Globalisation Perspective of Libraries as Curators of Oral Tradition and Storytelling Activities

Oluwayemi IbukunOluwa Odularu*[a], Enongene Mirabeau Sone[b], & Mandisa Eunice Puzi[a]

* Corresponding author:
Email: oodularu@wsu.ac.za
a. Department of Social Science, Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Law, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.
b. Department of Arts, Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Law, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

In today's increasingly globalised world, libraries have emerged as crucial institutions for preserving and promoting oral traditions and storytelling activities. This paper explores the globalisation perspective of libraries as curators of oral tradition and storytelling activities. The methodology adopted for this study was a systematic method, using relevant literature through a highly rigorous and systematic process. The systematic review of oral tradition in libraries highlighted that libraries had embraced the digital age and utilised technological advancements to digitise and archive oral traditions, making them accessible to a broader audience. Despite the growing significance of libraries as curators of oral tradition and storytelling activities, there is inadequate research and empirical evidence on the globalisation perspective of libraries regarding this. Consequently, this research gap hinders the development of strategies and frameworks that can effectively harness the globalisation potential of libraries as curators of oral tradition and storytelling activities. The linguistic model for this review was chosen to demonstrate how traditional oral forms convey perception and experience. Libraries, as curators of oral tradition and storytelling activities, contribute to preserving cultural heritage, enriching knowledge, and promoting cross-cultural understanding in an interconnected world. These will contribute to preserving, promoting, and sharing worldwide oral traditions, thereby deepening cross-cultural understanding and facilitating meaningful cultural exchange. Future research should explore using digital technologies and online platforms to reach global audiences and effectively bridge cultural divides.

KEYWORDS

Africa; culture; globalisation; library; oral tradition; storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Smith (2022) opined that oral traditions possess a distinct historical essence due to their "unwritten" nature, designed for oral transmission and reliant on the memory of successive generations (Yow, 2014). According to Ong and Hartley (2013), oral tradition embodies a culture's beliefs, legends, and practices transmitted verbally. Despite the rise of printing, it endures through elders passing down traditional values in global communities. Woodhouse (2019) states that contemporary African writers have effectively preserved oral tradition's core aspects, reflecting a unique cultural identity, even in modern civilisation and globalisation (De Ramírez, 2015). Oral tradition can be viewed as a dynamic tradition sustained by collective memory, developed, and embraced by societies for specific purposes (Peterson, 2016; Tuwe, 2016). Scholars have traditionally examined oral tradition with an academic lens, archiving their research findings to support education, organisation, research, and Management of these unwritten sources, primarily due to their intrinsic value (Layman, 2019). However, an oral tradition preserves historical records and remains dominant in transferring knowledge and human communication in the twenty-first century (Tuwe, 2016). In support of the essential value of oral tradition, libraries are crucial in bridging the gaps and serve as establishments for making significant contributions (Hoopes, 2014). Additionally, libraries conceptualise information as a purpose-centred phenomenon that must be inter-connected, disseminated, and circulated, contributing significantly to society. Also, libraries utilise the mechanisms of traditional, orally inclined networks for knowledge acquisition for the benefit of all (Edosomwan & Peterson, 2016).

Civallero (2017) opines that traditional knowledge is one of the main constituents of information vital in developing community networks and structures. Its impact on designing adaptation, transformation, and conservation strategies for developing beliefs, values, and behaviours cannot be overemphasised. Such forms of traditional knowledge convey their sense of belonging, allowing them to build a formidable team together (Hirst, 2010). Generally, the conventional understanding of a community is preserved and transferred via their language, norms, artwork, body adornments, fabrics, sculptures, photographs, printed documents, journals, books, magazines, etc. The oral tradition of a specific community consists of spoken knowledge (Cocq, 2013). According to Woodhouse (2019), oral tradition is grammatically complex, vast, dynamic, reasonably unstructured, unstable, and relatively fragile, which could also be confusing and puzzling occasionally, even for the users of the same. In an oral tradition, the noticeable and the invisible, the subjective and the objective could be so closely blended that they cannot be differentiated occasionally. Even though some pieces of information constituting oral tradition are rigidified, they are flexible and prone to changes by undergoing amendments at different levels (Krogh, Nonaka, & Rechsteiner, 2012). Such changes usually come naturally, based on the needs of specific social communities, which evolve due to circumstances and eventualities. According to Edosomwan and Peterson (2016), oral tradition is transmitted in two ways, namely: horizontally, for instance, amongst members belonging to

the same generation, and vertically from age to age, thereby strengthening ties among peers and reinforcing community structures. It also enhances education, socialisation, and cultural promotion (Samuelson et al., 2018). The delivery of oral tradition can be through singing or storytelling, theatre, or dance, or can be transferred through formal or informal means (Mahuika, 2019). Oral tradition has a strong presence in modern urban communities, particularly among minority or disadvantaged social groups who have not been able to translate their memories and viewpoints into writing. Oral tradition is also the custodian of knowledge unique to the places they are found (Giordano, 2013). It has been observed that in certain situations, oral tradition serves as the last refuge of information, which, unfortunately, is fast disappearing or subsumed in other equally endangered languages. The West African oral tradition includes numerous folktales (Macdonald, 2013), utilised in communicating their history and teaching morals and values, especially to young people. Many traditional folktales were diffused to the Americas by West Africans, who were sold into slavery around the 1500s. These folktales were orally diffused by the enslaved Africans and their descendants (Railton, 2015).

Consequently, the folktales were wholly adopted and became part of the Culture of North and South America and the West Indies. While looking for the future, current historical challenges are essential for library and historical globalisation (Seroto, 2011). The investigation in present-day Africa and the pace of civilisation and political evolution is changing the means of preservation by libraries and older traditions that were formerly orally transmitted, and the influence of independence in most African communities has fast-tracked the process (Frey & Bends, 2017). Therefore, the objective is to synthesise the global perspective of libraries as curators of oral tradition and storytelling activities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The linguistic model has influenced oral tradition, where the language analogy illustrates the dual nature of functionality and aesthetics in oral tradition, emphasising their interconnectedness in shaping group perceptions and experiences (Thompson, 2017). The Prague school introduced modifications to the linguistic model, accentuating the functional aspect of its structure. Parry's system is also crucial as it aids in perceiving form as a framework. This generative and formal model underscores the inseparability of the functional structure and its role in facilitating structural conception. This comprehensive structuralist approach gained prominence by shifting focus from seeking isolated content to exploring the inherent structural properties that moulded the content (Macdonald, 2013). Parole then represents individual performances, encompassing works like the Iliad and the Odyssey within Homeric verse (Gordon, 2004; Elmer, 2015). According to Thompson (2017), the capabilities of the linguistic model are perfectly in line with the Globalisation Perspective of Libraries as Curators of Oral Tradition and Storytelling Activities. This model can substantially contribute to promoting and preserving storytelling practises and oral traditions in a globalised society. The approach can

help libraries digitise and archive oral histories, myths, legends, and folklore from various cultures so that a wider audience can easily access these priceless narratives. Because of its natural language processing skills, it can efficiently catalogue and index materials, preserving them for future generations. Additionally, the model can benefit libraries by providing expertise in cross-cultural communication, supporting the curation of multicultural storytelling efforts, and hosting and promoting storytelling events and seminars. Due to its extensive linguistic competence, it can provide translation and interpretation services, overcoming linguistic boundaries and advancing various cultural narratives. The linguistic model can be a potent tool in enhancing libraries' capabilities, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and enriching world culture through the preservation and promotion of oral traditions and storytelling activities as libraries continue to develop into digital hubs of cultural exchange.

METHODOLOGY

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) encompassing a rigorous and structured approach to identifying, analysing, and synthesising existing research on the specific concept of this study was adopted. Through this process, we were able to significantly appraise relevant studies relating to libraries, oral tradition and storytelling without losing sight of the curation processes. Hence able to gather a comprehensive summary of the available evidence. We carefully consider relevant search terms, globalisation, libraries, oral tradition, curation, and storytelling while also capturing synonyms and related terms for comprehensiveness. In addition, we employed Boolean operators (AND, OR) to assist in logically combining the search terms.

The materials were searched from credible academic databases that included Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, ProQuest and Google Scholar. These databases were chosen because they covered the relevant search terms used in this review article. The inclusion/exclusion criteria ensured that the selected studies met specific quality and relevant standards, providing information about which studies are considered for inclusion and which studies are excluded from the review. The Inclusion criteria comprise relevance to the research problem, the publication type, citation index and the outcome measures. This ensures the selection of articles that are directly related to the research problem in achieving the objectives of the study with the scope properly delineated. In terms of exclusion, databases with irrelevant materials based on content, publication status, citation index and outcome measures were excluded. Such that studies that do not directly address the research objective or the study title were excluded thus we were able to ensure that the review remains focused on the intended subject. Studies that did not undergo peer review processes or were not published in reputable sources were not considered. This helps minimise bias and ensures that the studies selected for inclusion are the most relevant and of sufficient quality to address the research question.

Studies conducted on the role of libraries in curating oral traditions and storytelling activities that were published in peer-reviewed journals, books, and conference proceedings, and research conducted in various geographical regions formed the basis of the review to

capture divergent views. To mitigate publication bias, the authors expunged grey literature sources and transparently disclosed any limitations associated with publication bias within the review. For data extraction, a systematic approach was employed to collect crucial information from each of the studies that were included. This encompassed capturing study characteristics (e.g., author, publication year, methodology), key findings, and themes relevant to the subject matter. In the data synthesis phase, a thematic analysis was conducted to discern recurring themes and patterns across the included studies. The analysis extracted and synthesised related literature captions in themes to allow reviewed material to be properly aligned and situated within existing studies with appropriate inferences made.

This systematic review methodology ensures a comprehensive and transparent approach to investigating the global perception of the role of libraries in curating storytelling and oral tradition activities. It allows for the systematic identification and synthesis of existing research, helping to advance our understanding of this critical topic while minimising bias and ensuring the reliability of the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Oral tradition resembles oral history archives, similar to the collections we house, but without the need for recording (Ritchie, 2014). Furthermore, oral traditions encompass knowledge spanning generations, not just limited to an individual's personal history, as with oral histories (Barber, 2018). Often regarded as both a socio-political and cultural-religious obligation, oral tradition has led specific communities, lacking formal resources or harbouring mistrust for institutional archives, to turn (or return) to preserving their histories through storytellers who bridge generations, circumventing the need for organised repositories and materials (Lebaka, 2019). This approach empowers community members to dictate what and how history is preserved, aligning with the ethos of community-driven archives (Eve, 2014). Libraries, aligned with their mission, engage in data collection and documentation to illuminate the identity of the societies they serve. This involves identifying core traditions and key figures within the community, conducting oral tradition interviews, and documenting and sharing these interviews for researcher accessibility - activities integral to the library's role (Finnegan, 2012). Additionally, libraries hold a unique position, capable of storing recorded information to meet user needs, contributing to knowledge dissemination across diverse fields and employing innovative methods (Eve, 2014). Globally, libraries serve varied purposes, from fostering early reading to aiding research and Internet access, fundamentally serving as gateways to knowledge (Finnegan, 2012; Omotayo, 2015).

Within the library, there are dedicated segments focused on conserving and furnishing users with materials regarding oral tradition documentation and interviews, effectively addressing the informational requirements of library patrons. Among the tasks undertaken in the library domain is identifying essential cultural, oral tradition, and political facets of a society. Abadi (2006) notes that a pivotal and historic institution for housing records of oral tradition is

Columbia University, established by Alen Noise. Consequently, the library serves as an institution that preserves knowledge acquired over centuries, which should be freely accessible to all users. According to Ellington (2014), a library is a place that is organised by information professionals or other experts designated for collecting resources in diverse formats and providing timely intellectual, physical, bibliographic or digital access and providing exceptional programmes and services to inform, entertain or educating diverse audiences to advance society and ensure the stimulation of individual learning in general. White (2012) notes that it would be practically impossible to advance human knowledge and academic research and preserve heritage for future generations without libraries.

Furthermore, libraries promote access to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, essential for promoting informal education in which most societies succeed (Chibuzor and Ngozi, 2009). Oral history collections in libraries are aided by cooperation from organisations and local data generation establishments for the sharing, cost reduction, and expansion of audiences, among other benefits (Kargbo, 2008). An interview is a crucial sector in oral history, and an interviewer or narrator is closely related to the interview process. Thus, the interviewer plays a significant role as an active listener, enabling the respondent (i.e., the narrator) to explain his attitudes and approaches. From the foregoing, librarians are required to possess adequate skills and technological knowledge, as well as the needed competencies in conducting the role of interviewers (Barry & Tedd, 2008). Additionally, librarians must protect the privacy of interviews and associated risks relating to misuse and manipulation in the supervision of interviews.

Libraries As Curators of Oral Tradition and Storytelling Activities

Civallero (2017) emphasises that libraries play a pivotal role in bridging researchers and communities of practice by providing physical spaces for gatherings and as institutions that contribute essential expertise, techniques, contents, strategies, services, and activities. Libraries worldwide have historically demonstrated thoughtful leadership in organising human knowledge (Barry & Tedd, 2008), functioning as repositories of materials and tools vital for societal knowledge needs (Conway, 2010). Their mission entails integrating into and supporting the community, responding adeptly to users' queries, sometimes acting as guiding beacons and other times as shelters. Libraries facilitate access to strategic information, promote literacy, broaden understanding, and bridge geographical gaps, serving as archives for humanity's cultural heritage (Ong, 2002). Morgan (2008) points out that traditional and oral knowledge is often overlooked in library collections and services despite their importance for human groups. International recommendations emphasising cultural diversity and intangible heritage encourage the use of oral tradition for preserving and disseminating cultural expressions and languages. Libraries, leveraging their experience as information managers, have the potential to contribute significantly to the preservation and promotion of oral tradition (Millar, 2017). However, the role of libraries as curators of oral tradition goes beyond mere collection and

storage; their purpose is to elevate and optimise these resources. The creation, acquisition, and transmission of traditional knowledge represent an ongoing, dynamic process that necessitates a comprehensive understanding. Therefore, LIS professionals must gain insight into oral tradition's nature, functions, significance, flaws, biases, problems, and risks (Morgan, 2008). To successfully preserve oral tradition, librarians may need to reframe concepts and techniques from an interdisciplinary perspective (Civallero, 2007). Once established, libraries can effectively organise, promote, and disseminate oral tradition, considering specific formats, channels, contents, actors, and spaces (Conway, 2010). Libraries can breathe life into memory and knowledge encoded orally, enriching their collections and enhancing their role as community memory archives, fostering communication bonds (Millar, 2017). This inclusion acknowledges marginalised sectors like indigenous peoples, challenging stereotypes and nurturing exchange and recognition (Scalise, 2017). Libraries can identify 'living books' or expert practitioners of oral tradition and support them, inform users about the preserved tradition's value and potential applications, and create spaces for teaching and exchange (Civallero, 2007).

Libraries serve as storytellers, preserving cultural heritage, religion, and customs essential for all societies (Robin, 2016). Oral storytelling fulfils varied human needs, such as recalling history, explaining environments, honouring beliefs, and preserving ancestral memories (Ernst, 2012). Libraries safeguard community elements like poetry, dance, and history that could have faded away (Leeming, 2018). They curate vast collections of oral tradition, encompassing recorded memories in various formats (Osunride & Adetunla, 2017). Lowenstein (2006) adds to this assertion, mentioning a collection of speeches, talks, and folklore recordings preserved in the library, further highlighting libraries' role in preserving diverse forms of oral tradition (Robin, 2016).

Libraries are essential repositories of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, facilitating informal education and promoting access to knowledge (Omotayo, 2015). They play a crucial role in collecting, preserving, and disseminating oral tradition materials, contributing to developing community networks and structures. The engagement of libraries with oral tradition involves identifying cultural, oral, and political aspects of society and conducting interviews to document and make this material accessible to researchers. Librarians must possess requisite skills and competencies, recognising storytelling's value since the early 20th century. In the 21st century, libraries' physical form appears less crucial than their purpose in information provision. Technological advancements sometimes bypass librarians as intermediaries, as certain categorisation aspects can now occur without their intervention. Cloud computing grants shared resource access, raising concerns about data ownership and security (Bansode & Pujar, 2012). While this technology has pros and cons, the challenge lies in balancing barriers and benefits to advance research, preserve knowledge, and safeguard cumulative heritage (White, 2012). Storytelling is essential, encompassing tangible and intangible elements such as oral traditions, cultural heritage, and self-identity, contributing to informal education (White, 2012). Libraries offer access to tangible and intangible heritage, the attributes inherited from past

generations (Chibuzor & Ngozi, 2009). As defined by Ruggles and Silverman (2009), intangible cultural heritage encompasses oral traditions embodied in people. For example, African writers draw from oral tradition to recapture cultural heritage in their works (Kalu & Ukam, 2019). African literature's storytelling tradition, particularly folktales, offers insights into societies' Cultures, beliefs, and development (Kalu & Ukam, 2019). Oral traditions encompass more than stories, including traditional knowledge, wisdom, values, worldviews, personal narratives, and histories (Maffi, 2014). They foster cultural expression, transmission, and survival, shaping the African personality's continuity and consciousness (Osuagwu & Ganyi, 2019). Libraries play a vital role in preserving and promoting oral tradition, bridging historical gaps and shaping curriculum development (Scalise, 2017).

Oral tradition's global significance is underscored by institutions that preserve and study it (Primadesi, 2009). Indigenous peoples and communities worldwide hold onto their oral traditions, maintaining identities and connections with the land (Maffi, 2014). The oral tradition records historical presence, Culture, spirituality, and sacred sites (Maffi, 2014). In oral traditions, African philosophy influences cosmology, religion, and relationships (Osuagwu & Ganyi, 2019). Libraries curate oral traditions, maintaining cultural wealth (Turner, 2010). Folklore, like Zulu oral traditions, intertwines with written records (Dundes, 1965). Folklore forms, such as folktales, convey cultural traditions, often performed by experts like grandmothers (Finnegan, 1970). Praise songs, seen among the Tswana people, transmit societal ideals and historical records (Okafor, 2004). These songs celebrate achievements, encourage emulation, and convey messages, playing a crucial role in preserving cultural history and values. The Malawian National Archives have diverse collections of oral traditions, which are threefold: The first is for bridging the information gap between government and non-government institutions through planned interviews with interviewees in the rural communities as sound records. These recorded interviews are purposed for research preservation uses. Second, it enriches the National Archives with oral information about the colonial era's disgruntled, dispossessed, underprivileged citizens (Edwards, 2020). Third, the collection of oral traditions serves as a panacea for correcting biased information domiciled in government and non-government records in the colonial era regarding the history and Culture of the native people. However, it can be debated whether oral tradition collections relieve communities from the ugly decolonising histories with balanced perceptions (Maffi, 2014). Throughout Africa's historical development, West Africans from diverse areas were recruited to work on sugar plantations in the New World. The "Slave Coast," which comprised Benin and Nigeria; "West-Central Africa," which included Zaire, Congo, and Angola, and the "Gold Coast," which is now Ghana, were notable transhipment areas in the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Nunn, 2008).

In 1979, Zambia commenced her oral history project in the Library of the University of Zambia as a unique collection, as it got approval from the institution's Research Grants Committee and received funding in 1987 to collaborate with developing countries to advance research. The funding received from SAREC was dedicated to purchasing projectors,

headphones, recorders, tapes and microphones for compiling bibliographies of projects on oral history projects. Consequently, two volumes of taped bibliographies and transcribed materials collated from oral traditions were published accordingly. The project team was comprised of experienced foreigners who conducted oral interviews. Hence, the oral history project enabled the retrieval of lost documentation of oral traditions (Bolhassan, 2018).

The Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, is actively engaged in the collection of oral tradition records, with large volumes on Ifa divination, as well as oral collections of relegated communities of the old Oyo Empire, situated in the Upper Ogun Valley, the Benue valley, as well as the Idoma, Igala, Jukun Tiv, and the Aro Ibo communities, which were made before the Nigerian Civil War, broke out. There are also extensive collections of oral traditions from the Niger Delta of the Ijaw people, transcribed by students and non-students. Many documented materials include traditional literature, hunting horn calls, praise, and funeral songs (Traore, 2010).

According to Mosweu (2011), the Oral Traditions Association of Botswana (OTABO) was established in 1982 and affiliated with the National Archives of Botswana, which has its headquarters in Gaborone, with the following mission objectives: First, for the monitoring, organising, and coordination of oral tradition activities in Botswana. Secondly, to promote measures geared toward the defence, protection, and preservation against all inhibitions militating against the practice of oral traditions in Botswana and to ensure the development of all aspects of the preservation and administration of oral traditions. Thirdly, for establishing, strengthening, and maintaining relations between all stakeholders involved in the practice, promotion study, dissemination, and practice of oral traditions in Botswana. Fourthly, to facilitate meaningful utilisation of oral traditions in Botswana by encouraging greater ease of access to research findings and making them more widely known. Lastly, OTABO was mandated to proffer professional guidance and advice to researchers by providing research and relevant information.

Curtin et al. (1978) discussed the Sanga people of the Congo, who noted their extraordinary skill in working with metals like iron and copper. These groups founded caste and guild systems, and their adept potters produced vessels. Famous craftspeople appeared, indicating that increased food production allowed for specialisation. Barry (1999) emphasised both males with boat-building skills and women committed to farming, fishing, and home construction (Diagne, 2017). The ability of Africans to recite the Koran, a distinction noted by Illife (2009) that emphasised the disparity between Islam and indigenous beliefs, was cited by Finnegan (2012) as evidence of the vitality of African oral cultures (Brenner & Last, 1985). Schmidt (2009) discussed the depth of African oratory, debate, poetry, and discussion, which are unrestricted by written materials, with traders in awe of Africans' memory prowess. Despite the lack of written forms, the conveyance of messages via drum calls or natural items has survived transatlantic voyages and is currently documented (Illife, 2009). While West Africans' access to literacy was limited, this cannot be said of their orality (Illife, 2009) or their

inventiveness in epic traditions (Belcher, 1999), emphasising the importance of orality in transmitting cultural history. Even if Belcher (1999) questioned their worth and legitimacy as historians, recent African historiography has emphasised the significance of African Culture in transmitting history and tradition. He warned against idealising all of them, even while he acknowledged the diplomatic responsibilities some of them played (Maffi, 2014).

Nevertheless, they became significant keepers of African customs and Culture. The continent of Africa was civilised during the slave trade, with theological, educational, social, cultural, and political systems. Despite certain inaccurate depictions of enslaved Africans, oral Culture predominated even when writing was introduced into the educational system.

Oral Culture and storytelling

According to Wilson (2015), before the advent of writing, early human societies transferred stored and oral information through listening and speaking, which is very different from today's digital and print Culture (Beamish & Beamish, 2015). According to Lamberti (2012), the legendary communications academic Marshall McLuhan conceptualised the changes in communication modes, from orality to literacy, culminating in resultant changes in the formation of societal beliefs and values. The transmission of information defines the very essence of human existence. In an oral culture, information exchange involves at least two people, namely the speaker and listener, and is customarily a communal experience (Van Styvendale, 2013). The speaker uses a repertoire of verbal and nonverbal tools that include gestures, intonation, and facial expressions when communicating with the listeners.

In contrast, the listeners passionately react to what is being told, and information exists only when spoken in oral societies without any permanent record. Hence, when someone recalls and repeats information, that information is subject to change. Oral stories are variable, depending on the audience and the storyteller, as well as the expression of ideas, which makes every storytelling somewhat different. Storytelling approaches have significantly metamorphosed from oral to written cultures, and present-day storytellers use language and sometimes modern technology when telling stories responsive to cultural underpinnings (Thas, 2015).

Furthermore, the incorporation of storytelling has permeated academia across diverse fields, including the utilisation of oral history as a research methodology (Boyd & Ramírez, 2012). Concerning this, Primadesi (2009) notes that oral tradition is discernible primarily within certain cultural activities held within the community. Unfortunately, this situation has adversely affected the preservation of oral tradition among the Minangkabau people. The dissemination of these traditions has been confined to a limited group of individuals possessing a kinship connection with the custodians of knowledge. Furthermore, the incorporation of storytelling has permeated academia across diverse fields, including the utilisation of oral history as a research methodology (Boyd & Ramírez, 2012). Concerning this, Primadesi (2009) notes that oral tradition is discernible primarily within certain cultural activities held within the community. Unfortunately, this situation has adversely affected the preservation of oral tradition among the

Minangkabau people. The dissemination of these traditions has been confined to a limited group of individuals possessing a kinship connection with the custodians of knowledge. Additionally, the younger generation within Minangkabau society has begun to neglect and forget these oral traditions. The factors contributing to the decline of oral tradition are not solely attributed to metanarrative discourse that undermines the significance of local customs but also to the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, leading to the diminished transfer of oral tradition. Consequently, proactive measures are imperative to safeguard and conserve oral tradition. Preservation extends beyond merely upholding the outward structure of oral tradition within the community; it entails safeguarding the intrinsic values embedded within these oral expressions (Maffi, 2014).

Story programming has been the foundation of library initiatives for children because when children cultivate a penchant for stories, they enjoy reading and develop a love for books. Oral stories build imagination and inspire visualisation, as children actively build images in reaction to heard tales. Although traditionally linked with children, storytelling in libraries has changed tremendously. Since the 1980s, libraries have held storytelling festivals, conferences, workshops, and academic presentations by accomplished storytellers. In addition, libraries have figuratively opened their doors to adult storytellers. As a result, libraries have made their physical and virtual doors open for teens and adults to share their stories. Thus, libraries offer a venue for sharing digital storytelling through social collective memory. The histories, cultural legacies, traditions, values, hopes, and anxieties of communities can, therefore, be successfully collected and shared using digital technology.

Additionally, by gathering individual community stories as part of recordkeeping, community-based projects profit from job opportunities in oral history and tradition (Koya & Chowdhury, 2020). This is especially important for projects that aim to serve as historical archives for local history because the accuracy of the collected stories is crucial to the project's overall integrity, solidifying the case for using oral history methods to compile local histories of libraries. A language's viability depends on its functional integration into native speakers' daily lives and usage by a large enough population to include writing. Such a language can have a variety of functions, from acting as a means of communication between different social groups—such as the clergy and the laity or the elderly and the young—to acting as a sacred conduit for the transmission of enduring cultural truths, as is the case with Hausa in West Africa.

Additionally, it can better convey the subtleties of the local setting than an outside language. This idea serves as the foundation for Terralingua, a multidisciplinary organisation that is primarily an online association connected to the University of California (Maffi, 2012). This association of linguists, biologists, anthropologists, and geographers, which operates through conferences, workshops, and sporadic paper posts on their website, maintains that preserving regional languages is linked to biological variety. Their viewpoint suggests linguistic diversity promotes ecological diversity and may even result in a healthier planet (Koya & Chowdhury, 2020). Hawaii, the 50th state in the union, is a notable example of successful

language preservation. Concerns about the spread of Western materialism, the increase in visitors, and the dominance of the English language have sparked action among numerous organisations on the island. While some people fight for independence, others for autonomy, and others for restitution for past wrongs, a determined effort to preserve the Hawaiian language has evolved. Hawaiian was a widely spoken language among the native population and had a thriving publishing industry. However, the usage of Hawaiian decreased as a result of English becoming the predominant language of instruction in schools, with fewer newspapers and books being published. In 1985, fewer than 25,000 people could speak it, though more could. To address this issue, a group of concerned graduate students established a preschool immersion programme to teach Hawaiian to young children (Koya & Chowdhury, 2020). The project soon expanded to offer courses at all levels with the help of a technology team that enabled online instruction, collaboration, and communication. Hawaiian is a creative method in computer systems, software, and academic translations. While remaining the main subject. This paradigm underscores how the Internet and technology can bolster a progressive yet traditional educational endeavour. While recognising the potential influence of the Internet on local language and Culture, it is essential to acknowledge the dynamic nature of language, Culture, and storytelling. As English may presently predominate, the space for other languages to flourish remains, and while traditions and norms evolve, they remain a resilient force (Koya & Chowdhury, 2020). Among the Tswana people in Southern Africa, praise songs play a pivotal role in instilling societal ideals, particularly valour, as emphasised by Okafor (2004). These poetic compositions celebrate exceptional achievements, simultaneously serving as repositories of historical records. Praise songs are equally adept at focusing on one's lineage or ancestry, meticulously chronicling the feats accomplished by ancestors and inspiring subsequent generations to strive for comparable accomplishments. In essence, praise songs within the Tswana community serve as a dynamic medium for preserving and transmitting cultural values.

Practical considerations after recording oral traditions

According to Woodhouse (2019), libraries face the challenge of preserving and archiving collected oral stories. In the past, transcribing oral traditions was a time-consuming and costly process. However, with digital technology advancements, libraries can now reproduce the oral nature of stories by making them available online in video or audio formats. Duplicate recordings are noted, working copies are used, and original copies are preserved (Ezeigbo, 2013). The organisation of these recordings should be done chronologically, and decisions need to be made regarding transcriptions to clarify any inaccuracies in the digital recordings or enhance the information in the stories. The topics discussed in the stories should also be summarised, including any noteworthy events. Libraries can store the oral history collections with the interviewees' consent or archive them and make them accessible to the public (Leavy, 2011).

The significance of oral traditions in South African cultures, where a large portion of the population is uneducated, cannot be overstated (Thompson, 2002). As service-based public

institutions, libraries serve as preservers of spoken and written words. They play a vital role in collecting, preserving, and storing indigenous knowledge, which includes folklore and oral literature, for the benefit of the general public. Including information and communication technologies (ICTs) in oral recordkeeping has made it easier for librarians to gather and preserve oral traditions (Kargbo, 2008). The digital realm of the Internet offers a versatile platform encompassing diverse facets of oral tradition, including language preservation, oral history, storytelling, poetry, and emerging forms like digital radio and webcasts. Each domain hosts repositories, databases, and interactive events, serving as hubs for associations to flourish and disseminate information among their members.

Moreover, the Internet catalyses unanticipated collaborations, uniting groups that might not have intersected previously (Coleman, 2015). These collaborations can unfold in virtual or physical spaces, spanning specific projects or events. Under its connectivity and capacity to nurture cooperation, the Internet effectively diminishes the isolation that individuals engaged in global oral history, storytelling, and poetry initiatives might otherwise encounter (Thompson, 2017).

It would be disheartening to see oral traditions disappear without preservation, as they are integral to a society's heritage (Musandu, 2022). They represent accumulated knowledge over the years, serving as a bridge that connects different generations. Therefore, libraries should preserve oral traditions as the foundation of modern knowledge. Libraries link tradition and modernity, enabling historians, scholars, archivists, writers, scientists, artists, and others to contribute to future development and take responsibility for their community's daily existence (Sommer & Quinlan, 2018). Librarians play a crucial role in selecting and acquiring transcripts and oral recordings. They develop directories to facilitate access to these essential documents and process and organise oral traditions, just as they do for printed materials (McKemmish, 2017). Librarians are responsible for servicing and disseminating recordings of oral traditions in various formats to ensure the continuous preservation of Culture. They can collaborate with other agencies or independently engage in oral tradition initiatives to advance historical information and fulfil their roles as custodians and transmitters of Culture (MacKay, 2015).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This review article underscores the pivotal role of libraries in preserving and disseminating oral traditions, ensuring that the gap between past and present is bridged, and fostering a connection between communities and their cultural heritage. The reviewed literature in this study provided some crucial insights in terms of key findings with strategic implications of the role of libraries in preserving oral tradition and storytelling. The literature affirmed that the preservation and transmission of oral traditions are essential in maintaining cultural continuity, embodying knowledge and values transmitted across generations (Barber, 2018; Lebaka, 2019). Libraries serve as critical institutions in preserving these traditions, facilitating their transition from oral to recorded formats, thereby ensuring their longevity and accessibility for future

generations (Eve, 2014; Finnegan, 2012). The literature highlights the empowerment of communities in preserving their histories through storytelling, which aligns with the ethos of community-driven archives (Eve, 2014). This approach allows communities to have control over what aspects of their history are preserved and how they are represented, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage. Libraries are not merely repositories of information but also play a curatorial role in organising, promoting, and disseminating oral traditions (Civallero, 2017; Millar, 2017). They act as educational resources, providing access to cultural and historical knowledge that forms the backbone of many communities' identities. This role is crucial in promoting understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and traditions within and across communities. The review suggests that oral traditions are invaluable for academic research and curriculum development, offering rich insights into cultures, beliefs, and societal structures (Scalise, 2017). Libraries facilitate this integration by making oral histories and traditions accessible to researchers, educators, and students, thereby enriching academic discourse and knowledge production. Furthermore, advancements in technology have transformed how oral traditions are preserved and accessed, with digital formats offering new possibilities for documentation and dissemination (Bansode & Pujar, 2012; White, 2012). Although, challenges related to data ownership, security, and the digital divide are also presented by this shift, necessitating a balance between leveraging technology and maintaining the integrity and accessibility of oral traditions. The promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity is further underscored in this study. The review emphasises the significance of oral traditions in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, contributing to the preservation of languages and practices at risk of disappearing (Maffi, 2014; Koya & Chowdhury, 2020). Libraries play a pivotal role in these efforts, serving as platforms for the expression and celebration of diverse cultural identities. The potential for libraries to facilitate collaborations at both global and local levels was also highlighted in the literature, connecting communities, researchers, and practitioners engaged in the preservation and study of oral traditions (Coleman, 2015; Thompson, 2017). These collaborations can enhance the sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices, contributing to the global effort to safeguard intangible cultural heritage.

The strategic implications of these findings suggest that libraries must continue to evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the preservation and dissemination of oral traditions. This involves embracing technological advancements, fostering community engagement, supporting academic research, promoting cultural diversity, and participating in global networks dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage. By so doing, libraries can ensure that oral traditions continue to enrich and inform future generations, bridging the past, present, and future in a continuous flow of knowledge and cultural expression.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The practice of oral history involves the documentation and preservation of individuals' recollections, emotions, and viewpoints. Recording, archiving, and leveraging oral histories

contribute significantly to recognising and enhancing heritage comprehension. Notably, well-crafted interviews made accessible to the public can unearth fresh testimonies, including those from individuals who experienced upbringing in care. Furthermore, established oral histories, such as those recounting the experiences of Italian migrants residing in Wales, can be enriched and elucidated through digital exhibitions and community workshops. The exploration of oral literature has long been a subject of discourse, particularly in Africa, where it has profoundly served the cause of national unity. Before 1965, African writers grappled with whether to focus on the oral traditions of their people or urban life. Nigerian writers, in particular, had not extensively addressed social-political issues until that juncture, and literary works centred on African oral traditions remained relatively scarce (Ritchie, 2014; Barber, 2018; Lebaka, 2019). It has also been noted that Southern and Eastern Africa have made more progress in documenting oral literature than West Africa. While the reasons for this discrepancy are unclear, it may be attributed to urbanisation, the influence of Western education, and higher illiteracy rates in West Africa, where oral tradition holds more significant sway. Additionally, because these programmes don't turn a profit and demand a lot of labour, funding initiatives to preserve oral literature is still a challenge.

It is essential to allocate enough resources to hire qualified library staff with expertise in anthropology, sociology, literature, and history to address these issues. These employees can cooperate on initiatives with domestic and international agencies. Additionally, librarians should see that other parties active in fostering and safeguarding oral traditions deposit copies of their research findings in libraries for the general public. Libraries serve as custodians for storytelling documents and should be valued as essential tools for preserving and disseminating oral traditions. The formal nature of libraries often contrasts with the informal nature of oral traditions, and this disconnect is further exacerbated by urbanisation, migration, religion, and internationalisation, which sometimes disregard anything associated with tradition as outdated. The librarians actively preserve oral traditions for academic, intellectual, and societal development. They should demonstrate their willingness to be an integral part of their communities, maintain contacts, and be familiar with the local languages of the host communities where oral traditions are gathered (Civallero, 2017; Barry & Tedd, 2008; Conway, 2010).

To adopt a global perspective in their role as curators of oral tradition and storytelling, libraries should actively curate and present a diverse array of cultural narratives, form collaborative partnerships with cultural groups and indigenous communities to ensure respectful and authentic representation, utilise digital technology for multimedia preservation of storytelling performances, leverage digital platforms for global accessibility, provide translation and interpretation services for language barriers, develop workshops to foster intercultural awareness, offer cultural sensitivity training for staff, create both virtual and physical exhibits to showcase curated materials, support research to document historical and cultural significance, encourage audience feedback to enhance curation, and ultimately

contribute to the preservation, promotion, and sharing of worldwide oral traditions, thereby deepening cross-cultural understanding and facilitating meaningful cultural exchange.

At an institutional level, African countries should enact laws that require researchers and postgraduate students in higher education institutions to deposit copies of their field research recordings with translations in institutional libraries. Since oral tradition is fundamental to African Culture and history, teaching it should be an essential part of modules in higher education institutions worldwide. Modules on collecting, processing, preserving, and disseminating oral traditions should also be included in the curriculum. These efforts would greatly benefit students who aspire to become research scholars in anthropology, folklore, African history, or sociology.

Future research in this field can explore several areas. One field of inquiry involves examining how digital technologies influence the conservation and distribution of oral traditions and storytelling endeavours within library settings. Another area is examining how libraries can effectively curate and represent diverse oral traditions and storytelling practices from various cultures and regions. Additionally, research can focus on the role of libraries as community hubs for oral traditions and storytelling activities, exploring their potential for fostering community engagement and participation (Ernst, 2012; Leeming, 2018). International collaborations and networks among libraries to facilitate the exchange of oral traditions and storytelling practices across borders are also worth exploring. Furthermore, studies assessing the effect of the efforts of libraries in curating oral traditions and storytelling activities on individuals, communities, and cultural heritage would contribute to advancing knowledge and understanding in this field. These research areas can inform library practices, policies, and strategies to preserve and promote diverse cultural heritages and facilitate intercultural dialogue in a globalised world.

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