution may also not be consistent in educating the public about its various public programming initiatives. Consistent educational programmes through social media ultimately develop an individual's curiosity about what the living heritage archives entail. Kandade (2021) reiterates that as long as the youth do not regard the public programming initiatives as having significance in their lives, they will still not access the archives, regardless of the efforts made to establish their awareness. Garaba (2015) also emphasises that the public programming initiatives will only be effective when public programming officials keep up with the social media trends.

The researcher noted that public programming initiatives of the NHC are tied to the vision and mission of the organisation, as suggested by Moahi (2019). However, the majority of the participants stated that the public programming initiatives at the NHC are not effective in attracting new users and/or the targeted audience to their

programmes. Again, user studies play a crucial role in ensuring that the public programming initiatives established align with the information needs of the public.

The researcher also noted that the lack of funding noted by one participant could also impact the effectiveness of the public programming initiatives. The researcher suggests that the inconsistency of content sharing on social media may also be the reason behind ineffective public programming initiatives. The researcher realised that content sharing of programmes is periodic. The institution shares content based on the period during which it occurs, which gives the public limited time to familiarise themselves with the content, and or put value in those projects, therefore impacting the attraction of the public towards the programmes. The findings validate the suggestion made by the researcher that educational programmes conducted once are not enough to appeal to the users and potential users. The Health Policy Project (2014) also ascertained that factors such as lack of funding or workforce, unclear roles, inconsistencies with other current policies, and a lack of motivation may affect the effectiveness of public programming initiatives. Ratlabiyana et al. (2016) also reiterate that the budget can be strained and opportunities for more effective initiatives can be lost when the budget is not big enough to carry out certain initiatives.

#### **5.1.4.2. Mechanisms used to gather feedback**

Mechanisms used to gather feedback on public programming initiatives provide ways in which an organisation can comprehend what functions well or poorly, and discover factors that contribute to the programme's success. Saurombe (2016) upholds that evaluating public programming initiatives supports accountability and enables relevant officials to improve on their programming initiatives. Participants indicated that media interviews were also used to gather feedback on the current public programming initiatives. One-on-one interviews after an event also formed part of the feedback mechanisms used by the institution. Appeal and news clips were also highlighted as feedback mechanisms used by the NHC on social media. The study showed that the institution has various ways in which feedback from the public is gathered. The results validate the suggestion made by Frye and Hemmer (2012) that evaluation models are necessary for evaluating the efficacy, efficiency, and impact of the initiatives, projects, or procedures of an institution.

However, there are no evaluation models for the programmes such as HESOP. There is no feedback model of some sort to indicate the value for money which the programmes provide to the HESOP learners. The impact made by the programme is not measured in communities and/or in the lives of the learners who participated in the HESOP programme. HESOP does not take the research outputs developed by the learners, instead, they let the learners leave with their portfolios of evidence, unlike the funding unit, which mandates the beneficiaries to submit copies of their research output to the organisation. The programmes just continue annually without weighing the effectiveness of the programme in creating living heritage awareness in the communities. The researcher therefore suggests that there should be an evaluation model that will assist with gathering feedback on the effectiveness of both the funding and HESOP programmes to ensure that the organisation realizes value for money which they inject into these programmes.

#### **5.1.4.3 Feedback from the public on modification or improvement of public programming initiatives**

Feedback from the public is crucial for improving significant services or products offered by an organisation. It facilitates growth, innovation, and improved decision-making on products and services offered by an organisation (Saurombe 2016). Participants agreed that there were instances where feedback from the public influenced modifications and/or improvement of public programming initiatives on social media. Participants mentioned that there were complaints that the NHC does not use heritage format in their writings, which saw the COMSTA unit improving on their writing skills and format, and ensuring that the posters of the NHC included the five W's (Who, What, When, Where, and Why) and an H (How), clarifying the funding campaigns.

Through feedback, the funding unit also managed to include quite a number of funding categories, such as the youth in heritage, which saw a great impact in knowledge production. The NIO also came as a result of the feedback from the public lamenting that heritage information known by the elders may become extinct if it is not documented or preserved. Participants mentioned that the establishment of lectures by the organisation was a result of the public enquiring whether the organisation had one. The results therefore validate the suggestions made by Frye and Hemmer (2012).

Saurombe (2016) further emphasises that feedback enables the heritage specialist to continue developing their programming initiatives, which then accommodates the needs of the public. However, the participants further stated that the organisation ignores the comments they perceive to cause unnecessary drama on social media.

The findings suggest that the institution values the opinions of their audience, and that feedback from the public therefore makes heritage officers wiser in their strategic planning of public programming initiatives. The findings validate the findings of the study conducted by Qayam (2017) towards assessing the number of cases of diarrhoea illness that were prevented for every US dollar spent on five distinct programmes, which found that free chlorine was suggested as the most economical method of preventing diarrhoea.

#### **5.1.4.4 Level of participation on social media**

Participants agreed that there is social media participation; however, other participants stated that they were unaware of the level of participation by social media users in discussions posted. Participants mentioned that the only time they visited social media, was when they participated in the hybrid events of the organisation and then logged out immediately when the event ended. Other participants mentioned that participation in social media, particularly Facebook, was high, because it had the most followers. Participants also highlighted that there has been an increase in the feedback from the funding calls the institution made in 2024 compared to what they received in 2023.

Participants uttered that the participation, particularly from the youth, led to the establishment of intergenerational dialogue. The elders also participate in programmes such as GOSHA showing their interest in heritage preservation and promotion of the country. Participants also stated that the participation of the public in the RLHR public programming initiatives is highly satisfactory such that their events always receive more than 60 attendees. It was also established that the social media user's participation is dependent on the kind of content the institution shares on their social media pages, particularly Facebook.

The researcher noted that funding-related content shared by the institution on their Facebook page attracts the public to participate, whereas other content repels them

from engaging. The researcher suggests that social media users may have attached value to the content with which they engage, therefore regarding it as significant in their lives. The findings hereby validate the suggestion made by Kandade (2021) that the public will only engage in content they regard as having significance in their lives. The findings also suggest that user studies play a significant role in assisting living heritage officers to align their content with the needs of the public.

Overall engagements with the Facebook content by users clarify the fact that people only engage with content they find relevant to their needs. The issue, therefore, validates the issue of user studies, reiterating that users only engage with content they relate to.

### **5.3 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the data analysed and presented in Chapter Four of this study was interpreted and discussed.

The researcher carefully analysed the data to extract meaningful insights and a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by following the six steps of thematic data analysis. The trustworthiness of the study was confirmed by following the four dimensions of trustworthiness. The researcher conducted member checking to ascertain whether the data collected was credible. The researcher also served in the unit under investigation, which is the living heritage unit. Thick description was also provided in this chapter, to help ensure the transferability of the study's results and analysis. The researcher made field notes of what was heard, seen, and/or done during the time spent at the institution as a research intern. The researcher also conducted an audit trail by tracking the methods used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation towards guaranteeing the dependability of the study.

The researcher made sure that the results were unbiased and objective, carefully ensuring that the researcher's impact had no bearing on the results. The researcher conducted member checking and peer debriefing (Stahl & King 2020) with peers and colleagues within the research unit at the NHC to ensure that bias was minimised.

Data was interpreted in relation to the objective of the study indicated in Chapter One of this study. The identification of cultural strategies used by the NHC to promote living heritage; the usage of social media as an innovative tool to increase public awareness

of living heritage; assessing the relevant skills required to carry out public programming initiatives; and assessing the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness were crucial in exploring the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting the living heritage archives through social media.

It was clear that the NHC adopted public programming initiatives such as funding for heritage projects and HESOP, to name just a few, but their success and impact in ensuring awareness and usage can be debated considering the fact that some of the programmes such as HESOP attract the same schools for their competitions, and the funding for heritage projects are unable to reach out to the crucial grassroots programmes being targeted. The knowledge of the institution is in progress of effectively using the NIO system for living heritage promotion has been shared as well.

It was established that the COMSTA unit relies on the comment sections from the posters they share on social media, one-on-one interviews with the public prior to and/or after the event, radio interviews, TV interviews, the News Clip service provider, as well as from the NHC's website for feedback. The RLHR unit depends on the constituencies they targeted from their events. The living heritage's NIO system has a section wherein the public can lay their comments.

However, programmes such as HESOP do not have any feedback mechanism which informs the institution of the effectiveness of the programme in the lives of the learners who took part in the initiative. The programme does not have an adequate follow-up mechanism from the schools won. Therefore, in a way, there is no way of evaluating the value for money the programme provides in the lives of the learners through this outreach programme.

The social media platforms adopted by the institution for public programming initiatives have also been indicated, along with the target audience that the public programming initiatives are targeting.

Information about the living heritage officers having the required skills and competencies for implementing public programming initiatives, together with the training relevant to public programming and heritage management, has been discussed, and the results indicated that among the nine participants of this study,

only a few received the necessary training from the institution, with one having received the training a long time ago.

The public programming initiatives established by the NHC were suggested to be ineffective in creating living heritage awareness. The cultural strategies utilised by the NHC are solely used to preserve and promote heritage among the youth through research, For instance, the funding initiatives are used to draw the public to a funding application system, Ubuntu is used to uphold the values of giving back to the community, GOSHA aimed at celebrating the champions of heritage, funding calls being utilised to support heritage research related projects, and HESOP supporting heritage research however in high school learners.

Meanwhile, the mechanisms used to gather feedback assisted the institution in establishing programming initiatives such as public lectures and the NIO, among others. It was, however, established by the researcher that even the established public programming initiatives are not effective in drawing the public to the archives hosted within the institution. It was witnessed on social media that instead of bringing people to the NHC for them to get hold of the research outputs submitted to the NHC by the funding beneficiaries, the NHC directs the public to the beneficiary. The level of participation on social media also proved to be dependent on the kind of content shared, therefore validating the significance of user studies in public programming initiatives.

The conclusion and recommendations are made based on the summary of the findings of this study in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided the interpretation and discussion of the data collected through interviews, content analysis, and observations. The current chapter offers a summary of the findings, conclusions derived, and suggestions in view of the results. The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting the living heritage archives through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage.

The focus of this study was on the NHC of South Africa based in Pretoria. The findings provided an overview of the influence of public programming initiatives in promoting the living heritage archives through social media towards awareness and usage. The NHC or any other heritage institution that is mandated to preserve and promote heritage can implement the recommendations in this study.

Conducting effective public programming initiatives on social media towards increased awareness and usage of the archives is still a challenge experienced by the archives, which ultimately leads to poor usage of the archives. The purpose of this chapter is to provide recommendations that provide the NHC with a framework for guiding the improvement of the public programming initiatives established by the NHC through social media.

A summary of the findings enables readers to swiftly comprehend the main findings of the study without having to read the full report (Snyder 2019). A summary acts as a convenient resource for people seeking detailed information about the study, therefore aiding the readers determine whether they wish to read the entire study. Whereas the conclusion summarises and links the primary findings of the research to the initial research questions, The conclusion provides an insight into what the study has confirmed, reinforced, or invalidated (Snyder 2019). Recommendations therefore make suggestions for possible courses of action, or additional research topics based on the findings of the study, thereby encouraging ongoing dialogue and exploration of the topic.

## 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The established that the NHC acknowledged the significance of public programming initiatives in enhancing the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage in South Africa, drawing on possible partnerships and/or supporters for the visibility of their projects. However, the public programming initiatives established by the NHC were found not to be effective in attracting the public to engage in them on social media. This results from the inconsistency in the promotion of programming initiatives, lack of creativity in content sharing on social media, as well as the institution's not conducting user studies to ensure that the content shared satisfies the needs of the users. Despite the NHC having plans and strategies to evolve or expand current public programming initiatives, a lack of funding is still a challenge when it comes to implementation. However, suggestions made were that the NHC may consider collaborating with some of the Facebook users' institutional initiatives, should they align with the mandate of the NHC.

The NHC has adopted Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and recently TikTok as its social media platforms with the view of enhancing the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives in South Africa. However, not all participants were aware of the social media platforms of the institution. Among initiatives established for public programming, only one has been found to effectively promote the living heritage archives, although the recent programme only covers the current funded projects and not any other archives held by the institution. This therefore, leads to the archives before the year 2025 not being known by the public.

Among other reasons for the adoption of social media by the institution, was for the NHC to remain relevant to the trends. The social media platforms of the NHC target everyone, with its focus being on the youth. Despite the NHC's social media targeting everyone, social media was found to be ineffective in reaching the crucial targets of the funding unit at the NHC. Facebook was found to be selective in responding to comments and therefore ended up not responding to crucial comments. It was also established that the NHC facilitates competitions that ends up nowhere, with winners not being announced.

The findings also established that participants had the relevant qualifications for the job titles they hold at the NHC; however, some of the participants did not have much

experience in their work at the NHC, as they were recently hired by the institution at the time of the interviews. Although participants had educational backgrounds relating to living heritage, social media and/or public programming, it was found that there is still more room for improvement. With regard to training relevant to public programming and heritage management, it was established that the organisation does not have an archival repository, hence the lack of heritage management in the organisation; however, few participants had received training on both public programming and heritage management, but the training was received a long time ago. The study also unearthed that the majority of the participants had only received on-the-job training, whereas others received their training from their tertiary education. The organisation was found to provide training relevant to the work one does at the institution to its staff apart from their interns. User studies are therefore conducted on the staff members with whom the organisation funds, and not on the other general workshops conducted for everyone inclusive of the interns.

The current public programming initiatives are therefore deemed ineffective in creating living heritage awareness. The lack of human capacity and technological resource constraints affected the overall effectiveness of the current public programming initiatives. The level of participation in or contribution to social media by users to discussions posted was derived to depend on the kind of content being shared, with calls for funding, GOSHA, and HESOP receiving a high level of participation. The organisation does have feedback mechanisms on which they feed on the views and suggestions made by the public about the currently established public programming initiatives by the NHC. The institution shows its acknowledgement of the suggestions made by using them to either improve or modify the public programming initiatives.

## **6.3 CONCLUSION**

This section presents a summary of the results in accordance with each of the study's objectives, followed by conclusions.

### **6.3.1 Public programming initiatives used by the NHC to promote living heritage**

The ability of an organisation to attract the public to the living heritage archives of the institution is viewed as soft power. It is considered a powerful tool for public

engagement (Mukwevho 2019:202). For instance, institutional awareness gained when the living heritage archives are promoted using public programming initiatives through social media. The aim of the initiatives is to facilitate awareness and usage of the archives. This will assist in persuading the public to also act on behalf of the institution to persuade others to know and use the living heritage archives held by the NHC. Hence, the study sought to identify the public programming initiatives used to promote living heritage.

The study found that the NHC recognises the significance of promoting living heritage for continued awareness of South African heritage. Such public programming initiatives include awareness of funding for heritage projects; heritage-related dialogues; seminars; heritage competitions; heritage videos; symposiums; lectures; cultural expressions, where various cultures come together to express themselves, book exhibitions, where books from the funding unit which were the outputs of their funded projects are also displayed for awareness; HESOP, where heritage researches are conducted by learners from various schools in all the provinces in South Africa and presented in competitions held starting from district level to national level; media engagements; as well as the NIO that is yet to function. However, their public programming initiatives are not being consistently promoted for awareness and usage. Some are due to their annual nature, for instance, HESOP, GOSHA, and cultural expressions, to name a few. Despite the programmes occurring once a year, the institution does not promote them beforehand; instead, they are promoted as and when they take place. Thus, it provides an insight that the organisation may choose to engage in, in the consistent utilisation of the public programming in promoting living heritage.

The indication of only HESOP and GOSHA as the best-known public programming initiatives by the majority of the participants indicated that there was limited promotion of other programmes. Awareness of current heritage publications is also limited, as it means that only recent records are known, whereas previous records remain unknown. Also, the heavier use of Facebook than the other social media platforms adopted by the institution was also limiting in the sense that the exposure of the organisation will only be on Facebook rather than on all the media platforms established.

With regard to the promotion of living heritage, the study attempted to identify how the adopted public programming initiatives encouraged participation. The participants stated that participation was encouraged through calls for funding, Ubuntu programmes, and incentives given through GOSHA and HESOP. Email and telephone correspondence was also used to encourage participation. The participants agreed that there was participation, although the majority of the participants agreed that participation of the public depended on the kind of content being shared, with the public engaging mostly in calls for funding and GOSHA programmes. However, engagements on social media decrease as soon as the programmes ended due to their annual nature. Ericson (1991) emphasises that for continued participation of the public on social media, public programming should be continuous and closely aligned with an organisation's core mission and values. The study confirmed the significance of continuous public programming to guarantee consistent participation of the public in the public programming initiatives of the institution on social media.

The NHC recognises the need to reach out to the masses to preserve and promote living heritage. Among some of the plans and strategies to evolve the NHC's current public programming initiatives, the institution engages with the houses of traditional leaders, community-based organisations, and private sectors for collaboration in events. The institution therefore includes its public programming initiatives in its strategic framework. However, the institution does not implement all its strategic public programming initiatives due to financial constraints.

It is also limiting for the institution to have one national office based in Pretoria and no provincial offices. Meaning that other provinces are only dependent on social media, email, and telephone correspondence to reach the offices. If there is not much content shared relating to their information needs, they may never know about the institution, and/or deem the institution worthless to them; more especially if there is no constant public programming accompanied by the fact that the organisation currently does not have any plans to branch out by having offices in all the provinces of South Africa.

In general, the public programming initiatives established by the NHC, are typically not planned and carried out in a way that enhances the visibility and accessibility of living heritage in South Africa, as well as efficiently attracting new users to the living heritage archives. There is a need for the organisation to redefine its public programming

initiatives towards exploring how the archives can leverage soft power to enhance visibility and accessibility. The organisation needs to adapt the archives to the diverse needs of their audience, establish various programmes that will cater for the needs of the users and potential users, and consider consistency in promoting living heritage through public programming initiatives on social media. Regular programming initiatives may assist with building trust and rapport with the public, and will also assist the archives to remain relevant and accessible in an era where information is constantly evolving. The public archives should also present accurate, well-researched information to build and maintain credibility and provide objective perspectives on educational programmes in order to foster an understanding and reconciliation while also acknowledging different viewpoints (Mukwevho 2019).

### **6.3.2 Usage of social media as an innovative tool to increase public awareness of living heritage**

Having access to a diverse range of communication channels, including digital platforms, social media, and direct interaction tools, gives organisations a natural advantage in developing stories and connecting with various audiences. An organisation can reach a wider audience and deliver more focused messaging if it has access to or control over more channels. This covers both conventional media like radio, TV, and newspapers as well as digital media, including blogs, podcasts, social media sites, and online communities. The NHC has adopted Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter as its innovative tools to increase public awareness -of living heritage, with Facebook being the most-used platform. However, not all the participants knew the media platforms adopted by their organisation.

The reasons for the adoption of social media by the NHC were to cut down the advertising costs and improve accessibility, to remain relevant to the trends, as well as its affordability. The reasons for the adoption of social media are against the background of this study which was the use of social media for both visibility and accessibility towards usage of the living heritage archives.

The study established that the NHC does not entirely promote living heritage archives on social media, instead, it shares a brief description of the funding beneficiaries, GOSHA, and HESOP winners, and Ubuntu initiative partners. The organisation also highlights the value of the funding, as well as the prizes won by both GOSHA and

HESOP beneficiaries on the website of the organisation. The only living heritage promotion platform the participants mentioned was NIO, which is yet to be functional as it is still in its developmental stage. The NHC has therefore not entirely adopted social media as a tool for promoting living heritage archives on social media.

Social media platforms established by the NHC target everyone; the target market varies with the public programming established. For instance, there are programmes that are aimed at the youth, the elderly, and knowledge bearers, among others, with the youth being mostly targeted. The likes of HESOP, GOSHA, as well as cultural expressions, to name a few. The findings suggest that the organisation also recognises the significance of targeting the youth when promoting living heritage because they are the future of tomorrow.

### **6.3.3 Assessing if responsible officers at the NHC have the relevant skills required to carry out public programming initiatives**

Relevant skills are crucial in carrying out public programming initiatives. Knowledge is power in taking action in addressing issues, bringing about change, and making sound decisions; however, good leadership is also key. Soft power identifies leadership as a crucial aspect in the promotion of living heritage towards accessibility and visibility. Participants were of the view that proper leadership style influences the health and direction of an organisation. Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) maintain that a transformational leader is a good leader.

The participants stated that they believed that the responsible living heritage officers did have the necessary skills and competencies. However, other participants stated that they believed there was still room for improvement as a result of the living heritage officers not having all the necessary skills to carry out public programming initiatives. It was mentioned by the participants that ICT skills, communication skills, heritage background, writing skills, as well as innovativeness are the crucial skills an individual needs to have to successfully facilitate educational programmes. However, leadership was not mentioned by Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) and Mukwevho (2019). Nye (2021) argues for proper leadership in persuading the public to do what you want them to do without force. Proper leadership is therefore suggested by the researcher.

The results in assessing if the responsible officers at the NHC did receive relevant public programming and heritage management, suggested that trainings were given to the selected few. Only permanent and fixed-term employees of the NHC, excluding the interns, are at liberty to further their studies and receive external training in relation to the work they do at the NHC. The other general trainings organised for all the staff, including the interns, are tailored to close the gaps of the organisation as thought by the organisers. The staff are therefore not consulted about the kinds of training they would like to receive.

The organisation does not have an archival repository. Their records are placed in storage boxes and stored in storage rooms as well as in the offices of the other staff members. Therefore, there is no heritage management of the records.

#### **6.3.4 Assessing the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness through social media**

Several scholars believe that the organisations' ability to take the archives to the public is the most powerful tool for public engagement. However, the archives need to be consistently taken to the people, marketed properly, as well as consider the needs of the targeted group through various mechanisms of feedback towards ensuring the effectiveness of the public programming initiatives.

The NHC established public programming initiatives, which are believed to facilitate awareness of the products and services rendered by the institution. However, there is no indication of the public programming initiatives creating awareness and usage of living heritage archives to the public, apart from the call for funding posters, a picture of HESOP participants and or a video of them en route to the national camp shared on the institutional social media platforms. The public programming initiatives established facilitate awareness of the events the institution participates in and established awareness of the South African historical days, such as the Day of Reconciliation, Heritage Day, Women's Day, and to name a few. Few of the participants believe that the existing public programming initiatives are effective in creating living heritage awareness through social media; however, others mentioned that the effectiveness is starting to surface up. The public programming initiatives established are failing to reach and attract new faces to the institution. For instance, the programmes are unable to attract the targeted funding audience, as well as the

new schools that will participate in HESOP competitions such that the same schools and learners are always the ones participating in the competitions.

In order to promote the living heritage, the study established that the LH programme of the NHC collaborates with houses of traditional leaders in various provinces such as Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Free State, private sectors, and community-based organisations to supplement their financial constraints' however, the collaboration seems not to be effective in alleviating the institution of its financial constraints in successfully implementing the strategic public programming initiatives. The collaboration with traditional leadership is very important because they are custodians of heritage, and their role should not be ignored.

Other than the appeal, comments section, media interviews, and one-on-one interviews after an event, the institution uses a News Clip service provider to gather feedback on social media. However, programmes such as HESOP do not have a feedback model, which indicates the impact made by the programme. The programme continues to operate without evaluating its effectiveness in making living heritage known to the youth. Hence the suggestion by the researcher for the organisation to have a model that evaluates the impact made by the programme on the youth who participated in it, especially those who reached the national level competition.

The organisation recognises the value of feedback from the public. Through feedback from the public, the funding unit managed to include a number of funding categories, the NIO system was developed, the COMSTA unit managed to improve their writing skills, as well as the design of their posters, and the RLHR unit managed to establish lectures as part of their public programming initiatives. The findings validated the significance of feedback and its implementation.

The level of participation on Facebook is higher than the other social media platforms adopted by the organisation because Facebook has more followers than the other social media platforms of the institution. The level of participation in the funding unit seems to be growing on a yearly basis. Participants stated that participation in 2024 supersedes that of 2023. Participation seems to come from the youth to the elders. However, participation is dependent on the content shared. Yet again, the study confirms the significance of user studies towards the effectiveness of the public

programming initiatives. One can safely say that the public programming initiatives are ineffective in taking the archives to the public.

In conclusion, the success of the public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage could not be confirmed by a thorough assessment of the literature review because South Africa's public heritage institutions continue to consider visibility and accessibility as a significant obstacle. In view of the problem statement, the evidence collected through semi-structured interviews, social media, and physical observation, and content analysis of the annual reports, institutional reports, policies, strategic plan, minutes, annual performance plan, and social media log analysis demonstrated that, firstly, the current public programming initiatives are ineffective in greatly taking living heritage archives to the public. Secondly, the issue of leadership in the living heritage promotion is concerning given the fact that the public programming initiatives are inconsistently promoted, also, the content may not be tailored to the needs of the social media followers, because the COMSTA team is aware of the power of consistency in publishing, as well as the power of channelling content to the needs of the public towards attraction.

The participants are not fully aware of all the public programming initiatives that have been established by the institution. Therefore, it should also be alarming the leaders at the NHC that the employees of the NHC are mostly aware of some of the living heritage and funding unit programmes and not of all the programmes under the living heritage. The RLHR units' public programming initiatives should also be made known to the staff. Awareness should start internally. However, the researcher also realised that within the core business programme, it is only the research unit that does not have public programming initiatives of its own.

Secondly, reasons for the adoption of social media were not necessarily for awareness of the living heritage archives in order to bring the public to the archives held by the institution. Instead, the reasons are more centred around cutting down advertising costs and remaining relevant to the trends, among others. This suggests that the social media adopted by the NHC has not yet fully been used to its maximum capability. Thirdly, the institution lacks heritage management as a result of not having an archival repository. There is also still a lack of skills in public programming initiatives as a result of the organisation providing a selected few with an opportunity for skills training. The

majority of the participants received their training on the job as well as through their tertiary qualification. Lastly, the current public programming initiatives are not effective in promoting living heritage awareness on social media. The targeted audiences are not reached by the current public programming initiatives. The financial constraints faced by the institution in implementing their strategic public programming initiatives can be alleviated by the insights provided by the concept of soft power.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

To promote living heritage through social media with the view of guaranteeing awareness and usage in South Africa, the study offers the following recommendations:

- a. Recommendations regarding public programming initiatives used by the NHC to promote living heritage

The study recommends that the NHC establish an all-inclusive awareness programme that will inform all the staff members of all the public programming initiatives established by the organisation, along with the reasons for their development. There is a saying that charity begins at home, suggesting that before helping others, one should first take care of the needs of your own family. It highlights how crucial it is to take care of one's own environment or close relationships before offering assistance to others. In relation to this study, it entails that the relevant living heritage officers at the NHC should start by making sure that the staff are internally aware of all the public programming initiatives offered by the institution. Mukwevho (2019) opines that the public archives ought to take advantage of this social force for their own gain, because once those in the immediate vicinity are aware of the public programming initiatives as well as the advantages they offer society as a whole, they can act as human landmarks, thereby pointing people to the archives.

The research and knowledge production unit needs to consider establishing its own public programming initiatives to attract the public to the organisation for awareness. For the promotion of the organisation and the living heritage archives, the research and knowledge production unit can plan and organise educational seminars about the living heritage archives held by the institution, make a public call, and share the knowledge produced by the beneficiaries of the NHC's products and services. The funding outputs from the funding beneficiaries, as well as the living heritage research

output conducted by the learners under the HESOP programme, can also be used as some of the living heritage content to share with the public after verification of the accuracy of the data collected has been done. This will assist in enlightening other youth and the public about the programmes themselves and the organisation, and ultimately attract them into learning about living heritage for them to ultimately use heritage as a strategic resource.

The NHC may also look into expanding its services by establishing provincial offices to allow for easy access to their offices by the public. Expansion of the offices will also assist with the awareness of the institution as well as various ideas on the expansion or improvements of public programming initiatives.

The organisation may strategically use its collaboration with houses of traditional leaders to establish public programming initiatives that will attract the communities wherein the houses of traditional leaders are based. The NHC may consider using their current public programming initiatives to conduct workshops, seminars, and or exhibiting the funding outputs to those communities. This will assist by firstly ensuring awareness of the organisation, the archives, and the services and products the organisation offers, towards making sure that the grassroots' targeted groups are reached.

Equally so, the NHC needs to ensure that their heritage competitions reach the final stage, in which winners are announced and given their prizes, before moving to the next competition. The NHC needs to make sure that its users feel valued by responding to their queries in the comments section. Batho People principles should be upheld as and when the institution provides services to the public.

The NHC also needs to ensure that before making publications and or sharing videos on social media, accuracy and objectivity are verified. This can be achieved through peer review of the materials and or information by knowledge bearers and or experts in the field of the knowledge being shared. Knowledge bearers who peer-reviewed the materials can then be acknowledged when sharing materials.

The NHC should open its public archives to users if the organisation wants to enhance its public programming initiatives for awareness and usage. Educational and informative publications, such as the funding publications, should be open to the public

to access. This will also ensure that those who are unable to purchase the books, can still be able to access the knowledge in the information resources.

- b. Recommendations regarding the usage of social media as an innovative tool to increase public awareness of living heritage

The organisation should consider conducting its public programming initiatives often to ensure that continuous engagement between the public and social media users is maintained. These will assist with establishing a level of trust between the organisation and the public and ensure continuous participation with the public. Currently, the public is mostly found on TikTok, with over 1 billion active users daily (SeO.AI 2024). The institution may consider establishing social media stories using the platform to present living heritage in bite-sized, engaging segments, therefore attracting the followers to the NHC's living heritage archives. The institution should consider continuing with initiatives that draw in the public, such as the heritage videos. Although content may this time include living heritage archives held by the institution, and therefore inform the public that such information can be found at the NHC. Snippets about content deposited in the NIO may be shared on Facebook with links directing users to the official website.

In their study, Cevik and Sevin (2017) concluded that due to the irrelevant and irregular conveying of messages, their dissemination of Turkey's message could not achieve a positive impact. Inconsistent content makes users lose interest in a social media page they are following, such that some end up unfollowing the page, no longer bothering themselves with the engagements that occur on the very same social media page. As a result, the institution should ensure that regular and relevant content is shared on social media platforms to guarantee effective public programming initiatives. In this sense, the living heritage archive's intended audience or potential users will almost certainly notice the benefits of such interaction, which will raise public awareness of the archives and/or their reputation (Mukwevho 2019). Content that is not conveyed regularly will not achieve its objectives.

The institution may also establish online exhibitions, where social media users can explore the living heritage and funding unit collections could be the title page of the documents and a summary or an abstract of the documents that will assist in bringing the public to the NHC's archives.

After verification of the funding outputs, the NHC can also consider using the funding outputs as part of their NIO content when the system eventually kicks off. Alternatively, the NIO can use the funding outcomes as a database for obtaining knowledge barriers of the ICH.

It is also suggested that the relevant officials should ensure awareness of the social media platforms adopted by the institution, along with the significance of the adoption. They should persuade the staff members at the NHC to regularly visit the social media platforms of the organisation and/or use its partnerships with other stakeholders to their maximum ability. The NHC and SAHRA may collaborate in the sense that, when the NHC shares its posts, they tag the SAHRA page, and SAHRA does the same. This will assist by further increasing awareness of and accessibility of the organisation. Alternatively, the institution may collaborate with a heritage social media influencer to assist the NHC with enhancing awareness and using the living heritage archives. The NHC may outsource influencers from their GOSHA programme winners, therefore also playing a feedback role in evaluating the impact made by living heritage winners. This will assist the organisation to develop another model of feedback from the beneficiaries of the living heritage unit.

The organisation may also collaborate with the houses of traditional leaders, and private sector institutions such as higher institutions of learning, which have a great following in making living heritage known. This can be done through both parties agreeing that at times, the organisation will tag their social media pages when sharing living heritage-related content which may also be beneficial to their communities. This act will assist the NHC to engage in a broader audience. Budget restricting, the institution can establish a rewarding model of ensuring awareness and usage of the heritage archives. By so saying, the organisation can establish an internal initiative where the core staff are rewarded with an incentive, possibly a gift voucher or a heritage title for a certain duration for the best heritage influencer of the month. Through the use of soft power, this can be achieved towards improving awareness and accessibility of the archives. It will also guarantee that the staff are aware of the living heritage archives held by the organisation.

The use of the website for profiling information about the beneficiaries of the institution's funding and incentives should include all information, and not omit some.

This is guided by observing that some of the information on the website of the institution has been omitted, with others being placed under the wrong folders . The omission of information can lead to erroneous conclusions or decisions based on partial information provided. Incomplete or missing information can damage the credibility of an organisation; stakeholders may lose trust in the system (Greenwood & Buren 2010). This statement also suggests the significance of heritage management. The NHC should thereby guard against missing or incomplete information when uploading data to their social media page and the website of the institution.

Awareness and accessibility of the living heritage archives should be featured in the justification of establishing reasons for adopting social media for promotion of the living heritage. Additionally, when conducting a user study, the organisation should start by understanding the needs of their target population and identifying the issues that are significant to the communities they serve. The needs of the communities identified should be connected to the relevant heritage materials within the collections of the organisation. As and when the organisation can, they may package the information in the language preferred by the communities. This is done so that inclusivity, accessibility, and relevance in the archival practices can be achieved, therefore guaranteeing that the archives serve as a vital resource for the public. It is recommended that there be regular, interactive, and public communication on social media, so as to promote a better awareness of archives and the advantages they provide to the public. People should know the archives and their significance for them to attach value to them. Archives should also disseminate information about their holdings, offerings, and influence on research, education, and the preservation of culture through them.

Masizana and Salubi (2022) argue that institutions use social media to keep an eye on what the public is saying about them and respond to both favourable and unfavourable remarks. The COMSTA department at the NHC should consider revising its policy on the part that says the HoC should delete comments that are disrespectful to the organisation. The public may not view their comments as being disrespectful to the organisation and may continue with such behaviour in other posts. The unit needs to come up with a strategy on how to deal with such comments. Strategies may include approaching the user and politely addressing the matter with them, making sure they

thoroughly understand the reasons provided. The Government Communications and Information System (GCIS) Social Media Guidelines and Resources (2011) maintains that anyone using social media needs to be professional at all times, be fair, thorough, and transparent. The organisation needs to exercise fairness in responding to comments on social media, be responsive to all the comments, and be professional in responding to all the comments and encourage constructive criticism.

- c. Recommendations regarding relevant skills required to carry out public programming initiatives

The NHC's training and development policy should be all inclusive, thereby ensuring that interns are also included in the training the institution offers to its employees. The organisation needs to also conduct training often to ensure that its staff are up to date with current trends and are able to successfully implement their key performance areas (KPA). A transformational leadership style should also be adopted by the leaders in all the units at the NHC so that their followers can develop passion and commitment in their work towards becoming thoughtful leaders in the future.

The organisation can also consider establishing an archival repository to ensure that heritage management is obtained and that the archives are archived in a manner established by the NARSSA Act. This will ensure that there is proper management and care of all the public records, so that the public records may be disposed of with written authorisation from the NARSSA.

It is arguable that when an archivist communicates and demonstrates a considerable deal of superior knowledge about the archives in a rational manner with a clear objective for imparting such understanding, it helps to meaningfully form the perceptions of the intended audience. When the living heritage officers do the same, they will eventually assist with meaningfully forming the perceptions of the intended audience.

- d. Recommendations regarding the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness through social media

User study is crucial in public programming. Therefore, the public programming established by the institution needs to be centred around the information needs of the public. This will assist in attracting the public to the archives, encourage participation

of the public in the archives, and persuade the public to act on behalf of the organisation by independently promoting the archives. A message that is not relevant to the target market will not achieve a positive impact.

The NHC should be creative with the content they share. The organisation can make unique archival materials available to the global audience. This includes digitised documents, rare photos, videos, and engaging content like living heritage throwback posts. A glimpse of the archives and historical facts can attract attention and spark public interest.

The organisation may create a platform that encourages social media users to share suggestions of materials they would like to see in future. The organisation can therefore create such a platform to foster engagements.

By sharing stories and engaging with trending topics, archives can highlight how their collections contribute to contemporary discussions on social justice, human rights, and cultural identity, which align with soft power by positioning the archives as a valuable and influential entity in shaping public discourse, building cultural understanding, and fostering global cooperation.

The NHC should post content on social media about HESOP competitions from the provincial level, to give the public a sense of what transpires in the programme from ground level until the competition reaches its final stages that is the national level. However, the institution will need to share such information with the consent of the learners' parents, while also hiding the identities of the learners; for instance, a picture of ongoing presentations by the learners may be taken from their backs.

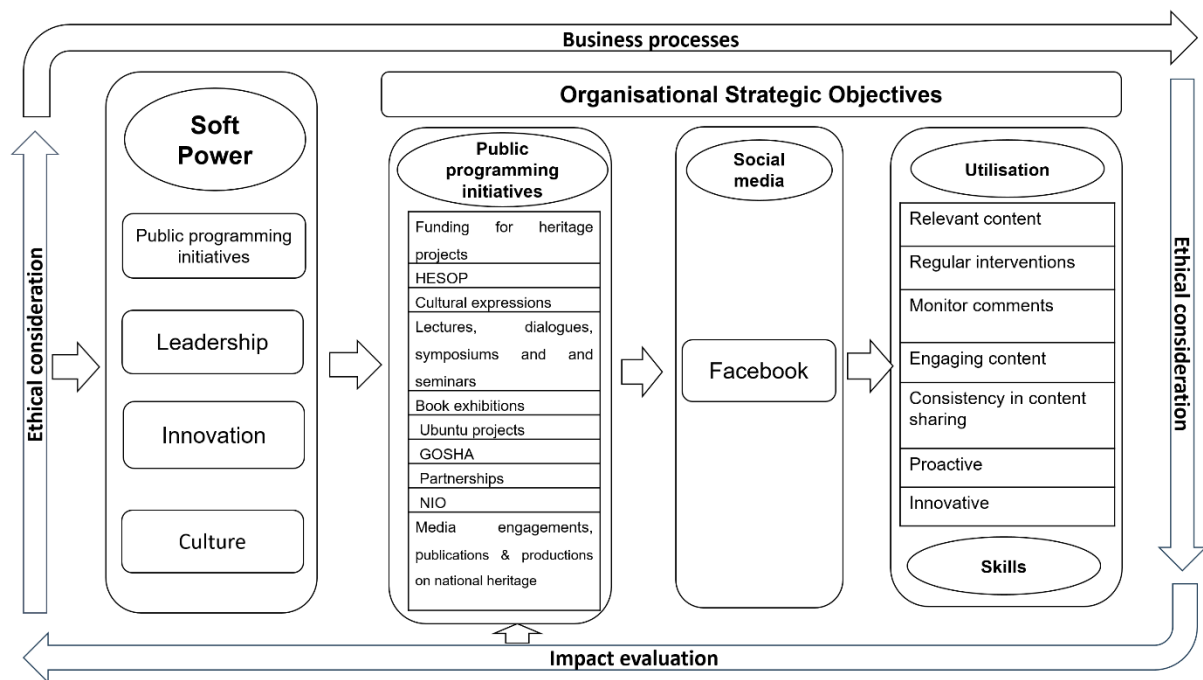
One Facebook comment confirmed the effectiveness of heritage publication video shared in guaranteeing awareness about the clash of tribes. Such initiatives can be continued in ensuring that the archives held by the NHC are actively used and engaged on.

## **6.5 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE THE PUBLIC PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

The fifth objective sought to propose a framework to guide the public programming initiatives through social media for the promotion of living heritage. The framework in

this current digital age is a fundamental underlying structure that the NHC or any other heritage institution looking to modify or create an efficient awareness and usage programme of the living heritage archives would use as a benchmarking tool. The framework is crucial to the living heritage officers because. Firstly, it will assist the heritage officers in establishing successful public programming initiatives that will assist with reaching all the targeted audiences, more especially the grassroots audience. Secondly, it will assist the organisation prioritise public programming initiatives that speak to the information needs of the social media users and potential users; and also assist the heritage officers align their current public programming initiatives with unique characteristics of soft power, thereby ensuring its long-term success. Thirdly, it will encourage the organisation to prioritise consistent public programming initiatives to ensure effective participation because inconsistent content makes users lose interest in a social media page and ultimately leads to them unfollowing the social media page and stop engaging in the content posted. Finally, it will provide heritage officers with an opportunity to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the programmes externally to assess progress.

The framework was developed and founded on ideas like effective public programmes, enhanced public knowledge of archives, and increased usage of archives presented in Figure 1.2 in Chapter One. Stage one is concerned with identifying the information needs of social media users and potential users when establishing public programming initiatives. Stage two is concerned with conducting awareness of the current established public programming initiatives of the organisation, as well as the living heritage archives held by the institution, both internally and externally. Stage three is concerned with regular public programming initiatives towards effective participation in the programmes, and ultimately an increased awareness and usage of the living heritage archives held by the NHC.



**Figure 6.1: Framework for the Promotion of living heritage archives through social media (Researcher 2025)**

The textual explanation of the framework is as follows:

**a) Soft power as a framework**

This study argues that heritage officers need to consider the unique elements of soft power. The fundamental elements of the heritage programmes should include regularity, smoothness, influence, resilience, creativity, as well as a transformational leadership style to achieve effective awareness of living heritage archives. When current programmes have proven to be unsuccessful and/or difficult to implement, smoothness is another intervention that may be helpful and effective in altering other people’s behaviour (Michalek, Meran, Schwarze & Yildiz 2016). Dreyer and Nofziger (2021) highlight that challenges often encountered by organisations in achieving awareness include minimal resources to facilitate public programming initiatives. Heritage officers thereby need to consider this as and when they are establishing and/or revising their current public programming initiatives, especially when encountering financial constraints.

As depicted by Figure 6.1, soft power’s persuasive qualities ought to guide all organisational leadership at all levels, be it in establishing public programming

initiatives, leadership, or in social media as a tool of communication. The NHC should embrace social media as an innovative tool for effectively promoting the living heritage archives on social media for awareness and usage. The NHC may implement strategies used by Skinns, Rice, Sprawson and Wooff (2016) on how to successfully include unique aspects of soft power in their public programming initiatives. For instance, compliance of detainees in a study conducted by Skinns et al. (2017:605-608) was achieved through the provision of regular and accurate information to detainees, communicating with detainees and the staff trying to develop a level of understanding between themselves and detainees. Heritage officers may also use their power softly by establishing a cordial and intimate rapport with special media users and potential users, employ humour, and have polite and casual conversations with the public, and more especially give them regular and accurate updates about living heritage archives towards effective public programming initiatives.

#### **b) Business processes**

The framework acknowledges that the public programming initiatives are essential to the main operations of the NHC. They are key activities that have a direct impact on the business's capacity to provide consumers with value. Kaniski and Vincek (2018) argue that these activities occur to fulfil the mission and vision of the existence of an organisation. The executive core business unit at the NHC consists of the key activities that affect the company's ability to deliver value to the public directly. The unit establishes and facilitates the public programming initiatives, which align with the vision and mission of the organisation towards ensuring the country's living heritage awareness to the public of South Africa.

A clearly established business process facilitates operational efficiency, boosts output, and guarantees uniformity across departments. Thus, the living heritage officers should strive for awareness of both the public programming initiatives established by the organisation as well as the living heritage archives held by the institution in all the staff of the NHC to make sure that uniformity is guaranteed across all the units and departments within the institution. Mukwevho (2019) advocates for the promotion of living heritage internally before promoting the archives externally. Mukwevho (2019) further reiterates that although promoting living heritage archives to the staff is cheap, it also works in favour of the institution as the staff ultimately act as public archive

ambassadors when interacting with their significant others as well as in the communities they live in.

### **c) Ethical considerations of using social media for heritage**

Social media is an effective tool for conserving, sharing, and promoting living heritage. However, it raises a number of ethical issues (Arokiaraj et al. 2023). The framework thereby recognises the significance of ethics in social media. The understanding is that the heritage officers will have the basis of how to promote and present living heritage information on social media without demeaning the cultures being presented, guarding against spreading anything that can be interpreted as exploitative or offensive, as well as having guidance on how to deal with copyright (Lutz 2017). The study indicated that the NHC has a social media policy that guides the daily operations of the online content of the organisation. However, the policy stated that any comments on social media platforms showing any disrespect should be removed where possible.

It is crucial for the NHC to uphold transparency in dealing with comments that the organisation regards as disrespectful. The NHC needs to come up with a strategy to ensure that heritage content shared on social media is not misused to harm individuals or groups by implementing ways that will make the public aware that a certain kind of information is not acceptable by the organisation and that action will be taken should such behaviour continue. Enforcing such strategies may assist in avoiding such behaviours on social media, wherein those who were not aware of their disrespectful comments are aware of their actions, and know that there are consequences for them, rather than just deleting the comments without warning.

### **d) The organisational strategic objectives**

An institution's performance is determined by its broad, high-level organisational strategic objectives. Strategic goals assist an organisation in efficiently allocating resources and maintaining focus on priorities. It is also a tool that helps with daily decision-making, progress evaluation, and strategy modification (Mukwevho 2019). Promotion of living heritage archives should thereby be included in the strategic objectives of the organisation, along with ways in which the organisation can effectively achieve successful awareness of the archives through social media. This

will encourage the COMSTA unit and all the Core Business programmes to prioritise their daily tasks to accomplish the goal within the allotted time.

According to Chaterera and Rodrigues (2019), the ability of public programming initiatives to grant access to and use of an organisation's archives through awareness, also grants heritage officers with an opportunity to evaluate their public programming initiatives. The reporting that comes with implementing public programming initiatives will also encourage heritage officers to improve on their public programming initiatives.

#### **e) Public programming initiatives**

The study recognises that for an organisation to facilitate effective living heritage awareness of the archives, they need to first have organised information resources that will allow for easy access to the records of an institution. Records with archival value must be archived and arranged in a proper manner. The NHC therefore needs to have a functional archival repository for the heritage officers to have a direction as to where they should direct the public when they need the living heritage archives. The organisation must address the need for an archival repository as the first step towards achieving effective public programming initiatives.

Secondly, heritage officers should conduct user studies to identify and observe its users, as well as potential users. A needs analysis should be conducted to understand the behaviour and preferences of the targeted audience. The public programming initiatives used to enhance user accessibility to the archives, are influenced by the understanding of the information needs and search patterns of the majority of users (Mukwevho 2019).

#### **f) Social media**

Social media has the potential to increase awareness and usage of the living heritage archives. It offers convenience in disseminating information to the public, along with convenient access to the public programming initiatives of an organisation (Nchabeleng et al. 2018). This was seen with public libraries across the US being effective in using social media networks to enhance awareness through outreach programmes. Consistent use of social media has also been seen to assist in guaranteeing successful public programming initiatives, as well as assisting by

contributing to accountability for the costs incurred and the efforts put into the public programming initiatives established by an organisation (Liew et al. 2015). Guided by the soft power approach, the NHC should be innovative in their use of Facebook to ensure that they attract the relevant people.

At the moment, the NHC Facebook social media platform has more following than their other social media platforms (X, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok). Therefore, creativity and innovativeness in attracting relevant people stands a great potential, given that Facebook is mostly used by the youth (Patricios 2023).

### **g) Utilisation**

The study recognises that various organisations use social media differently and for various reasons. However, the study also recommends that the organisation utilise its social media to achieve effective public programming initiatives of the organisation. The study saw the need for the organisation to share content that is relevant to the target audience, share public programming initiatives regularly, respond to all comments to make sure that fairness is given to the public, create engaging content that will attract the public to participate in it, maintain consistency in content sharing, share content prior its occurrence, and be innovative in content sharing. There are other heritage institutions apart from the NHC, so the institution must make it a point to ensure the public has a reason to visit the NHC's social media platforms.

### **h) Impact evaluation**

Impact evaluation of public programming initiatives consists of evaluating the results of the NHC's established public programmes against the impact they made in relation to the established goals. The assessment discovers the programme's success in accomplishing the set goals of the interventions. Mukwevho (2019) argues that a successful visibility programme should deliver the desired outcomes and benefits that remain relevant while avoiding undue intended consequences in the most economical way possible. Performance can be monitored either through outsourcing service providers such as the Newsclip mentioned above, or through surveys and one-on-one interviews, among others. The impact evaluation of the public programming initiatives can assist programmes such as HESOP, GOSHA, and PESP to develop a model they

can use to evaluate the impact made in communities in which these programmes occur.

## **6.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The adoption of social media as an innovative tool to enhance the visibility and accessibility of the living heritage archives is still being experimented in the heritage sector. This area can be researched further with the view of enforcing the adoption of social media for visibility and accessibility of the heritage archives. Another research area can be on the heritage sectors not using social media to its full potential in creating heritage awareness nationally. This can be researched to guarantee the awareness of heritage in the public.

This research study further indicated that it is still unclear if the public programming initiatives can create heritage awareness towards usage of the living heritage archives. Further research can be conducted to clarify the capability of public programming initiatives towards ensuring the utilisation of the living heritage archives. User studies are also still not prioritised towards the promotion of living heritage archives. Research can be conducted to put emphasis solely on the significance of user studies when promoting living heritage archives, to show that the promotion of anything goes hand in glove with user studies. A successful promotion is one that knows its target audience. Leadership is also still not being prioritised as a crucial factor in determining the success of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage to the public. It is therefore crucial that leadership be explored in promoting living heritage to the public because the success of promotion is determined by the leaders who are promoting it.

## **6.7 FINAL CONCLUSION**

This chapter made conclusions and recommendations based on the interpretations and discussions made in Chapter Five of this study. A summary of the study's findings was created in order to reach a decision about the promotion of the living heritage archives through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage. The study's objectives were taken into consideration when drawing and presenting the findings of this study. A conclusion was first drawn about the public programming initiatives established by the NHC to promote living heritage. Secondly, on the usage

of social media as an innovative tool to increase public awareness of living heritage. Thirdly, on assessing whether responsible officers at the NHC have the relevant skills required to carry out public programming initiatives. Lastly, on the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating living heritage awareness through social media. The recommendations made were meant to offer alternatives to the current situation or assist the organisation improve on their current public programming initiatives. Recommendations provided included the framework for the promotion of the living heritage archives through social media.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Preamble: Permission to record

#### Section 1 – Introduction

- Briefly share your roles and responsibilities at the NHC

#### **Theme 1: Identify public programming initiatives used by the NHC to promote heritage**

What are the public programming initiatives adopted by the NHC of South Africa to enhance visibility and accessibility of the heritage in South Africa?

How are the adopted public programming initiatives encouraging participation of the public in heritage through social media?

What platforms does the NHC use for public programming initiatives to enhance visibility and accessibility of the heritage archives in South Africa?

Which social media audience does the NHC's public programming initiatives target in creating heritage awareness?

Are there any plans or strategies in place for the NHC to evolve or expand its current public programming initiatives in the future?

#### **Theme 2: Explore social media as a cutting-edge instrument for raising public awareness of heritage**

Have the heritage archives adopted social media as an innovative tool for raising public awareness on heritage?

Which social media platforms have been embraced and used by the NHC of South Africa to raise public awareness of heritage?

What are the reasons for adopting social media platforms in raising public awareness of heritage?

How does the NHC use technology in its public programming initiatives to enhance the presentation and accessibility of living heritage archives on social media?

**Theme 3: Assess whether responsible officers at the NHC have relevant expertise required to carry out public programming initiatives**

What is your educational background and how does it relate to public programming initiatives, social media and/or heritage?

How would you describe key skills and competencies you believe are crucial for successfully implementing public programming initiatives related to heritage?

In your view, would you say that officials who are responsible for public programming initiatives have the relevant skills and competencies to conduct public programming initiatives through social media? Why?

Have you received any specific training relevant to public programming and heritage management?

**Theme 4: Assess the effectiveness of existing public programming initiatives in creating heritage awareness on social media**

How would you assess the overall effectiveness of the current public programming initiatives in creating awareness of heritage through social media?

What mechanisms are in place to gather feedback on public programming initiatives?

Have there been instances where feedback from the public influenced the modification or improvement of public programming initiatives for living heritage on social media?

How is the level of participation or contribution by social media users to discussions posted on social media?

**Theme 5: Develop a framework to guide public programming initiatives through social media**

## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

19 January 2024

Dear Mrs Kedibone Sarah Mojapelo

NHREC Registration # :  
Rec-240816-052  
CREC Reference # :  
67847382\_CREC\_CHS\_2024

**Decision:**  
**Ethics Approval from 19 January**  
**2024 to 19 January 2025**

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs. K. S. Mojapelo  
Contact details: [67847382@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:67847382@mylife.unisa.ac.za)  
Supervisor(s): Name: Dr. M. G. Mojapelo  
Contact details: [mojapmg@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mojapmg@unisa.ac.za)

**Title: Influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through social media in South Africa.**

**Degree Purpose: Masters**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for one year.

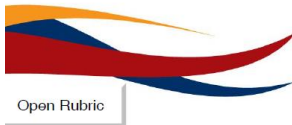
The *low-risk application* was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review

Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the



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confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**19 January 2025**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

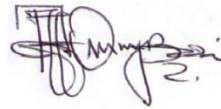
*Note:*

*The reference number **67847382\_CREC\_CHS\_2024** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature: 

Prof. KB Khan  
CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson  
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za  
Tel: (012) 429 8210



Signature: PP

Prof ZZ Nkosi  
Executive Dean: CHS  
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## APPENDIX C: NHC SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Social media platform	Social media links
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NationalHeritageCouncil/">https://www.facebook.com/NationalHeritageCouncil/</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/nationalheritagecouncil/?hl=en">https://www.instagram.com/nationalheritagecouncil/?hl=en</a>
Tiktok	<a href="https://www.tiktok.com/@national.heritage">https://www.tiktok.com/@national.heritage</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://x.com/nhcsouthafrica">https://x.com/nhcsouthafrica</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClIGG8ufwEKZm_rAUHAICLA/featured">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClIGG8ufwEKZm_rAUHAICLA/featured</a>
Website link	<a href="https://www.nhc.org.za/">https://www.nhc.org.za/</a>

## APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER



### PERMISSION LETTER

#### Request for permission to conduct research at the National Heritage Council (NHC)

Research title: "Influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through Social Media in South Africa"

Researcher: Kedibone Sarah Mojapelo

Reference number: **67847382\_CREC\_CHS\_2024**

18 September 2023

Dr Thabo Manetsi  
353 Festival St, Hatfield,  
Pretoria, 0040  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
012 748 3901

[t.manetsi@nhc.org.za](mailto:t.manetsi@nhc.org.za)

Dear Dr Manetsi,

I, Kedibone Sarah Mojapelo am doing research with Dr Makutla Mojapelo, a lecturer in the Department of Information Science towards a MA (Masters) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through Social Media in South Africa.

The aim of the study is to explore the impact of public programming initiatives in promoting the heritage archives through social media with the view of ensuring awareness and usage.

Your company has been selected because of the role it plays nationally towards making heritage known to the public. Given the unawareness of heritage in the youth of today, the study therefore seeks to explore the impact made by the organisation's public programming activities towards ensuring awareness of the heritage of South Africa using social media as a tool for communication.

The study will entail an interpretive in-depth case study research which will include standardized semi-structured interviews, and a document analysis for data collection. In-depth interviews will assist by providing different views and opinions to the same questions from different participants, which will allow for comparison in an orderly manner. Meanwhile, document analysis will be used to supplement the information obtained from the documents such as the organisational annual reports and quarterly reports, policies, strategic plan, and annual

A purposive sampling method, wherein the researcher will deliberately select the elements she wants to include in the sample using predetermined characteristics will be used. The population sample identified for this study are the heritage managers responsible for making heritage known to the public, the executive core business personal assistant, the General Secretary of the

institution, the office of the CEO's personal assistant, the funding manager, Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) manager and funding juniors, executive core general manager, living heritage unit manager and juniors, research specialist, the organisation's executive strategy planning and implementation manager, Resistance Liberation and Heritage Route (RLHR) manager, World Heritage Specialist (WHS), as well as the Communications and Marketing Unit. The study is about awareness and usage of heritage archives at the NHC using social media, which makes the selected population a relevant sample for this study.

The benefits of this study includes: an addition to the body of knowledge by providing the findings on the impact made by public programming initiatives established by the NHC towards ensuring heritage awareness through social media. The study will assist the NHC assess the effectiveness of their public programming initiatives in making heritage known to the public of South Africa; the NHC will be able to realise its strength and weaknesses by assessing the effectiveness of its public programming initiatives, therefore allowing a room for strategising enough to overcome their weaknesses for them to achieve their mandate. A Framework to guide the public programming initiatives on social media will also be established. Although the framework will be developed specifically for the NHC, other organisations may also make use of it depending in their needs and services.

Potential risks that may be faced includes fear of lack of anonymity by staff members. Also, considering how small the NHC is, the research participants may fear to go deeper into details during an interview especially because NHC is a small organisation by measure of personnel.

Feedback procedure will entail the outcomes of the research study. The researcher will share a copy of the dissertation with the NHC.

Yours sincerely

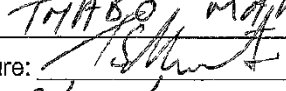


**Kedibone Sarah Mojapelo**

Research Intern

Approved by:

Name: TMABO MAWETSU

Signature: 

Date: 09/04/2024



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## APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S LETTER

**LETITIA GREENBERG**  
**LANGUAGE SPECIALIST**

Cellphone: 084 077 1580  
Email: [lgletitia@gmail.com](mailto:lgletitia@gmail.com)

31 Aland Road  
Valhalla  
0185

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24 March 2025

To whom it may concern

With this letter, I confirm that I have language edited the dissertation titled *Influence of public programming initiatives in promoting living heritage archives through social media in South Africa* by Kedibone Sarah Mojapelo.

With a relevant degree and honours degree, I am fully qualified to undertake such proofreading.

Yours faithfully



Letitia Greenberg