

The impact of heritage resources on community livelihood in Namibia: A case for Oshikoto Region

Dr. Aina-Paulina Muulila¹, Dr. Nchindo R. Mbukusa², Prof. R. Kavena Shalyefu³

¹Department of Veterans Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs, Namibia

²Department of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Namibia, Namibia

³Department of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Namibia, Namibia

ABSTRACT :This study explored the impact of heritage resources on community livelihoods in the Oshikoto region, Namibia. The study employed a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for a theoretical lens. A qualitative approach guided by an interpretive phenomenological design provides opportunities for heritage practitioners to share perspectives on the phenomena of heritage resources and community livelihoods. The sample of 20 participants was drawn from a population of 58 heritage practitioners using the purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion, and document analysis. The findings showed that heritage resources positively impact community livelihoods. Through heritage tourism and the creative sector, heritage resources and creative products can generate income and create employment opportunities that contribute to the improved well-being of the local communities. Heritage resources can provide scientific and educational information for teaching, learning, research, and community engagement. The findings suggest that heritage activities can preserve local culture and unite people from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the findings suggested that heritage resources can be applied during counselling, therapy, and healing processes.

KEYWORDS –Heritage resources, heritage values, cultural heritage tourism, community livelihood

I. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of heritage resources and heritage tourism have attracted a wide range of empirical research internationally as an approach to enhancing community livelihoods. Heritage resources are material and immaterial elements found in both rural and urban environments that attract tourists. (Esichaikul and Chansawang, 2021). Namibia has rich heritage resources that can be valorised into tourism products and services to provide the basis for the community's livelihood in urban and rural areas. Heritage resources are inherited cultural, historical, and natural assets valued by people for reasons, and distinguished from other environmental constituents by society's importance beyond their functional use (Bond and Worthing, 2016). They are passed down from generation to generation and manifest as tangible and intangible resources (Diaz-Andreu, 2016). The heritage resources embody different values collectively assigned by the local communities ((Labadi *et al.*, 2021). These values of importance are not static but dynamic and change in time and space. At present, the benefits of heritage resources need to be more researched and better recognized in Namibia (Saarinen and Rogerson, 2015, because hosting communities do not fully benefit from available heritage resources in their locality (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture [MOEAC] and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Tourism [MEFT], 2021). Therefore, Namibia has recognized the need to rethink its current tourism

offering and include heritage products to support the diversification and promotion of the tourism sector (Green, *et al.*, 2018). Based on the knowledge gap mentioned above, this study attempts to unlock the potential of heritage resources and promote community-based heritage tourism in Namibia. Hence, the present study aimed to shed light on the impact of heritage resources on the community livelihoods in the Oshikoto region.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1. Conceptual framework

In this study, the conceptual frameworks are drawn from international and local literature. The frameworks used are based on the concepts of heritage resources and community livelihood.

2.1.1.1. Heritage

Heritage is a broad concept and includes both natural and cultural features. Heritage is the legacy of the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations, including natural and cultural, tangible and intangible resources with meaning or value (ICOMOS, 1999). There is an apparent movement towards a people-centred, functional approach to heritage as the focus shifts along three interconnected axes: from monuments to people, from objects to functions, and consequently from conservation to sustainable use and development (Loulanski, 2006). Today heritage is often understood as a social and cultural process and as a means of meeting contemporary needs. The role of heritage, formerly perceived in the narrow sense as a symbol of national unity and pride, has expanded to include broader phenomena such as contributing to political ideals, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and cultural diversity (Cerisola, 2019).

2.1.1.2. Heritage Values

Heritage values refer to the qualities attributed to heritage resources (Mensah, 2021) and are related to the codification, preservation, management, development, and promotion of heritage (Diaz-Andreu, 2017). These values lie in the benefits of their direct and indirect use and include economic, social, aesthetic, scientific, symbolic, spiritual, and historical values. Heritage values differ from society to society and from level within society and are embedded into the heritage resources (Kosna, 2016). These values compel individuals, groups, and communities to draw meanings and sorts of benefits from heritage resources in the present and pass them on to future generations (Diaz-Andreu, 2017). Based on these values, heritage resources can catalyze sustainable development, bringing environmental, economic, social, and cultural benefits to the local communities (Rakitovac and Urosevic, 2017). The above agreed with the contribution of scholars and organizations listed below, who suggested that heritage resources might have the following values as highlighted by Chandani *et al.* (2018).

Table 1: Summary of heritage values as listed by various scholars and organizations

Lipe 1984	Reigel 1996	English Heritage 1997	Frey 1997	Mason 2002	Tiwari <i>et al</i> 2012	Australia ICOMOS 2013
Economic Aesthetic Associative Symbolic Information	Age Historical Commemorative Use Newness	Cultural Educational and Academic Economic Resources Recreation Aesthetic	Monetary Option Existence Bequest Prestige Education	Historical Cultural Symbolic Social Spiritual/ Religious Aesthetic	Historical Architectural Aesthetic Artistic Socio- religious Ecological	Aesthetic Historical Scientific Social (including spiritual, political, national and other

						cultural)
--	--	--	--	--	--	-----------

Sources: Adopted from Chandani et al. (2018).

From TABLE 1, it can be inferred that heritage resources have assorted values that prompt a notably meaningful recognition and a sense of connection. Heritage values can be understood as the usefulness and positive impacts of such heritage resources on the community.

2.1.3. Heritage Resources in Namibia

Heritage resources are natural and cultural resources created by past activities and events that inform present and future societies about the past. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] convention adopted in 1972 defines natural heritage in three-tier: natural features, geological and physiographical formations, and natural sites. In comparison, Alexandrakis *et al.*, (2019) described cultural heritage as tangible and intangible assets that represent the legacy of physical artworks and intangible attributes of society, inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

The MOEAC and MEFT (2021) National Strategies of Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development and Employment Creation Opportunities at the Community Level recognized various heritage resources in Namibia that can contribute to its socio-economic development. The heritage resources include; wetlands, waterfalls, landscapes, rural environments, sites, festive events, ceremonies, and associated rituals and taboos, clothing, ornaments and ointments, oral traditions and languages, gastronomy, museums, cultural villages and centres, creative activities and traditional crafts, architecture, historic structures and buildings, fauna and flora including those with traditional medicinal significance and indigenous knowledge. Under the 1972 UNESCO Convention, Namibia has two World Heritage Sites, namely Twyfelfontein and Namibia Sand Dune World Heritage Site. For the preservation and proper management of Namibian's heritage resources, the Government of Namibia, through the National Heritage Council of Namibia, has encouraged the public to identify and nominate heritage resources in their area to be inventoried in the National Heritage Register and declared as national heritage sites or objects.

2.1.4. Heritage Tourism

Ezenagu (2020) described heritage tourism as the phenomenon in which the cultural, historical, and ethnic components of a society or place are used as resources to attract tourists. They are visits by individuals outside the host community who are motivated individually or in part by an interest in a community, region, group, or institution's historical, artistic, scientific, lifestyle, or cultural offerings (Li and Hunter, 2014). The Namibian MOEAC and MEFT (2021) informed that heritage tourism values aspects of the culture of a given destination and are closely related to the local community, heritage, history, architecture, traditions, crafts, gastronomy, dance, music, social practices, livelihoods systems and aspects of identity. Hence, heritage tourism provides economic and social benefits to local communities (Ezenagu, 2020). Regarding the above submission, the economic value of heritage tourism includes job creation and income generation. Similarly, the social benefits of heritage tourism include poverty reduction, increased economic opportunity, empowerment of the grassroots poor, empowerment of identity and people, and contribution to sustainable rural development (Sithole, 2017, & Ahebwa *et al.*, 2015).

2.1.5. Community Livelihoods and community development in the Context of heritage tourism

Heritage resources have various attributes that can contribute to the community's livelihoods and community development. Community livelihood is the ability to earn a living and embrace everything that impacts people's lives. It encompasses the skills, capabilities, assets, and activities required by an individual, household, or community to support itself (Ahebwa *et al.*, 2015; Su *et al.*, 2016). Community development and livelihoods often utilize natural, physical, economic, financial, human, cultural, and social assets. Community development is the process that helps grassroots communities transform and sustain their economic, social, cultural, and environmental situations (Sithole, 2017). Elements of community development are; community participation,

local initiatives, leadership, and the use of local resources (Patil, 2013). Through heritage tourism development, heritage resources can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation, a source of income, and a means for community development. In Namibia, heritage tourism has demonstrated its ability to contribute to infrastructures development, employment creation, improves the standards of living and well-being of local people, secure livelihoods and capacity building (Ndlovu and Nyakunu, 2013; Lapeyre, 2016; Saarinen, 2011; Hüncke and Koot, 2012). Heritage tourism improves skills and knowledge transfer, contributing to capacity building and community self-reliance (Green *et al.*, 2018). Although the positive impacts of tourism development on the local community are highlighted, the sector also has perceived negative impacts. The economic dependence of local communities on heritage tourism, price hikes, seasonal jobs, increasing economic inequality, depletion of natural resources, cultural conflicts, the disappearance of local traditions through the adoption of foreign cultures and languages, and the loss of authenticity are some of the recorded negative impacts (Boz and Karakas, 2017). Moreover, the loss of cultural identity of host communities, particularly indigenous peoples, through acculturation and assimilation mainly, over-reliance on tourism, inflation, real estate values, and opportunity costs are some of the adverse tourism impacts observed in Namibia (Asa *et al.*, 2022). Adding to that, the growth of heritage tourism, poor management, and the mass commodification of culture can lead to the deterioration of local heritage (Ndlovu and Nyakunu, 2013). Therefore, finding a balance between the positive and negative impacts is crucial to conducting a thorough analysis and formulating a community-oriented heritage tourism model that allows the involvement of hosting communities as critical players.

2.2. Theoretical framework: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) and heritage tourism development

This study adopted the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as a theoretical perspective to understand the impacts of heritage resources on community livelihoods in the Oshikoto Region, Namibia. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework consists of five key components: context, conditions, and trends; livelihood resources; the transformation of processes and structures; livelihood strategies; and sustainable livelihood outcomes (Westoby *et al.*, 2021). As a people-centred and holistic approach, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework focuses on community interests, recognizes the complexities of people's lives, and acknowledges society's multisectoral characteristics (Su *et al.*, 2015). The framework took stock of all assets available in the region and highlighted using these resources to sustain livelihoods (Lui *et al.*, 2022). The livelihood assets are commonly classified as natural, physical, financial, social, and cultural. Access to these assets is mediated through social institutions, organizational structures, and social relationships (Su *et al.*, 2015). If bringing it in the context of heritage tourism, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework integrates these capitals, which include heritage resources, personal knowledge, arts, culture, and social groups as inputs to a community livelihood system. The expected livelihood outcomes will be generating income and making a living from heritage tourism products and services, community participation, improved security, community well-being, productivity, vulnerability reduction, and sustainable use of heritage resources (Chen and Wan, 2022). Therefore, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework is the appropriate tool to analyze the impact of heritage resources on community livelihoods in the Oshikoto region. It combines heritage resources with heritage tourism and creative activities, considered some of the livelihood initiatives in the region.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study followed a qualitative approach based on an interpretive phenomenological design. This approach allowed heritage practitioners in the Oshikoto region to share their perspectives on the impact of heritage resources on community livelihoods. The study was conducted in 6 out of 11 constituencies in Oshikoto because of the rich heritage resources. The target population consisted of 58 heritage practitioners, including culture officers, arts extension officers, curators, heritage site officers, community conservancy officers, craftspeople, local culture conveners, and culture group leaders. The target group was rich in information and

works in heritage sectors in the region. The sample of 20 participants was drawn from 58 heritage practitioners using the purposive sampling technique. Primary inclusion criteria were participant availability, communication ability, knowledge, and data saturation. The primary data collection methods were in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. The document analysis method was conducted to complement the two data collection methods and gain better insight into cultural heritage resources. Collected data were analyzed using the thematic data analysis approach, following the analysis steps suggested by (Miles and Huberman, 2014).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Heritage resources as the source of income

The findings of this study showed that heritage resources could be a source of income. Drawn from the documents reviewed, the local people generate income from entrance fees, selling of local food, cultural performance fees, accommodation, and selling of crafts products. Similarly, a financial report for a local craft shop, where local women bring their craft products to sell, showed that a relative amount was generated and shared among the members. The reports were confirmed by the respondents (AC1, CN1 and AC6) who had this to say:

As a visual artist, I make a living by selling my artworks, such as portraits and drawings (Respondent AC1).

When tourists visit places like conservancies, national parks, historical places, and museums in our region, they spend money on accommodation, food, entrance fees, buying crafts, watching the cultural performance, fuel, and other transport. In this way, local businesses and their employees generate income, create more job opportunities for locals, and pay taxes to the Government (Respondent CN1).

Our cultural group receives invitations to government and private events such as the Independence Celebration, the opening of local lodges and hotels, visits by prominent figures of the region, and much more. At such events, our group receives a performance fee which we later share or save for the group's needs (Respondent AC6).

The local heritage practitioners recognized the economic benefits of the heritage resource. Through heritage tourism, local people earn income through salaries and the sale of heritage products. Similarly, the sector enables local people to generate income through live cultural exhibitions, catering, and accommodation services. Locals used the income generated to pay for water, hospital bills, education, and buying groceries. In line with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, this study argues that heritage resources are a source of livelihood and a means for economic emancipation. Heritage tourism provides financial security to poor people and empowers them by boosting their economic status.

4.2. Heritage resources as job creation and livelihood improvement means

One of the identified socio-economic benefits of heritage resources is job creation and livelihood improvement. Heritage tourism creates employment opportunities for local people in various heritage sectors such as accommodation, catering and restaurants, transport, museums, cultural villages, and heritage sites. Here too, heritage contributes to the growth of the local economy and improves people's living standards. Locals are employed as curators, cultural officers, artists, tour guides, drivers, cooks, heritage officers, rangers, wardens, and conservation officers. These employment opportunities are created at the grassroots level. For instance, the following respondents explained:

Heritage sectors have created jobs for people in the region. People are recruited as cashiers, tour guides, cooks, conservancy officers, rangers, curators, and institutional workers (Respondent C1).

Employment opportunities can be created through creative activities such as basket making, pottery, woodwork, traditional songs and dancing performance, drawing, and painting (Respondent AC1).

Many Namibians are self-employed as dancers, musicians, choreographers, and painters (Respondent AC5).

In addition, the annual reports for museums, craft shops, heritage sites, community-based conservancies, and cultural villages seen during document analysis, the study found that about 43 local people are employed on a full-time and part-time basis in the heritage sector. The study is consistent with the Ministry of Industrialization,

Trade, and SME Development's Growth Strategy for Namibia's Handicraft Industry and Associated Value Chain Report for 2019, which shows that about 445 Namibians are employed full-time and part-time in craft enterprises. This is in line with the National Development Plan 5 (NDP5) and the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2017/18-2021/22) to reduce the country's unemployment rate by increasing the labour force in heritage and creative industries. These plans are endorsed by the Namibian Arts, Culture, and Heritage Policy for 2018-2023 (2016) as an implementation tool. Heritage tourism promotes self-employment and youth employment and provides employment opportunities for both genders. The findings also support a community-based approach to heritage tourism which aims to actively promote and decentralize tourism activities in the community and enable local people, particularly from rural areas, to utilize the local heritage resources and improve their living standards. Community-based heritage tourism is considered by the Namibian Government as one of the approaches to improve community livelihood (Ndlovu *et al.*, 2011).

4.3. Heritage resources as sources of educational information

Heritage resources, especially creative cultural products, have educational benefits as they can be used as teaching and learning tools, mainly through visual and performing arts. These are activities based on individual creativity, skills, and talents. It involves transmitting skills and knowledge in the arts and crafts fields, which is of significant importance as it enables the transmission and preservation of art, craft, and indigenous knowledge. Similarly, heritage resources can be sources of scientific information. On this issue, the following citations support this claim:

The other day, my granddaughter came home with homework to write an educational essay about our culture. Through storytelling, I explained our traditions, what we wore and ate, and how things were done in the past (Respondent AC3).

As a school teacher and culture convener, I like taking my learners to places with natural, historical, and cultural significance during heritage week celebrations or annual school tours (Respondent AC6).

Teachers in the region had approached me to assist with developing visual teaching aids such as drawings since learners learn better when they see a visual image than reading a text (Respondent AC1).

I have a school project where I teach singing to the learners. During my lesson, I realized that learners have difficulty pronouncing English words. Therefore, I am using music to teach them vocabulary and how to pronounce words using singing notes. Singings also help in remembering words and lessons learned (Respondent AC5).

The lesson plans seen by the researchers during the document analysis show that the teachers used teaching materials and methods that incorporated painting, molding, sculptures, drawing, singing, role-play, dancing, storytelling, and videos throughout the curriculum, reflecting aspects of heritage. Also, the National Curriculum for Basic Education emphasizes that arts and culture learning contributes to building a knowledge-based society, particularly by emphasizing the development of creativity, communication skills, and innovation skills (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2016). Therefore, heritage is central to developing personal and social identity and culture. Arts and crafts carry history and represent culture, therefore crucial for conveying Namibian history and culture.

Elders are the custodians of local culture and history and are responsible for educating young people about culture and history through various means, such as storytelling and oral tradition. The School Culture Club for Development National Policy Guide for Grade 1-12 (2015) encourages teachers send learners into the community to collect artefacts and, with the help of elders, to recreate items of local traditional and historical significance. By recreating traditional objects, learners are imparted with traditional life skills such as basket-making, woodwork, pottery, beadwork, painting, and indigenous agricultural practices that are part of the livelihood activities of the community. Therefore, these heritage activities can be an avenue for transmitting and passing on traditional life skills to the young generation, a learning platform, and a means of making a living.

In addition, the study found that heritage resources such as museums, parks, archaeological sites, festivals, art fairs, culture centres, dunes, and memorial sites provide the pathway for formal and informal learning. The findings also showed that using arts and crafts in teaching and learning motivates learners to learn the target

language and improves their linguistic competencies. The 4th Draft Namibian Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy for 2015, reviewed during the document analysis, recognized art *as a medium of language improvement, encouraging artists and musicians to produce spoken word performances, literature, and music in Namibian languages*. In addition, heritage resources such as water springs, salt pans, lakes, nature reserves, museums, mountains, plains, rivers, indigenous fauna, and flora can be sources of scientific information related to history, geology, natural sciences, paleontology, anthropology, economics, environmental sustainability, and archaeology. Therefore, learners, students, and researchers undertake excursions to these cultural assets to supplement textbook information and enable experiential learning.

4.4. Heritage as Means of culture preservation

The findings highlight the positive relationship between heritage resources and culture, history, and identity preservation. Through heritage and cultural expression activities such as cultural festivals, traditional ceremonies, performing arts, storytelling, craftsmanship, literature, and visual arts, various heritage knowledge, and skills are being transmitted from generation to generation. The transmission of traditional skills is crucial as they are intangible and may become extinct. In addition, heritage products such as artefacts are an expression of local culture and represent community identity. Identity and history are socially constructed through culture, which is directed to a way of life. The majority of respondents echoed this fact; for instance, the following quotes amplify the voices in this regard:

Through basketry, one can preserve our traditions and skills of making them. The knowledge and skills of making and decorating baskets are not written; if we stop making them, we will forget, and the skill will become extinct. Therefore, during basket making, the skills are transferred from one person to another through a demonstration (Respondent AC4).

As a curator, I am responsible for collecting objects that depict our culture and history. All these are stored in the museum for preservation purposes. Additionally, I am responsible for researching our culture and history (Respondent C2).

Furthermore, respondents in this study believe that heritage events such as cultural festivals and art fairs enabled culture transmission. One respondent explained it this way:

One can preserve culture through folk songs and dances (Respondent AC5).

Traditional songs, chants, and dances are part of all traditional events in the region and lifetime ceremonies such as births, rites of passage, and funeral rites, hence, they can be a means of preserving culture and passing on traditions. Traditional songs, chants, and dances are always associated with tangible heritage objects such as traditional costumes, ornaments, and musical instruments that represent one's identity and heritage. Adding to this motion, the traditional songs, dances, and rituals are usually composed and dedicated to a prominent person, local practice, historical event, or place and aim to keep the culture and history alive and not forgotten. These traditional songs are part of the oral tradition and history of the community. Some of the well-known folk songs in the region are songs. These songs, hymns, or expressions are associated with various works related to traditional livelihood activities. Such songs can be performed to call neighbours to assist with cultivating fields and coordinating the labour of a group of people working together, which improves work efficiency, and relieves the boredom of a tedious job. Other work songs among communities in the Oshikoto region include those associated with the long journey to hunting, salt harvest, and taking animals to the cattle post or grazing cattle. The findings also suggested that heritage tourism plays a role in preserving local culture and history. Heritage resources, such as cultural villages, museums, and heritage sites, provide a means for keeping local traditions alive through exhibitions, storytelling, performances, and research. This respondent confirmed this viewpoint:

Because museums, cultural villages, and heritage sites always expect tourists, the locals ensure that the exhibition of artefacts is ready (Respondent C1).

Museums are redefined as historical, cultural, and socio-economic assets in today's society. Museums play a huge role in preserving local culture and history through research and exhibitions. In addition, the museum has

the function of reviving disappeared societal moral values and beliefs, promoting cohesion in the community, providing support in teaching and learning local culture and history, being a source of scientific information, and protecting, present through the exhibition and interpret an aspect of past and present. Namibia is a country with diverse cultures, which are showcased in cultural villages found around the country. In the cultural village, local cultures are promoted and safeguarded through model houses, performances, oral history, foods, household chores, and artefacts such as utensils and costumes.

4.5. Heritage resources as people unify

The findings of this study revealed that heritage resources have the potential to tie and unite people together. The following respondent noted that:

Cultural festivals and arts events bring people from different areas and promote peace and unity. When we used to have annual cultural festivals in the region, we all came together from the 11 constituencies to celebrate and share our culture (Respondent AC1).

As a culture dancer for 17 years, I have travelled all over the country for national culture festivals; the event indirectly ties the regions together as all the 14 regions of Namibia come together from different cultural backgrounds. Namibia has diverse cultures, and that culture is the glue that binds us together (Respondent AC6).

Heritage festivals bring people together and facilitate communal harmony, allowing everyone to feel a sense of unity. In this sense, different cultures help bind people to their communities, foster and strengthen group identity, and are central to transmitting oral traditions. On the other hand, festivals and events foster togetherness in cultural diversity and foster coordination and cohesiveness among the organizers. According to Yang *et al.* (2019), local people who attend these events show a supportive attitude towards the events and experience more significant impacts on community identity formation. The study found that heritage can be key to building a solid and united nation and can be used as a conflict prevention tool. Post-independence, Namibia uses arts and culture to facilitate national reconciliation and unite people with the concept of "unity in diversity". Due to the different cultural backgrounds, conflict can arise in the region, but people's awareness of cultural diversity is a tool to avoid conflicts. Also, heritage events such as the new harvest ceremony, marula festival, cattle show, and state-sponsored cultural events are some of the events hosted to bring people together and promote unity in diversity in the region. In the National Policy for Arts and Culture entitled Unity, Identity and Creativity for Prosperity for 2001, the Namibian Government promoted arts and culture as a means of uniting the nation and achieving reconciliation through mutual respect and understanding, solidarity, stability, peace, tolerance, and inclusion.

4.6. Heritage as a healing, counselling, and therapy tool

The findings of this study suggest that heritage resources such as indigenous knowledge of ethnomedicine, medicinal plants, and herbs play a significant role in ensuring healthy living and people's well-being. Also, arts, crafts, and heritage sites address mental health and deal with illness and grief by allowing people to express feelings and emotions. During healing and therapy sessions, sketching, drawing, carving, painting, sculpting, beading, sewing, basket making, chanting, singing, playing a musical instrument, writing poetry, songs, stories, dancing, drama, and theatre are creative processes that foster profound personal growth are employed. These activities improve the person's overall well-being and contribute to improved self-awareness, self-esteem, self-expression, enjoyment, and reduced stress and tension. The following responses confirmed the findings:

When a family member is not feeling well, sometimes we use traditional medicines from local herbs, where we collect leaves and roots and use them as medicine (Respondent CGL5).

Most ethnic groups in Namibia use traditional medicine with limited access to modern medicine. These natural products, such as herbs, minerals, and animal parts, are used to prevent, treat and cure diseases. Traditional medicine involves the application of inherited indigenous knowledge to diagnose, classify, prevent, and treat various diseases. Traditional medicine knowledge accumulates over time and is shared orally from generation to generation across a community, family, and individual. At the same time, traditional medicine and the healing

process involve aspects of intangible cultural heritage such as magic, charms, amulets, sacrifices, rites, rituals, and healing dances and powers—traditional healers, whether herbalists or diviners, apply indigenous knowledge to treat people.

As a performing artist, I usually perform at the OVC Centre in our town. When I go there, the children will be singing and dancing; hence, at the end of the day, they will have forgotten their difficult life (Respondent AC5).

Dance and music help reduce anxiety and depression and promote personal development. Dance therapy helps people deal with and overcome their physical and emotional ailments. Dance is a physical behaviour that embodies many healing properties released through movement, rhythms, self-expression, and communion. In addition, traditional dance and music are associated link to traditional treatment and other socio-cultural functions. Dances and music such as Ndeup (Senegal), Zar (North and Middle East), and Guinea Dance (Guinea) are some of the therapeutic healing dances found in African countries (Monteiro, 2011). Divare, Kayote, Niakasanda, Liyala, Lanka, Ngaka, Bonkaka, and Omakola are some of the identified traditional dances and music among the local tribes performed for healing purposes in Namibia. Dance and music are essential in revealing and treating mental distress symptoms and helping build and maintain healthy self-esteem (Monteiro & Wall, 2011). Dancing combined with other healing rituals the traditional healers and patients uses for ailments prevention and treat sickness. Traditional dance choreographies based on local traditions provide a solid framework for addressing social issues through performance.

Furthermore, a visual artist stated that some of the learners expressed their feelings through art activities during the visual art classes he conducts with school learners. Respondent had to say:

One may find a learner drawing a picture of a child beaten with a stick. The drawing indicates that the learner is experiencing physical abuse, something she/he might face. Therefore, I talk to such learners and refer them to the school counsellor for further investigation. People use drawing to express their feelings (Respondent AC1).

Expressive arts, along with many other cultural expressions such as drawing and writing, can be a vehicle to support people in dealing with and overcoming their emotional and physical ailments. It helps to identify and express feelings about problems one is facing. It allows one to go straight to the root of one's feelings to diagnose the problem and tap into the transformative spirit of the self-inner voice for guidance. Sketching, drawing, and painting are counselling tools because they allow one to express and release emotions visually and improve overall health and well-being. (Chibbora & Camacho, 2011). People who find it difficult to talk about embarrassing or traumatic life events, such as family violence and abuse, can express themselves through an artistic medium. Art allows for the visual representation of thoughts that are difficult to express. The present study's findings are consistent with Peräkylä (2013), who suggested that arts and crafts can be therapeutic. Creative expression improves people's lives by providing activities for expressions that help restore their well-being and increase their self-esteem, confidence, and empowerment. This study identifies various health practices and approaches embedded in the local cultures, beliefs, and customs. These practices of traditional healing and management of diseases are deeply rooted in natural and cultural heritage. The natural heritage is represented by the medicinal items that the rural communities in the Oshikoto region obtain from local fauna and flora. Similarly, the cultural heritage is represented through the application of the inherited indigenous knowledge system to diagnose, classify, prevent, and treat variously diseased as well as cultural aspects such as magic, charms, amulets, sacrifices, rites, rituals, dances, and power.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study explored the perceptions of heritage practitioners regarding the impact of heritage resources on local community livelihoods in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. This study has shown, among other significant findings, that heritage resources positively impact community livelihoods. Through heritage tourism and the creative industries, local people earn income from selling heritage products, are employed in the sector, and

create opportunities for skills improvement. Heritage tourism creates opportunities to learn new languages and cultures. Heritage tourism provides opportunities for cultural exchange between the community and tourists and helps local community members to learn something new. Heritage tourism plays a role in preserving local culture, identity, and history by encouraging hosting communities to value and protect their local culture and history. Similarly, the study found that heritage tourism ensures the preservation of vernacular architectural styles and authenticity, which are part of the identity of local people. In addition, it further concludes that heritage contributes to community development in terms of local capacity building and infrastructure development. Finally, several factors appear to limit the full recognition and usage of heritage resources for livelihood and sustainable community development in Namibia. Therefore, the study recommended the following interventions for further development of the heritage sector: raising awareness; repackaging tourism packages to incorporate heritage resources in the national tourism products; usage of digital platforms to profile heritage resources in the region and in promoting and marketing heritage tourism nationally and internationally. Similarly, this study recommended collaborative and local participation in community-based heritage tourism development and promotion to improve tourist experiences and extend regional stays.

VI. Acknowledgement

This work forms part of PhD study undertaken at the University of Namibia.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Ahebwa, W., Aporu, J. and Nyakaana, J. B. (2015), "Bridging community livelihoods and cultural conservation through tourism: a case study of Kabaka heritage trail in Uganda", *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp.103-115, DOI: 10.1177/1467358415589656.
- [2.] Alexandrakis, G., Manasakis, G. and Kampanis, N. A. (2019), "Economic and Societal Impacts on Cultural Heritage Sites, Resulting from Natural Effects and Climate Change", *Heritage*, Vol.2, pp. 279-305, DOI:10.3390.
- [3.] Asa, A. R., Tjizumaue, B, Campbell, H. and Nautwima, J.P. (2022), "The Impact of Tourism Development on the Local Communities in Namibia", *International Journal of Operations Management*, Vol. 2. No, 2, pp. 7-16.
- [4.] Behrendt, M. and Franklin, T. (2014), "A review of research on school field trips and their values Education", *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, Vol. 9, pp. 235-245.
- [5.] Bond, S. and Worthing, D. (2016), *Managing Built Heritage: the role of cultural values and Significance* (2nd ed.), United Kingdom, U.K.
- [6.] Boz, M. and Karakas, E. (2017), "Impact of Tourism Industry on Hosting Communities: Antalya and Canakkale case", *Researcher: Social Science Studies*, Vol. 5, No.8, pp. 153-170.
- [7.] Cerisola, S. (2019), "A new perspective on the cultural heritage-development nexus: the role of creativity", *Journal of Cultural Economics*, Vol.23, pp.21-56.
- [8.] Chandani, K.C., Karuppannan, S. and Sivan, A. (2018), "Assessing the values of living heritage sites in Kathmandu Valley: a community perspective. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 93-110, DOI: 10.1108/JCHMSD-05-2018-0032.
- [9.] Chen, Z. and Wan, P.Y. K. (2022), "Interdependence between community participation and sustainable livelihood development: community perspectives on heritage conservation in Macao", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Dio.10.1080/173873x.2022.2134785.
- [10.] Chibbora, J.S. and Camacho, H. (2011), "Creative Approaches to School Counselling: using the Visual Expressive Arts as an Intervention", *GSCA Journal*, pp. 41-44.
- [11.] Diaz-Andreu, M. (2017), "Heritage Values and the Public", *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 2-6.
- [12.] Dumcke, C, & Gnedovsky. (2013), "The Social and Economic Value of Cultural Heritage: a literature review", EUROPEAN EXPERT NETWORK ON CULTURE PAPER.
- [13.] Džanic, N.D. (2016), "The Effect of Using Songs on Young Learners and their Motivation for Learning English", *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol.1 No.2, pp. 40-54.

-
- [14.] Esichaikul, R. and Chansawang, R. (2021), "Community participation in heritage tourism management of Sukhothai historical park", *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, DIO: 10.1108/IJC-03-2021-0035.
- [15.] Ezenagu, N. (2020), "Heritage resources as a driver for cultural tourism in Nigeria", *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 7 No.1, pp.1-14. DOI 10.1080/23311983.2020.1734331.
- [16.] Hüncke, A. and Koot, S. (2012), "The presentation of the bushmen in tourism: tourists' images of Bushmen and the tourism provider's presentation of (Hai//om) Bushmen at Treesleeper Camp, Namibia", *Critical Arts*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 671-689.
- [17.] Green, I., Sheyapo, M. and Kavita, E. (2018), "Creative Cultural Tourism for Namibia: opportunities and challenges", *Journal of Tourism, Culture, and Territorial Development*: doi.org/10.6092/issn.2036-5195/7223.
- [18.] International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS] (1999), "*International Cultural Tourism Charter: managing tourism at places of heritage significance*", ICOMOS.
- [19.] Jagmohan, S., Spencer, J.P and Steyn, J.N. (2016), "Local natural and cultural heritage assets and community-based tourism: challenges and opportunity", *African Journal for Physical Activity and Health Science*, Vol. 22 No. 1:2, pp. 306-317.
- [20.] Konsa, K. (2016), "Natural and Cultural Heritage: Framing Meaning and Practices", *The International Journal of Sustainability in Economic, Social and Cultural Context*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 9-18.
- [21.] Labadi, S., Giliberto, F., Rosetti, I., Shetabi, L. and Yildirim, E. (2021), "*Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance for Heritage and Development Actors*", Paris, ICOMOS.
- [22.] Lapeyre, R. (2016), "From Hunting –gathering to Hospitality? Livelihoods and tourism use of Bushman Paintings in the Brandberg Mountain Namibia", *In Manwa, Moswete & Saarinen (Eds), Cultural Tourism in Southern Africa*, Channel View, Bristol, pp.145-165.
- [23.] Li, Y. and Hunter, C. (2014), "Community involvement for sustainable heritage tourism: a conceptual model", *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol.5 No. 3, pp.248.262, DOI 10.1108/JCHMSD-08-2014-0027.
- [24.] Liu, Y., Wang, Y., Dupre, K. and McIlwaine, C. (2022), "The impacts of world cultural heritage sites designation and heritage tourism on community livelihood: a Chinese case study", *Tourism Management Perspective*.
- [25.] Polanski, T. (2006), "Cultural Heritage in Socio-Economic Development: a local and global perspective", *Environment Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 51-66.
- [26.] Love, O. (2013), "*Valuing Cultural heritage-economic and cultural value of the Colosseum*", Tampere University of Applied Science.
- [27.] Maneenetr, T. and Tran, H. T. (2014), "Developing Cultural Tourism in Border Province: A case study on Bueng Kan Province, Thailand", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 5 No. 23, pp. 55-64. Doi:10.5901/mjss. 2014.v5n23p55.
- [28.] Ma, X., Wang, R., Dai, M. and Ou, Y. (2021), "The influence of culture on the sustainable livelihoods of households in rural tourism destinations", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 29 No. 8, pp. 1235-1252, DIO: 10. 1080/09669582.2020.1826497.
- [29.] Macheke, T.M. (2016), "Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site and Sustainable Development", *Journal for Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 226-237.
- [30.] Mensah, J. (2021), "Community perception of heritage values regarding a global monument in Ghana: implications for sustainable heritage management", *Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences*, DOI: 10.1108/JHASS-01-2021-0010.
- [31.] Miles, M.B., Huberman, M.A. and Saldana, J. (2014), *Qualitative Data Analysis: a methods sourcebook (3rd. ed)*, California, C.A.
- [32.] Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism. (2021), *The National Strategies on Sustainable Heritage Tourism Development and Employment Creation Opportunities at Community Level*. Windhoek.
- [33.] Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2015), *Namibia Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy-2018-2023*. Windhoek.
- [34.] Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. (2015), *School Culture Clubs for Development. National Policy Guide Grade 1-12*", NIED, Okahandja.
- [35.] Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. (2016), *The National Curriculum for Basic Education*, NIED, Okahandja.
- [36.] Monteiro, N. M. and Wall, D. J. (2011), "African Dance as Healing Modality Throughout the Diaspora: the Use of Ritual and Movement to Work through Trauma", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 4 No.6., pp.234-252.
-

- [37.] Ndlovu, J. and Nyakunu, E. (2013), "Re-positioning Namibia as a cultural tourism destination to enhance its competitiveness: a tour operators' perspective". *Journal of Contemporary Management*, Vo.10, pp. 117-134.
- [38.] Ndlovu, J., Nyakunu, E and Auala, S. (2011), "Community Based Tourism in Twyfelfontein Conservancy: exploring Local Community's involvement", *Hospitality and Tourism System*, Vol. 4, No. 2.
- [39.] Nkwanyana, M.S., Ezeuduji, I.O, Nzama, A. T. (2016), "Cultural Heritage Tourism in South Africa: perceived a panacea for rural development?", *ACTA UNIVERSITATIS DANUBIUS*, Vol.12. No.6., pp. 160-167.
- [40.] Nowacki, M. (2021), "Heritage Interpretation and Sustainable Development: a systematic literature review", *Sustainability*, Vol. 13 No. 4383, pp.1-16.
- [41.] Oluwatuyi, O. and Ileri, O.N. (2015), "Cultural Tourism and Community Involvement: impact on sustainable tourism development in Ekiti State, Nigeria", *Donnish Journal of Geography and Regional Planning*, Vol. 2 No.1, pp. 1-8.
- [42.] Patil, A.R. (2013), *Community Organisation and Development: an Indian Perspective*, PHI Learning Private Limited, Delhi.
- [43.] Pathloth, V. (2021), "Therapeutic healing through dance", *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, Vol. 9, No.3.
- [44.] Peräkylä, H. (2013), *The role of arts and craft in Namibian primary school*. A thesis presented for the degree for the Master of Arts (Textile and Design), Aalto University, Finland.
- [45.] Rakitivac, K.A. & Urosevic, N. (2017), "Valorisation of cultural heritage on Sustainable Tourism", *Management*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp.199-215, DIO: 10-26493/1854-4232.12.
- [46.] Saarinen, J. (2011), "Tourism Development and Local Communities: The Direct Benefits of Tourism to OvaHimba Communities in the Kaokoland, Northwest Namibia", *Tourism Review International*, Vol. 15, pp. 149-157. DOI: 10.3727/154427211X13139345020534.
- [47.] Saarinen, J. and Rogerson, C.M. (2015), "Setting Cultural Tourism in Southern Africa", *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 24 No.3&4, pp.207 -220.
- [48.] Shayakhmetova, L., Shayakhmetova, L., Ashrapova, A., and Zhuravleva, Y. (2017), "Using Songs in Developing Intercultural Competence", *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, Vol. 6 No.4, pp. 639-646.
- [49.] Sithole, S.R. (2019), "*The contribution of Tourism to Local Community Development: the case of Shakaland Zulu Culture Village*", M.A. thesis, Durban University of Technology, Durban.
- [50.] Su, M. M., Wall, G. and Xu, K. (2016), "Heritage tourism and livelihood sustainability of resettled rural communities: Mount Sanqingshan World Heritage Site, China", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2015.1085868.
- [51.] Turker, N. (2013), "Host community perceptions of tourism impacts: a case study on the World Heritage City of Safranbolu, Turkey", *Expert projects Publishing House*, Vol, 43, pp. 115-141.
- [52.] UNESCO. (1972), *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Paris.
- [53.] Westoby, R. Gardiner, S., Carter, R.W. and Scott, N. (2021), "Sustainable Livelihoods from Tourism in the 10 New Balis in Indonesia", *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol.26, No. 6, pp.702-702.
- [54.] Yang, Z., Zhang, X., Di, F., Wall, G., Liu, X. and Shao, R. (2019), "Natural heritage values and comparative analysis of Kanas, China", *Journal of Arid Land*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 197-206.