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The preservation of Indigenous Knowledge: A study of some useful linguistic terms utilised in the processing of traditional marula (*mukumbi*) in the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province

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ABSTRACT

Traditional indigenous knowledge has remained the most untapped, a form of intangible heritage owned by most rural people in Zimbabwe. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs) can easily become a source of wealth, as they provide useful linguistic knowledge when we look at the terms utilised during the production of marula (mukumbi) in many rural communities of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The primary focus of this paper is to explore the linguistic terms utilised in the discourses of the processing of traditional marula, to preserve indigenous knowledge. Traditional marula is known in the Shona language as mukumbi, which is made from ripe marula fruits. In Shona, the fruit tree is known as mupfura. The fruits are treated by many rural people as a source of a health energy drink and alcohol. The traditional marula brew captures rich linguistic terminologies that are crucial in the formation of an identity by the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province. These are critical in defining the people's historical heritage and rich cultural beliefs and customs. This paper is couched in the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis, in which the primary goal is to explicitly study how language is used in different practical communicative events, demonstrating performative actions. Data for the study were collected qualitatively using in-depth interviews and observations, which helped the researchers to collect raw data from experienced people in their natural settings. A sample of 15 women was purposively selected from which to collect the data for this study. In our findings, we came up with a collection of many linguistic terms utilised by the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo during the processing of traditional marula. Our study recommends that the production of traditional marula should be done on a larger scale, emphasising the linguistic terminologies the locals use during marula processing, for the preservation of indigenous knowledge so that it can be passed on to future generations.

Key words: Heritage, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Discourse Analysis, marula, spirituality

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INTRODUCTION

The African continent is rich with many resources that include a diversity of wild fruit trees (Nemapare et al., 2023). Maroyi (2022) argues that fruits play a pivotal role in maintaining biodiversity, supporting agroecosysytems, and providing the socioeconomic well-being of rural communities. In recent years, climate change has hugely contributed to the decline of these wild fruits but the the marula trees have survived. Their fruits are a delicacy for most rural communities, so the survival of the trees is critical. The marula fruit has played a central role in the dietary intake, socioeconomic standing, and cultural practices of communities of Southern Africa for centuries (Hlangwani et al., 2023). Apart from its various nutritional values and the purposes it serves to many rural dwellers, the marula fruit has traditionally been used in the production of traditional marula alcohol. This alcohol is commonly known in Shona as *mukumbi.* Traditional marula in the context of the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo has been known through some linguistic terms which the people utilise to point to the different traditional processes that they engage in during its processing. The processing of marula is tied to deep cultural and spiritual beliefs of these people and the utilisations of some linguistic terms reveal a rich indigenous knowledge that the people demonstrate, pointing to their historical and cultural backgrounds. Traditional marula helps the people to link their present with the past, hence the utilisation of the rich linguistic terms helps them preserve their Indigenous Knowledge Systems, at the same time passing that knowledge to the younger generations.

Background to the Study

We note that the world over, people manipulate resources that are at their disposal in their locality, for their survival. Ingwani (2022) avers that cultures the world over have had to utilise whatever resources that are at their disposal in their immediate surroundings to survive, especially to provide basic needs such as food. She adds that in most communities, people go out to hunt and gather food ranging from such small insects as *majuru* or termites (Ingwani, 2022). Other insects that form part of Zimbabwean foods include *ishwa, makurwe* (crickets), *harurwa* (stinkbugs), and *mbeva* (mice). Some of the food can be gathered from harvesting fish as well as collecting honey. Most rural communities also gather wild fruits that include *mazhanje, nyii, shumha,* and *mapfura* (marula). What is apparent is that most rural

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communities can survive on edible insects and wild fruits that they can easily access from their surroundings and consume them. Among many other wild fruit trees found in the rural communities, *mupfura* (marula) tree is one such important tree that provides fruits that people enjoy. Ingwani (2022) says the *mupfura* (marula) tree is a multi-purpose fruit which is collected and also enjoyed as an occasional delicacy. The marula fruits ripening period may vary depending on the rainfall pattern of an area and this usually occurs during December – February, January – March, or April – June periods (Nerd & Mizrahi, 2000; Hall, 2002). To the communities residing in such areas, the marula tree and its fruit are sacred and hold significant spiritual, sociocultural, nutritional and economic value (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013; Murye, 2017). Furthermore, since all parts of the tree are usable, the marula tree has been one of Southern Africa's most ecologically-valuable resources for centuries (Nwonwu, 2006; Mokgolodi et al., 2011). Thus, the marula fruit tree is a versatile, multiple-purpose species that produces fruits that are eaten whole or processed (Tapiwa, 2019).

Human beings' ability to adapt and utilise readily-accessible resources has enabled them to survive even with scarce resources (Ingwani, 2022). This adaptaility can even sustain human beings in times of droughts and hunger, in which wild fruits can prove to be the source of food for them. Ingwani's sentiments are essential to this study in which the focus is to examine the linguistic terminologies that are useful in the processing of traditional marula *(mapfura)* to preserve indigenous knowledge. Cunningham and Stanely (2003) opine that indigenous people lean heavily on their cultural beliefs, adjusting these to meet their daily needs. This applies to the indigenous knowledge demonstrated by the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province who have used their cultural beliefs to prepare marula wine *(mukumbi),* an alcoholic drink from the marula fruits that are accessed from their local environment. Ingwani (2022) further argues that people have the ability to do so because they are indigenous inhabitants of those environments, that is, they have been born and bred in those areas and know every nook and cranny where these resources are found. Culture is defined as as the sum total of knowledge, religion and material objects such as food that people obtain individually or in groups to meet their basic essentials for survaival (Ingwani, 2022). Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs) are local and

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anchored in the community providing information (psychological and socio-cultural) necessary for community survival and blossoming within the local environments (Tharakan, 2017). From these ideas, we are inclined to appreciate that human beings are very knowledgeable in IKSs, which they utilise as they link with other community members through communication to gather and prepare food as individuals, at household level and as groups. To this effect, indigenous knowledge has been crucial in enabling members of the traditional communities to live and benefit from the resources that are located within their environments. They can collect such resources through hunting, gathering and prepare them for food or drink.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous knowledge is a set of unique knowledge that belongs to a specific ethnic group, culture, or society (Sraku-Lartey et al., 2017). Indigenous languages are rich and endowed with indigenous knowledge that help to preserve distinctive beliefs, customs and environmental information that would be transmitted from one generation to another (Havemann, 2016). Greenwood and Lindsay (2019) postulate that IK is primarily relational, interconnected with language and land, and intergenerationally transmitted orally through ceremonies, customs, and ways of life. IK is rich and carries with it crucial and several ways, cultures, and beliefs that shape this knowledge form (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2018). Malapane et al., (2024) observe that IK is recognised globally by most acclaimed educational and research institutions that include the World Bank. In addition, Adre-Marobela et al. (2012) argue that IK is acknowledged as a valuable knowledge system resource that is significant in the sustainability of rural and disadvantaged communities, managing climate change and human development. Thus, we appreciate IK as logically valid living processes possessed by members of any ethnic group and that can be transferred from one generation to the next through the use of language in oral traditions. Steup and Neta (2020) argue that knowledge is derived from epistemology, which refers to the theory of knowledge, particularly the methods, validity, scope and distinction between justified belief and opinion. IK refers to the knowledge local people acquire through experiences, informal experiments, and an intimate understanding of their environment (Gope et al., 2017). Our study focuses on the linguistic terminologies utilised to preserve

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indigenous knowledge by the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province. We appreciate that the people possess rich linguistic resources that are crucial in the preservation of their indigenous knowledge, which they advance through the processing of traditional marula.

Traditional Ways of Processing Marula Juice

The processing of traditional marula brew can be done in two ways. The first one is producing an alcohol-like clear juice which the people of the area call wine, while the second way is adding fermented and crushed small grains to the juice and these can be millet, rapoko or sorghum. This kind of marula brew is almost like the traditional opaque beer. In producing the clear marula juice or wine, the following steps are taken: The first step in the processing of marula beer is the separation of the skin from the shells of the fruit with either a knife or any sharp object. The pulp is then squeezed and the resulting juice is collected into containers. The nuts and the remaining fruit flesh are mixed with water to release any remaining juice and pulp (Shackleton, 2004). Making marula beer requires the fruits pulp mixture to be concentrated in traditional clays pot or buckets. In so doing, ambient temperatures of approximately 25 °C must be maintained (Shackleton, 2004; Rampedi & Olivier, 2013). The pulp mixture is left and allowed to ferment for a period of two to four days (Shackleton, 2004; Rampedi & Olivier, 2013). After this period, the pulp mixture will resemble semi-solid masses of slurry suspended on top, with bubbles, signalling that the breakdown of fermentable sugars into alcohol has occurred (Rampedi & Olivier, 2013). During the fermentation process, the slurry formed on top of the liquid is removed once or twice daily (Shackleton, 2004), within the 2-4 days period mentioned. After this stage, the mixture is carefully filtered, and the beer is ready for drinking. Different communities have different methods of separating or filtering the slurry-like froth from the clear juice. In some communities, they use sacks for the filtration while in other communities they use special tree leaves. The shelf-life of the beer is, however limited, that is, it lasts for about 2-4 days, depending on the ambient temperatures (Shackleton, 2004).

In a study by Shackleton (2004), the author mentions that other producers could make the beer last longer if they topped it with fresh marula juice on a daily basis, and this added 2-3 days in its shelf-life, or they store it in

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fridges. In some communities, marula wine can be preserved and last long. Inhabitants put it in clay pots and bury them underground. Water is regularly poured on the ground under which the pots are buried so as to maintain cool temperatures. While under the ground, the wine continues to mature. The clay pot with the wine would then be unearthed when there is need to consume the wine, especially during ceremonial events. This idea is supported by Singh et al. (2018) who allude that underground burying of marula fruit juice increases fermantion in order to increase the marula fruit's nutritional value and medicinal properties. Unlike any other traditional beer, marula beer preparation usually requires no additional supplementary ingredients like brown sugar, maize, yeast, or sorghum (Rampedi & Olivier, 2013). However, this depends on the expertise of an individual community. Like what was highlighted earlier on, in some communities, marula clear juice can be turned into opaque-like beer by adding fermented powder of some small grains to enhance its alcohol content. It is during these processing methods that the locals utilise some linguistic vocabulary that reflects high degrees of Indigenous Knowledge Systems that the researchers find worth documenting for use by future generations, so as to carry on with this rich heritage.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study is couched in the Discourse Analysis theoretical framework. We selected this theory based on the knowledge that in processing the marula fruits for alcohol or beverage drink, people use certain linguistc terms that are rich in meanings. These terms and meanings further point to the cultural traditions, heritage and identity of the people of te south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province.

Discourse Analysis

For us to understand the linguistic terms used in the processing of marula brew, we need to have an understanding of the discourses that the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province engage in during the processing of the marula brew. Our understanding of these discourses can only be achieved by analysing the concept of discourse as a theory of language. Discourse is situated sequentially in the sense that the primary context within which social interaction occurs comes first and largely shapes accounts and constructions of participants involved in discourse (Potter, 2003). It is contingent on the variability of

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language use in different cultures and contexts. Discourse analysis provides a different way of theorising language. It is more concerned with the analysis of texts and/or utterances within specific socio-cultural context and indicates a method of data analysis that can tell researchers about the discursive construction of a phenomenon (Willig, 2008). In view of these sentiments, this study sought to examine some of the linguistic terms that the people of the sourth-eastern parts of Masvingo Province use in the processing and consumption of the traditional marula wine. Discourse analysts transcribe and analyse data gathered through open-ended interviews, focus group discussions, field observations and other means of data collection where talk is unconstrained by research protocols (Potter, 2003). In view of this, the researchers collected data in the form of the required linguistic terms from the locals, transcribed them in an effort to ascertain their meaning in the context of the traditional marula processing and consumption.

Taylor (2001) loosely defines discourse analysis as "the close study of language in use" (p. 5). Primarily, discourse analysts espouse the principle that people construct versions of their social world through the instrumentality and functionality of language (Potter & Wetherell, 2001). This explains the case of the linguistic terms that are embraced in the traditional marula processing and consumption. They serve the purpose of showcasing the communities' rich Indigenous Knowledge Systems, their culture and identity, as well as demonstrating the fostering of the notions of ubuntu. Ubuntu notions are reflected when people of the communities come together to enjoy the marula alcohol, thus binding community members to live in solidarity. Thus, discourse analysis involves a theoretical way of understanding the nature of psychological phenomena (Billig, 1997). Participants in social interaction strategically deploy discursive devices to demonstrate their keenness and stake in conversations in pursuit of their interpersonal and social objectives (Willig, 2008). Though some have doubted the critical and detailed study of texts by psychologists (Kendall, 2007), some discourse analysts believe that a pretty new style of sociopsychological research can be effectively erected on the foundations of "speech act theory" (Potter & Wetherell, 2001, p. 198). Speech-act theory is a concept of essentially linguistic and philosophy of language, which basically describes the performative function of language; that is, the

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use of language to perform action in a given social context. Thus, natural language and everyday language use in social contexts, for most qualitative researchers, can closely represent the psychological reality of human experiences than the hitherto regimented and formal abstract categories that psychology has adopted over the years (Polkinghorne, 1990). It has been argued, in recent times, that a new and transformative way of doing social psychology should be established on detailed, concrete and empirically-driven analysis of actual discourse (Potter, 2012). The current study is, thus, hinged on the production and meaning-making process in social interactions the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province engage in during the processing and consumption of the traditional marula brew.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed the qualitative methodology in which the use of interviews and observations as the instruments for data collection to explore the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge by analysing some useful linguistic terms utilised in the processing of traditional marula into *mukumbi* in the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province. The researchers were inspired to carry out this research after they became engaged in the teaching of Cultural Heritage Studies, a short course that was meant to equip the women of Masvingo Province with skills for their self-sustenance and upliftment by using natural resources from the communities in which they come from. The short course was not only meant for the women from the south-eastern parts of Zimbabwe, but for all volunteering women to be taught the skills across the country. Having been afforded this opportunity, the researchers were further motivated to carry out this study after getting overwhelmed by the level of traditional knowledge showcased by the people of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo province in the production of traditional marula wine. It was during these interactions with mostly the women that the researchers volunteered to participate in the Culture and Heritage short course. The researchers drew a lot of inspiration from the level of traditional knowledge that the women demonstrated during the lessons on the theme of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the uses of local resources to sustain lives. By conducting research on the production of marula wine, the researchers wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic terminologies used in the production of traditional marula wine and share this knowledge with others in the discourses of IKSs and their importance. The

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researchers also wanted to challenge the misconceptions that some people held about both IKSs and marula wine as both a drink and alcohol. Thus, by conducting research on the marula wine and the linguistic terminologies embedded in its production, the researchers would be in a position to provide a nuanced and accurate understanding of the culture and traditions of the people involved. This would also help people to make an appreciation of marula wine and the linguistic terms that are associated with its production. Moreover, the researchers were motivated by the urge to establish the importance of preserving and promoting the appreciation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and their impact on cultural traditions, and demonstrate how IKSs can be preserved through language use. With all the information gained from this study, the researchers, as academics, wanted to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on marula wine and the linguistic terms utilised in its production, to demonstrate the importance of IKSs in human lives. It was also hoped that the researchers could provide new insights and perspectives on the significance of preserving the marula tree by valuing its by-products. The interviews enabled us to probe the participants for clarification, and it unveiled data in sufficient detail so that one who had not experienced the phenomenon could understand it (Nyoni et al., 2011).

Since the researchers did not have any background knowledge about the production of the traditional marula wine *(mukumbi)*, they were non-participants during the period of data collection. To collect data on marula wine production, the researchers used in-depth interviews and observations while recording the required data in the participants' natural settings. The researchers selected the participants of the study by utilising purposive sampling, and so only the people who were knowledgeable about marula and its processing were selected from a large group of participants per every community they visited during the course of the short course. The researchers selected theree women from the above-mentioned communities, who happened to be knowledgeable, while at the same time holding leadership posts in the communities from which they came. Their average ages ranged from forty to sixty, ages that made them experienced enough to provide essential data (Marashe, 2018; Marashe, 2014). The participants were selected with their consent and they were assured that the information they supplied was solely for academic

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purposes of the researchers and they were also told that if anyone chose to withdraw from the study, they were free to do so, based on their reasons. They were selected because we assumed that they were responsible and so they would provide us with accurate information that we were looking forward to obtaining. Data were collected from these participants during a period of three days, which were days allocated for the teaching of the short course per community visited.

Each day started with the teaching and learning sessions and then the interviews and observations with the participants would follow. All these areas were visited during the period from January 2023 to March 2023, the time during which the marula fruit would be harvested for marula wine production. The researchers had a very easy task in gathering the data, as they were lucky to get most of their participants who were very cooperative and earger to reveal a lot of information on traditional marula wine and the linguistic terms used in its production. This allowed the researchers to compile notes on both the interviews and observations during the periods of the real production of the wine.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers established some linguistic terms used in the processing and consumption of the traditional marula wine, on the one hand as a beverage, and on the other as an alcoholic substance. Most of the linguistic vocabulary collected from the particpants of the study revealed rich meanings that the people link with their cultural and spiritual beliefs. Since the people are from Masvingo Province, where the Karanga dialect of the Shona language is spoken, the terms might vary a bit but the meanings looked the same.

Some linguistic terms used in the production of the traditional marula wine (*mukumbi)*

The following are some of the common linguistic terms that are associated with the processing of the traditional marula that we picked from the partcipants of this study from the time when the marula fruits are ripe and ready for picking.

***Kutunga mukumbi/kutunga mapfura*:** This means to cut open the ripen marula fruit in order to extract the juice that is usually collected and preserved in a bucket. Because the shell of the ripen marula fruit is hard, the locals use a sharp object to cut open the shell. At this stage, what is collected is both the

juice and the seed, while the shell is stored separately. This mixture of the juice and seed will later go into another stage of separation and the shells are not thrown away but they will be used for other desired purposes. This exercise of *kutunga mukumbi/kutunga mapfura* is likened to a situation whereby cattle use their horns to hit another in a fight. Using a sharp pointed object to cut open the marula fruit is almost similar to the horn of cattle being used to strike an opponent to inflict pain and sometimes let blood ooze from the one that is hit by a sharp horn. Hence, this emphaisises the way the marula juice comes out of the shell when it is cut open by a knife or a sharp object that the women use to open the ripe fruits. In other words, *kutunga mukumbi/kutunga mapfura* are terminologies whereby the action of carrying out the task is emphasised. This aligns well with the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis which was used in this study. Potter and Wetherell (2001) assert that speech act theory incorporates linguistic terms that reveal the performative function of language. Therefore, in the context of traditional marula processing, the words *kutunga mukumbi* relate to an action that more experienced persons from the community are familiar with.

***Kutsinha mukumbi*:** This is another linguistic phrase common in the processing of traditional marula that is used by the people of some parts of the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province. During this stage, the further separation of the juice is done and this time the locals use a pestle *(mutswi)* to pound the mixture so that the juice in the hairy part of the seed, together with the hair-like threads, are separated from the seed. The juice and the hairy part are stored until they mature for consumption. The clean seeds are stored separately to allow them to dry and later on they will be broken to tap the bean-like product which can be used to make butter or eaten as food, while the shells can be burned to make traditional soda that can be used for various cooking purposes. *Kutsinha mukumbi,* as the name implies, reveals an abstract action, but Polkinghorne (1991) alludes that some words reveal more of the reality of human experiences which may call us to make a close connection with the psychological endeavors people may be going through and which then require them to manipulate language to speak their experiences.

***Kuvidza mukumbi*:** Well-processed marula should taste well and should cause drunkenness to the people who consume it.

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So for it to taste as expected, it should be allowed to ferment under desirable weather conditions. When it is hot, the marula alcohol can mature faster but can also easily taste sour. So marula wine requires moderate temperatures for it to ferment and desirably taste well. Marula winw does not ferment faster when the weather is humid and hence the people increase the fermentation rate by putting the containers in which the juice is stored in the hut where there is fire that generates moderate heat. Concurring with these assertions, Sheckleton (2004) says that other producers could make the beer last longer if they top it with fresh marula juice on a daily basis, and this adds 2-3 days in its shelf-life or they store it in fridges. In some communities, marula wine can be preserved and last long.

***Waini*:** This is a term used to refer to traditional marula wine which the locals preserve without adding any other substances like fermented cereal, for instance millet. This is clear juice made from the marula fruits and any one from the local community can drink it, especially before it fully matures as it provides them with energy and can cause mild drunkenness to those who would have consumed it. Usually this kind they call *waini* is crystal clear and has a sweet taste when it is processed properly. School-going children can carry this kind of marula in bottles to school which they use as drink that they consume during break or lunch time. It gives them energy as they engage in different play activities, but in some instances when the wine has fermented, it can cause children to sleep while in class. The production of this kind of juice is described in detail as follows: The pulp mixture is left and allowed to ferment for a period of two to four days (Shackleton, 2004; Rampedi & Olivier, 2013). After this period, the pulp mixture will resemble semi-solid masses of slurry suspended on top, with bubbles, signalling that the breakdown of fermentable sugars into alcohol has occurred (Rampedi and Olivier, 2013). During the fermentation process, the slurry formed on top of the liquid is removed once or twice daily (Shackleton, 2004), within the 2-4 days period mentioned. After this stage, the mixture is carefully filtered, and the beer is ready for drinking.

***Mukumbi wekupumhira/wechimera*:** Besides the juice the locals call (waini) wine, there is also another brand or type of the traditional marula wine. With this type, they add fermented and pounded small grains like millet, rapoko or sorghum to the juice. This process increases the content of the alcohol.

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This type is normally consumed by older people, both females and males. During the day when it is consumed, the family that would have prepared it usually invites close family members and friends for the drinking. Sometimes they first provide food to the drinking people and they normally serve them with *sadza*, a thick porridge, and meat. They have a belief that *mukumbi* should be taken by people who are well-fed. Drinking marula wine without having eaten food that comprises meat is believed to cause serious drunkensess to people. At the same time, while people may be drinking, there will be music being played. People would be dancing, responding to the music, thus bringing more entertainment to the gathering.

***Majandu*:** This is another linguistic term used in the processing of marula into alcohol, to refer to the juice which has not been well-processed. In addition, this usually refers to marula juice produced from unripe marula fruits. This type of marula brew usually tastes very sour and many people would not like to drink it, save for those who are addicted to alcohol. Elderly people from the communities where traditional marula wine is produced associate this kind of marula wine with effects that include heartburn and abdominal discomfort. So elderly people do not encourage first-time drinkers to take this kind of marula.

***Govori/dangwa/chikeze*:** This is a term that is culture and regional specific but it refers to one and the same same thing. It refers to the residual froth-like substance that forms as a result of the fermentation process separating pure juice from the hairy part that is usually removed from the seed when the juice and seed are pounded. This substance is said to be toxic and in some cases it can cause people to soil themselves, especially those people new to traditional marula brew. As the words imply, people can appreciate the level of discomfort that the substance can cause if it is consumed by those who are not used to traditional marula. The words reveal a residual that is unpleasant in nature and which is not suitable for consumption but because those used to traditional marula brew may see it fit for consumption because of their insatiable appetite to sap the small amounts of marula that this residual susbstance might contain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The preservation of the traditional can be made permanent in communities where the fruit is found by commercialising this traditional process into huge business

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projects to benefit the country as a whole. This will also see the creation of employment for the local people, as well as benefiting them financially when they sell ripe marula fruits to the processing companies. At the same time, as a country we need to preserve our heritage through the use of our Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Our people should learn to appreciate spirituality and embrace IKSs to build strong Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

CONCLUSION

This study established that local people in the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe rely on marula fruits for the production and consumption of marula beverage and alcohol. The study further revealed that local people are highly knowledgeable in indigenous knowledge which they demonstrate by fostering their cultural and historical heritage identities while buttressing these aspects with the notions of spirituality. This is achieved when people manipulate the resources they get from their immediate environment by making use of their indigenous languages to name and describe these resources. Many people in the south-eastern parts of Masvingo Province embrace cultural and traditional beliefs in which the marula brew is important in uniting the communities. In addition, the people regard traditional marula wine as a pillar of community bonding, bringing unity among community members while at the same time allowing community members to relate in harmony. Data collected in the present study illustrate that traditional marula processing is not an easy task but requires experience and rich knowledge from the old members of the community to carry out the processing task. This qualitative analysis strengthens the firm belief that traditional indigenous knowledge represents not only an important heritage, developed over the centuries, but also a considerable mass of data that should be exploited in order to provide new and useful knowledge on plant resources in Zimbabwe. It is, therefore, necessary to tap into, and preserve, this indigenous knowledge on traditional spirituality aspects of human life by proper documentation of linguistic vocabulary that is in use, and identification of plant species used. This inventory will assist future generations on the continued preservation of useful plant species for the growth of indigenous economies and continued fostering of African indigenous knowledge and spiritualism. Indigenous fruit plants research and Indigenous Knowledge Systems are areas that need to be highly thoroughly in an effort to provide options for

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indigenous food and beverages to counter the cost of scientifically-processed foods and so that locally-made food can become an option for most disadvantaged families in Zimbabwe in times of droughts and hunger. Advancing and sharing of such knowledge is important in maintaining useful avenues for the continued survival of our indigenous knowledges and languages, so as to foster our cultural belief customs as Africans.

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